

# COSTARS™ CONNECTION



The Commonwealth's Cooperative Purchasing Program



## Grant Writing for Newbies

Jarod Ganci, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Writing grant proposals can be a daunting task for those who are new to the process. However, with the right tools and tips, anyone can learn how to write successful grant proposals for funding in Pennsylvania. First and foremost, it's important to thoroughly research potential funding

opportunities and make sure your organization or project aligns with the grant guidelines and requirements. This will save time and effort in the long run and increase the chances of your proposal being accepted.

Once you've identified potential funding sources, it's time to start writing your proposal. The most important thing to remember is to be clear, concise, and persuasive in your writing. Start by introducing your organization and outlining the need for funding, then define the specific project or program you're seeking funding for. Be sure to include details about how the funding will be used and the expected outcomes of the project. One important tip is to include specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goals in your proposal. This will show the funding organization that you have a well-defined plan for how the funding will be used and what the expected results are.

It's also essential to include a budget in your proposal, outlining all the costs associated with the project or program. Be sure to include both direct and indirect costs and explain how you arrived at the numbers in your budget. You can use COSTARS estimated commodity costs as a reference when adding your budget into the grant proposal. Another important aspect of grant writing is building relationships with potential funders. This can include attending networking events, reaching out to funding organizations to learn more about their priorities and interests, and collaborating with other organizations on joint proposals. Building these relationships can increase the chances of your proposal being accepted and can also provide valuable feedback and support throughout the grant writing process.

In addition to the tips mentioned above, there are a few other things to keep in mind when writing grant proposals for funding in Pennsylvania. One is to follow the specific guidelines and formatting requirements of each funding organization. This may include things like word count limits, requirements around fonts and margins, and required information to include in your proposal. Another thing to consider is the competition for funding. In Pennsylvania, as in other states, there is often a lot of competition for grant funds. To compete with other organizations for grant funding, it is important to thoroughly research available grant opportunities and carefully tailor your organization's proposal to the specific requirements and goals of the grant. It is also crucial to highlight the unique strengths and capabilities of your organization, as well as the potential impact of the funded project. Additionally, building relationships with potential funders and highlighting any past successes or help to establish your organization's credibility and increase its chances of securing grant funding. Finally, be sure to carefully follow all application instructions and submit your proposal by the specified deadline.



See Page 5 for a list of resources that may be helpful as you strategize your grant options for 2023.



## New Things You'll See in '23!

With each new year, the COSTARS team provides announcements on the program's evolution. As 2023 marks the transition to a new administration, the Bureau of Procurement (BOP) at the Department of General Services (DGS) will likely experience a transformation in processes, policies and program offerings throughout the new year.

We want to share the changes we know of, as of "press time," that can impact our program participants such as administration changes, new contracts available to COSTARS members, and new COSTARS resources updates.

Be sure to read each quarter's issue of the COSTARS Connection to receive the latest updates as the administration's transition progresses.

## New Contracts Available

- 6100055625 - Two-Way Radio Equipment & Services.
- 4400024955 - Portable Toilets, Handwashing Equipment, and Septic Waste Removal.
- 4400026637 - Municipal Waste Services ITQ.
- 4400027046 Fire Extinguishers, Maintenance & Repair Services ITQ (coming in April).

## Contract Updates

- The contract scope of COSTARS-8 Maintenance, Repair & Operation has been expanded to include the product category of \*Robotic Tools, Parts and Accessories as well as the use of these items within the Stand-Alone Service offering of Roof Inspection.

\*(such as unmanned aerial vehicles/systems [UAV/UAS], remote operated underwater vehicles [ROV], and ground robotics. The COSTARS supplier of these products must be in compliance with local statutory and regulatory provisions, including FAA regulations.)

# 2023

## New Resources

- 2023 Webinar Trainings are Available for Registration via the [COSTARS Calendar of Events](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS) at [www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS) > Program Resources.
- New and Improved COSTARS Connection Newsletter.

## Staff Updates

- Reggie McNeil - Acting Secretary
- Brian Esposito - Chief Procurement Officer.
- Stephanie Sun - COSTARS Marketing Manager.

Learn more about us in the Spring edition of COSTARS Connection!

## DGS and Procurated Expanding Partnership

The Department of General Services (DGS), Bureau of Procurement (BOP) has expanded our efforts with our vendor evaluation partner, [Procurated](#) by entering into a new agreement which runs through December 2025. Inspired by sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor, Procurated is a supplier ratings and review site for public procurement. COSTARS members have been using this tool since 2019. With our new partnership, purchasing decision-makers within commonwealth agencies can now benefit, just like COSTARS members, from more than 50,000 supplier reviews submitted, on the Procurated site, by public procurement professionals nationwide.

Additionally, NASPO has recently partnered with Procurated to understand how its suppliers are performing on their contracts. The [press release](#) providing details of their new partnership is available by visiting:

[https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/naspo-valuepoint-announces-pioneering-procurated-pilot-301631292.html?tc=eml\\_cleartime](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/naspo-valuepoint-announces-pioneering-procurated-pilot-301631292.html?tc=eml_cleartime).

We are excited to continue this partnership with Procurated among all commonwealth state and local governments. If you have questions or would like to connect with the Procurated community team, you can reach them directly at [community@procurated.com](mailto:community@procurated.com).

## PROCURATED

### Top Three Benefits of the DGS/Procurated Partnership ...

1. Procurated makes it easier to find the best suppliers.
2. Procurated improves and informs contract negotiations.
3. Procurated provides insight for supplier performance management.

## Enrollment for the 2023-2024 Sodium Chloride Contract Closing Soon!

Earlier this month, COSTARS members received an email regarding the enrollment period to register for participation in the 2023-2024 Sodium Chloride Contract.

If you have not yet enrolled for the 2023-2024 contract, **you have until March 15, 2023 to submit your participation agreement.** Participation in this contract is not mandatory, so a new agreement must be submitted each year for inclusion in the next contract.

It is important to note that the Salt Contract Participation Agreement is legally binding. However, the Sodium Chloride (Road Salt) contract allows for flexibility, requiring the member to buy only 60 percent of the total tonnage listed on the signed agreement in case of a light winter while allowing the purchase of 140 percent of their established volume at contract pricing during a severe winter. A member can review and/or edit their Participation Agreement anytime up to the enrollment deadline. A summary of the awarded contract(s) will be posted to the COSTARS Members Area, within the Newsflash section, in August.

If you intend to participate in the 2023-2024 contract, but miss the enrollment deadline, you can request a late enrollment form by emailing [GS-PACostars@pa.gov](mailto:GS-PACostars@pa.gov). COSTARS submits late requests to the supplier awarded the county in which the requesting organization resides. *It is at the supplier's discretion as to whether they accept the late agreement.*



### Follow the steps below to submit the Agreement form:

- Go to [www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS).
- Select the Member Information button.
- Select the Members Area button.
- Review the Participation Guidelines of the Statewide Contract for Sodium Chloride (Road Salt) found in the Newsflash section on the right-hand side of the page.
- At the top, center of the page, select the orange link "SALT REQUEST SUBMISSION IS OPEN FOR 2023 SEASON. CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT THE REQUEST."
- In the spaces provided, enter the User ID and Password.
- Select the Login button.
- If you are associated with more than one COSTARS membership account, use the dropdown to select the associated member organization from the Existing COSTARS Membership list. Click Complete Salt Participation button.
- Fill in the blank spaces of the Agreement with the appropriate information.
- At the bottom of the page, select the SUBMIT button.

She's back and in a new role!



Priscilla Bills is returning to the COSTARS Program as a Commodity Specialist. She has been a veteran of the program, as a Management Technician, and she is excited to return to the team. In October of 2021, she exited the team for a promotion to provide support to the Bureau of Procurement's Deputy Secretary and the Chief Procurement Officer. When asked about her decision to return to the program, Priscilla said she was drawn by the familiar office culture and her desire to learn more about the role of a Commodity Specialist within COSTARS contracting process. She will manage contracts:

COSTARS-21 Pest Control  
COSTARS-29 Grounds Keeping Services/Supplies  
COSTARS -33 "Streetscape"  
COSTARS-40 Security & Surveillance...  
COSTARS-42 Electronic Monitoring...

She is particularly excited about the opportunity to learn the new electronic bidding system. When she left the program, the bidding process was not yet electronic, so she is looking forward to seeing a paperless process. Priscilla is also looking forward to the treats her coworker Kathy Garman shares as they are a highlight of the workday. Priscilla is eager to return to the COSTARS program and continue to learn and grow in her new role as a Commodity Specialist. We are confident that she will excel in this position and make a valuable contribution to the team. Congratulations on your promotion, Priscilla, and COSTARS is so happy to have you back!

### NEWSFLASH A WEALTH OF RESOURCES

The Newsflash section within the Members Area is your go-to library of helpful resources.

#### **Road Salt Resources Available in Newsflash:**

- The current Sodium Chloride contract is always available here.
- A NEW tracking template to help strategize future agreement quantities.

To view more member resources in Newsflash, visit [www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS) > Member Information > Members Area

## Winter Fleet Prep

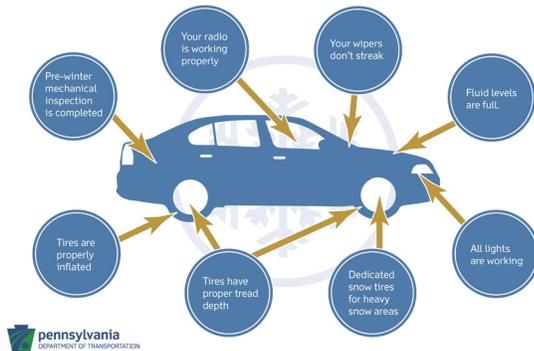
Felicia Campbell, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Whether your organization is responsible for maintaining the safety of roadways or not, if you support a fleet, the focus on winter safety of these vehicles and passengers is just as important as the safety of the roads they travel.

The [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#) (PennDOT) provides Pennsylvanian's with informative resources that will be useful prior to hitting the road. One section in their [Travel in PA](#) site is specific to winter topics. Though much of the information is geared to the general population, their [Winter Preparation](#) content should be considered best practices in a fleet manager's winter maintenance process.

### Getting Your Vehicle Ready for Winter

Motorists should ensure that...



The key to smooth winter travel is to prepare the vehicle for unexpected conditions. PennDOT recommends the following:

- Fill 'er up! Maintain full fluid levels.
- Streaky wiper blades? Consider winter blades.
- Kill the chill. Ensure the heater and defroster work.
- Breaking News! Check radio and speakers to receive weather and traffic reports.
- Don't be a paddler! Make sure all lights are working.
- "Kick the tires" to check inflation levels and treads.

### Ensure operators and passengers are prepared in the event of winter related incidents by including a winter emergency kit in fleet vehicles.

- Flashlight and batteries.
- Battery-operated radio.
- Jumper cables.
- Cell phone and charger.
- Snow shovel.
- Matches and candles.
- First aid supplies.
- Extra warm clothing and gloves.
- Blanket.
- Ice Scraper.
- Sand.
- Bottled water.
- Non-perishable food.

For more information, visit [www.penndot.pa.gov](http://www.penndot.pa.gov).

### EMERGENCY TRAVEL KIT...DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!



Also remember to include warm clothing and gloves, blanket, ice scraper, sand, non-perishable food and anything else you may need to accommodate family traveling with you (special medication, baby supplies, pet food, etc.).

pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



## IT IS TIME TO UPDATE YOUR MEMBER PROFILE

An online step-by step training on how to [update a member profile](#) is available at

<https://help.myworkplace.pa.gov/gm/folder-1.11.112790?originalContext=1.11.97211>.

## Green Gov News

The GreenGov council of Pennsylvania, a state-level initiative aimed at promoting sustainability and environmental conservation, has been making strides in its efforts to reduce the state's carbon footprint.

Established in 2021, the council is made up of representatives from various state agencies and departments, as well as environmental organizations and industry experts. The group works together to develop and implement policies and programs that support sustainability, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect natural resources.

One of the council's key accomplishments to date has been the launch of a statewide recycling program. The program, which was implemented in 2022, has already diverted thousands of tons of waste from landfills and reduced the state's overall carbon emissions.

In addition to the recycling program, the GreenGov council has also worked to increase the use of renewable energy sources in the state. This has included the development of new wind and solar energy projects, as well as the expansion of existing ones. As a result, Pennsylvania's reliance on fossil fuels has decreased, and the state has seen a significant increase in its clean energy production.

The council has also focused on improving the energy efficiency of state buildings and facilities. Through retrofitting and other measures, the council has helped to reduce energy consumption in state buildings by an impressive 20 percent.

The GreenGov council's efforts have been met with widespread support and praise from residents, businesses, and lawmakers alike. Governor Wolf, who established the council, has praised its work, stating that it has made a "significant contribution to our efforts to build a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly future for the state of Pennsylvania."

Overall, the GreenGov council of Pennsylvania has demonstrated that through collaboration and innovative thinking, it is possible to make meaningful progress in the fight against climate change. As the council continues its work, it is sure to be an important and valuable asset to the state's efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainability.

## Butter, Sculpting Renewable Energy

You may have heard the "Rooted in Progress" butter sculpture displayed at the 2023 PA Farm Show is made of more than 1,000 pounds of butter.

But(ter), did you know when the Farm Show closed, the emulsion was moved to a methane digester at Reinford Farms in Juniata County to be converted into renewable energy?

That's news worth spreading!

## GRANT WRITING



### State Agencies and Commissions providing grants and resources in Pennsylvania:

- [Department of Community and Economic Development.](#)
- [Department of Environmental Protection.](#)
- [Department of Conservation & Natural Resources.](#)
- [Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.](#)
- [Department of Education.](#)
- [Department of Labor & Industry \(PennSERVE\).](#)
- [PennDOT.](#)
- [PEMA.](#)
- [Office of the State Fire Commissioner.](#)
- [Commission on Crime and Delinquency.](#)
- [PA Historical & Museum Commission.](#)

### Pennsylvania Associations providing grant writing resources and assistance:

- [County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.](#)
- [Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors.](#)
- [Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs.](#)
- [Pennsylvania Municipal League.](#)

### Other resources are available through a quick internet search or word-of-mouth:

- Search local non-profit organizations, such as foundations and charitable organizations and view their websites for grants that support specific causes or types of projects.
- Search philanthropic businesses with storefronts in your area. Many well-known companies support the communities, through grant offerings, where they do business.
- Search for grant writing services or consultants to provide you with expert advice and guidance on writing successful grant proposals or to review and edit your proposal to help you to make improvements.
- Talk to other organizations like yours to ask for recommendations by those who have successfully secured grants in the past.

Carefully research and compare different resources to find the ones that will be the most helpful for your specific needs and goals.

**"Don't judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds you plant."**

*~Robert Louis Stevenson*

## November

**Butler Eagle** - the Cranberry Board of Supervisors approved the purchase of two John Deere 1585 mowers from West Central Equipment. Township supervisor, John Skorupan, acknowledged that though the price sounds high, the mowers typically last 20 to 25 years and by purchasing through COSTARS, they were able to save money.

**The Times Leader** - The Wilkes-Barre Area School Board approved an agreement with NRG Control North to upgrade JACE controllers at four separate school buildings. The purchases are being made through COSTARS, which allows school districts to piggy-back onto contract agreements made by the state to save money.

**The Times Leader** - The Dallas School Board accepted a proposal from Keystone Sports Construction for supply and installation of Novacrylic color coat system for six tennis courts and one recreational sports facility through the supplier's COSTARS-participating, statewide contract.

**The Times Leader** - East Franklin Township Supervisors unanimously voted to purchase two 2023 Ford F600 gasoline chassis 4x4 SD regular cab 145-inch WB DRW XL (F6L) from FMC Dealer/Ford through the COSTARS program.

## December

**LPN** - The Terre Hill Borough Council approved the purchase of a Grasshopper Mower Model 725DT from Ag Industrial, New Holland, under Pennsylvania's COSTARS program.

**Republican Herald** - Butler Township supervisors voted to purchase a 2023 Ford F-600 from Sunbury Motors through COSTARS, a program that leverages procurement contracts established by the PA Department of General Services and utilizes competitive pricing strategies to achieve the best value for member organizations.



## January

**LNP** - Earl Township supervisors has approved the purchase of a sound system through COSTARS, to be installed by TCW-GAV in Lancaster.

### We Hear You

As participants in the COSTARS Program, supporting your needs is a priority for our team. We understand that staying up to date on contract information and processes can be important to the smooth operation of your business, and we want to make it as easy as possible for you to access the resources you need.

For our members, please remember that the current salt contract can be found under the Newsflash section on the right side of Members Area home page. All salt orders should be placed directly with the supplier awarded the county in which the ordering organization resides. COSTARS does not process salt orders. Additionally, all active COSTARS-exclusive contracts can be located by visiting [www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS) > Member Information > Members Area. The "Search Contracts" link is located on the left side of the Members Area. Statewide, COSTARS-participating contracts can be found by searching PA eMarketplace at <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/BidContracts.aspx>.

For our suppliers, when it comes time to renew your contract, payment instructions can be found on page 2 of the remittance email that is sent out. If you need assistance with the PA Supplier Portal, which is controlled and operated by the Office of the Budget, you can utilize the email address located under the User and Password section of the Log In page.

We value your participation in the COSTARS Cooperative Purchasing Program and want to make sure you have the resources you need to succeed. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [GS-PaCostars@pa.gov](mailto:GS-PaCostars@pa.gov).



## From the Office of the Budget - PA Supplier Portal

The PA Supplier Portal is a vendor self-managed site maintained by registered, vendor administrative users. It is the administrative users' responsibility to maintain organizational information, including:

- 1) Creating additional users--bidders or administrative users.
- 2) Inputting a bank account for direct deposit payments.
- 3) Maintaining addresses--default remit-to address, ordering addresses, and shipping addresses.

All users accessing the PA Supplier Portal must have their own unique User ID. Log in information should never be shared. All email addresses should be personally identifiable, business-specific, and only accessible by the individual user.



If a User ID is already taken, the system will provide the error message: "User ID is not available." Simply select a different User ID and resubmit.

Step-by-step instructions and additional information can be located at [www.budget.pa.gov](http://www.budget.pa.gov) > SERVICES > FOR VENDORS > PA Supplier Portal Admin Support.

Send questions to [RA-PSCSRMPORTAL@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PSCSRMPORTAL@pa.gov).  
**For quickest service, provide:**

- 1) Tax ID.
- 2) Vendor Number.
- 3) User ID--if you are the administrative user.

*COSTARS questions, such as paying the administrative fee or sales reporting, should be sent to [RA-PACOSTARS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PACOSTARS@pa.gov).*



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|-------------|--|
| February 7  | COSTARS Webinar: Your Portal to Local Public Procurement Sales (new supplier presentation) |
| March 14    | COSTARS Webinar: Simplified Procurement (new member presentation)                          |
| April 4     | COSTARS Webinar: Search Contracts Like a Pro! (member presentation)                        |
| April 24-27 | Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) Annual Conference           |
| May 4       | Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Southwestern PA Commission                  |
| May 9       | COSTARS Webinar: Using Procurated Ratings and Reviews in Your Sales Strategy               |
| June 4      | PA State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) Annual Conference & Exhibition                     |
| June 8      | Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Southwestern PA Commission                  |

Do you want COSTARS to present at your upcoming event? Contact COSTARS at 1-866-768-7827 or email [GS-PaCostars@pa.gov](mailto:GS-PaCostars@pa.gov).

View our full event calendar at [www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS](http://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS) > Program Resources.

### COSTARS™ CONNECTION

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