



The Buyer Flyer

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Quarterly Newsletter of The Procurement Community of Practice

T'is The Season For Gifting.....If In Doubt, Just Say No

As government employees, we are often faced with those sticky situations we call conflicts of interest. This is especially true during the upcoming holiday season. As procurement staff, we select goods and services from our suppliers on the basis of things like quality and price. Our decisions in dealing with our suppliers cannot be influenced by gifts, personal relationships, hospitality or anything else of value. However, at this time of year, gifts and generous hospitality are not in short supply.



The trick is identifying when a conflict, actual or potential, exists. A good starting place is the B.C. Public Service Standards of Conduct and any ministry specific policies. In terms of gifts, our Standards of Conduct include as examples of conflict of interest, *“an employee who accepts from an individual, corporation, or organization, directly or indirectly, a personal gift or benefit that arises out of employment in the B.C. Public Service.”* The Standards list four criteria, when taken together, are intended to guide the judgment of employees considering the acceptance of a gift: *The benefit is of nominal value, the exchange creates no obligation, reciprocation is easy and it occurs infrequently.* A cup of coffee or small box of chocolates at Christmas time may fall within those criteria. Tickets to a hockey game or a paid dinner would not. After reading the Standards and consulting with your supervisor, if you are still in doubt as to whether or not to accept a gift, don't! The vendor will understand. And then you can get on enjoying that holiday spirit!!

Who should belong to the Procurement Community of Practice (PCoP)?

We have a large representation of public purchasers who belong to PCoP however we are missing a contingent that could really benefit from belonging to this organization. Do you have a purchase card? Do you book hotel rooms or car rentals? Do you buy any type of supply or even printing? If so, belonging to this Community of Practice will provide you with relevant information through newsletters and webinars.

Upcoming Events

Webinar: Dec 10, 10:30 a.m.
Partnership Procurement and Managing the Risks

Projects procured using a partnership model include an up-front, detailed risk analysis. Partnerships BC will provide an overview of their approach in partnership projects.

Webinar: Jan 14, 10:30 a.m.
WCB and Contractors

Have you ever wondered why we prefer contractors have WCB/ Worksafe coverage or what personal optional protection is? Join this webinar to get the answers.

Webinar: Feb 11, 10:30 a.m.
Employee/Employer Relationships?

Crossing the line with Contractors

No sessions are planned in March and April due to year end *madness.*



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More Efficient Evaluations

How much time do your evaluation processes take? Too much? Would you like to make this process more efficient so that you can get through it faster without compromising the results and documentation?



In our September newsletter we covered the first tip in our four-part series on more efficient evaluations. We continue here with the second in our series to help you solve this problem.

Why do I have search through pages and pages of information I didn't request, to get to the information that I need? The simple answer to this question is the importance of due diligence in our process, to ensure that we avoid rewarding the best response writers rather than the best service providers. But we can structure our solicitation in a manner that guides proponents to give only pertinent and valuable information.

The easiest way to do this is through response templates. For example, if your solicitation identifies the experience that a proponent should have (e.g. at least 3 projects within the past 5 years that included x, y, and z), you can build a template that is customized to the experience being sought. Proponents will be guided by this template on what information to provide and therefore are less likely to provide unnecessary marketing “bumph”. As an added bonus, you will have consistency in how the

information is presented from one proposal to another.

Of course, providing a template does not guarantee that it will be used. You could include a mandatory requirement to complete the template, but what happens if every part of the template isn't filled in, or if a propo-

nent copies the template into a different format? Has the mandatory been met or not? Instead, consider adding the following language to your solicitation “Proponents are strongly advised to use Appendix X The Province will only consider information provided in Appendix X when evaluating this section; related information found anywhere else in the proposal will not be considered.” Now, you have no compliancy issues if a proponent doesn't provide complete answers or copies the template into their own format. Even if the proponent doesn't include the appendix at all, the result is a score of “0” for this section rather than exclusion from the process.



Upcoming Courses



PCMP 201: Contract Mgmt Planning
Jan 14/2014 - Victoria

PCMP 202: Contract Solicitation,
Award & Monitoring
Feb 6/2014 - Victoria

PCMP 203: Administering &
Evaluating Contract Performance
Feb 26/2014 - Victoria

PCMP 305: Negotiation Skills
Feb 4/2014 - Vancouver
Feb 18/2014 - Victoria



Do you or those you work with need specialized procurement training?

If so, the Procurement Services Branch and Public Service Agency can work together to ensure everyone gets the procurement training they need. Call PSB at

250 387-7300

Two Page RFP

Watch for upcoming workshops on the Short Form RFP (SRFP) coming to you this winter.

George Farkas on the *Small Business Doing Business With Government Project*

It is my pleasure to update you on the **Small Business - Doing Business With Government Project**. The project supports one of the principles of the B.C. Small Business Accord - *to create long-term growth opportunities for small business through government procurement*. An action item for government related to this principle is to *reduce barriers to government's procurement process*.

To understand the barriers for small businesses and ultimately improve the tools, supports and processes, the project involves consulting with small businesses until December 6, 2013. This includes facilitating a series of 8 sessions in communities around the province, initiating a survey to supplement the information gathered through the sessions and inviting written feedback through the project website. To date, what we've heard is that they want us to:

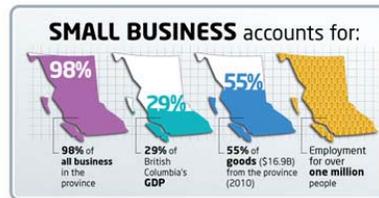
- *Tell them, through a variety of ways, what opportunities they have to get government business;*
- *Improve the information and resources that are specifically targeted for small businesses; and*
- *Make the processes for getting government work as easy as possible.*

The new two page Short-form Request for Proposals (SRFP) - *that fulfills one of government's commitments for all businesses* - is something that will also address concerns small businesses have raised. Feedback from small businesses on contracting processes will also support efforts underway, and a commitment to further streamline RFP processes.

Additional information about the SRFP is available at the Procurement Services Branch site <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=8582A3AA671F4A9D9F539D14A1A10BDB>

What's next? The feedback received through the small business consultation process will be developed into practical recommendations that respect trade agreements and follow principles of fair, open and competitive procurement. Support from this Procurement Community of Practice will be key to managing the change within government arising from the recommendations. If you have small business contacts in your network, your help getting the word out about the project and the survey is greatly appreciated. An interim report will be published by December and a final report with recommendations will be issued by March 2014.

Further information about the **Small Business - Doing Business With Government Project** is at www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/selltobcgv.



CSA Updates/ Changes

There is a new Corporate Supply Arrangement (CSA) available for **Audio Visual Goods and Services**.

For more information view the web page at www.pss.gov.bc.ca/csa/categories/audio_visual/audio_visual.html or contact Jerry Gauthier at Jerry.Gauthier@gov.bc.ca



POSO's

The Purchase Order on a Standing Offer (POSO) form has been updated, and is available as a fill-able PDF on the CSA website (under "How to Order and Pay Supplier"). The direct link to this updated form is https://www.pss.gov.bc.ca/csa/pdfs/PC199_july5_v2.pdf.

The hardcopy version of this form is no longer being carried by DCV.

Temporary Help Services

Looking for some temporary administrative support in your office for upcoming March Madness? We can help! Procurement Services Branch, in partnership with the Public Service Agency, has a Corporate Supply Arrangement (CSA) in place with multiple temporary staffing agencies across the province offering Temporary Help Services and Auxiliary Recruitment Referral Services for the following job classifications:

- Office Assistant 6 & 7
- Stockworker 6 & 7
- Clerk Stenographer 9 & 11
- Clerk 9 & 11

Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relating to the CSA:

Can a placement be for more than 30 days?

No, the maximum assignment length for temporary help is 30 calendar days for bargaining unit positions. Note that this limitation does not apply to excluded positions.

What if I want to extend the placement past 30 days?

Past 30 calendar days, the placement needs to be hired as an auxiliary employee, and the ministry must pay a “retained hire fee” to the Temporary Help Agency.

Can I have a brief pause of service in between placements to get around the 30 day maximum i.e. they work 30 days, don't work for a week, and then we bring them back for another 30 days?

There must be a period of a minimum of 30 days between appointments for any individual.

The position I need to hire for is not included on the list, what do I do?

When needing to hire for a position that is not included on the list of classifications under the CSA, normal hiring practices would apply. If the placement is for less than 7 months, the ministry would need to hire an auxiliary employee.

Hotel CSA Question

Q: Why is the hotel I stayed at last month not showing up in my search for this month?

A: The hotel (or property) may not have submitted a rate for the month or the rate they submitted was too high so they were not successful for the month. Properties submit rates by month so each monthly rate submitted could be different. Also, not all properties submit rates for every month of the year. High season, low season and mid-season vary from property to property so properties need to be able to submit different rates for each month. During evaluations, each month in each community is evaluated separately.

Sometimes a player's greatest challenge is coming to grips with his role on the team.

~Scottie Pippen



It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.

~Nelson Mandela

Enlightened leadership is spiritual if we understand spirituality not as some kind of religious dogma or ideology but as the domain of awareness where we experience values like truth, goodness, beauty, love and compassion, and also intuition, creativity, insight and focused attention.

~Deepak Chopra

Ask The Procurement Wizard*

- * note: the “Wizard” may be one or more people with specific expertise for a given question.

Can I Be Named as a Reference?



One of the frustrations for proponents in an RFP process is the inability to use ministry staff as references. Some ministries have rules against being a reference, and some staff feel that they will be in a conflict situation if they are both an evaluator and a named reference for one or more of the proponents.

My view is that ministries should encourage being named as a reference, as this is the one method where the Province can incorporate its own experience with suppliers in the evaluation process. However, there are some boundaries to keep in mind:

A reference is simply a name and contact information of a person who can verify the quality of the work performed. It is not a letter of support, where a ministry staff person is recommending the supplier for future work.

The relationship between the proponent and the named ministry reference is strictly business with no personal ties (e.g. the reference and proponent are not family, friends, golfing buddies, etc.).

If references are checked as part of the evaluation process and a ministry person is one of the references, this reference should be treated the same as any other. If the ministry person is also an evaluator, someone else should be tasked with checking references.



And finally, if the ministry reference is negative in any way, contact the Legal Services Branch before proceeding.

One proponent has added their own terms and conditions to their proposal. Do I need to disqualify them?

The answer to this question is very fact specific. Standard RFP terms and conditions are not negotiable. The terms and conditions include, but are not limited to, proponents agreeing to be bound to the terms and conditions in the RFP, the successful proponent agreeing to sign a contract on the terms and conditions set out in an appendix to the RFP and various reservation of rights in favour of the Province. If a proponent has included its own terms and conditions in its proposal, strictly speaking this is a counter offer and could disqualify the proponent. Depending on the facts, the Province may wish to exercise its rights under the RFP to seek clarification from that proponent to confirm that the proponent intends to be bound to the terms and conditions in the RFP and that its own terms and conditions do not apply or are otherwise read down to the extent they are inconsistent with the terms and conditions in the RFP. There is always the risk that an unsuccessful proponent argues that the successful proponent who included its own terms and conditions was a non-compliant bidder and therefore should have been disqualified.

To mitigate against this risk, if a proponent submits a proposal with its own terms and conditions attached, contact Legal Services Branch for advice specific to your situation.

If you have a question for the Procurement Wizard send it to debbie.owen@gov.bc.ca

Results Of Our Call For Jokes About Procurement and Contract Management.

In our last Buyer Flyer, we mentioned how hard it was to find a procurement joke or cartoon (without infringing on Scott Adams' intellectual property). After finding jokes about other professions we began to wonder - *Why iare there no punch lines to Old Purchasing Officers never die or Old Contract Managers never die?* We asked you to come up with something for us and here are the results.

Old Purchasing Officers never die, they just buy the farm! - Adam McKinnon



Old Purchasing Officers never die they just extend the contract end date! - Jim Cowan

Old Purchasing Officers never die, they just make other arrangements! - Sheila Tucnik

Old Contract Managers never die, they just expire at the end of their term! - Sheila Tucnik

Our new humor assignment for you is thus - **What should a group of Purchasing Agents or Contract Managers be called?** If a group of lions are a pride and buffalo, a herd, what would we call a meeting of our peers? A party of procurers? Send your response back to debbie.owen@gov.bc.ca

Steering Committee Members

- Derek Cockburn, CSCD
- Jacoba Corrigan, FLNR
- Liz Lowe, MTIC
- Duncan McLelland, MTIC
- Deb Owen, MTIC
- David Pilling, FIN
- Kai Robinson, MTIC
- Dawn Stewart, GCPE



Are You A Member of the PCoP Yet?



Procurement Community of Practice Members are finding out what it is like to belong to a community of peers who share knowledge, expertise and time in order to support and educate each other. If you are reading this and are not a member, we invite you to view our sharepoint site at <https://purchasing.gov.bc.ca/pcop/Pages/Default.aspx> What will you find? A rare opportunity to sign up to be part of this group. Click on "Become A Member" and fill in your information to sign up. It is **FREE**.

What do you gain from joining? **FREE** access to documents and templates on the Sharepoint site. Invitations to **FREE** educational sessions such as the webinars and events featured in the column to the right. A **FREE** copy of this outstanding quarterly newsletter.