

# CUSTOMER STRATEGIES

*High Level*



RISING TO THE  
**NEXT LEVEL**

*NJPA's Approach to High Level  
Contract Use & Adoption Strategies*

## WHO WE ARE ...

# National Joint Powers Alliance®

In the past years, recent months and weeks, various High level departments of procurement within government and education across the country have been expressing interest in adopting NJPA national cooperative contracts as their own contracts and/or allowing the use of NJPA contracts within their respective agencies. Due to a variety of factors, agencies have been looking to NJPA and continuing to give consideration for use and adoption to established contracts that have been solicited, evaluated and awarded by NJPA. There are several reasons why this is happening and why agencies are valuing NJPA cooperative contract solutions.

**Our goal is to help procurement departments understand the value of NJPA contracts** as they are asked to develop comprehensive High level proposals. Currently we have multiple agencies that have:

- adopted NJPA contracts at the agency level;
- made purchases through one or more of our contracts;
- provided formal communications validating our organization;
- entered into membership relationship with NJPA; and/or
- made law and policy changes allowing NJPA contract use at the local government and education level.

We have come a long way in increasing our acceptance by many agencies.



The image shows the NJPA logo, which consists of the letters "NJPA" in a large, white, serif font. A red and white swoosh is positioned behind the "N". Below the letters, the text "National Joint Powers Alliance®" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the logo is a dark blue field with a stylized American flag pattern of stars and stripes. In the lower-left corner of the logo area, there is a faint, light blue image of a classical building with a dome, likely a state capitol building.

## National Joint Powers Alliance®

National Joint Powers Alliance® is a national public service agency committed to serving our Members nationally and locally through a variety of valued programs. As a public agency, we are committed to providing cooperative solutions that assist Government and Education entities as they strive for efficient public service. We are only able to do this as we work together, creating a unified alliance that is valued by both NJPA Members and the business community.

## WHY ARE HIGH LEVEL GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS INTERESTED IN NJPA CONTRACTS?



High Level agencies that would normally do their own contracting are experiencing the same type of budget and staffing cut backs that all other government and education agencies have been experiencing. This results in less time and staff to facilitate the required bid process and establish procurement contracts necessary to meet their needs. When they do facilitate a bid process during these economic times, less qualified and lower performing vendors are responding and "buying the business." High level procurement requires a high level of execution and performance by its awarded vendors. In many cases, NJPA's high quality vendors do not end up on the winning end of a low bid process. But in all cases, the agency would prefer and be better served by the high quality vendors such as those contracted vendor solutions that are part of the NJPA family of vendors.

Our contracts focus on a pathway to help agencies get what they want and deserve. This usually starts with a credible vendor and high quality contract solution. Along with the structure of NJPA as an organization and our accepted contracting process, the NJPA world class vendors will always be one of the major reasons why agencies are continuing to show strong interest in NJPA contracts.

Adopting an NJPA contract as an agency contract is one way that agencies can secure high quality contract

solutions through proven and desired vendors. Another reason that prompts this arrangement is the fact that an agency cannot easily change its own process, but it can recognize the NJPA contracting process as an acceptable model of contracting that meets their contracting requirements. Additionally, agencies are bound by the requirement of "specifications" which can be limiting to our high quality vendors in an evaluation process.

As a result of our "solutions based solicitations" and overall contracting process, Agencies have access to our vendors' full line of products, equipment and services under contract. Agencies are finding NJPA solutions serve as a real solid "contract gap filler." Procurement department primary function is to establish purchasing pathways and contracts for use by their departments. If their departments have a need or use for a contract category, there is a good chance the procurement department will spend the time to solicit and secure a contract to create the purchasing pathway.

In reality, we are witnessing High level procurement slowly change the way organizations do business by their attitudes and action toward "cooperative contracts". We as a contracting agency and our NJPA contracted vendors have a role and responsibility to do our part to help government and educational procurement make it happen.



*Action steps: These are first steps for your team*

## STRATEGY: DETERMINE LEVEL-ONE AGENCIES



### Research your specific agency contract placements and landscape:

- Determine where you, as an organization, have contracts and where you need to fill a product or equipment gap and desire contracts at the agency level.
- Note any politics or conflicts that would not compliment an agency contract adoption of an NJPA contract.
- Determine if your organization has a current contract solution in place in the category that satisfies your needs. If you have a solution you have secured on your own through your own contracting process, it may be hard for you to add a NJPA contract due to potential vendor conflicts and even possible lawsuits by current agency contract vendors.
- As a continued part of your research, consider the “hot topics” of your agency. What is going on in the Governor’s office or congressional discussion at the capital that could affect the decisions of your procurement officials? Consider and take a pulse on what is in the news, locally and nationally. You may help your organization by threading in a solution you know is of interest.
- Periodically, NJPA communicates with government agencies via a quick reference “NJPA Contract Selection” form. This form lists all NJPA contracts and a column offering the opportunity for agencies to indicate interest and request a proposal based on a specific NJPA contracts.



### The Best Case Scenario

- You have done your research and determined a procurement category that would be a good candidate for an NJPA contract adoption and it appears to be a good fit for your agency.
- Through your research, you can determine that NJPA contract adoption is a gap filling solution for your agency when there is an expressed or demonstrated need and interest. You have determined that you do not have a contract solution in place to meet your needs due to a variety of other reasons it and does not look like you will have time to facilitate your own process in the near future.
- Politics and/or laws allow for contract adoption and allow the use of national cooperative contracts.

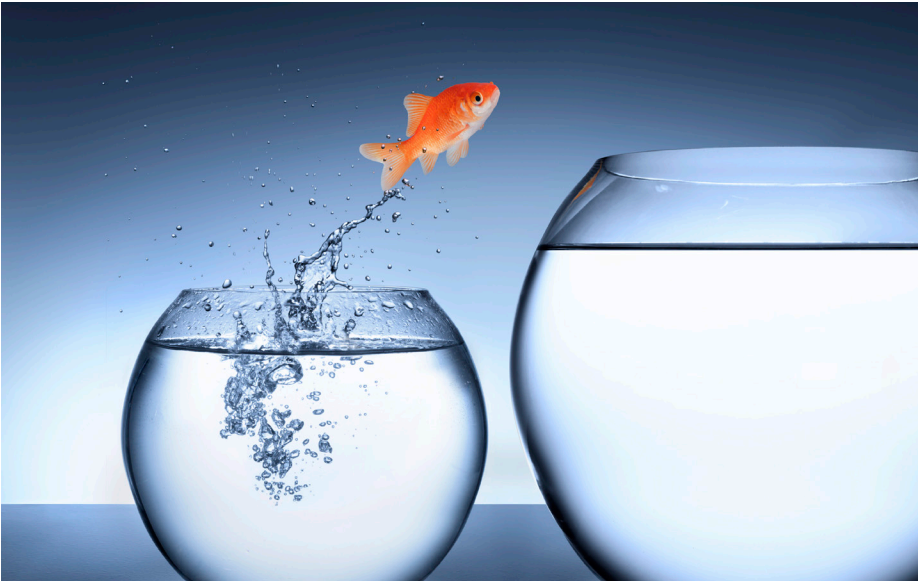




## LEVEL-ONE STATE

Once you have determined a priority list of the commodities that are in the best position for contract adoption, you now have the ability to develop a game plan. Timing or urgent need are usually factors. You are now in a position to set our NJPA High level strategy in motion to make calls with management and set meetings to communicate within your agency to move the contract adoption process forward.

- If your agency is interested and if needed, NJPA can be a part of the proposal presentation.
- Once your agency has said yes to contract option for procurement, the process usually goes rather quickly and your agency will carry the ball across the goal line.
- All agencies will vary on needs, especially new participating agencies, some will likely have questions and need for contract clarification. Keep in mind, NJPA will be holding and maintaining the contract on behalf of your agency. This places a considerable amount of responsibility on NJPA and your agency will need to have the highest level of trust and comfort with NJPA and our ability to maintain the contract to meet your organization's reporting and documentation requirements.
- Membership or some type of formal connection by the agency with NJPA will likely happen at this time or has already happened. NJPA encourages all agencies to establish some type of formal connection between us to validate our working relationship and justify your decision to procure through the NJPA contract; NJPA will take care of this part. Membership with NJPA is the connection by your agency to NJPA's procurement file and contracting process.
- You will likely establish a "purchase agreement" with the selected vendor connecting your agency to the contract and our contracting process. Additional agency specific terms and conditions required by our organization will be established between the agency and the vendor as a part of the agreement. The selected vendor will be asked to accept these additions Ts & Cs in addition to the NJPA terms and conditions of the master contract.
- At this point your NJPA contract will be issued an "agency purchase order number". Then the business begins; executing and delivering on what we said we would do! The goal would be to exceed all expectations and make your agency proud of the decision to accept and leverage an NJPA contract.



## A BUSINESS CASE JUSTIFYING THE DECISION

In many cases in the process of evaluating NJPA contract opportunity, your Agency's purchasing department will need to "build a business case" to present to its upper management team justifying and validating the rational why NJPA contracts make good sense for your organization and its users. As an important part of this plan and process, department users will indicate an interest in a specific NJPA solution or contract. You may ask the identified NJPA contracted vendor to develop a proposal specific to your agency's needs and purchasing volume as well as helping you validate and justify the decision to accept and leverage a NJPA contract and the specific awarded NJPA vendor. There are important aspects of your agency's decision to adopt the NJPA contract in lieu of facilitating their own contracting process.

The below outline is a minimum guide to the potential areas of interest your agency may view as important and see as a priority when considering outsourcing and adopting another agency (NJPA) contract. One of the compelling advantages for agencies is that NJPA will be maintaining the contract.

It is important to note the following:

- this is an acceptable and efficient method of doing business at the highest level of procurement.
- the national volume of NJPA is part of the reason for the price level offered in the proposal.

In the event the volume of your agency's procurement is in excess and merits a price reduction to match the volume, note that the NJPA contract allows for price reductions due to the "Ceiling-Based Pricing" clause in the RFP and the price level in the proposal matches your agency's committed and anticipated volume.

### ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- 1) NJPA vendors are willing to allow and accept additional terms and conditions to be submitted as a part of the NJPA contract and Purchase Agreement moving forward. This purchase agreement would include terms and conditions custom to your individual agency's specific needs, interests and requirements that are not a part of the NJPA contract or to the extent that meets an agency requirement. Agencies are encouraged to include those additional terms and conditions as a part of a "Subsequent Agreement" or as a part of a "Purchase Agreement" or as a part of the Purchase Order Ts & Cs.
- 2) NJPA vendors can include in hard copy or electronic file CD the following: NJPA RFP document, Acceptance and Award document and Contract Pricing files. Determine as a part of the proposal any price levels that would match your agency's historic volume and commitment.
- 3) NJPA vendors can include a marketing plan outlining product installation and program management throughout the agency and to other departments.