Greetings from WANIGP!

Greetings Members!

Summer was off to a hot start and so was WA State NIGP Chapter! The first half of the year was jam-packed with a diverse offering of benefits for our members. We had our Annual Meeting, followed-up by Procurement Summit/Annual Reverse Trade Show and several Class offerings along the way. The Reverse Trade Show had record breaking attendance and the Chapter would like to extend a special note of appreciation to Hector Meneses for coordinating this effort. In addition, thank you to the Events Committee for helping to

Congrats! Mark Little, 2018 Manager of the Year and Maija Lampinen, 2018 Buyer of the Year. After reviewing all of the applications, Mark and Maija are truly making a difference in the Procurement profession and within our Chapter!

WA State Chapter applauds the hard work of Victor Leamer and Sarah Yeckley for their efforts as Co-Committee Chairs for the Newsletter! Thank You for stepping up to help bring “Newsletters” back to the membership.

Thank you! Ginny Justiniano and Maija Lampinen for coordinating our 2nd Annual Mariner Game Event on Saturday, July27th! If you missed this one, c’mon out next time, it’s always a fun event!

WA State Chapter is very fortunate to have knowledgeable members to provide leadership, instruction and encouragement at our events. Their contributions at the various offerings this year and to our profession are greatly appreciated. Our next event will be host by City of Bellevue this September!

Hope you all had a SAFE and FUN Summer!

Rena Jackson, President

Looking for an opportunity for a scholarship?

The Washington Chapter of NIGP not only offers training opportunities to members, we encourage members to contribute to the Chapter by being involved in Committees and education. The Scholarship program provides members opportunities to apply for funding to attend educational events that their organization may not be able to provide. In an effort to encourage members to contribute to the Chapter, and provide them an avenue to share their procurement wisdom, the Scholarship Committee offered a challenge; write an article promoting the procurement profession. The reward - an opportunity to attend NIGP National Forum.

Much like the procurement process, the Committee established the guidelines, sought responses, and evaluated those received. The evaluation process is tough as several great articles are submitted. The Committee took into consideration the following criteria during the evaluation process:

- Is the author responsive (on-time, appropriate signatures, and in good standing with the Washington Chapter).
- Is the article encouraging and promotes the procurement profession.
- Is the article well written and free of errors.
- Is the article presented well, clear and concise.

Following the tabulation of scores the Committee announces the winner!

Who received scholarships to Forum?

See the next pages for the members and their winning submissions!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CPPB PREP—TUMWATER
Sep 12–13, 2019

FUNDAMENTALS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT—SEATTLE
Sep 26–27, 2019

WANIGP FALL CONFERENCE—BELLEVUE
Oct 4, 2019

PRACTICAL SPECIFICATION WRITING—SPOKANE
Oct 7, 2019
Cheers,
to share. Thank you for reaching out. Let me know if you want any other information from me and I’m happy to share. Thank you for reaching out!

Cheers, Ashley

WANIGP 2019 Forum Scholarship Winner
Ashley Blowers
Department of Agriculture

“I am very excited to have been awarded a scholarship to attend this year’s forum because frankly, my agency does not have the training budget to send me to many trainings. This training alone would have exceeded my annual training budget so you can imagine how excited I was to find out there were scholarships being offered!!!

In order to apply for the scholarship, I was asked to write an essay demonstrating an avid interest in a career in government procurement, a copy of my current resume, and a recommendation letter from a leader at my organization. Attached is a copy of the essay submitted in case you’d like to view it or use any excerpts from it.

I received an email in mid-April to notify me that after several rounds of review, I had been selected out of nearly 70 applicants for a 2019 NIGP Forum Young and New Professional Scholarship. Since then my acting role as the Contracts and Procurement Manager for the Washington State Department has become permanent so I really feel like things are falling into place for me with all of the opportunity I’ve been afforded over these past 5 years and especially as of recently.

I am getting more excited by the day to attend the forum in Austin. I’ve never been to Austin before so that in itself is very exciting. I absolutely love to learn new things so my goal is to gain new knowledge and friendships at the forum.

Let me know if you want any other information from me and I’m happy to share. Thank you for reaching out!

Cheers, Ashley

After completing my Bachelors of Science studies in Operations and Supply Chain Management, with a minor in Economics at Central Washington University, I began my career working in the private third party logistics industry as a contracts manager. At the time I didn’t consider working in the government arena because the program I studied in didn’t focus on helping students work for the government. All opportunities focused me toward the private sector.

I worked in the private sector as a contracts manager for approximately a year and a half, but never felt at home in the company I was working for. The contracts I managed had little profit margin left to be squeezed out of the vendors, and I felt horrible having to negotiate them down even further to meet my quotas. I quit my job and took a step back to do other things. I told myself I would never go back to working in contracts. Ever.

During this time of my life, I traveled and worked many odd jobs. It was an eye opening experience to work in foreign countries as I was traveling. I had some great experiences, but also encountered job discrimination during that time and even got my passport stolen. It was very eye opening and I credit it for helping to build my character, as well as put my life into perspective. Upon returning from travels overseas, I realized that it might be a good idea to give contracting another shot. After all, I had given more time to studying in school than I had a career in contracting.

In early 2015, I received a call from Larry Oline, who was the Washington State Department of Agriculture Contracts & Purchasing Manager. He asked me if I was interested in coming in to work in small purchases temporarily while the agency worked to fill the role permanently. It sounded intriguing, but as I started my first day, I went in thinking this would be just that — a temporary stepping stone that was helping both WSDA and myself. I was treated great and working for Larry was enriching; he took just about every opportunity he could to teach me about contracting at WSDA.

When the opportunity arose, I decided to apply for the permanent job; the agency agreed to interview me and in the end, offered me the permanent position. I excitedly accepted the permanent job offer and little did I know at the time, that was when the learning opportunities skyrocketed.

Larry continued to get me involved in the contracting process, and guided me through my first formal procurements for low risk goods above our direct buy threshold of $10,000. When he retired in late 2015, his successor, Kevin Greene, took me under his wing right where Larry had left off. Kevin gave me the freedom and flexibility to continue shaping the position as the needs of the agency directed and got me even more involved in the contracting process. He supported me in developing new trainings to share across the agency to effectively teach people to “fish” for themselves. Having the support to share resources with the divisions to support their own small purchasing needs internally served to free up more of my time. This allowed me to focus on other agency-wide matters, such as policies, procedures, and learning more about contracts both formally and informally.

I began splitting my time very evenly between small purchases activities and contracts. Kevin built on the knowledge Larry had taught me and also supported me by allowing me to attend a number of trainings. He has provided me the knowledge to be successful, the freedom to learn the concepts, and is always there for support when I have needed guidance.

In December 2018, I got a colossal opportunity when Kevin accepted a position as Acting Chief Technology Officer at the agency and I was offered the Acting Contracts & Procurement Manager role. With the new assignment, I dove headfirst into everything contracts. For a short time, I was the only employee within the contracts and procurement group at the agency – supporting both small purchases and contracts singlehandedly without as much as a hiccup. Luckily for my sanity, I now have some part time help.

I truly enjoy the contracts work I now do. I help support a group of about 1,000 employees and because we are such a small agency, all contracts flow through our group. The Washington State Department of Agriculture works mostly in the scientific research arena and I am proud to support the needs of such a diverse agency that does so many great things for the citizens of Washington State.

The best part is I never know what to expect. I have run solicitations for half a million dollar pieces of laboratory equipment needed for specialized pesticide testing on one day and turned around to work on a project to hire a company for aerial pesticide applications the next. I am learning about the process to negotiate with unions on updating job duties for union members. I help solve financial conundrums and often help ensure suppliers get paid for successful completion on a contracting project. It is exhilarating to work in such a varied environment and support such a diverse group of staff doing great things for the State of Washington. I come to work each day excited about the prospects of the day to come.

In addition to loving my job in the government procurement arena, I am a lifelong learner. I jump at every training opportunity I come across; having even attended NIGP trainings available via grants through U.S. Communities when my agency didn’t have the funds available to send me for formal training. I am continually on the lookout for new opportunities that will not only help me advance my career, but be the best contract manager and steward of state funds I can possibly be.

I am about 40 hours shy of being eligible to sit for the NIGP CPPB Certification and the opportunity to attend the 2019 NIGP Expo would help me get that much closer to qualifying to sit for the certification exam. In addition, I am excited at the mere opportunity to be in a building with so many of the country’s best and brightest in government contracts; the chance to network and learn best practices from peers in the trade would be an opportunity unlike any other I’ve been provided in my professional career. Please consider me for a scholarship for the 2019 NIGP Forum in Austin, Texas.
Did you know that many public procurement organizations are losing the procurement value game? Sadly, these organizations are willing to continue to do business as usual. They have not set expectations for the future, and unfortunately, have taken a complacent attitude about whether procurement adds value to their entity.

During my 35 years in procurement, I have observed what it takes to win the game. The purpose of this article is to share some thoughts on steps you can take to win the procurement value game.

A Sad Story

Once upon a time, at an NIGP Forum in St. Louis, I met the Procurement Director of a medium-sized city in the Midwest. I’ll refer to him as Mr. Ames. Later, we were both assigned to an NIGP writing team. Our task was to write a paper on the importance of transparency in procurement. Over the next several months of working with Mr. Ames, I discovered he was literally a human “dictionary” of procurement information. He was also a very talented writer. Here’s where this story takes a sad turn. After the paper was written and accepted by NIGP, the team held a final teleconference to celebrate our efforts. During the call, Mr. Ames announced he was retiring, but his boss, the City Manager, had decided not to replace him. Instead his department would be placed under the Finance Director. The City Manager’s explanation for this was because “all they do is process POs”. Sad as this story may be, and considering how smart this guy appeared to be, clearly Mr. Ames’ department lost the procurement value game. This is not a story about what happened – this department did not demonstrate the value of procurement to senior leadership.

Leading is Winning

The Procurement Director, Mr. Ames, had failed to lead his team to victory. This story motivated me to help other procurement professionals win the procurement value game. Winning the game starts with leadership. Someone, not necessarily the boss or director, needs to lead and inspire their co-workers to take the steps needed to demonstrate the value of procurement.

How Do You Add Value?

Let’s start with the fact that we have something no other department has, namely procurement authority. Specifically, we have the power to award contracts and make purchases. Procurement chooses the sourcing methods, conducts negotiations, develops contracts, administers contracts and conducts competitive acquisitions while being fair, transparent, ethical and strategic. Speaking of strategic, here is a winning quote: “The strategic value of procurement is realized when an organization shifts its focus from reactive, transactional purchases to proactive, value-based procurement actions.” Proactive procurement professionals are winning the procurement value game. Reactive procurement people are not (“all they do is process POs”).

Building a Winning Game Plan

Your game plan starts and ends with processes. It requires the collection of data and analysis. It takes forward thinking. Winners set goals and use benchmarks. Let’s break down the game plan…

Understand and document how work happens. Review all of your procurement processes and procedures. Ask this question about each one: Is it LEAN? In other words, is it efficient and effective? Are there any wastes of time, people, other resources? Are they customer friendly? Can they be improved? Write down (document) your processes and procedures. Update your improvements and changes. Involve your stakeholders and adjust to meet their needs. Document!

Data. Identify what data you already use or have. What other data should you mine? I suggest identifying what data you already have available before attempting to collect data that has yet to be captured in some report or system. Here are some examples of purchasing related data topics: spend information, requisitions, purchase orders, contracts, competitive bid and quote results, Pcard data, cost of operations, value of services provided, processing times for purchase orders, times for conducting bids or RFPs, data related to warehouses and stock programs, and savings achieved. For a more complete list of procurement metrics you can refer to Element 1.3 of the NIGP Global Best Practice on performance metrics, which is a fairly comprehensive list. Usually there is no magic wand you can wave to get usable data. It will take planning, time and persistence to identify and gather data. In addition, once you start collecting data, you must consistently gather new data on a regular basis. A financial system is a great place to start a data mining effort. The simplest approach to collecting data is to use Excel spreadsheets. Data collection is time consuming work and most of us cannot afford the luxury of hiring a consultant to collect data. Consider hiring temporary help or using a college intern to collect and input data.
I think many procurement offices and departments could be winners if they knew how to demonstrate the value of procurement.”

Steve Demel, CPPO

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**Analysis.** Some data stands on its own, for example, the amount of $ spent on something. However, it is likely you will need to analyze the data in order to present it. Cost analysis is a core activity of procurement. Here are some cost related topics procurement may encounter:

- **What are the fixed and variable costs?**
- **What is the time value of money (inflation, discounts)?**
- **How does cost behave over time (consistent, sporadic, seasonal)?**
- **What are the cost benefits of alternatives (lease versus buy)?**
- **What calculations or formulas are needed?**

Determining the costs of operations requires identification of all cost elements for that operation. For example, the cost of warehouse operations includes costs for: personnel, warehouse space (lease or own), vehicles, equipment, supplies, utilities, and other/miscellaneous.

Market analysis may be as simple as determining what something should cost before deciding to go out to bid or use a cooperative contract. Our Purchasing Department uses a market comparative analysis to compare the prices of the items we stock with what it would cost our customers to purchase these items directly. We only stock items that we can purchase below the market/retail price. This year our market analysis determined that our stock prices were 86% below those of outside sources such as Amazon, Walmart or Target. This shows senior leadership the advantage of a stock program based on buying large, bulk quantities of commonly used items. Our department also does a market comparison for the District print shop. This year’s comparison shows them to be 52% less costly than outside print sources for the same print products.

**Spend.** You should be looking at spend data for all your contracts and purchase orders. Identify the top suppliers, local/minority/women-owned business utilization, and spend by department or budget area. Sharing spend data with senior leadership lets them know how and where funds are being spent. It also is part of demonstrating procurement value. The NIGP Global Best Practice titled “Spend Analysis” discusses the use of spend analysis to make future management decisions.

**Savings.** This area is the procurement value game changer. If you are not currently measuring the ways procurement saves your organization time and money, why not? Every time our department conducts a bid, RFP or quote, we identify and track the savings achieved. There are many ways to measure savings. For bids, we simply use the difference between the average of all bid prices with the winning bid price. We track this by the month and regularly report to senior leadership how much has been saved. Last year we tracked savings of $7.4 million.

**Efficient and Forward Thinking.** If your organization has not been changing with technology during the past 10-20 years, then your procurement value is not being maximized. Technology has been bringing dramatic changes to the world of procurement. Here are some areas you should consider.

- **Transparency.** As public procurement professionals, your actions should be totally transparent. The internet has made this relatively easy. Post all bid requirements on-line and post the bid tabulations for awarded bids. Post all contracts on-line with easy public access and search capability. Have an up-to-date web site with your procurement organization’s mission, vision and goals. This is also a good place to post your organization’s code of ethics. For further information, refer to the NIGP position paper on Transparency.

- **Pcard.** According to an RPMG research study, the average cost of a purchase order is $93 (from requisition to payment) compared with the average cost of a purchase card (Pcard) purchase of $22. A robust Pcard program will dramatically reduce the number of small purchase orders and invoices processed. Pcard allow our organization to do more with less. We now process over 70% of our purchase transactions with a Pcard. As a bonus, last year we received a bankcard rebate of over $400,000.

- **e-Procurement.** “Procurement Technology helps accelerate business improvements. Technology can also increase supplier access to bid opportunities which can result in increased competition, diversity and inclusion of suppliers.” It is a fact that over 90% of you reading this are not using e-Procurement. Some of you may be posting bids on-line. Technology has made on-line tools available which will multiply the value of procurement to your organization. Cost is no longer an excuse for not using these tools. There are a number of low cost providers. We started our e-Procurement journey in 2011 using Public.Purchase.com, which is a free service for vendor registration, posting bids and receiving bids. Last year we began using a service (Bonfire) that not only does those things, but also allows you to manage and evaluate complex RFPs. Our District RFP evaluators have told us how much they love on-line evaluations compared with the old paper method. As a result of using e-Procurement tools, the number of vendors responding to our department bids has more than tripled. Plus, we have seen a significant decrease in the number of non-responsive proposals submitted.
In order to effectively implement your winning game plan, you must have goals. Winners have SMART goals: [Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely] Examples of potential procurement goals include: the annual savings achieved by competitive bids; Process improvements that save time and money, or produce better outcomes; customer service wait times; Pcard utilization; warehouse operational improvement; supply chain management outcomes; use of e-Procurement tools; and increased transparency.

Notice how things that comprise a winning game plan lead to goals that in-turn lead to measures of procurement value. Many people have difficulty with setting SMART goals, especially when it comes to setting Realistic and Timely goals. Use data analysis to help set goals and look for benchmarks and metrics used by other like procurement organizations. Always make Time a part of your goal, for example a goal may be set for achievement by a certain date, or cover a certain period of time such as an annual goal. Goals that are not Time bound tend to flounder.

**It’s a numbers game.** Setting Measurable goals means identifying exactly what defines the goal, breaking it down into Measurable elements based on solid data, over a certain period of Time. Success on goals results in winning the procurement value game.

**WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?**

Is your procurement department just processing POs? I doubt it. So, get in the game and start demonstrating the procurement value added to your organization. Adopt a winning game plan. Set meaningful goals and measure your success. You should be bragging to senior leadership about your “winning” results. This means giving them regular reports on achievements and outcomes. Every year our District Purchasing Departments provides District leadership with an annual report on what was accomplished in the past year. Then we take it one step further and tell them what our goals are for the coming year.

**Game On.** Vince Lombardi, an NFL coach from the 1960s and 70s once said: “Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.” Don’t just get in the game, play to win. Winning is achieved by proactive procurement professionals, not from reactive people who only process POs. Be the leader. Own the numbers. Be a forward thinker. Set SMART goals. Measure success. Share the results. Finally, for the true pros, the game never ends, as each year you will strive to get better, achieve more and plan for the future. As Yogi Berra once said, “If you don’t know where you are going, you’re going to end up somewhere else.” Winning the procurement value game means you not only know where you want to go, but how to get there. Game on!

- NIGP Global Best Practice ([link](#))
- NIGP Position Paper ([link](#))
- NIGP Position Paper, The Strategic Value of Procurement in Public Entities ([link](#))
- NIGP Global Best Practice ([link](#))
- NIGP Practice: Technology in Public Procurement ([link](#))
If you didn’t go to the Region 8 Conference in beautiful Sunriver, Oregon, allow me to show you what you missed, in hopes you’ll join us next year!

The conference was kicked off with an awesome NIGP Training from Darin Matthews and a Charity Fundraiser Golf Tourney. I didn’t golf because I won so much stuff last year, I was embarrassed (jk—I didn’t arrive until the next day, but I am enjoying the custom driver I won last year!). I did, however, win TWO wonderful gift baskets that were auctioned off this year!

The Opening Reception featured all 143 attendees, 35 of which attended the Young Professionals (those under 40) event and 43 first-timers!

The next morning’s kick off was given by none other than NIGP’s President, Rick Grimm. Lots of great things coming from National!

Our Keynote was Chad Hymas, touted by the Wall Street Journal as the “Most Inspirational Speaker in the World” (seriously, I just got goosebumps remembering his presentation). In 2001, at the age of 27, Chad’s life changed in an instant when a 2,000-pound bale of hay shattered his neck, leaving him a quadriplegic. But Chad’s dreams were not paralyzed that day—he has become an example of what is possible. My heart is touched forever and now my eyes are leaking again!

We then embarked on our world-class training with some of our own! Mike Purdy was there teaching about Insurance and Liability. Josh Klika: The most Intergalactic presentation on leadership was given ...hmmm? Karen Fitzthum is back – Karen Fitzthum is back! She presented on paperless purchasing and we loved it! Ginny Justiniano gave us her last and final presentation as our Region 8 Chapter Ambassador as she moves on to greater things at NIGP! Many other wonderful trainings took place as well.
That evening, we all got our “80’s gear on for the banquet, which recognized our Buyer (Miaja Lampien) and Purchasing Manager (Steve Demel) of the year!

Casino Night was a huge hit...and didn’t I tell you there would be dancing...lots of dancing? There was! Recognize anyone?

One thing is for sure...Region 8 has the best people around!
...and the BIGGEST HEARTS! We also helped raised $6000.....YES - SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS for their two charities “Grandma’s House” and “Devin’s Destiny”. WOW!!!

Grandma’s House is a non-profit home and outreach, providing emergency and transitional shelter to homeless or abused pregnant, parenting young mothers, and young mothers choosing adoption for their child for the last 20 years. They have helped several hundred young women become independent and transition out of their home. The whole while “Grandma” was telling us this story, we were watching the two young women, assuming they were in the program. Imagine our surprise when they were introduced as the DAUGHTERS of the benefactors...and they are both on their way to College this fall! Queue the tissues again!

The Washington state contingent would like to personally thank the Oregon Public Purchasing Association for all of their hard work in putting on this conference. They are already working on Spring 2020. SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

Sue Ownby
Who’s who in our zoo?
Here’s your list of WANIGP chapter officers

Rena Jackson, CPPB, CPCP
President
King County
401 Fifth Avenue, 3rd Floor
Seattle, Washington 98104
Phone: (206) 263-9385
Fax: (206) 296-7675
Rena.Jackson@kingcounty.gov

Susan Knotts CPPO, CPPB
Treasurer
Yakima City/County Purchasing
129 No. 2nd Street
Yakima, Washington 98901
Phone: (509) 575-6095
Fax: (509) 576-6394
Susan.Knotts@yakimawa.gov

Amel A. Alsalman
Membership Secretary
Washington State Patrol
8543 Armstrong Road SW
Phone: (360) 704-5452
Fax: (360) 704-5439
Amel.Alsalman@wsp.wa.gov

Jeff Peterson, CPPB
Vice-President
Intercity Transit
526 Pattison SE
Olympia, Washington 98501-2076
Phone: (360) 705-5878
Fax: (360) 754-9361
jpeterson@intercitytransit.com

Anna Vogel
Recording Secretary
City of Vancouver
415 W 6th St.
Vancouver, Washington 98660
Phone: (360) 487-8429
Fax: (360) 487-8602
anna.vogel@cityofvancouver.us

Josh Klika, CPPB
Immediate Past President
Washington State Department of Enterprise Services
1500 Jefferson St SE PO Box 41408
Olympia, Washington 98501
Phone: (360) 407-7939
josh.klika@des.wa.gov