

FAPPO Best Practice Award Entry

Orange County Contracting Academy

The Orange County Procurement Division respectfully submits the following for a FAPPO Best Practice Award.

On July 21, 2023, the Orange County Procurement Division hosted its first Contracting Academy. The target audience was the business community who are not currently engaging in contracting with Orange County. The free event aimed to inform the business community about best practices when doing business with Orange County. The intended outcome was to inspire businesses to pursue our contracting opportunities and realize an increase in subscribers to our e-procurement platform, ensuring they are notified of future solicitations. Developing the program was a collaborative effort, focusing on sessions that address each part of the solicitation and contracting process. The curated sessions were led by professionals from various fields, including Procurement, Risk Management, Business Development, and OpenGov (e-procurement platform). We also engaged external bond counsel to provide education on bonding requirements. The academy sessions are as follows:

8:20 – 8:30	Welcome and Video Message from the Mayor	
8:30 – 9:30	Navigating the Procurement Process	Carrie Mathes, Procurement Division
9:30 – 10:00	E-Procurement Platform Demonstration	OpenGov
10:00 – 10:15	Break	
10:15 – 10:45	M/WBE Program Overview	Vasanth Raysor, Business Development Division
10:45 – 11:45	Insurance and Bonding	Susan Martin, Risk Management and Cheryl Foley, Florida Surety

Event marketing initiated 30 days prior to the scheduled event date. A copy of the marketing material is attached. Due to overwhelming interest, we maxed out capacity (240 attendees) in less than three weeks. The event was attended by several County Commissioners as well as Florida (House) Representative Johanna Lopez.

The event was supported by the County’s production team, OrangeTV, who set up full production to record all sessions. Once the finalized videos were available, we collaborated with ISS to create a dedicated web page for the Contracting Academy, which houses all recordings, as well as slide decks and supporting resources. These recordings will be an incredible resource for both the Procurement and Business Development Divisions when holding monthly educational meetings with prospective vendors.

The event was a half-day educational offering, which afforded attendees the opportunity to learn about various aspects of contracting. At the conclusion of each session, a question-and-answer period was held. There was quite a bit of engagement from attendees during each of these periods, which was beneficial to provide clarifications or deeper dives into the session topics. At the conclusion of the event, many of the session speakers remained onsite to further engage with attendees.

Post-event, we collaborated with the County’s Communication team to prepare a “*Newsroom Article*” to highlight the event’s success and share details on the new web page. A copy of the article is attached.

Impacts

In advance of the event, we coordinated with OpenGov, our e-procurement platform, to measure the number of new subscribers to Orange County solicitations in the week following the Chapter Academy. I am happy to report that Orange County realized over **200** new subscribers during that timeframe!

Additionally, we deployed a survey to all attendees to obtain feedback which will be used to adjust for future academy events. The results were overwhelmingly positive. A few comments provided from attendees are below:

“The early session presented by Procurement was very informative, as it provided insight into the County procurement process”.

“Well done. The length of the event was sufficient but not too long. Information was relevant. Very worthwhile”.

“All information was excellent”.

“Great event. Keep them going”.

“Presentation from Procurement was very informative, gave a good, broad amount of information that more appropriately applied to my company’s needs”.

“The entire program was an equal value to me”.

“The informational session was great. Thank you, Orange County, keep them coming”.

“All of the information was helpful”.

“The session on the procurement process was very informative because it provided updates on how Orange County will be communicating future projects, and a better understanding of how bids are reviewed and determined to be responsive”.

“Well put together and informative”.

As a result of the success of the event, we anticipate replicating on at least an annual basis, possibly semi-annual.

Below are some photographs from the event.





ORANGE COUNTY CONTRACTING ACADEMY

JULY 21, 2023

RENAISSANCE SENIOR CENTER
3800 S. ECONLOCKHATCHEE TRAIL
ORLANDO, FL 32829



SCAN HERE TO RSVP OR
[HTTPS://OCACADEMY.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://ocacademy.eventbrite.com)

Hosted by the Orange County Procurement Division, this free event includes sessions led by Procurement, Risk Management, Business Development and our e-procurement platform provider. Sessions are designed to inform the business community on best practices for doing business with Orange County



Inaugural Orange County Contracting Academy Helps Businesses Navigate Bid Process

08 September, 2023

Business

Share

For the first time ever, Orange County Government held a free comprehensive Contracting Academy on July 21, to provide information to area businesses and help them increase their chances of winning County contracting bids.

Multiple educational sessions, including Navigating the Procurement Process, E-Procurement Platform Demonstration, M/WBE Program Overview, and Insurance & Bonding highlighted the half day event. Capped at 235 registrants, the event was a sellout. It also included a walkthrough of Orange County's [OpenGov procurement website](#). Attendees included Orange County Commissioners Maribel Gomez Cordero (District 4) and Mike Scott (District 6), as well as Florida (House) Representative Johanna Lopez.

“We want to reach contractors who may not have done business with the County before and need more guidance to navigate the process,” explained Carrie Mathes, Orange County Procurement Division Manager. “This event was unique because of its comprehensive nature, and among the goals was to boost competition for County contracts and also increase the number of minority and women business enterprises [M/WBE].”

Orange County bids out millions of dollars’ worth of contracts every year for everything from professional services work to multimillion-dollar construction projects. The County expends taxpayer dollars and has a responsibility to do so in a fair and prudent manner.

“One of the core values of this administration is collaboration, so we need to tap into business partners who can bring that collaboration to the table,” explained Mayor Jerry L. Demings. “We also receive grant money, so we need to meet those competitive requirements. Competition leads to setting some good, competitive rates. It’s to our benefit to get more businesses doing business with us.”

The Procurement Division’s portal “OpenGov” realized more than 200 new subscribers in the week following Contracting Academy. Additionally, the County launched a post-event survey to attendees, and the results were overwhelmingly positive. “Well put together and informative,” responded one attendee.

“The session on the procurement process was very informative because it provided updates on how Orange County will be communicating future projects, and it provided a better understanding of how bids are reviewed and determined to be responsive,” said another.

Orange County is considering making Contracting Academy an annual or semi-annual event going forward due to the high level of interest. The County manages about 950 term contracts per year, not including one-time construction contracts, and it awards on average about \$700 million worth of contracts per year.

“Many businesses aren’t aware of these contract opportunities, and no matter the size of your business, there are opportunities to do business with Orange County,” asserted Mathes. “It’s scalable, so not everyone has to be a large company with large financial backing. We’re looking to contract with businesses of all sizes.”

To see open projects and project dates, and to be notified for any Orange County formal solicitations, subscribe at [OpenGov](#).

For more information about Orange County’s Contracting Academy, visit ocfl.net/ContractingAcademy.

[Previous Article](#) |

[Back To Top](#)

Mayor Demings