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What and How Universities Buy

What Universities Buy

Illinois public universities purchase goods and services to support academic, research, and public service programs. They also purchase goods and services to support activities such as operations and maintenance, student housing, food services, and bookstore operations. Items purchased include scientific equipment and medical equipment, classroom and office furniture and supplies, chemicals, building construction and repair, maintenance services, and professional services.

For descriptions of commodities and services purchases, see the [categories and keywords list](#).

Related Info

[Principles of Conduct](#)

[IPHEC Commodities](#)

How Universities Buy

All Illinois public universities must follow the regulations set forth by the Illinois Procurement Code. Each university board of trustees has approved established purchasing procedures in conformance with the Illinois Procurement Code. Purchasing departments are accountable to their boards of trustees and the taxpayers of Illinois. The university award process may be delayed up to thirty days as awards go through the state approval process. Expenditures must pass numerous audits (local state, and federal), and be conducted in an efficient and professional manner.

Purchasing Mission & Function

Illinois public university purchasing departments obtain commodities, equipment, and services to support the educational mission of their university. They follow sound business methods consistent with the Higher Education Procurement Rules, the Illinois Procurement Code, and other applicable state and federal regulations.

Purchasing departments perform these functions:

- **Pre-requisition service** - Obtain specification and market information about commodities, equipment, and services for campus units. This information helps campus units to budget funds for purchases, and to plan acquisitions so necessary goods and services are acquired in a timely manner. Purchasing departments locate sources of supply, conduct preliminary negotiations with suppliers, obtain price quotations, and recommend vendors.
- **Buying** - Identify vendors, bid (when necessary or desirable), and place orders. Purchasing departments purchase the amounts of commodities, equipment, and services requested by campus units at the lowest price consistent with requisite quality from suppliers who can and will deliver purchased items at the specified time and place.

- **Expediting** - Maintain requisition and purchase order files and insure delivery of proper items at the proper times. Purchasing departments follow up on purchases to ensure that the vendor fulfills the purchase agreement on delivery and that the carrier delivers the shipment promptly and in good condition.
- **Transportation** - Insure efficient and economic routing of goods from the vendor to the university. Purchasing divisions arrange for the return of defective or incorrect materials, assure that additional shipments are made to fill any shortages, and to present claims for damages which may arise in transporting goods to the university.

Fiscal Year

All Illinois public universities have a fiscal year from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. Accounting is done on this fiscal basis.

Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative (IPHEC)

The Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative (IPHEC) was formed in 1975 to consolidate common requirements for various state universities on one bid with subsequent orders being placed by each individual university for the contract period.

The thirteen campuses of the nine Illinois public universities participate in the Cooperative. One university initiates and receives bids on the consolidated requirement of a particular commodity. Upon determination of the lowest bid IPHEC member universities each establish individual contracts with the selected vendor for the commodity and orders are issued accordingly.

At the present time, [commodities](#), such as furniture, janitorial supplies, lab supplies, and office supplies, are bid by the Cooperative as they are identified as common requirements for all the participating universities. These consolidated purchases enable vendors to pass their savings on to the member schools. IPHEC contracts saved the member schools approximately \$19.2 million in FY09.

For information about IPHEC bids, contact the sponsoring [university](#).

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Diverse Vendor Resources suggested by Governors State University

Where can we view bid opportunities?

Higher Education Procurement Bulletin www.procure.stateuniv.state.il.us



Where can we register 'all at once' for statutory compliance at all agencies/universities?

CPO - Illinois Procurement Gateway <https://ipg.vendorreg.com/>



Where do we go to seek certification by the state as a diverse supplier?

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

<https://www2.illinois.gov/cms/business/sell2/bep/pages/default.aspx>



Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

BEP assists businesses owned by minorities, women and people with disabilities gain access to the State of Illinois procurement process. BEP certification with the State of Illinois can also open the door to opportunities with other public and private entities which are looking for diverse suppliers.

Program Eligibility:

- The business is at least 51% owned and controlled by a minority, woman, or person with disabilities (30 ILCS 575)
- The owner must be a citizen of the United States or legal permanent resident alien
- Annual gross sales of less than \$75 million



Victoria Santiago, CPPO, CPPB

Victoria “Vicky” Santiago is the Director of Purchasing at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). She has over twenty years of procurement experience, both in the public and private sector. Her experience includes procurements for various goods and professional services, construction, and Architectural/Engineering Services.

In her role at NEIU, she leads the procurement team and is responsible for ensuring that the goods and services procured for the university departments are executed timely and in compliance with State procurement statutory requirements. Vicky is active in representing NEIU at various events such as university vendor fairs, training sessions for vendors on how to do business with the university, and how to register in the State’s Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and the Small Business Set Aside Program (SBSA).

Prior to joining NEIU, Vicky was appointed as the first Latina State Purchasing Officer (SPO) serving under the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) for General Services in 2011. In this role, she oversaw and approved purchases for Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, and Illinois Math and Science Academy. In 2013, she was promoted to Senior State Purchasing Officer where she then oversaw procurements for the Illinois Toll Highway Authority and the Illinois Department of Transportation. Additionally, she served on committees that were responsible for reviewing and drafting policies and procedures, bid templates and training agency procurement staff. Vicky has worked for other public entities such as Chicago Housing Authority, Housing Authority of Cook County, and City of Chicago.

Vicky is a proud alumna of NEIU earning her Bachelor’s Degree in Business Management from the College of Business and Management. In addition, she has certifications as a Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO) and Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) from NIGP-The Institute for Public Procurement. In addition, she is a member of the following organizations, National Association of Educational Procurement (NEAP), National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), Illinois Association of Public Procurement Officials (IAPPO), Midwest Association of Public Procurement (MAPP).



Tracy Sullivan MBA, CPPO

Tracy Sullivan is the Assistant Vice President for Procurement & Business Services at Governors State University (GSU). She has worked in the procurement field within public higher education for over twenty-five years in both community college and public university operations. Prior to that, she worked in both purchasing and sales in the corporate world.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame Indiana, Tracy earned a master's degree in Marketing Management from Loyola University of Chicago. In addition, she is a Certified Public Procurement Official.

In her role at GSU, Tracy leads multiple departments, including the procurement operation. Her primary focus is statutory compliance, bidding and contracting on behalf of user departments campus-wide. She represents GSU on the Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative Board of Trustees. Since FY17 Tracy has served as an officer of the IPHEC Board of Trustees Board consists of Vice President/executive level representatives of all public universities in Illinois related to Procurement. In FY18 Tracy received an IPHEC Distinguished Service Award for her commitment to Procurement statewide, as a leader for legislative change and implementation of best practices.

"The Illinois Procurement Code." she said "is quite complex. Internally, I help GSU departments determine a course of action so the resulting contract will meet their goals." Often she refers to navigating the procurement process as 'the Procurement hokey-pokey'. Sullivan has been actively working towards legislative improvements for procurement and supplier diversity by drafting and assisting with bills introduced to the Illinois General Assembly.

One of the most challenging times in procurement has been during the pandemic and urgent sourcing of PPE. "Trying to order PPE has become a sport. You are prepared, able to respond instantly, or you miss an opportunity." Recently, Sullivan authored an article, being published nationally in fall of 2020, about the importance of maintaining vendor relationships. GSU has several strategic partners sharing PPE information 24 hours a day because of existing relationships. She calls it the 'contingency planning Olympics' and credits the IPHEC Office and other Purchasing Directors for constant creativity, problem solving and continuing collaboration.

For her legislative leadership and collaborative approach, Tracy has been recognized statewide because she is always willing to help others, and focuses on what is best for students, the IPHEC institutions and vendor community.

Every purchase we make has an impact on our students and the educational mission of GSU. Tracy Sullivan often comments: "The best day for me is Commencement. Knowing each of us had a role in the education that our graduates received, that makes me very proud. My goal is always to make a difference in the lives of others."



Aaron Carter MBA, CPPO, CPPB

Aaron Carter is the Assistant Vice President at the University of Illinois, where he leads a team responsible for the statewide higher education cooperative activity in the areas of procurement, legislation, policy, and technology and oversight collaboration assisting more than 135 procurement professionals meeting the needs of over 200,000 students statewide. Through his leadership of Illinois collective initiatives in Higher Education through the Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative (IPHEC), State Universities have achieved savings in the tens of millions while growing spend with Certified Diverse partners to over 11 Million in FY 2019. Beyond the purchasing arena, Aaron has lead Legislative and technological initiatives to provide greater efficiencies in the day to day activity for the State's Public institutions, while providing greater access to small and diverse businesses.

Prior to the University of Illinois, Aaron served as Executive Director the State of Illinois Procurement Policy Board, a State agency responsible for the review and policy allocation of over 16 Billion in annual spend across for State Chief Procurement Officers. In his role leading the agency, the Procurement policy Board enhances statewide policy affecting State Institutions, through Policy, rule, and Legislative Change. Additionally, during his tenure as Executive Director the Procurement Policy Board oversaw a program for professional development through the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, ensuring adequate training and certification of the States professional Procurement Staff.

Aaron currently sits on the E&I strategic sourcing committee, the Sourcewell Higher Education Advisory Committee and is a member of the MHEC Higher Education Leadership and Technology Committees. Aaron has been recognized by the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce, receiving their 2017 Agency of the Year award, the Office of Procurement Diversity 2019 Champion of Diversity Award, the 2019 Outstanding Leadership award from the State's Public Institutions, and the Buying Executive of the year from the CMSDC.

Aaron earned his MBA from the University of Illinois Gies School of Business and his B.A. from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Aaron lives in Springfield with his wife Nicole and three Sons Samuel, William and Henry.