

COSTARS Connection

The Commonwealth's Cooperative Purchasing Program *Passport to Business Opportunity and Procurement Savings*

Volume 11, Issue 2
Spring 2017



Tom Wolf, Governor
Curt Topper, Secretary



Registrations Open for PA Procurement Expo Logo Chosen

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Registrations for attendees and exhibiting vendors are now being accepted for the 2017 PA Procurement Expo & Forum to be held on Sept. 6 and 7, 2017 at the Harrisburg Farm Show Complex.

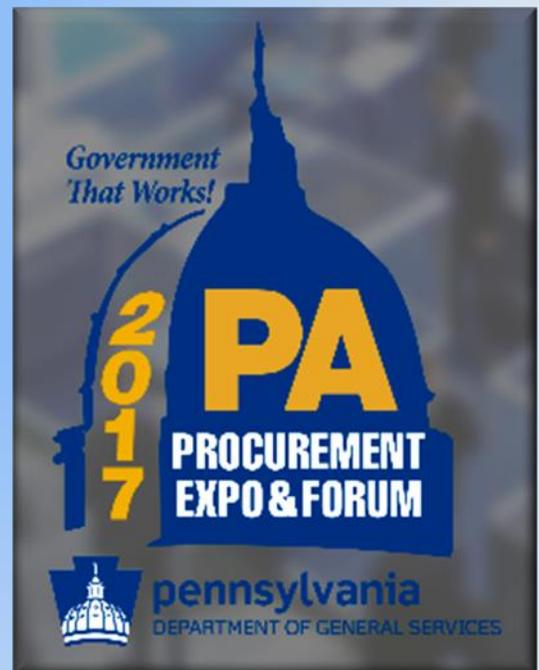
This premier networking and educational event is a two-day gathering of elected officials and procurement decision-makers, including buyers and users from state, county, and local governments; as well as schools, colleges, non-profit agencies, public safety entities, and health care institutions. Additionally, hundreds of current and prospective state government and COSTARS contract suppliers will be exhibiting their products and services.

The conference will include a General Session featuring a headline speaker (to be announced) plus dozens of dynamic educational seminars and workshops designed for current and future suppliers, public procurement decision-makers at the state and local levels, and elected officials. Topics include: Conducting Reverse Auctions; Best Practices in Procurement; What is COSTARS?; Negotiation Strategies; Registering as a Vendor with the Commonwealth of PA; How to Self-Certify as a Small/Small Diverse Business. A Hands-on Computer lab will also be available on-site for registration and website assistance.

A variety of attendee options are available beginning with a one-day Expo only ticket (which includes Expo, parking, breaks, and the Wednesday night networking event) for only \$25 (if registered prior to July 10). Exhibit booth rates start as low as \$250 for small businesses and \$800 for larger vendors. Discounted local hotel rates have been negotiated for attendees and exhibitors.

This event is expected to be the largest gathering of public procurement decision-makers and suppliers in the history of Pennsylvania and will be an exciting opportunity for buyers and sellers to interact in a variety of innovative settings.

To learn more about the Expo or to register, please visit the PA Procurement Expo & Forum website at www.paprocurementexpo.com. Additional questions may be emailed to: info@paprocurementexpo.com.



Government
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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

*A premier networking and
educational event for public
procurement decision-makers
and suppliers!*

SEPTEMBER 6 -7, 2017

**FARM SHOW COMPLEX,
HARRISBURG**

*More than 300 exhibitors
and 2,500 attendees from
State and local government,
schools, non-profits and
industry expected!*

*Email Questions to:
info@paprocurementexpo.com*

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

Public purchasing decision-makers, end-users, and elected officials from Pennsylvania state agencies and COSTARS members should join us for this exciting opportunity to:

- *Interact With Hundreds Of Authorized And Prospective Vendors;*
- *Learn About And Share The Newest And Most Innovative Ideas, Products, And Trends In Public Procurement;*
- *Attend Product Demonstrations And More Than 50 Educational Breakout Sessions.*

Registration Types and Fees

Full Admission

(includes admission to General Session, educational breakout sessions, Expo, parking, lunch, breaks, networking event)

Early Bird Registration--Payment received by July 10, 2017

Two Days at \$100; One Day at \$65

Registration--Payment received after July 10, 2017

Two Days at \$120; One Day at \$75

Expo Only

(includes admission to Expo, parking, breaks, networking event)

Early Bird Registration--Payment received by July 10, 2017

Two Days at \$50; One Day at \$25

Registration--Payment received after July 10, 2017

Two Days at \$60; One Day at \$30

Educational Breakout Sessions

More than 50 educational sessions are planned for suppliers and buyers on a broad range of topics including:

- *Best Practices in Procurement*
- *How to Submit a Bid*
- *What is COSTARS?*
- *Increasing Small/Small Diverse Business Participation*
- *Innovative Procurement in PA*
- *COSTARS Marketing Success Stories*
- *Available and Upcoming Grants*
- *Procurement and the Elected Official*
- *How to Conduct Reverse Auctions*
- *New, Upcoming and Proposed Contracts*
- *Resources for Small Business Start-Ups*
- *Seasonal Contract Overviews*
- *Applying for Small Business/Small Diverse Business Certifications*
- *Procurement Rules for Local Governments and Schools*
- *Marketing to State and Local Governments*

Many more topics to come... check the web site for updates and descriptions.

PLUS:

On-Site Computer Lab: Register as a Commonwealth vendor and receive assistance with navigating the procurement system.

Speed Networking: Great opportunity for quick chats with public procurement officials.

For More Info & To Register: www.paprocurementexpo.com

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EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

Participate as an Exhibitor at this new two-day event featuring hundreds of suppliers and state and local government agencies displaying their products and services and networking with several thousand attendees. We are anticipating procurement and purchasing agents from throughout Pennsylvania, as well as other states, including buyers/users/decision makers from state, county and local governments, as well as schools, colleges, non-profit entities, industry, public safety agencies, and health care institutions.

Maximize your marketing investment by taking advantage of one of the limited opportunities to become an Expo Champion. As an Expo Champion, you'll receive additional exposure before, during, and after the event and create a lasting impression with Expo and Forum participants.

Exhibit Hall Highlights

- *An exciting, new opportunity to showcase your products and services.*
- *Thousands of public and non-profit procurement and purchasing staff, buyers, decision-makers, and users are anticipated from State and local government, schools, non-profits, and industry.*
- *An early bird registration discount for all exhibitors who register and pay by June 2, 2017.*
- *Dedicated exhibit hall time on Wednesday and Thursday.*
- *Extended break and lunch times to allow all participants time in the exhibit hall.*
- *Hotel rooms available to exhibitors starting at \$95 per night.*

Exhibitor Registrations Include:

One 6' draped table, back wall and side rail drapes, two chairs, wastebasket and a booth identification sign. Carpeting is included and free Wi-Fi Internet is available.

Note: Electricity is available at an additional charge. Full registration for two booth staff included; additional staff at \$50 each. Parking at the PA Farm Show Complex is also included.

PLUS...

- *Two full registrations will be included with every exhibit space. Exhibitors are an integral part of the event and are encouraged to participate in educational breakout sessions, lunches and breaks, and special networking events. Exhibit hall only badges will be provided at \$50 each for your other booth staff and include parking, lunches and breaks.*
- *Your contact information and a brief description of your company's products or services will be included in the program to be given to every attendee allowing you to update old clients on new developments while at the same time attracting new prospects.*
- *A link to your company's website from the 2017 Expo website will be created heightening your company's recognition among attendees and allowing attendees to instantly learn more about your products and services.*
- *A post-conference attendee list with full contact information will be given to all exhibitors so you can follow-up with attendees after the conference.*

VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR CHAMPION UPGRADE INFORMATION.

COSTARS Introduces Members Quote Kit

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

The word is spreading among public procurement professionals: NEGOTIATION is the key to obtaining the best value purchases. Whether an individual is buying a new home, or a big box retailer is buying five million flat screen TVs, or the state government is awarding contracts for two million tons of road salt – some form of negotiation is key to getting the best value for the money spent. Pennsylvania’s Department of General Services Secretary Curt Topper recently acknowledged in budget testimony before the state Senate that the traditional formal bid process may not be the best vehicle for obtaining best value, which is why the state government is increasingly using more modern techniques such as reverse auctions (see COSTARS Connections Summer 2016 edition).

COSTARS, since its inception in 2005, has recommended to its 8,600 members that they use an informal negotiation/reverse auction-type model to choose their best value supplier from among COSTARS-authorized vendors. When used properly, this selection process can be used instead of the traditional formal bid process. In FY 2015, the COSTARS process saved local taxpayers approximately \$240 million!

Based on anecdotal feedback from members, it is clear that COSTARS members could use a tool to assist them to more effectively, more thoroughly, and more transparently use the COSTARS model.

In response, the COSTARS Marketing Team has developed and introduced the [COSTARS Members Quote Kit](#). The kit includes a sample Request for Quote (RFQ) form that can be sent to suppliers along with a cover letter, a Quote Worksheet to record and summarize all the quotes from suppliers (including value-added inducements such as extended warranties, free training, etc.), a completed sample of the Quote Worksheet to illustrate how it can be used, and an Introductory page that includes Tips and Suggestions on how to use the kit.

Advantages of using the kit include:

- ✓ Reminding members to obtain quotes from several COSTARS-authorized and -participating contracted vendors, and to return to those vendors to obtain successively better values.
- ✓ Confirming and documenting that vendors have current contract numbers.
- ✓ Confirming and documenting the contract pricing vendors have indicated in their contract is not exceeded.
- ✓ To make it easier to compare quotes from different vendors.
- ✓ To provide documentation and transparency to auditors, citizens, or others that due diligence has been performed.

Copies of the kit can be accessed electronically from the Member Information page, and from the COSTARS Members Area page under NEWSFLASH/Current News on the COSTARS website at www.costars.state.pa.us.

COSTARS members **are not required** to use this quote kit. It is provided as a suggested tool to help COSTARS members obtain cost savings and best value when procuring needed materials and/or services.

Contract News

Scope Expansions, Clarification, Contract Updates

COSTARS-5 Janitorial Supplies
Addendum 9 amends the scope to include Industrial Cleaning Equipment and Accessories (Supplies and Chemicals).

COSTARS-25 Municipal Work Vehicles Addendum 13 amends the scope to include Powered Airport Ground Support Equipment.

Did you know that eligible entities can purchase industrial size generators and much more at a minimal cost from the Bureau of Supplies and Surplus Operations (BSSO)?

In addition to the extensive selection of products available through the COSTARS Program, most COSTARS member organizations may be eligible to purchase surplus material from Federal and/or State Surplus Property Programs offered by BSSO.

For more information, be sure to visit the BSSO website at www.dgs.pa.gov. From the Local Government & Schools tab at the top of the page, select the link for Surplus Supplies & Equipment.

Saving Money with Surplus!

COSTARS



PENN STATE FACILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE & COSTARS:

Electric Procurement Services

Since 2009, the Penn State Facilities Engineering Institute (PSFEI) has provided electricity procurement services for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania resulting in savings of over 119 million dollars. Now, PSFEI and the PA Department of General Service Bureau of Procurement (DGS-BOP) want to bring these savings opportunities to all COSTARS members.

How it works: PSFEI's certified energy professionals continually monitor electricity market conditions and determine the best times to shop for electricity. They aggregate appropriate loads to obtain the lowest pricing from suppliers who have agreed to the commonwealth's terms and conditions. This means you get the best pricing on terms that protect you. It's that simple.

Ever heard this before: "We help you buy the lowest priced electricity and it won't cost you anything"?

The truth: No one does anything for free. There are always charges, which are hidden in the cost of your electricity, based on a relationship between the broker and electricity supplier. With PSFEI, you'll receive full price transparency at a highly competitive rate!

The solution: Join other COSTARS members and let PSFEI and DGS-BOP work for you!

What steps should you take to initiate the COSTARS/PSFEI electric procurement services:

Current COSTARS Members

For more information contact:

Scott Harford
Energy Management
Consultant
Penn State Facilities
Engineering Institute
sharford@engr.psu.edu
814-863-2090

Ready to enroll in the program?
Download the enrollment form
at www.fe.i.psu.edu and follow
instructions.

Interested in becoming a COSTARS Member?

Contact:
COSTARS Marketing Manager
1-866-768-7827
GS-PACostars@pa.gov

Further information on the
COSTARS Program is
available by visiting the
COSTARS website at
www.costars.state.pa.us.



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COSTARS Member and Supplier Webinars



Are you a COSTARS member who's not sure about how to use the COSTARS website to search contracts, find suppliers, or update your membership profile?

Are you a supplier who needs help with reporting sales, paying the administrative fee, or accessing the COSTARS members list?

If so, we have the answer for you! The COSTARS team is proud to present COSTARS Member and Supplier Quarterly Webinars to help you with all the COSTARS questions you may have.

Our first Member Webinar will be held on Tuesday, May 2 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and will focus on searching COSTARS-exclusive and statewide COSTARS-participating contracts.

If you are interested in participating in this Webinar, please RSVP by Monday, April 17 at our toll-free number 1-866-768-7827 or send us an email to GS-PACostars@pa.gov.

Stay tuned for information about future Webinars including our first Supplier Webinar, "How to Report Sales."

COSTARS Supplier Reminders

- ☞ Registering as a vendor with the Commonwealth of PA does not imply you are an awarded COSTARS supplier. To become a COSTARS supplier, you must submit a bid for the respective COSTARS-exclusive contract that applies to your business. Please visit the COSTARS website at www.costars.state.pa.us, then from the Businesses tab at the top of the page, select the Materials & Services Procurement/COSTARS Supplier Information/Bidding Opportunities link. Once your business has been approved and the administrative fee has been paid, it is recognized as an awarded COSTARS supplier.
- ☞ If you update your vendor record in the Administrator/Bidder section of the PA Supplier Portal, you must also update your vendor data (contract) in the COSTARS system by selecting the Enterprise Applications/COSTARS links in the portal. **Please note:** You must also contact your commodity specialist to update your Bid Item Workbook. Additionally, suppliers should contact their commodity specialist to update vendor name, business ownership, or FEIN changes.
- ☞ If suppliers offer the "cost plus" pricing standard, they must be willing to provide a cost sheet, if asked, to the purchaser (member) or to COSTARS administrators.
- ☞ If suppliers provide a custom price list or manufacturer's price list, they must honor the pricing on that list, so it's very important to update the price list on a yearly basis when renewing. If a manufacturer updates their base price list during the suppliers' contract year, the supplier may, **upon notifying COSTARS**, reflect the new price list, but cannot change their discount.



COSTARS On The Road

COSTARS Marketing Managers make it their mission to spread the message about the COSTARS Program, recruit new members and suppliers, and provide training about the program. Marketing Managers Bruce Beardsley, Kim Bullivant and Claire Osborne travel throughout the commonwealth speaking at conferences, workshops and seminars sponsored by associations, suppliers, universities, legislators, chambers of commerce and others.

Recent Events

- March 8** Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Norristown
- March 14** County Commissioners Association of PA IT Quarterly Meeting Harrisburg
- March 16** Dauphin County COG Lykens
- March 21** DCED Grants Conference State College
- March 21-24** PASBO Annual Conference Pittsburgh
- March 30** SEDA-COG Supplier Workshop Harrisburg

Upcoming Events

- April 12** Watson Diesel Open House for Members Williamsport
- April 13** SEPTAC/Lehigh University - Doing Business With the Commonwealth Seminar Bethlehem
- April 20** Upper Dauphin COG Lykens
- April 23-25** PSATS Annual Conference - Hershey
- April 25** Government Finance Officers of PA State College
- April 27** DBIA Liberty Northeast Region 2017 Annual Conference - Hershey
- May 7-8** PA Boroughs Association Annual Conference Hershey
- May 12** Representative Rothman Presentation Camp Hill
- May 18** Oil Region COG Oil City
- May 18** Representative Dush Member Event Jefferson County
- May 19** PASBO Northwest Facilities Managers Meeting Erie
- May 25** Prospective Supplier Workshop Slippery Rock

To submit a request for a COSTARS representative to speak or conduct a training session for members or suppliers at an upcoming event, please contact Bruce Beardsley at 717-214-3432, email: bbeardsley@pa.gov; Kim Bullivant at 717-346-2678, email: kbullivant@pa.gov; or Claire Osborne at 717-346-3838, email: cosborne@pa.gov. The COSTARS Marketing Team's Calendar of Events is also available on the COSTARS website on the [COSTARS Program Resources](#) page.



Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to begin receiving COSTARS updates! Remember, this does not replace important updates we send to you via email, so please be sure to maintain your member and supplier information in the COSTARS system.

Visit our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Costars-PA-Department-of-General-Services/904261462952351?ref=hl>

Visit our Twitter page at:

<https://twitter.com/COSTARSNews>.

COSTARS Connection

Curt Topper - Secretary, Department of General Services
Ken Hess - Deputy Secretary for Procurement
Jenny Doherty - Chief Procurement Officer
Dawn Eshenour - Chief, Supplier Dev. & Support Div.
Bruce Beardsley - Marketing Manager
Kim Bullivant - Marketing Manager
Claire Osborne - Marketing Manager

Further information on the COSTARS program is available by phone at 1-866-768-7827 or by visiting the [COSTARS](#) website at www.costars.state.pa.us.

Published by the Pennsylvania Department of General Services
Editor: Bruce Beardsley

At DGS, our mission is to help government operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely - delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians.

