NIGP Forum Recap
As we begin a new fall season, it's a great opportunity to recap recent successes as well as plan for and anticipate future opportunities. The recent NIGP Forum provided a great opportunity for many Virginia procurement professionals to gather with colleagues from across the nation for professional development, educational sessions, chapter leaders discussions and wonderful networking opportunities.

One of the common themes conveyed by several of the keynote speakers during the NIGP Forum was encouragement to Change your Perspective. We all face challenges, both professionally as well as personally. The message from the keynotes was to strive to view those challenges in a different light. When new initiatives are introduced, rather than thinking “that's how we've always done it…”, attendees were encouraged to take a fresh perspective. Consider alternatives. Strive to turn obstacles into opportunities. This is a relevant reminder as we all face challenges daily as we strive to ensure that our organizations receive the needed goods and services at the best value while maintaining compliance.

VAGP was recognized by NIGP for its leadership and focus on service to our members. We won the Excellence in Advocacy for Members and the Profession award. In addition, we were recognized for hosting more NIGP courses than any other chapter. VAGP strives to provide educational and professional development opportunities throughout the state on the various aspects of procurement, so it was rewarding to see that VAGP was recognized for these outstanding efforts.
NIGP also recognized newly certified individuals. In addition to those in attendance, congratulations to the following Virginia procurement professionals who recently earned their certification.

Dustin Baker, CPPB  
Stephanie Brown, CPPB  
Laura Lee Hester, CPPB  
Vinayak Kamatchi, CPPB  
Janis Hall, CPPB  
Heather Somervail, CPPB  
Erin Rauch, CPPB  
Eileen Joy Thawley, CPPB

The following Virginia agencies were also recognized throughout the NIGP Forum:

**ACHIEVEMENT OF EXCELLENCE IN PROCUREMENT (AEP)**  
- Alexandria City Public Schools  
- City of Virginia Beach  
- Department of General Services Division of Purchases and Supply  
- Fairfax County Public Schools  
- James Madison University  
- Loudoun County  
- Old Dominion University  
- Prince Williams County Public Schools  
- The George Washington University

**UPPCC AGENCY CERTIFICATION AWARD**  
- City of Virginia Beach

In addition to the awards noted above, VAGP also offers scholarships and awards. Please take the time to nominate a worthy colleague or yourself. Nominations are due September 26. As we wrap up a summer that seemed to pass much too quickly and anticipate cooler season ahead, VAGP offers multiple opportunities and events for you to participate in. The Fall Symposium in Staunton is just a few weeks away and offers professional development, networking as well as a wonderful opportunity to participate in a community service project with colleagues.

Congratulations to all the award recipients and VAGP members! This is a great year for VAGP and I am honored to represent you as your President. A huge thank you to the Board Members, committee members, volunteers, the membership, and vendor partners for everything you do to support our profession and this association. Your involvement and support is greatly appreciated!

We look forward to seeing many of you in beautiful Staunton!
## VAGP SPONSORED NIGP CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Seminar</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aspects of Public Procurement</td>
<td>Oct. 2 - 4</td>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>Patricia Wilkerson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:patricia.wilkerson@fairfaxcounty.gov">patricia.wilkerson@fairfaxcounty.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing &amp; Managing RFPs</td>
<td>Oct. 18 - 20</td>
<td>Radford</td>
<td>Kevin McDowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:dkmcdowel@radford.edu">dkmcdowel@radford.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro to Public Procurement</td>
<td>Nov. 29 - Dec. 1</td>
<td>Fairfax</td>
<td>Cindy Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cdsmith1@wmata.com">cdsmith1@wmata.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## VAGP LOW-FEE SEMINARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Seminar</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Purchasing Basics</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Lynchburg</td>
<td>Melissa Tillman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Melissa.Tillman@lynchburgva.gov">Melissa.Tillman@lynchburgva.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding, Using &amp; Understanding PPI and CPI Indexes</td>
<td>Sept 29</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Mary Zapata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mary.Zapata@abcvirginia.gov">Mary.Zapata@abcvirginia.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Public Procurement Act</td>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Harrisonburg</td>
<td>Tomek Kruszec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Tomek.Kruszec@lynchburgva.gov">Tomek.Kruszec@lynchburgva.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information or to register for a class please visit https://www.vagp.org/insidepages/meetings/
Time to Register for the 2017 VAGP Fall Symposium
This year the VAGP Fall Symposium will be held October 16-17, 2017 at the historic Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in Staunton, Virginia. The hotel is located within walking distance of the historic downtown area. In addition, the Shenandoah Valley is beautiful to see during the fall months.

The symposium theme is Information Highway – Increasing Knowledge, Efficiency and Security and will focus on technology and the impacts it has on the way procurement professionals do their jobs. We are busy putting together a dynamic program and have confirmed sessions on “Technology Procurement and the Cloud – The Era of Build Versus Buy”, “Contract Management Tool Kit”, “Cyber Security and Procurement Mistakes to Avoid” and “Tools and Methods for Protecting against Procurement Fraud”.

This year the host committee has selected “Project Grows” www.projectgrows.org as the event charity. “Project Grows” is a 10-acre, youth-oriented community farm in the rolling hills of Augusta County, Virginia. Their mission is to improve the overall health of children and youth in Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County through community farming that includes hands-on experience, nutrition education, and access to healthy food. In addition, there will be a service opportunity on Sunday, October 15, 2017 at the “Project Grows” location. More details on this service opportunity to follow.

You can register for the Fall Symposium on the VAGP web site: www.VAGP.org. The room rate is $91.00 a night and the deadline for that rate is September 21, 2017 so make your reservations now.

There are many other exciting events that you don’t want to miss, including the first-timers event, great educational opportunities, the VAGP awards lunch and a tailgate party Monday evening with a cornhole tournament and other games. Make sure to wear your favorite team jersey to the tailgate party. Where else can you get three meals, over eight contact hours, and a room full of procurement professionals sharing ideas for $99.00? See you in Staunton!
A silent auction will be held during the 2017 Fall Symposium at The Stonewall Jackson Hotel and Conference Center in beautiful Staunton, VA!! The charity auction proceeds will benefit “Project GROWS”, which helps provide hands-on, garden-based education for thousands of local youth.

“Project GROWS” is a 10-acre, youth-oriented community farm in the rolling hills of Augusta County, Virginia, on Berry Farm Road. They are a non-profit whose mission is to improve the overall health of children and youth in Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County through community farming that includes hands-on experience, nutrition education, and access to healthy food. Project GROWS teaches kids who visit the farm the process of turning a tiny seed into vegetables they can eat. To do this, they have the kids play a game that requires them to pretend to be a seed, then a sprout, and finally a mature flowering plant. They also take them through the farm to show them each step of the plant life cycle in action. For more information please visit their website at http://www.project-grows.org/.

There are a lot of creative talented VAGP members among us. The VAGP would like to reach out to our members and ask them to please consider showcasing their talents by donating hand-crafted items made by VAGP members and friends of VAGP. Contact a Silent Auction Committee member to donate for the auction: Ginger Gordon at ggordon@manassasva.gov or Richard Budaji at rbudaji@varetire.org.

There will be other fundraising going on during the Fall Symposium. There will be a 50/50 raffle and a corn-hole tournament during the host event.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT
If you are arriving on Sunday, October 15, 2017, plan on joining the VAGP Conference Advisory Committee as they will be KICKING OFF the Fall Symposium by doing a community service project for the charity. This will be the VAGP’s second time doing a community service project and is a great opportunity for our members to participate and give back to the community.

Community Service Tasks:
• harvesting and washing vegetables
• weeding and cleaning vegetable beds
• moving woodchip
• spreading compost
• organizing for the end of the season.

Project GROWS does have some supplies but if you would like to bring your own gloves, hand pruners and/or trowels it could be useful. Please wear outdoor work clothes and closed toe shoes. *Optional- water bottles, hats, pants and a rain jacket, if needed.

This event will take place on Sunday, October 15, 2017 from 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm the day before the symposium starts. If you would like to participate, please contact Ginger Gordon at ggordon@manassasva.gov. The first 30 to register will have the rewarding experience of participating in this project. I hope to see everyone there!
LeeAnne Beatty Smith, CPPB, VCA, CUPO

James Madison University (JMU) Procurement Services held their seventh SWaM Opportunities Business Fair on August 9, 2017 at their campus in Harrisonburg and it was a great success! Before the event began, JMU hosted a luncheon that offered attending vendors the opportunity to meet with JMU buyers and other JMU department representatives. 60 vendors set up displays and reported that they had great networking opportunities throughout the day. One vendor stated, “I made a lot of new contacts and received a lot of advice for my new business.” JMU Procurement Services was excited to have such wonderful feedback and such a large turnout and looks forward to holding their next SWaM Opportunities Vendor Fair in August 2019!

If you have any questions about this event please contact Caroline Dickens, JMU Procurement Services, dickencm@jmu.edu

There will be games to play and a cornhole tournament
The Champions program is rebranding!! To truly capture what this program is all about, VAGP is rebranding the Champions program and it will now be called **VAGP Ambassadors**.

We are still looking for VAGP Ambassadors that can lead Zones 1, 3, 4, 5 and 9 as well as a Co-Chair to the At-Large Member Chair who will provide guidance and consistency to the program. Each zone VAGP Ambassador will be given a list of the VAGP members in their zone to reach out to during the year.

Examples of what Ambassadors can do for their zone are:

1. Assist in finding local venues to host a local class or event;
2. Notify others in their zone of events happening both locally and at the state level;
3. Keep zone members up to date on classes or events that they may be interested in attending;
4. Reach out to non-VAGP members to encourage their membership and participation in VAGP;
5. Provide feedback to the Chair as to the needs, comments, or concerns of members in their zone.

Would you like to know more or become a VAGP Ambassador? Contact Kristy Varda @ vardak@fcpsk12.net
Statistics show that 93% of daily communication is non-verbal. Surprised? Think about the words “communication” and “verbal.” Did you immediately think about the “action of speaking”? If so, think again and try not focus independently on the human act of speaking. Relationship can be defined as the way two or more people are connected. Think about your average day. The average person communicates verbally through multiple communication channels: email, text, telephone, and social media. Instantly, I was able to identify numerous methods that make up the 7% of our verbal communication. It is shocking that such a small amount of communication actually involves the use of words. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, author of Silent Messages, found that 55% of non-verbal communication occurs by use of facial expressions, gestures, posture, etc. and 38% of non-verbal communication occurs with certain vocal elements. It is believed that non-verbal behavior is a most crucial aspect of communication.

Stay with me for a moment as I validate the importance of listening. Communication is defined as the imparting or exchanging of information. We cannot effectively communicate if we are poor listeners. Studies imply that we spend 30% speaking, 45% listening, and 16% reading. Although listening has a higher percentage than speaking, we must ask: “what do we actually retain? Most people speak at the rate of 125 words per minute and have the mental capacity to understand someone speaking at 400 words per minute. This means that while someone is speaking at this rate, our brain has the ability to focus on other thoughts and distractions and therefore it is hard to stay focused. This equates to comprehending ¼ or 25% of what you actually hear. Do you listen to respond or listen to understand? How can we improve our communication skills?

As procurement professionals it is imperative that we are able to effectively communicate. We are the first line of action for our stakeholders. Listening to your end user is just as important as listening and understanding your supplier. Garbage out will more than likely produce a dumping ground for a multitude of waste collection (waste of energy, time, and money). Communication skillsets are vital in our profession and we must take action to improve our skill. How do you prepare for important conversations or meetings? Do you research or survey your audience? Often we believe that our most important communication occurs during negotiations; however, all communication is important as it builds relationships. When we use terms such as ‘relationship management’ are we truly attempting to manage the relationship and build authentic and valued respect for one another? It is impossible to communicate when you have a party that is not willing to listen or receive what you are saying. There are numerous methods and tools to assist you in building communication skillsets. I’d like to share what I will call my ‘Top Five Tools’ for building better communication skills:

- Face the speaker and maintain eye contact (builds trust).
- Keep an open mind.
- Ask questions only to ensure understanding.
- Pay attention to what isn’t said (non-verbal cues).
- Focus on the issue and not the person.

Teamwork makes the dream work; there’s value in effective communication!
TO BOND OR NOT TO BOND - WHAT’S THE RISK?

Harry R. Smithson, Jr., CPPO, CUPO, VCCO
Assistant Director, Procurement Services
Old Dominion University

If your organization is a “public body” of the Commonwealth of Virginia (“Commonwealth”), as defined by the “Virginia Public Procurement Act” (“VPPA”), it’s almost certain that during your career as a purchasing professional you have experienced both the limitations and the flexibility that the provisions of the VPPA provides. When dealing with smaller construction contracts (this article will focus on construction project costs from $120,000 - $500,000), two (2) of the VPPA code sections that offer flexibility, and that Old Dominion University (“ODU”) frequently benefits from are (i) § 2.2-4336. “Bid bonds”, and (ii) § 2.2-4337. “Performance and payment bonds”. By allowing agencies to waive bonding requirements under § 2.2-4336 and § 2.2-4337, the Commonwealth is providing opportunities to those smaller businesses that may not have the ‘bonding capacity’ to qualify for award consideration for projects valued up to $500,000, but certainly have the capability and skills to successfully complete the project. However, if bonding is waived there’s always the question “what’s the agency’s potential risk and exposure on this project”?

The Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of Professional and Occupation Regulation (“DPOR”) is responsible for the licensing of businesses engaged in construction and construction-related services. The licenses consist of two parts, (1) the class of license (A, B, or C), which determines the monetary value of contracts/projects that may be performed, and (2) the classification/specialty, which determines what type of work is allowed. Since most construction is typically project-specific, the class of license plays an important part in the contract award since only Class A contractors can qualify for projects greater than $120,000. Additionally, through the DPOR licensing process, those same Class A licensed contractors have demonstrated the necessary relative experience, knowledge of the associated classification(s), and resources to successfully complete projects exceeding $120,000.

So what’s the risk and exposure to an agency that waives the bonding requirements? The short answer is “minimal”, as long as the agency has appropriate language included in the contract. By way of example, if during the performance period of the contract an agency decides to Terminate for Cause the contract agreement with the Contractor, the agency will typically complete the project by other means, which in some instances could mean increased project costs. However, if appropriate language is in place, and should the costs to complete the project exceed the remaining unpaid balance of the contract, including any additional costs for administrative/managerial services incurred by the agency for terminating and completing the contract, the Contractor can be required to pay the difference. And what about subcontractors; can they come after the agency if the prime Contractor fails to comply with the payment provisions of the contract? Not likely, especially given the contract agreement is written specifically by and between the agency and Contractor.

Regardless of cost, if an agency’s SOP is to require bonding for all construction-related solicitations, the agency may want to consider (i) could the requirement potentially lead to increased contract costs because smaller, qualified Class A contractors can’t meet the bonding capacity, or (ii) is the potential reward of finding that small “diamond in the rough” Class A contractor worth the low risk? If the answer to either of those two questions is “yes”, the choice is fairly simple. However, “to bond or not to bond” is at the agency’s discretion, and it’s probably good practice to seek guidance from General Counsel before determination is made. With that stated, thanks to the VPPA, something can be said for low risk ‘opportunities’ because ODU has found those “diamond” contractors! Maybe your agency can too!
As a young procurement professional myself, I know the difficulties of entering the procurement field with very little practical experience. As most procurement professionals will tell you they just “fell into procurement”. I wanted to hear from those young professionals who sought out procurement as a profession and how difficult it was to get a position in procurement.

Along with my perspective on the topic, I interviewed Vin Kamatachi from Chesterfield County, Jianchong Lou from City of Chesapeake, and David Bakhshaee from Albemarle County. Vin started off as an intern at the City of Chesapeake then was hired as temporary help. From there he obtained his first full time position with Henrico County as a Buyer I and is now at Chesterfield County as a Senior Contract Officer. Jianchong also started off as an intern at the City of Chesapeake and was then hired as a Procurement Specialist and is now a Procurement Specialist II. David also started off as an intern at the City of Chesapeake then was hired as Buyer I with Albemarle County and is now in a Buyer II position. I started as an administrative intern at Old Dominion University (ODU) and was then hired as the Office Manager. I am now a Procurement Coordinator and PCard Administrator for Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD).

Deciding on Procurement as a Profession
Vin, Jianchong, and David all found procurement because of Dr. Stephen Gordon who is professor of the Graduate Certificate in Public Procurement & Contract Management (GCPPCM) program in the School of Public Service at ODU. After talking with Dr. Gordon, all three of them decided that it is a career field that will have many future opportunities due to the amount of people in procurement about to retire. However I started backwards, I landed an internship in the Procurement Department at ODU as an undergraduate student and decided I really liked procurement and then decided to pursue the GCPPCM at ODU. All four of us agreed that becoming members of VAGP helped us network with a great group of procurement professionals that may have also swayed us to stay in procurement and gain the experience needed to move forward in our careers.

Obtaining Practical Experience
Finding an internship to gain practical procurement experience isn’t easy as the City of Chesapeake is really the only agency in the Hampton Roads area (where ODU is located) that has an on-going internship program. Not many other agencies in the state have an internship program. Vin, Jianchong, as well as David received internship opportunities at the City of Chesapeake. The internship I completed wasn’t for purchasing; it was for an administrative capacity in the Procurement Department.

We all found it difficult to obtain a position in procurement with the little experience we gained from our internships. We didn’t have enough experience for a certification (most agencies prefer applicants to have a certification of sort) or to meet most agencies minimum practical experience requirements. This left us with our networking connections gained through VAGP and NIGP and the knowledge gained from the GCPPCM. Because my previous experience is all administrative and analytical I found it difficult to step into a buyer’s position because I didn’t have the experience, only the knowledge. Currently I am in a position that is more administrative; however, HRSD is teaching me the procurement side as well which will help me a great deal for any future purchasing positions I may want to take.

From talking to other agencies during the last VAGP Spring Conference, most do not have an internship program in place because it is too time consuming to put a program together and train the interns. However, that is...
the effort that it may take to help educate and shape young professionals for qualifying for entry level procurement positions. This will also help employers with a greater pool of quality applicants to choose from when hiring. If your agency is unable to implement an internship program, I recommend you implement a mentorship type of work environment. If your agency has lower level buyer positions, pair them with the higher level positions to learn from them. HRSD works this way; they have three procurement assistants that are paired with procurement specialist mentors on a quarterly rotational basis. They learn about the different areas of purchasing and gain practical experience.

Advice to Young Professionals and Employers

Vin:
To young Procurement Professionals: “Be persistent, don’t let the first rejection get you down, and be willing to learn a lot very quickly!”
To Employers: “Be visible, be out there so young professionals can find you – contrary to popular opinion, we will work for free to get started, all we need is that first foot in the door.”

Jianchong:
To young Procurement Professionals: “Employers always look for people who can provide immediate help for their organization, but sometimes I think they ignore the potential of young professionals. So they will need to show that to employers. Either they can start as an intern, or they can register on temp agencies. Going to conferences may be able to let employers and young professionals have interactions.”
To Employers: “Be open-minded, but be selective at the same time. It is worthy to give a chance to young professionals.”

David:
To young Procurement Professionals: “Stay on top of professional development, go to annual conferences, and find a mentor.”

Katie:
To young Procurement Professionals: “Take advantage of any procurement related membership you can register for (most are free for students). Those memberships lead to networking opportunities and will open doors for anyone looking to get into procurement or move further up. Also, procurement is one of those career fields that everyone works their way up, most people don’t just jump into a senior buyer position, it was learned and earned. Most agencies are willing to train and help you towards your certifications, so don’t give up if the job search is difficult. Finding a place where you flourish may take some time, I am so excited that I am now at HRSD, I feel like it’s a great fit for me!”

To Employers: “Take the time out to create an internship program at your agency, it will not only benefit the agency but it will help shape and guide many others out there looking to gain procurement experience. Also, work with your agency and human resources to allow for true entry level procurement positions so the young professionals can gain that experience needed to obtain the certifications that most agencies require to even get their foot in the door.”

In summary, for young professionals out there, getting a position within procurement isn’t quite as easy to fall into it anymore. Education, networking, and practical experience are great ways to start your career in procurement. For the employers out there struggling to find quality procurement professionals, think about implementing an internship or mentoring program within your agency to help create those quality applicants you so desire.
CONGRATULATIONS! VAGP wants to take this opportunity to congratulate the VAGP members who successfully passed the UPPCC CPPB/CPPO certification examinations administered May 1-13, 2017. Your hard work and dedication paid off. We are very proud of your accomplishment!

**CERTIFIED PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OFFICERS (CPPO)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanda Reese-Bey, CPPO</td>
<td>City of Richmond</td>
<td>Richmond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC BUYERS (CPPB)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dustin Baker, CPPB</td>
<td>Upper Occoquan Service Authority</td>
<td>Centreville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Brown, CPPB</td>
<td>Chesterfield County</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Lee Houser, CPPB</td>
<td>Chesterfield County</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinayak Kamatchi, CPPB</td>
<td>Chesterfield County</td>
<td>Chesterfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Joy Thawley, CPPB</td>
<td>Fairfax County Public Schools</td>
<td>Falls Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janis Hall, CPPB</td>
<td>Old Dominion University</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Elizabeth Somervail, CPPB</td>
<td>Old Dominion University</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Upcoming Application Deadlines & Exam Dates** [http://www.uppcc.org/]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Dates:</th>
<th>Apply by:</th>
<th>Apply w/ late fee by:</th>
<th>Schedule exam by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 7-19, 2018</td>
<td>Jan 29, 2018</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2018</td>
<td>Mar 26, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEWS & VIEWS**

We want your news and views in 2017!

This is your Association and your publication—make your voice heard! All VAGP members are encouraged to send articles, press releases and photos. Published articles on purchasing related topics may help members earn recertification points. For eligibility requirements, please verify directly with the certifying agency. Suppliers and contractors are also encouraged to submit purchasing-related articles for publication. Limited opportunities are available and offered at no cost! Submit your contributions to LeeAnne Beatty Smith at smith2lb@jmu.edu.