

In addition to worker demographic influences, federal, state and local governments are comprised of over 130,000 individual agencies.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Federal 60,000

State 4,350

County 3,043

City 19,372

Special Districts 35,257

School 17,178

Variety

Over the course of a procurement career, you may have the opportunity to purchase everything from IT infrastructure and mass transit systems to syringes for injecting giraffes and elephants (really!).

Challenge

To excel in this profession, you will need to develop a broad base of skills and knowledge and constantly hone your abilities. You will wear many hats. You will have the opportunity to be a strategic business person, developing and administering contracts, establishing contractual relationships that leverage your buying power; a shrewd negotiator who understands how to achieve win-win solutions for both the agency and the supplier.

What Skills and Knowledge Do I Need to Begin a Successful Career in Public Procurement?

To start, your commitment to ethical practice, personal integrity, strong problem solving skills and an eagerness to serve, be challenged and grow professionally are a winning combination that will lead to long term success.

Purchasing professionals often work closely with other employees in a process called “team buying.”

New graduates seeking their first job in procurement should be equipped with a solid business education, strong communication, relationship-building and analytical skills, as well as an impressive resume that lists internships and extracurricular activities highlighting their leadership and teamwork abilities.

The complex and ever-changing world of procurement also dictates that new graduates have a broad educational background and be willing to expand their career goals down the road by taking advantage of certification classes and even obtaining a master's degree.

The emphasis executives place on strong interpersonal, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills highlight the fact that today's procurement professional is working in a business world that revolves around partnerships and building relationships.

Communications skills — whether verbal or written — are important. Other skills include presentation delivery, writing appropriate e-mails and documents, and phone etiquette.

Complementing those skills are good analytical skills and the ability to build a compelling business case. The ability to work in a cross-functional team environment is important for new hires.

Extracurricular activities indicate that a student is a hard worker and understands the pressure of a competitive environment. Activities that draw attention include sports, academic and professional organizations, and student government. Almost any activity that involves teaming or working with groups of people is advantageous. Leadership roles are also invaluable for developing the ability to influence, set and meet goals, understand team dynamics and thinking out of the box.

Internships in business exposes a student to working in a large organization and understanding how to function in one successfully.

Visit our websites to learn more about the procurement profession! www.scagpo.org and www.nigp.org

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CHAPTER OF



Excellence in Public Procurement

What is Public Procurement?

Purchasing has been defined as buying the right goods, at the right time, at the right price, in the right quantity and of the right quality. Simply put, public procurement is the contracting and acquisition of the goods and services required to sustain society and its way of life. And no two days are alike!

Consider: how do roads become roads. How are airports, schools, libraries, and water treatment facilities established and maintained? How are water and electricity provided to commercial buildings and private residences? How does a community provide for emergency response to natural or man-made catastrophe?

At every level of society and every entity of government there is evidence of the public procurement profession. To be effective, purchasing professionals must have a working technical knowledge of the goods or services to be purchased.

They negotiate contracts and formulate policies with suppliers. Prepare and process requisitions and purchase orders for supplies and equipment. Develop and implement purchasing and contract management instructions, policies, and procedures. Maintain records of goods ordered and received. Participate in the development of specifications for equipment, products or substitute materials. Resolve vendor or contractor grievances, and claims against suppliers. Analyze market and delivery systems to assess present and future material availability.

A few key words hint at what government purchasing pros get from their experience in the profession: challenge; diversity; rewarding; and service to the community.

Purchasing Definitions

ACQUISITION

The act of acquiring goods and services.

AGREEMENT

A duly executed and legally binding contract; the act of agreeing.

ARO

After Receipt of Order.

BILL OF LADING

A written receipt or contract, given by a carrier, showing a list of goods delivered to it for transportation.

COMMODITY

A transportable article of trade or commerce that can be bartered or sold.

CONSIDERATION

Something of value given or done as recompense that is exchanged by two parties; that which binds a contract.

CONTRACT

Any written instrument or electronic document containing the elements of offer, acceptance, and consideration to which an agency is a party.

CONTRACTOR

A person who agrees to furnish goods or services for a certain price; may be a prime contractor or subcontractor.

GOODS

All types of personal property including commodities, materials, supplies, and equipment.

LEAD TIME

The time that it would take a supplier to deliver goods after receipt of order.

PURCHASE ORDER

The signed written acceptance of the offer from the vendor. A purchase order serves as the legal and binding contract between both parties.

Why a Choose a Career in Public Procurement?

Public Service

First and foremost, a career in public procurement is truly an exciting career dedicated to serving the best interests of the community.

Influence

Government procurement officials have the unique ability to determine '**how**' to best meet the goals of the community as identified through the political process. Whereas the politicians may approve the building of a road, the procurement official determines whether that road must be constructed using recycled materials, whether eco-friendly lighting is installed or solar powered traffic signals are employed.

The baby boom generation is ready for retirement and governments at all levels will experience the impact. According to an October 2007 research study by the National Association of State Procurement Officials, the percentage of government workers over 45 years old is **44.6%** versus 31.2% in the private sector.

Compensation of public procurement professionals depends heavily on the size and location of the entity you work for, your educational achievements and your work experience.

Director, Purchasing or Materials Management

\$65,000 - \$120,000+

Manager, Purchasing, Contracts or Warehouse

\$45,000 - \$80,000

Buyer or Contract Specialist

\$40,000 - \$65,000

Assistant Buyer or Entry Level

\$25,000 - \$45,000

* Source: 2007 NIGP Compensation Survey Report. p21.