



# Buy the Way

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**Official Newsletter of the  
Operational Services Division**  
January 2019

## Which Contract – MRO or Trades?

When it comes to facilities management, buyers have two options:

1. Purchase thousands of products, supplies, and equipment through four Maintenance, Repair, and Operations (MRO) Statewide Contracts, or
2. Use the four Trades contracts.

Deciding which of these options to pursue boils down to whether labor will be handled in-house.



Basically, if the purchasing entity will be performing the labor, examine your extensive options through the MRO contracts. If the project requires you to hire a contractor to perform the necessary labor, investigate the Trades contracts which include labor and materials as part of the overall cost.

### MRO Option

For example, an organization determines it needs a new boiler. They have the in-house expertise to know which boiler is best suited to their situation and the capability to install. This organization may review their boiler options on several Statewide Contracts:

- [FAC100](#) covers a wide range of products, supplies, and equipment across various facilities specialties, including mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems. In this case, Category 4 provides HVAC and refrigeration products and supplies with seven awarded vendors to support the category.
- [FAC101](#) should be another consideration, offering MRO industrial supplies, in particular, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration products, with four awarded vendors.
- Finally, [FAC105](#), providing retail MRO products and supplies from two vendors, is another option, with walk-in stores around the Commonwealth.



Buyers may reach out to vendors directly or solicit quotes through [COMMBUYS](#).

What if the need for a new boiler is immediate? Under these circumstances, the organization should consult our list of contractors designated as [emergency suppliers](#) who are able to respond to buyers' urgent needs. We should note that all FAC100, FAC101, and FAC105 vendors have this designation.

### Trades Option

If the organization doesn't have in-house staff to install the new boiler, reviewing options through the boiler services category on the TRD01 tradespersons contract is a sound course of action. Use the [Trades Index](#) to locate awarded vendors, pricing, and prompt pay discounts for boiler services in your county (and you also may view the 26 other trades services categories available on contract).

[Continued on Page 2](#)

## Training for Buyers

**COMMBUYS Purchasing for Eligible Non-Profits**  
February 5 (Webinar)

**COMMBUYS PunchOut and Line Item Catalog Ordering**  
February 7 (Webinar)

**Strategic Sourcing Certificate Program (SSCP)**  
Five Days  
February 6, 13, 20, 27 & March 6 (Boston)

**Essentials of State Procurement**  
February 11 (Boston)

**Introduction to Statewide Contracts and COMMBUYS**  
February 12 (Boston)

[Click here to see the full calendar.](#)

## Which Contract – MRO or Trades? (continued from first page)

If you decide to take this path, keep in mind that trades vendors' qualifications go through comprehensive review: At the time of award, OSD verifies current trades licenses and certifications, confirms the vendor carries all required insurance, OSHA 10 certification, and checks business verification information provided by the Secretary of State's Corporation Division or the municipality where the business was established.<sup>1</sup> Use COMMBUYS to forward a Statement of Work to your selected vendors or contact them by email or phone.

Have a more pressing need? Review vendors' bidder response forms posted in COMMBUYS that provide emergency contact information and include average response times for counties they support.

Note that trades projects are subject to the [Prevailing Wage Law](#) and may be subject to construction procurement laws, as well. Refer to the [TRD Contract User Guides](#) for general guidance and resources.

### Send your MRO and Trades Statewide Contract questions our way!

*MRO Questions:*

[Michael Maxim](#), 617-720-3112  
([FAC100](#), [FAC101](#), [FAC105](#), [FAC107](#))

*Trades Questions:*

[Betty Fernandez](#), 617-720-3133 ([TRD01](#), [TRD04](#))  
[Katherine Morse](#), 617-720-3153 ([TRD02](#), [TRD03](#))

Don't miss our related article, *OSD Trades Contracts Come in Handy in Needham*, on [Page 6](#).

- 1 Prior to engaging a contractor, it is the responsibility of the Eligible Entity to obtain current copies of all applicable employment requirements, such as licensing, etc., for all employees working on a project for a Contractor.

## Training for Businesses

**Quarterly Report Overview Statewide Contract Vendors**  
February 5 (Webinar)

**Supplier Diversity Plan (SDP) Overview for Bidders and Prime Contractors**  
February 19 (Webinar)

**Supplier Diversity Plan (SDP) Overview for Certified Businesses**  
February 19 (Webinar)

**COMMBUYS Vendors: Essentials for the Seller Role**  
February 21 (Boston)

**Demystifying the RFR: Understanding the Importance of the Request for Response**  
March 4 (Boston)

[Click here to see the full calendar.](#)

## Doing Business with the State



Are you a [COMMBUYS registered vendor](#) or other business interested in working with the state? If so, you should know about one of our popular vendor training courses: *Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth*.

This free class reviews the state's goods and services procurement process, provides an overview of OSD's business programs, such as [Supplier Diversity Office](#)

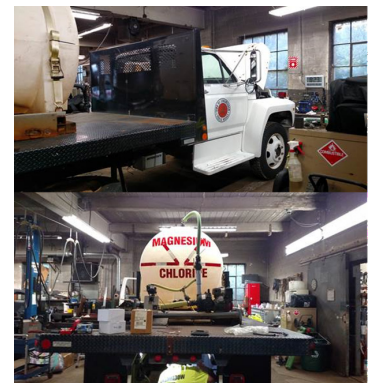
certification programs, instructs vendors on how to find bid opportunities in COMMBUYS, and offers suggestions for marketing your business to public purchasers.

We're currently offering [classes](#) in Boston, Cambridge, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester.

Review additional vendor training opportunities on our [website](#). Send questions to [OSD Training](#).

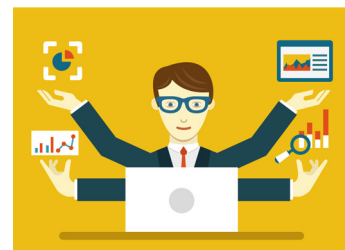
## Surplus Property Saves the Day in Longmeadow

The Town of Longmeadow DPW was in need of a truck to haul their de-icing equipment, but a tight budget prevented them from making that purchase. Through the Federal Surplus Property Program, they obtained an F600 flatbed truck (pictured right), saving the Town more than \$20,000. Visit [OSD's Surplus Property Program](#) webpage to learn how to take advantage of the state and federal Surplus Property Programs.



COMMBUYS serves as an electronic filing cabinet for all procurement and purchasing activity. Its use increases transparency when entities post bid opportunities for vendor response and it enables organizations to capture valuable purchasing data that can be referenced by the organization at any point in time.

Requests for Payment Authorizations (RPAs) are essential ingredients of COMMBUYS spending data. In particular situations, RPAs allow buyers to record purchases in COMMBUYS *after* purchases have been made. For organizations following 801 CMR 21.00 — which are required to use COMMBUYS, as well as organizations that choose to use the tool — recording RPAs in COMMBUYS represent a best practice for capturing comprehensive purchasing data.



There are two distinct types of RPAs:

- RPA Release Requisitions are used to record Statewide Contract (SWC) purchases when the normal COMMBUYS SWC purchase order process is not possible. Instances include:
  - Situations where the final purchase price is not known until receipt of an invoice, such as purchase of propane ([ENE46](#)), staff augmentation ([ITS63](#)), or network services ([ITT46](#)), among others; or
  - Unanticipated circumstances, such as replacement of a flat tire ([VEH97](#)) or windshield ([VEH103](#)).Buyers may find a list of RPA-enabled contracts using the Expanded Search in the [Statewide Contract Index](#), though OSD recommends buyers additionally consult the individual [Contract User Guide](#) to determine whether RPAs are permitted with limitations. Link to the COMMBUYS [Job Aid](#) for processing instructions.
- RPA Requisitions are used to record *off-contract* purchases when the normal procurement process is impractical due to impending need (emergency purchases) and for one-time incidental purchases up to \$10,000. Link to the COMMBUYS [Job Aid](#).

The three-hour [Advanced Purchasing in COMMBUYS](#) class covers RPA transactions in detail, along with Solicitation Enabled Release functionality (buyers easily obtain quotes from SWC vendors through COMMBUYS). Check the [Buyer training schedule](#) for upcoming classes. Note that the *COMMBUYS Purchasing* class is a prerequisite.

Direct questions to the [COMMBUYS Help Desk](#) at 888-MA-State (627-8283).

Read our [blog](#) about how aggregate COMMBUYS data is changing the Commonwealth's approach to sourcing.



## COMMBUYS Helpful Hints for Buyers

### Importance of the Bid Description Field

Before posting a bid in COMMBUYS, think carefully about the name you will assign the bid using the Bid Description field, which, for all intents and purposes, is the title of your bid. The Bid Description field accepts up to 100 characters (including spaces) and should include language that clearly identifies what the buyer is seeking.

#### How the Bid Description Field is Used

The Bid Description field title is used to display your bid in COMMBUYS and is what vendors see as they search for bid opportunities. Along with the bid number, the information from the Bid Description field is included in COMMBUYS bid notification emails and it presents an opportunity to catch vendors' attention as they review what could be a large number of emails. For quote requests against a Statewide Contract, OSD recommends prominently displaying the Statewide Contract number, e.g. OFF44, as part of the Bid Description field.

*For quote requests against a Statewide Contract, OSD recommends prominently displaying the Statewide Contract number, e.g. OFF44, as part of the Bid Description field.*

#### Bid Description Modifications Restricted

Buyers should keep in mind that the Bid Description field cannot be edited after the bid is approved. If changes are deemed necessary, the buyer must cancel the existing bid and repost using the new bid description. COMMBUYS cloning functionality may be used, but ensure the Bid Description field is updated before approval. One further note — the equivalent description field on a PO does not carry the same restriction: it may be modified at any time.

#### Questions?

Email us at [COMMBUYS@mass.gov](mailto:COMMBUYS@mass.gov) or call 888-MA-State (627-8283).



# COMMBUYS Loyalty Program Update

Results through December 31 are in! [Link](#) to the latest COMMBUYS Loyalty Program standings!

## Comprehensive Badge Earner Status

As of the end of 2018, 33 organizations merited Comprehensive Badge Earner status, having earned badges across all categories. This quarter, we welcome two new organizations meeting those criteria. Congratulations to the following entities:

- Executive Office of Technology Services and Security
- Town of Holbrook

COMMBUYS Organization Name	Loyalty Program Class	COMMBUYS Loyalty Program Points
Select Organization		
PURCHASING		
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level
PROCUREMENT		
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level
ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH		
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level
TRAINING		
Best Buyer	Achievement Level	Achievement Level

It's easy to view your [Program standings](#). Select your entity's name from the drop-down.

### New eProcurement Pro Level Five Winners

City of Easthampton  
Holyoke Housing Authority  
Town of Concord  
Town of Duxbury  
Town of Leicester  
Town of New Marlborough  
Town of Orleans  
Town of Rockport  
Town of Sudbury  
Town of Winchester

### Spotlight – eProcurement Pro

The eProcurement Pro badge recognizes entities using COMMBUYS to post bids. Organizations are given one point for each opportunity posted.

So far, 770 organizations have used COMMBUYS to post bids and 184 have reached Level 5 achievement! This quarter, we welcome 10 new organizations to this distinguished group – see our call out box for details. Fifty-three organizations are close with Level 4 badge status. Check your [organization's stats](#) to see where you stand in this category.

Executive Departments are reminded that they also must post bid awards in COMMBUYS to be eligible to earn eProcurement Pro points.

Congratulations to all our winners!



## COMMBUYS Annual Security Review

Over the next few weeks, COMMBUYS Organization Administrators (OAs) will be asked to review and update COMMBUYS user records assigned to their organizations. This annual review process ensures the validity of those who have access to COMMBUYS, requiring OAs to confirm each user's Department, Location, and security roles and make needed updates.

Organizations have 21 days from the time of notification to complete their review. **Once completed, OAs should select the Security Review Complete *Submit* button located in their notification email.**

Contact the [COMMBUYS Help Desk](#) with questions at 888-MA-State (627-8283).



## Ready for Winter in Beverly

The white stuff piled up in the City of Beverly, thanks to their recent road salt shipment. They saved a bunch, too, using the [VEH107](#) Statewide Contract — approximately \$55,000, according to Dave Gelineau, City of Beverly Purchasing Agent.

“While I can’t tell you how to make it *not* snow, I can tell you how to save lots of money when it does. We were able to buy the same product from the same road salt vendor we used last year, but at Statewide Contract pricing! It doesn’t get any easier than that! Thank you OSD!” Dave exclaimed.

Be like Dave and learn how you, too, may save time and money through the use of Statewide Contracts. Contact OSD’s [Local Government Enablement team](#) for more information.



Dave Gelineau, City of Beverly Purchasing Agent.

# STATEWIDE CONTRACT UPDATES | JANUARY 2019

[Procurement Schedule](#)

[Statewide Contract Reference Guide](#)

[COMMBUYS](#)

[Statewide Contract User Guides](#)

[Save\\$mart](#)

## Notice to Energy Buyers



As of January 1, 2019, Statewide Contract Diesel ([ENE40](#)), Gasoline ([ENE41](#)), and Heating Oil ([ENE45](#)) buyers no longer will see a charge for the Federal Oil Spill Tax Fund on their monthly invoices; the tax supporting the fund expired at the end of the 2018 calendar year. At this time, the future of the Federal Oil Spill Tax Fund is uncertain, but updates will be provided as information becomes available. Statewide Contract Vendors are aware of this update.

## ENE46 Propane Notification

Osterman Propane, a vendor on [ENE46](#), recently sent out an update to their Terms and Conditions. Buyers should disregard this notice and refer instead to the original contract documentation posted in [COMMBUYS](#). Furthermore, buyers are not required to pay Hazardous Materials Safety and Compliance Fees should they appear on Osterman Propane invoices.

Refer questions to [Michael Woods](#), Contract Manager, at 617-720-3191.

## Announcing the New HLS06 PunchOut for Grainger

OSD is pleased to announce the Grainger [HLS06](#) PunchOut catalog, offering products across the homeland security, public safety, and traffic safety arenas. With this addition, both awarded HLS06 vendors, [Grainger](#) and [Safeware, Inc.](#), offer this convenient way to purchase.

The Grainger HLS06 Buyer Navigation Guide, attached to their G2B MBPO in [COMMBUYS](#), outlines their PunchOut catalog functionality. Among the described features, the PunchOut allows buyers to enter quotes received from Grainger in the COMMBUYS PunchOut which summarizes the associated items and pricing so they are ready for purchase.

Reference our flyer detailing [all COMMBUYS PunchOuts](#), spanning a wide range of product categories to include MRO, medical and office supplies, and information technology.



[COMMBUYS PunchOut Flyer](#)

Forward questions about [HLS06](#) to [Steve Lyons](#) at 617-720-3373.

# COMMBUYS

## Help Desk Assistance

Questions about COMMBUYS?  
Contact us for help.

1-888-627-8283  
[COMMBUYS@mass.gov](mailto:COMMBUYS@mass.gov)

Staff are available  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET,  
Monday through Friday.

## Share Your VEH103 Purchasing Experience

The [VEH103](#) contract for Windshield and Glass Replacement for Vehicles is up for renewal and OSD is gathering feedback to ensure the contract is meeting buyer expectations.

Take our brief [survey](#).





[Sign-up for OSD  
email communications!](#)

## About OSD

The Operational Services Division (OSD) administers the procurement process for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Agencies by establishing Statewide Contracts for commonly purchased goods and services. OSD's mission is to create and promote dynamic programs and services that anticipate and fulfill our customers' needs. Our operational and oversight activities facilitate and guide the evaluation, acquisition, management, and disposition of goods and services. We strive to deliver a personalized customer experience by creating a climate of communication and cooperation and leveraging innovative business techniques.

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## OSD Trades Contracts Come in Handy in Needham

The Town of Needham has made wide use of the state's Trades contracts over the last two years. Buildings in Needham, including the Town Hall, school facilities, and the Needham Public Library, have been the beneficiary of various Statewide Contract Trades services — plumbing, HVAC, glass replacement, signage, and painting services, for example.

Cecilia Simchak, who handles building maintenance for the Needham Department of Public Works, talks about their experience using the Trades Statewide Contracts.



Needham Town Hall

*"Now when we need a Trades service, we check to see if it's offered on the Trades contracts. It's easier and, compliance wise, it's safer to pull a vendor from the state contract."*

**Cecilia Simchak**

Administrative Analyst

Needham Department of Public Works

"We've found it so helpful to have these services on contract. They save us time not having to bid these jobs out and the contractors have been very responsive. Now when we need a Trades service, we check to see if it's offered on the Trades contracts. It's easier and, compliance wise, it's safer for us to pull a vendor from the state contract."

As designed, Needham uses the [Trades Index](#) to search for awarded Trades contractors in Norfolk county. The Index, which is updated each week to include newly onboarded

vendors, makes it simple to search by Trades category and county in a few clicks, quickly displaying available contractors, pricing, and contact information.

To simplify their processes further, Needham routinely sends out requests for quotes through [COMMBUYS](#) and has encouraged local vendors to join the state contract.

### OSD Trades Contracts Taking Hold

Use of the Trades contracts was made possible back in November 2016 when [An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government](#) was signed into law. Among its many initiatives to simplify municipal processes, the legislation opened the opportunity to reintroduce the popular Trades Statewide Contracts by raising labor threshold to \$50,000. It paved the way for municipal organizations, Executive Departments, and other eligible entities to easily engage Trades services.

From the onset, OSD recognized it would take time to realize robust use of the [Trades contracts](#) as many organizations established their own agreements with vendors when the state's initial Trades contracts were dissolved in 2014. Today, OSD's four Statewide Contracts covering 27 trade service categories are gaining popularity.

"Organizations are seeing the benefits of having 27 state-sanctioned Trades services categories available for their use," asserts Maureen Barends, Director of Strategic Sourcing Services at OSD. "It is indeed gratifying to see use of the contracts taking hold across our buyer communities."

Learn more about the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Trades contracts at [mass.gov/trades](http://mass.gov/trades).