Answers to questions from breakout session: What's Your Problem

Q1. How do you initiate an RFP with DAS if you are not using Core?

A. A Core-10 is the recommended e-requisition form to initiate the competitive solicitation process through the DAS/Procurement Division. Non-CoreCT agencies may send DAS an SP-10 or send DAS an email with all of your requirements. If we receive your requirements via SP-10 or email, our office will create the Core-10 to initiate the competitive process.

Q2. If I'm ordering automobiles, what commodity code would I use? Looking to purchase a vehicle off of a State contract.

A. For purposes of finding contracts on the State contracting portal, automobiles are categorized under industry code 0065.

Q3. Any idea when there will be more training sessions for Core users? If we have say 15 or more people, would you come to our agency?

A. Agencies may have their CoreCT agency training liaison place the employees requiring training on the wait list for the specific classes. The CoreCT staff will review those wait lists to determine the number of classes and the classes that require training sessions to be scheduled. If your agency has a need to have several users trained in the same class and your agency has a dedicated training room, CoreCT trainers may come to your agency to conduct the training on site.

For e-procurement or purchasing training, please feel free to send Joann Bellamo an e-mail (Joann.Bellamo@ct.gov) and she can discuss your training needs.

There have been two upgrades to CoreCT and there have been changes in the way the software works, so it is wise for all users to attend training, as there may be some new functionality that can be shared.

Q4. I'm having an issue with a company on a contract regarding their performance. How should I handle this?

A. Agencies should file a Vendor Performance report, http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=311); DAS will work with the agency and the vendor to resolve the issue. The Vendor Performance reports are also very important to DAS Procurement as it assists us in determining if a vendor is qualified and responsible. Many times an agency comes to Procurement and says that vendor "has been horrible for the past three years and we don't want to use them", but DAS/Procurement has nothing on file that can document their poor performance. If a vendor has a poor performance history, we do not have to contract with them; however, if we don't have vendor performance documentation available, then it's nearly

impossible to discontinue contracting with them. The agency should get in touch with the Contract Specialist and document the vendor's performance. The DAS Contracting Portal has a link to the contracting staff and their commodities (right hand column under "quick links", then "directory", then "contracting teams & commodities" (shows who the Contract Specialist's team leader is too). The Vendor Performance tool is under "quick links" too – please use this whenever possible. Similar to employee performance, we also need to give the vendor a chance to fix the problem so they can perform better. Many times a vendor can resolve the problems.

Q5. The Procurement process is lengthy. By the time the contract is done, there has been no back and forth communication with the customer to make them aware a contract has been executed. This results in the Purchase Order being delayed and not getting issued for a month or two and the vendor has already been awarded the contract. How can we get better communication and feedback on contract status?

A. The DAS Contract Specialists will make a focused effort to communicate back to the contract requestors on contract status. Additionally, there are resources on the State Contracting portal to see "Recently Awarded" contracts which you may periodically review. Finally, we encourage all purchasers to subscribe to "Buylines" in which we feature contracts awarded in the last 14 days.

Q6. Two-part question. 1. Is it still an approximate 6-week lead time from time of bid to awarding? 2. Are we required to go through DAS or can we do a bid ourselves?

A. 1. It varies. Normally from posting the bid to award, on the average six (6) weeks. An RFP, excluding IT projects, probably 1 to 2 months (could be a little longer, depending on the complexity of it). IT modernization or IT major projects could take from a year to 18 months. There are other factors that can impact these timelines, so contact our Contract Specialist as needed.

2. Procurements over $50,000 must come to DAS Procurement for the competitive process. For procurements < $50,000, DAS has delegated general letter GL-71 for the agencies to do bids on their own. If you have an existing contract with DAS and you know it expires, i.e. it's October and the contract expires next March, October is the time to be getting in the Core-10. The earlier agencies are getting the Core-10 in, the better we can administer the procurement in time to meet your needs. Six months lead time is a good rule of thumb.

Q7. How do you normally handle market research when you are unsure of what you want/need?

A. When in doubt, we recommend doing a Request for Information (RFI). If you post your RFI on the State Contracting portal, there are over 17,000 registered vendors, so it's getting out to a broad audience. While we cannot guarantee who will respond, especially when it's really unique, chances are good for results. Market research can be done, via the worldwide web, and Google searches. DAS Procurement

also has a network of our peers in the 50 states through an on-line community where we can go to them and ask "…has anyone ever done this…?", "…can we see your RFP and contracts and what vendors you are using…"? This also provides solid results.

Q8. Do pre-bid meeting sign-in sheets need to be shared with the public if asked?

A. Yes. A sign in sheet, like for a pre-bid walkthrough, is a public document and that would be shared if asked via an FOIA request.

Q9. 1. What is the proper procedure when a vendor substitutes an item for their brand? 2. What do you do if a vendor keeps constantly sending your invoices to a different state agency, even though you have told the vendor the correct address for your agency?

A. 1. Vendors should not be substituting a name brand for their brand unless the contract allows for such. Read the contract, and then call the Contract Specialist if still in doubt. If you receive an invoice and you realize they have invoiced you differently from the catalog price, besides putting in a help desk ticket, contact the Contract Specialist because sometimes the catalog is still the correct price and the vendors may have incorrectly invoiced.

2. The first thing you do is check your Purchase Order (PO) to make sure the correct addresses are on there. If the PO is correct, then contact the Contract Specialist for assistance.

Q10. Why are you able to attach multiple documents to a requisition but not to a purchase order?

A. When you create a requisition in CoreCT, you can add multiple documents to a single comment. In Purchasing, you can only add one document per comment. So to add multiple documents, you would need to add an additional comment first, then attach the next document.

Q11. When purchasing items from the P-Card, are you still required to follow the rules as far as using vendors on state contracts?

A. Yes, P-Card is just another tool for your payment. Purchasing rules still apply.

Q12. I always thought state contracts had requirements for "Inside Delivery". I always have to battle with Vendors to do such. Is this a requirement?

A. Agencies should always read the contract to determine if "inside delivery" is required. Each contract has different terms and conditions, so such requirements may vary.