



Purchasing Training & Certification Program Nearing Completion

The DOAS State Purchasing Division (SPD) has been busily assembling a new statewide training curriculum for purchasing staff in all state agencies and universities. Historically, only very basic training courses were offered by SPD, including Fundamentals of State Purchasing and Intro to State Purchasing.

Dr. Mirna Barker, chief learning officer for SPD, leads the DOAS Professional Development Unit, which has spearheaded efforts to build a comprehensive training and certification program for all state buyers and purchasing officers. Purchasing staffs across the state have long said that training has been lacking, and in order for the state's Procurement Transformation to be sustainable, proper training and education of our state's purchasing professionals is of paramount importance.

Accordingly, to help provide the guidance needed to build a statewide comprehensive training and certification program, Dr. Barker and her team formed a Training Council representing various agencies and universities. As a result, SPD now offers twenty different courses (8 training courses designed specifically for SPD staff, 10 training courses designed for SPD and Agency staff, and 2 training courses designed for Vendors) covering purchasing fundamentals, specification writing, p-card training, Request for Proposal (RFP) development skills, among many others. Courses are a mix of instructor-led, online and self-paced training.

Recently, SPD opened a world-class training center complete with the latest equipment. Located in the West Tower of the Sloppy Floyd building in Atlanta, the classroom is designed to provide a fully functional environment for videoconferencing that integrates various audio and video multimedia sources and full multimedia display functionality independent of videoconferencing usage. These multimedia sources are VCRs, DVDs, CATVs, PCs and laptops which are integrated into the sound and display systems. The classroom also has two 50" plasma display screens in the front and two 40" ceiling mounted plasmas mid way through the room that are capable of displaying all video signals. In addition, the classroom can route any video source to any video destination, allowing the instructor to be able to view individual student's work and display it through any available displays in the classroom. To date, over 2,000 employees have attended various training classes. In fiscal year 2008 alone, 100 training courses were conducted.

Currently, assessments are being developed that in the coming weeks will compose the Georgia Purchasing Certification. Students successfully passing the tests will qualify for four (4) different levels of certification that include the Basic Procurement Certificate, RFP Certificate, Negotiations



Certificate, and a Contract Writing & Administration Certificate. A P-card Certificate will be available for those whose responsibilities include managing P-card programs. The certificates are scheduled to be released later this year.

Based on a core list of training courses at each level, students who successfully attend training and pass the required tests will be awarded certification from SPD.

Our hope is to provide the needed training curriculum which will elevate the purchasing skills needed both by our state and its purchasing professionals. This comprehensive approach to training and certification will continue to evolve as purchasing staffs enhance their skills and as needs change.

We encourage purchasing professionals at all agencies and universities to actively attend training and the certification program soon to follow. For more information or to review the upcoming training courses, see the [DOAS website](http://www.doas.ga.gov) ■

