2022 NIGP Member Council Elections
Meet the Candidates

Sarah Andrews, NIGP-CPP, CPPB
Contract Specialist
County of Dutchess, Division of Central Services
Dutchess County, NY

Prior to working for Dutchess County, I worked for many years in the private sector, purchasing large-scale commodities and responding to various government agencies request for bid/proposals. Currently, bid/proposals. Currently, I am in my 10th year working for Dutchess County, working in various departments and role. I was hired in the County’s purchasing office the summer of 2018 and have since obtained both the CPPB and NIGP-CPP certifications. In 2021 I became an Assistant Regional Representative for the NIGP Chapter New York State Association of Municipal Purchasing Officials (SAMPO). Recently, myself and a team of other selected SAMPO Regional Representatives established SAMPO’s Emerging Professional Program which aims to shape the future of our industry by supporting the growth of new purchasing professionals employed by public entities of New York State.

Being a member of NIGP has been instrumental in my career and success. When first starting my career in the public procurement field obtaining my CPPB certification was my first career goal. A few years later, a new goal was born as NIGP launched the NIGP-CPP certification program. I was able to look to NIGP for guidance on how to reach my certification goals. NIGP is where I was able to find out information on available certifications, attend NIGP sponsored class trainings to earn credit hours, including exam prep classes and assessment tools. More than anything it’s the NIGP community (the members) that were instrumental in me passing both my certification exams. I am proud and honored to have earned my certifications as they validate my experience, knowledge and competency working in the public procurement field.

As an ambitious person by nature, I always want to know as much as possible relating to my profession. That is why it was difficult for me when I first started out in public procurement, as I was new and didn’t know much. My outgoing personality benefitted me as I was able to reach out to my local NIGP chapter in New York and ask the questions a new public procurement professional may have. For some in this profession, they may not be as outgoing and comfortable reaching out to others and can feel alone or judged when first starting out. I make it my mission to seek out new public procurement professionals in my state to let them know they are not alone and to encourage them to reach out when they need to. We are all in this together.

Lori Bryant, NIGP-CPP, CPPB (Incumbent)
Purchasing Director
Clarksville-Montgomery County School System
Clarksville, TN

Lori Bryant has over twenty-four years of experience in procurement in both the public and private sectors. For the past 19 years, she has worked and successfully performed in municipal and K-12 school purchasing departments, covering almost all aspects of procurement. She is currently the Purchasing Director for the Clarksville-Montgomery County (TN) School System, where she procures a variety of goods and services for 43 schools and supporting departments. Lori holds a bachelors’ degree from Lambuth University, a Certified Professional Public Buyer certification from the UPPCC, and a NIGP-CPP certification from NIGP. She is a member of the Tennessee Association of Public Purchasing (TAPP) and NIGP. Lori began a three-year term on NIGP’s Member Council in July 2019. Lori serves as TAPP’s communications committee chair and webmaster, and she is a TAPP Past-President.
As a member of NIGP, I have had opportunities to learn and grow as a procurement professional. The classes offered have provided me with opportunities to prepare for both my job responsibilities and certification. Attending NIGP Forum has given me the chance to network and interact with other professionals from across the country and around the world, as well as broaden my understanding of the methods used outside of my agencies. My local chapter has provided me with leadership opportunities that I would not have had anywhere else. All these opportunities led me to my current position with the school system, and the chance to lead at the national level as part of the NIGP Member Council.

Most of my career has focused on providing customer service, first in a retail setting or now to my internal customers. Often that customer service revolves around problem-solving. I work through the diverse challenges that come my way every day. It might be chasing down a delivery issue or working with a vendor to provide better service options to the schools. I tend to say, “We can figure that out.” Working with the NIGP Member Council, I have enjoyed working with the other council members in figuring out the issues that impact our members. I have much experience volunteering with our local chapter and have tried to look at issues from the perspective of how they impact chapters and members, and how to make their experience with NIGP better. We continue to work together as NIGP continues its mission of developing, supporting, and promoting the public procurement profession.

Zachary Christensen, JD, NIGP-CPP, CPPO, CPPB
Director of Purchasing and Contracts
Utah State Board of Education
Salt Lake City, UT

During my 3rd year of law school, I had the opportunity to intern at Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, and I started my career there after graduation. I loved working on contracts and had the opportunity to work on a project for subcontract management. This project exposed me to the wonderful world of procurement, and it is where I spent a couple of awesome, rewarding years. I later worked for the family firm, but procurement called, and I joined the State of Utah Division of Purchasing. I LOVED working on cooperative contracts and finding solutions to help our customers and other agents. For the past five years, I have been the Director of Purchasing and Contracts at the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). I have since been elected Chapter President of the Utah Chapter of NIGP, worked with our education procurement organization, and have continuously sought to promote and advance public procurement. It is an honor and a privilege to be considered for the Member Council to continue to give back to a community that has given me so much professional and personal fulfillment.

My first chapter meeting was amazing and had me hooked. I was excited to work with others who were so passionate about public procurement, and I was even more excited to be an active member. I ran for Vice President and was elected! Because of this new role, I was able to attend the Chapter Leadership Academy, which introduced me to so many others on a national level. These connections were a wonderful source of inspiration and networking. I have posted questions and have loved working with others in the NSite communities. These are phenomenal resources that help answer just about any question or solve any problem we have in the procurement profession. As I have continued to be actively involved in the local chapter, I have also loved working with others on the national level, working on Global Best Practices, writing and teaching courses, and serving however I can. NIGP has helped give me the tools and support to succeed in public procurement.

Our team has several founding principles, including, “We are all in this together” and “Find a legal way to say ‘Yes’.” These principles have guided me as I navigate the challenging waters of public procurement, serving as a reminder of how we should conduct ourselves in this profession. When we are able to work together to address an issue or challenge, we are able to find creative solutions instead of reasons why something won’t work. As procurement professionals, we need to help our customers get what they need. Sometimes, we need help too, I have loved being an NIGP instructor, creating courses and teaching them! The students show time and again that we are amazing as a profession, we overcome challenges daily and deliver service with a smile. I am excited to work with others and have found that the more we help and serve one another, the more we learn and can strengthen those around us. When we recognize that we are working together, it’s easy to find the legal yes!
Torry Huff, VCCO, CPPO, CPPB  
Senior Procurement Specialist  
Fairfax Water  
Fairfax, VA

My name is Torry Huff. I'm a husband, father of two, and a graduate of Marshall University in Huntington, WV. Most of my free time is spent golfing or traveling. I currently serve as the Senior Procurement Specialist at Fairfax Water, located in Northern Virginia. The main responsibilities of my role include the contracting and procurement for our organization's engineering and capital construction projects. My previous work experience includes the contracting and procurement for various departments of county governments throughout Northern Virginia. I was first introduced to NIGP about a decade ago. Since that time, I have taken nearly a dozen courses offered thrugh NIGP and attended multiple FORUMS. I was appointed as a member of NIGP's Pipeline and Placement Committee in 2018 and continue to serve in that role today. In addition, I am also the current Technology Committee Chairperson for my local Virginia Association of Governmental Procurement (VAGP).

NIGP has been monumental in helping me develop as a public procurement professional going back to the beginning of my career 10 years ago. Initially, it was NIGP's course offerings that empowered me with the foundational knowledge I needed to be successful in this career. The concepts I learned from those basic courses served as a springboard for me as I advanced within my organizations. They eventually led me to successfully acquiring multiple certifications. In addition to educational opportunities, NIGP has allowed me to network with an amazing group of colleagues from across the country, whom I learned so much from. I have used NIGP as a resource to build and keep lasting relationships. Getting to see and interact with the familiar faces has always been a favorite takeaway from attending FORUMs.

I, like most of our members I'm sure, unintentionally fell into public procurement. However, my passion for the profession developed quickly. It's that passion that has motivated me to increase my involvement with NIGP over the years. I understand fully the value that we, as procurement professionals, can bring to our respective organizations. Our jobs are unique in that they require us to work both horizontally and vertically within our organizations. We serve every department and work with individuals from top to bottom. I hope to bring my passions and perspectives to the NIGP Member Council. I want to provide value back to membership in a positive way and can bring with me the experience of a Young Professional with nearly a decade of membership and involvement with NIGP.

Bob Pacenta, NIGP-CPP, CPPB  
Purchasing and Stores Manager  
Emerald Coast Utilities Authority  
Pensacola, FL

My career as a Navy Supply Corps Officer prepared me for my career as a procurement professional. My first public procurement position was with a local school district where my main commodities were IT hardware and software. I really enjoyed my time negotiating software contracts. After ten years at the school district, I then moved on to the local university where I was the Assistant Director of Procurement and Contracts. It was fun helping the athletic department field their first football team with all their equipment. Then, the opportunity opened to take my current position after eight years with the university. In addition to the normal purchasing responsibilities, I have added supervising a warehouse which brings me back to my Navy days.

I heard about the Institute of Supply Management prior to my taking my first public procurement position. I was not familiar with NIGP. My boss encouraged me to attend a meeting at a newly established Chapter. From there, I was encouraged to get certified and to take on officer positions in the Chapter. Since then, I have taken on other positions in the Chapter. I have always wanted to stay involved. The people I have met over the years have been my support group. I was fortunate enough to meet a great group of people at Forum by signing up to go on a brewery tour. To this day, I am still in touch almost daily.
with a couple of those that I met through the tour. This would not have been possible if I did not agree to attend my first Chapter meeting almost twenty years ago.

The passion that I have for this profession stems from NIGP giving me the opportunity to network with so many great professionals that I have met along the way. I have been fortunate throughout my career to be supported, mentored and motivated by so many great procurement professionals. Had it not been for these great procurement professionals that I met along the way, I am not sure that my career would have as successful or enjoyable. I know that through my NIGP networking that I can pick up the phone to run an idea past one of my great friends. The great thing about NIGP is that there are so many ways to volunteer both locally and on the national level. I encourage everyone to get involved in your local Chapter. I believe that by making NIGP better we will in turn make our profession better.

Kristy D. Varda, NIGP-CPP, CPPO, CPPB
Contracting Officer
Loudoun County
Leesburg, VA

Kristy Varda is currently a Loudoun County Government Contracting Officer. Her work includes construction and technology procurement. She has also served as a Frederick County Public Schools (Shenandoah Valley) procurement supervisor, and in procurement at Fairfax County. She has degrees in animal science, biotechnology, and business and she has experience with many different private industries. Kristy grew up in rural Oklahoma in a family with strong military connections. She spent several years as a military spouse and has lived in several locations including Germany. She is happily married to her rock, Tony, is the proud mother of Tehya, and enjoys spending time with both and her canine fur babies, Abbey and Timmy.

As an NIGP member since 2011, Kristy has gained knowledge and furthered her career. Using the CPPB assessment tool, she determined where to enhance her knowledge and obtained her CPPB in 2013. NIGP encouraged her to present webinars to the membership. Her first webinar presentation on “Sole Sources” was such a success that she was asked to do more! Kristy was also encouraged to join the task force building the four-part “Global Best Practice Series” on “Technology Procurement.” Inspired by the success of that first webinar, Kristy sought to become an NIGP instructor. After successfully completing the Learning Leaders course in 2018 and fulfilling her student instructor responsibilities, Kristy became a full-fledged NIGP Instructor in 2019, the same year she achieved her CPPO. No matter what she has worked on, Kristy is known for her high energy and devotion to the task at hand.

Kristy demonstrates passion as a devoted practitioner by providing both “Outreach” and “In-reach” activities - helping suppliers and internal clients gain useful procurement knowledge. Kristy fervently “pays it forward” to NIGP members through teaching and mentorship, and by producing content for monthly “Radio NIGP” broadcasts. She does all of this while modeling the highest ethical standards of the profession. Kristy is a passionate and enthusiastic advocate, taking every opportunity to talk about procurement to colleagues who may not currently be in procurement but benefit from what procurement does. She encourages the inclusion of public procurement courses in business and public administration degree programs and is developing ways to present procurement as a career field for K-12 programs that focus on business and career training. This is rooted in her firm belief that sharing knowledge with a younger generation encourages interest in joining our profession.