

# Benefits of Professional Certification



National Association of  
State Procurement Officials

## **THE PROFESSION OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

As trusted stewards of precious taxpayer dollars, government procurement professionals are held to the highest standard of excellence, requiring them to exercise the strictest level of care and judiciousness in conducting government business.

The ongoing development of academic degrees in public procurement, coupled with the increasing importance of professional certifications, continue to elevate the profession of public procurement as a chosen and distinguished career path.

Uniformity in professional certification criteria is critical if a practitioner's work is to be recognized as a unique discipline. The Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC) bodies of knowledge are accepted standards in state and local government procurement, ensuring all members of the public procurement profession uphold consistent principles and standards, regardless of where they may practice.

## **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

A professional certification program like the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO) and Certified Public Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) designations administered by the UPPCC establishes a verified system of distinguishing professionals who have met an advanced level of training and work experience in public procurement.

The UPPCC is composed of a Board of Directors, as well as a Board of Examiners, whose primary responsibility is to develop and administer exams.

## **BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION**

Professional certification can have many benefits for the individual certificant, procurement office, its staff, and the profession itself. For the procurement office, encouraging or requiring certification demonstrates a knowledgeable and capable procurement staff.

### **Benefits to the Public Procurement Officer**

- Professional recognition
- Personal satisfaction
- Increased knowledge and skills
- Continued professional development opportunities and a defined path for growth
- Increased credibility with suppliers
- Demonstrated commitment to the profession
- Portability of professional certifications, which are earned by the individual and go with them wherever their professional path may take them
- Prominence of professional certifications on resumes—often a factor in hiring decisions and salary negotiations

## **Benefits to the Public Procurement Office**

- Sets a standard of excellence within the organization
- Increases the professionalism, skills and accountability of procurement staff
- Helps foster ethical behavior of staff
- Produces better purchasing and contracting outcomes by improving competencies of employees with purchasing and contracting responsibilities
- Promotes responsible expenditure of public funds that complies with state purchasing laws and rules
- Ensures the skills and competencies of employees
- Promotes recognition of staff as purchasing professionals
- Provides professional development opportunities to staff and a defined path for continuous growth
- Provides objective benchmarks for evaluating skills

"Certification has provided an opportunity for me to serve as a professional resource to those considering certification. It has also broadened my professional network and sense of responsibility to give back to the Procurement community. I have a pride in the accomplishment, though it wasn't my initial focus. And since achieving each certification, the information gained from the process helped me feel prepared to serve as a leader."

*—Brenda Derge, CPPO, CPPB Wisconsin*

## **UPPCC CERTIFICATIONS**

The UPPCC programs are designed specifically for state and local government public procurement officers. Only those individuals who have government-specific procurement experience are eligible to achieve this designation.

Earning UPPCC certification demonstrates that an individual has successfully achieved a high standard of competency in public procurement, helping to assure the public that sound decisions reflecting maximum value for the taxpayers will be made.

With more than 10,000 professionals certified in the United States, Canada, and other countries, the CPPO and CPPB programs are highly respected among procurement professionals and employers in public procurement. Often a CPPB or CPPO certification is a required or desired job qualification for state, county or municipal government level procurement positions.

After an individual meets the UPPCC eligibility requirements and successfully passes the exam, their credentials are valid for a period of five years. To maintain certification, the individual must complete the UPPCC recertification process.

UPPCC is an independent entity formed to govern and administer the CPPO and CPPB credentialing programs to the public procurement profession. UPPCC alone verifies candidate eligibility, develops and delivers certification examinations, and issues the CPPO and CPPB credentials.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

Unlike most procurement certification programs, the UPPCC requires a body of work experience within the public sector. This work experience must be complemented by coursework/training specifically within the field of procurement.

Effective July 2019, UPPCC announced the following changes to the eligibility requirements for both the Certified Public Procurement Officer and Certified Professional Public Buyer certifications.

### **New requirements for the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO)**

- Bachelor's Degree from a post-secondary accredited institution of higher learning;
- Ninety-six contact hours of procurement-related coursework/training completed within the previous 10 years, and
- Five years of procurement experience within the previous 10 years of which a minimum of three years is in a management or supervisory position. A minimum of 50 percent of the required years of experience must be in the public sector. The remaining experience may be from either the public or private sector.

### **New requirements for the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB)**

- Completion of a two-year post-secondary educational program OR two additional years of experience;
- Seventy-two contact hours of procurement-related coursework/training completed within the previous 10 years, and
- Three years of procurement experience within the previous 10 years. A minimum of 50 percent of the required years of experience must be in public sector. Remaining experience may be from either public or private sector.

# FIVE REASONS TO GET YOUR CPPO, CPPB\*

*Jason Soza, CPPO, CPPB  
Former CPO, Alaska*



## 1. VALIDATION

A certification can lend authority to a procurement professional's counsel and validate that through their experience and certification, they are well qualified to guide the agency's purchasing function.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT

Jobs in public procurement can be highly competitive. Having a CPPB or CPPO can help to set you apart from others by showing that you have gone above and beyond to secure a professional certification.

## 3. JOB SECURITY

As budgets are tightened and agencies look to their procurement function to help save money, those who have continued their education and obtained their certification represent a valuable asset and investment to the organization.

## 4. PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Procurement in and of itself is a great, challenging profession that changes every day, but setting a goal to achieve CPPB/CPPO and working toward it can provide a welcome extracurricular challenge.

## 5. NETWORKING

Becoming certified places you in a small group of other certified procurement officials. As you come across other certificants, whether in person or through social media, having a common base of knowledge is a great start to establishing a mutually beneficial professional relationship.

\*excerpt from LinkedIn post shared in 2015 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-reasons-get-your-cppb-cppo-jason-soza-cppo-cppb/>

## HOW CAN NASPO HELP?



**EVERYTHING PROCUREMENT. ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.**

Procurement professionals interested in pursuing initial UPPCC certification or seeking recertification as a CPPB or CPPO can benefit from participation in NASPO's Procurement U prep courses, which are offered each Spring and Fall. These courses are an excellent self-study tool combined with facilitated review by certified instructors of the UPPCC Body of Knowledge.

While learning elements within the prep courses cover each domain topic, Procurement U's CPPO and CPPB Prep Courses are not designed to be instructional in nature. Rather, they are intended to help gauge exam readiness by providing access to resources for each domain, live facilitated discussions, exam practice questions and more.

NASPO members and all other state government employees, including employees of public, nonprofit universities, qualify for a discounted price of \$300 for the prep courses. The \$480 standard price applies to all other learners, including federal, county and city government employees.

To learn more about Procurement U's prep courses and see a complete list of course offerings, visit: [www.naspo.org/procurementu](http://www.naspo.org/procurementu).

### **State and Local Government Procurement: A Practical Guide**

Whether you are a seasoned procurement professional or new to the field, this guide should provide you a valuable reference tool in your efforts. The latest edition of NASPO's flagship guide features many changes, improvements and additional content.

This 3rd Edition of *State & Local Government: A Practical Guide* identifies the current and rapidly changing forces that are encountered by state or local government procurement officers and suggests ways in which they may be addressed. The text also describes the principles and practices that are at the heart of a procurement system that must remain both flexible and accountable. A combination of the factors that are discussed in the pages of this Practical Guide indicate the challenges facing public procurement officers are rapidly evolving.

To learn more, contact [procurementu@naspo.org](mailto:procurementu@naspo.org)

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