

COSTARS Connection

The Commonwealth's Cooperative Purchasing Program
Passport to Business Opportunity and Procurement Savings

Volume 14 Issue 2
Spring 2020

Tom Wolf, Governor
Curt Topper, Secretary

Statistics Show the COSTARS Program Continues to Grow!

A brief overview of COSTARS Fiscal Year 2018 Statistical Report

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Did you know? The county with the highest percentage of COSTARS participation among different member categories in fiscal year 2018 (FY18) was Bradford county at 79 percent and the county generating the most COSTARS members was Allegheny county with a whopping 752 members! Equally impressive, COSTARS membership grew by 1.6 percent to 9,051 members in FY18. Who will be the 10,000th member? Only time will tell.

One of the most important goals of the COSTARS Team is to ensure Pennsylvania's local public procurement units are saving taxpayer dollars by obtaining best value procurements through a variety of competitively bid contracts. We also strive to provide small, diverse, veteran-owned and large businesses the opportunity to compete for COSTARS members' business. The team consistently analyzes a variety of metrics to determine the effectiveness of the program including membership surveys as well as the annual statistical report. These measurements help us to define what makes the program successful, the products and services our members require, and the areas where we need to make improvements.

After reviewing program statistics for FY18, the team was encouraged by the positive membership, supplier and sales growth; an attestation to the team's ongoing outreach efforts, enhanced training resources and dedication to providing the latest and greatest contracts to our membership.

Within the next few months, the COSTARS Team will be sending our members a program survey. Be sure to take a few moments to complete the survey and send it back to us; we value your feedback and can only do better if we hear from you!

Check out some highlights from our report below and continued on page 3.

Program Growth

- Overall spend **increased by 17%** to \$1.05 billion.

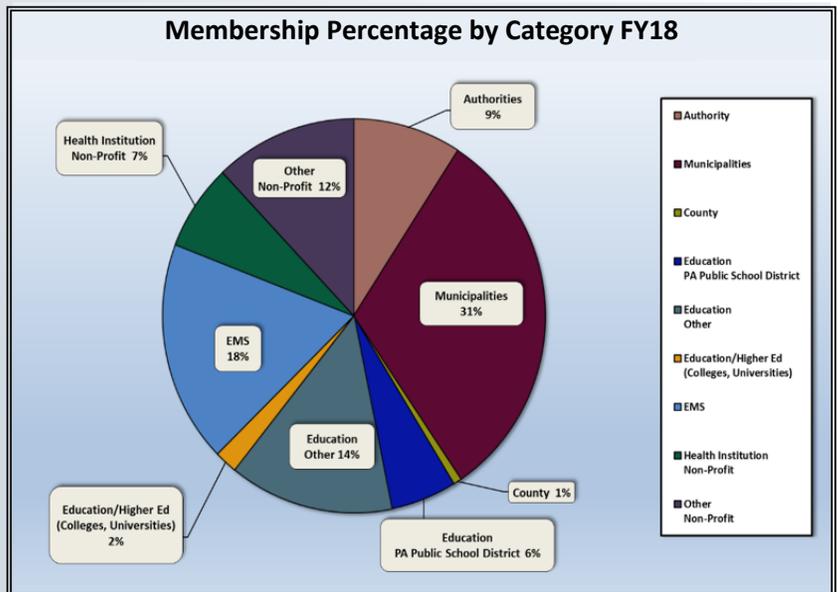
Member Growth

- ↑ Joint Municipality Entities (**8% growth**).
- ↑ City (**4% growth**).
- ↑ Health (**3.5% growth**).
- ↑ Forest and Venango counties had the highest **growth, with over 7% each**.

Highest Use of COSTARS-exclusive Contracts by Member Category

- Education entities (excluding higher education) **38% of total COSTARS-exclusive spend**.
- Municipal Governments **29% of total COSTARS spend**.

Membership Percentage by Category FY18



DGS Disaster & Emergency Procurement Website is Available to COSTARS Members

By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager

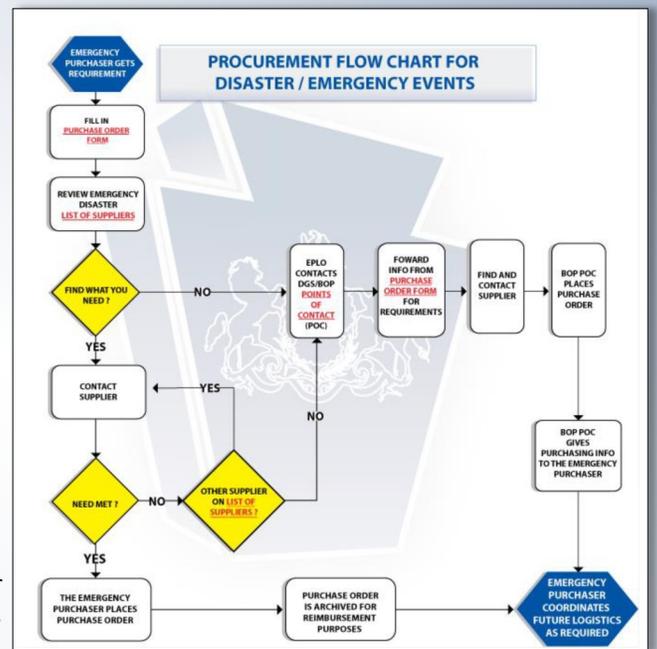
In light of the recent pandemic, or any future emergency situation your community may face, do you know where you can source emergency supplies and services? The Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS) Disaster & Emergency Procurement website provides information and instructions on how to procure materials and services from an available pool of suppliers during an actual emergency/disaster event.

The website is designed for local governments, school districts, universities and state agencies to support the procurement of urgently needed materials and services in the event of a governor-declared state of emergency; and provides a list of suppliers with their contact information, many of whom have commonwealth or COSTARS contracts.

The site also includes: a Quick Reference User's Guide; an Emergency Procurement Process flow chart; a Purchase Order form template; a DGS Bureau of Procurement Points of Contact list (to be used in the event that an emergency purchaser is unable to find what is needed); a link to search suppliers from federal contracts in General Services Administration (GSA) schedules; and links to helpful related websites such as American Red Cross, National Guard, Homeland Security, etc.

We encourage those assigned with procurement responsibilities, especially those who will be responding to an emergency/disaster event to familiarize themselves with the Disaster & Emergency Procurement website at <https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Disaster-Emergency-Procurement/Pages/default.aspx>.

Suppliers - If you are interested in adding your company to the list of disaster emergency suppliers, please complete the supplier contact form found on the Disaster & Emergency Procurement website. You will be asked to provide the relevant information needed for ordering goods/services from your company in the event of an emergency. Note, this form should only be submitted for new suppliers being added to the list, or for updating existing disaster emergency contact information. Once you submit the form, your company will be added to the DGS Disaster-Emergency Procurement website. In the event of an emergency, your firm agrees to sell the emergency products needed in accordance with procurement policy.



This flow chart provides a step-by-step diagram of the procurement process to use when buying materials and services during a disaster/emergency event.

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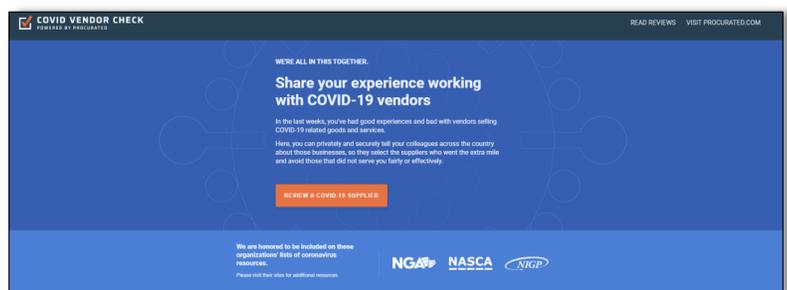
COVID Vendor Check Tool is Now Live!

Is your organization currently using the Procurated vendor performance management tool? This platform provides users with easy access to information from other procurement professionals that have already worked with the suppliers they are considering.

With the increased need for expedited emergency procurements of critical materials and services in response to COVID-19, the Procurated team has developed the [COVID Vendor Check](#) tool. This tool helps procurement professionals obtain information about suppliers who are providing these critical products and services.

Although purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential for the fight against COVID-19, procurement leaders are also planning ahead by investing in medical waste services, food services, IT hardware and software for an at-home workforce, and cybersecurity. Visit www.procurated.com/covid to use the COVID Vendor Check tool to rate your experience with any supplier you have worked with as part of the COVID-19 response. State and local government leaders can now report on their experiences, good and bad, working with COVID suppliers.

Each written review will provide other leaders across the procurement community with the information they need to find the best products and services for their citizens in this time of crisis and in the future.



Department of General Services and COSTARS Supporting Small, Diverse and Veteran-owned Businesses

By Felicia Campbell, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Governor Wolf's administration is committed to promoting small, small diverse and veteran-owned businesses in the commonwealth.

Last fiscal year, the Department of General Services set a record of nearly \$800 million in small, diverse business through contracting opportunities, equating to 11 percent of the commonwealth's spend on goods, services and construction.

Other notable small, diverse business data includes:

- A 47% increase in state payments to small diverse businesses to \$485 million from \$300 million.
- A 46% increase in small business payments to \$303 million from \$207 million.
- 557 small diverse businesses were awarded contracts, up from 488.

DGS and COSTARS are committed to supporting the mission of DGS's Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunity by providing inclusive and accessible procurement where small businesses can develop or expand their competency, capacity and footprint in the commonwealth marketplace.

COSTARS members, you too can support small, diverse business in your purchasing process. The small, diverse business status of each supplier can be found in the contracts:

- When searching COSTARS-exclusive contracts locate the Business Category column next to the Vendor Name column in the list of suppliers. The supplier's small, diverse status will be listed there.
- When searching Statewide, COSTARS-participating contracts, you will find a Small Business Status column in the Supplier Information tab of the contract Overview document.

To learn more about the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunity, visit <https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Small%20Diverse%20Business%20Program/Pages/default.aspx>.

Statistics Show the COSTARS Program Continues to Grow! A brief overview of COSTARS Fiscal Year 2018 Statistical Report, Cont.

Contracts

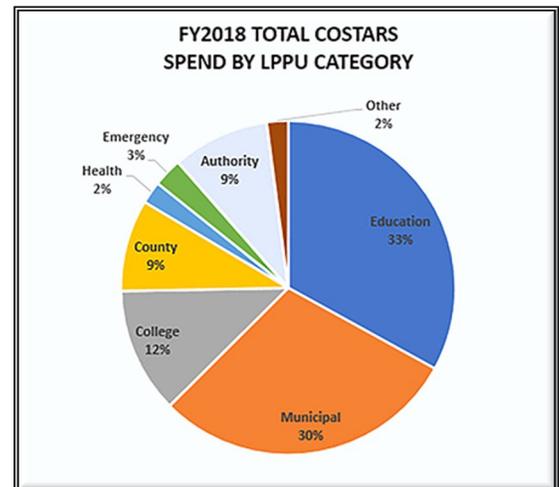
- Among COSTARS-exclusive contracts, COSTARS-3 IT Hardware achieved the **highest volume growth** of 29%.
- The contract exhibiting the **largest increase in spend** was COSTARS-30 Energy Consulting Services with an incredible 804% gain.
- Among statewide COSTARS-participating contracts, **those with the largest reported sales percentage increases** were:
 - ◆ Digital Multifunctional Devices
 - ◆ Moving and Storage Services
 - ◆ Body Armor
- Statewide COSTARS-participating contracts with the **greatest number of sales to COSTARS members** were:
 - ◆ Sodium Chloride (Road Salt)
 - ◆ Wireless Communications
 - ◆ Tires
 - ◆ Commercial Furniture

Suppliers

- The number of suppliers on COSTARS-exclusive contracts increased by 11% to 1,592.
- The number of suppliers on statewide COSTARS-participating contracts grew by 7% to 462.
- Twenty-two COSTARS-exclusive contracts increased supplier participation with 7% growth over the previous year.
- COSTARS-21 Pest Control Services doubled its participation with an addition of two suppliers.
- Five new suppliers were added to COSTARS-15 Water & Wastewater Treatment Consumables; a 33% increase from FY17.

Small and Small Diverse Businesses

- Small businesses comprised 42% of COSTARS-exclusive vendors.
- An additional 4% were small diverse businesses.
- Small and small diverse businesses accounted for 27% of total COSTARS-exclusive contract sales.
- COSTARS-9 Graphic & Printing Services gained the largest percentage of cumulative small /small diverse business participation at 80%.



Pick Up PA COSTARS: Beautiful Procurement

By Felicia Campbell,
COSTARS Marketing Manager

In the commonwealth's efforts to combat litter, the Department of Environmental Protection is partnering with the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful organization on Pennsylvania's inclusion in the Great American Clean Up. Due to COVID-19, all Pick Up Pennsylvania events originally scheduled to run from March 1 to May 31 will be postponed.

Communities across Pennsylvania are encouraged to create events to support these efforts in their areas. Events can include activities such as roadside litter clean up and recycling and e-cycling events to help individuals dispose of larger items. Register your event at www.gacofpa.org, to receive free clean up supplies such as bags, gloves and vests donated by PennDOT, the Department of Environmental Protection and Keep America Beautiful.

Other actions communities can take to reduce litter are:

- Provide public receptacles for trash, recyclables and cigarettes.
- Dispose of trash, recyclables and cigarettes in a proper receptacle.
- Place loose trash in a bag and container with a cover.
- Place recyclables in a container with a cover.

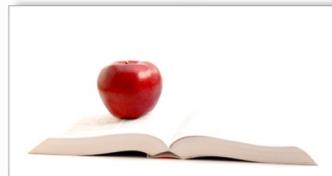
In 2019, Pick Up Pennsylvania held over 5,000 Clean Up events with over 90,000 volunteers. These events gathered in excess of 1 million pounds of materials to be recycled and over 6 million pounds of trash they were able to dispose of. Over 7,000 miles of Pennsylvania roads, shorelines and trails were cleared of debris and over 8,500 trees, shrubs and flowers were planted.

COSTARS-authorized suppliers provide competitive pricing on items to help you in your beautification efforts available under **COSTARS-5** Janitorial Supplies, **COSTARS-17** Waste, Recycling and Materials Handling Containers and **COSTARS-33** Street Lighting, Parking Meters and Street Furniture (AKA Streetscape).

Source: Township News, March 2020

Gold Star to Educators!

By Felicia Campbell,
COSTARS Marketing Manager



National Teacher Day was May 5, the day we express our appreciation of teachers and reflect on the educators who helped shape our childhood. Due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts across this country, the celebration on this day was subdued. However, now more than ever, Americans who have taken the responsibility of home-schooling their children during this stay-at-home phase appreciate the skills, patience and caring of our educators. During these last 2 months, parents have shared accolades across various social media platforms directed to the teachers – and longing for the day their children's education is back in the hands of the professionals.

Teachers are very near and dear to my heart. I was raised by two parents who devoted their professional lives to the instruction of the community's children. From history, driver's education, math, English, to theater, my parents had my education covered. I can still remember evenings spent at the kitchen table arguing over geometry. I just didn't understand it...until... one night my mother calmly said "It's a puzzle. Look at it like a puzzle." She began working out an equation and explained its relationship to the geometric shape and like a light switch turning on in my head, I understood!

Teachers are amazing human beings. When a student is frustrated, teachers remain composed. When a student's task just doesn't seem to make sense, the teacher discovers the path of clarity. They are motivators who help our youth reach their greatest potential. To me, teachers are super-human.

I raise an apple to all of you in one of the most noblest of professions! Thank you, much obliged, much appreciated, and all the other synonyms!

Schools budgeting for resource upgrades and replenishments, remember COSTARS product offerings range from A-Z! Be sure to study your [Guide to COSTARS Contracts](#) to find facility products and services as well as office, school and library supplies for your school at discounted pricing!

COSTARS Supplier Reminders



- ☞ Registering as a vendor with the Commonwealth of PA does not imply you are an awarded COSTARS supplier. To become a COSTARS supplier, you must submit a bid for the respective COSTARS-exclusive contract that applies to your business. Please visit the COSTARS website at www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS, then select the COSTARS Supplier Information link on the right-hand side of the page. On the Supplier Information page, select the Bidding Opportunities link. Once your business has been approved and the administrative fee has been paid, it is then recognized as an awarded COSTARS supplier.
- ☞ If you update your vendor record in the Administrator/Bidder section of the PA Supplier Portal, you must also update your vendor data (contract) in the COSTARS system by selecting the Enterprise Applications/COSTARS links in the portal. **Please note:** You must also contact your commodity specialist to update your Bid Item Workbook. Additionally, suppliers should contact their commodity specialist to update vendor name, business ownership, or FEIN changes.
- ☞ If suppliers offer the "cost plus" pricing standard, they must be willing to provide a cost sheet, if asked, to the purchaser (member) or to COSTARS administrators.
- ☞ If suppliers provide a custom price list or manufacturer's price list, they must honor the pricing on that list, so it's very important to update the price list on, at least, a yearly basis when renewing. If a manufacturer updates their base price list during the suppliers' contract year, the supplier may, **upon notifying COSTARS**, reflect the new price list, but cannot change their discount.



~ The Butler Eagle reported in January that the Mars Area School Board approved the purchase of whiteboards from COSTARS supplier Kurtz Brothers.

~ In a February Butler Eagle article, Middlesex supervisors approved the purchase of a 2021 Peterbilt dump truck body from COSTARS supplier Stephenson Equipment and an International truck through the COSTARS Program.

~ According to the *Courier Express*, in February, the DuBois Area School Board recently awarded bids for several projects in the district. The replacement of windows and doors at the bus entrances to the middle school was awarded to Glass Erectors Inc. through the COSTARS Program and replacement of the outdoor freezer at the high school was awarded to TriMark through the COSTARS Program.

~ In a March *Cranberry Eagle* article, Mars Area School Board considered the purchase of a new chiller through COSTARS, Pennsylvania's cooperative purchasing program.



COSTARS In The News

The COSTARS Team is always looking for stories in the news about COSTARS members who are saving money by purchasing through the COSTARS Program. Tell us about your successful money-saving purchases and we will be sure to include them in our next edition of the *COSTARS Connection* newsletter!

Email your story to us at GS-PACostars@pa.gov or connect with us via our social media accounts (see links on page six of this newsletter).

Learning with COSTARS *Real Time!*

Beginning in June, the COSTARS Team will resume its monthly webinar series. These interactive webinars aim to educate potential and current members and suppliers about the COSTARS Program, new contracts, contract and program updates, as well as tips for searching contracts and completing a bid package.

Check out the schedule below and register for the webinar(s) of your choice!

- June 2 Energize Your Bottom Line.
- July 21 Get Into Gear!
- Aug. 11 COSTARS - We Connect Suppliers with Buyers!
- Sept. 22 Equipped to Serve.
- Oct. 6 Purchasing and Fleet Card Programs - Forge Ahead With Discounts.
- Nov. 4 COSTARS - Effective and Efficient Procurement.

To learn more or to register, visit the Program Resources page of the COSTARS website at <https://www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS/Program-Resources/Pages/default.aspx>.



Important System Update for COSTARS Members

Recently, the PA Login Service you previously used to log into the COSTARS system to update your member profile or submit the Road Salt Participation Agreement form was changed to the PA Keystone Login System.

To ensure you have continued access to your COSTARS member account, please migrate your account to the new system by completing a new User Registration at <https://keystonelogin.pa.gov/>.

Once you have created a new registration, you can log into the COSTARS system with your new credentials. **Please Note:** You must associate yourself with your organization in the COSTARS System again to obtain access to your account (option #2).

If you have any issues migrating your account to the Keystone Login System, please contact us at 1-866-768-7827.



COSTARS On The Road

Recent Events

- ◆ Feb. 25 COSTARS Member Advisory Group Webinar
- ◆ March 19 PSATS Boot Camp - Cooperative Purchasing 101 Webinar
- ◆ April 21 COSTARS - Do You Feel Secure With Your Safety Preparedness? Webinar

Upcoming Events

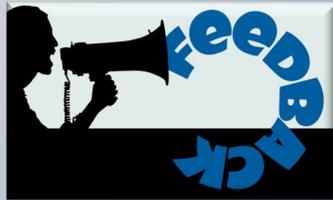
- ◆ June 2 COSTARS- Energize Your Bottom Line Webinar
- ◆ July 21 COSTARS - Get Into Gear! Webinar
- ◆ Aug. 11 COSTARS - We Connect Suppliers with Buyers! Webinar
- ◆ Aug. 16 CCAP - County Commissioners Association of PA Annual Conference and Trade Show Seven Springs

COSTARS Marketing Managers make it their mission to spread the message about the COSTARS Program, recruit new members and suppliers, and provide training about the program. Marketing Managers Kim Bullivant and Felicia Campbell travel throughout the commonwealth speaking at conferences, workshops and seminars sponsored by associations, suppliers, universities, legislators, chambers of commerce and others.

To submit a request for a COSTARS representative to speak or conduct a training session for members or suppliers at an upcoming event, please contact Kim or Felicia at toll-free telephone number 1-866-768-7827 or email to GS-PaCostars@pa.gov. The COSTARS Marketing Team's Calendar of Events is also available on the COSTARS website on the [COSTARS Program Resources](#) page.

Members and suppliers - we want to hear from you!

- What do you like about the newsletter? What can we do to make it better?
- Tell us how you saved money by using the COSTARS Program.
- Tell us more about how you helped a customer get the best value for their money.



Email us at GS-PACostars@pa.gov with your comments!

Remember to Keep Your COSTARS Profile Up To Date!

To ensure your organization or business continues to receive important program and contract information from the COSTARS Team, update your information online today! To access the online training module for step-by-step instructions visit:

Members: <https://www.copacustomhelp.state.pa.us/gm/folder-1.11.97278?originalContext=1.11.97211>.

Suppliers: <https://www.copacustomhelp.state.pa.us/gm/folder-1.11.97299?originalContext=1.11.97212>.



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<https://www.facebook.com/PAGenServices/>

Visit our Twitter page at:

<https://twitter.com/PAGenServices/>

Visit our LinkedIn page at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/pagenservices/>

Remember, this does not replace important updates we send to you via email, so please maintain your member and supplier information in the COSTARS system.

COSTARS Connection

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Janice Pistor - Chief Procurement Officer
Dawn Eshenour - Chief, Supplier Dev. & Support Div.
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Further information on the COSTARS program is available by phone at 1-866-768-7827 or by visiting the [COSTARS](#) website at www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS.

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At DGS, our mission is to help government operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely - delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians.

