The Kentucky Public Procurement Association (KPPA) Reverse Trade Show (RTS) is one of the chapter's signature programs and has become a highly anticipated event for both public procurement professionals and the vendor community. It provides a unique opportunity for agencies and businesses to connect directly, build relationships, exchange information, and create a better understanding of the public procurement process.

The event was held at the Cross Center in Midway, Kentucky, bringing together public procurement agencies and vendors in an interactive setting. Agency representatives staffed tables throughout the gymnasium, allowing vendors to move throughout the event, meet with procurement professionals, learn about upcoming opportunities, ask questions, and establish relationships that can continue well beyond the event.

A key element that sets KPPA's program apart is the educational opportunity provided to vendors. During lunch, participants were offered an in-depth "How to Do Business with the Commonwealth" class. The presentation covered the entire procurement process, including registering as a vendor through Kentucky's Vendor Self Service (VSS) portal, locating solicitations, submitting bids, understanding the award process, and managing a contract after award. The expanded content provided practical information for both experienced vendors and businesses that were new to working with the Commonwealth. The session also created an informal environment where vendors could ask questions, meet procurement professionals, and gain a better understanding of how they can participate in Kentucky's procurement process.

Another important component of the program is its ability to generate funding that directly benefits KPPA members. Registration and sponsorship revenue is reinvested into the membership through educational scholarships, professional development, training programs, forum registrations, and memberships. KPPA's commitment is that 100% of the funds generated through the event are returned to its membership in these forms.

The program delivered strong measurable results. The event attracted 118 vendors and 121 agency members representing 40 agencies and generated $35,277.57 in net revenue after expenses. This exceeded KPPA's goal of generating at least $30,000 annually to support educational opportunities for its members.

Participation and engagement were equally important measures of success. The full-day format gave vendors additional time to connect with agencies and allowed conversations

to develop naturally rather than feeling rushed. Providing lunch to all participating vendors also encouraged attendees to remain engaged throughout the day and created additional opportunities for networking and discussion. The result was an environment where participants could spend more time getting to know one another and discussing procurement opportunities.

Feedback from members and vendors reflected the value of that experience. Members appreciated the opportunity to have longer, more meaningful conversations with vendors and noted that the event was comfortable, welcoming, and conducive to networking. Vendors consistently compliment KPPA members for being approachable, transparent, knowledgeable, and willing to help. KPPA regularly hears that its events are among the vendors' favorite opportunities to engage with public procurement professionals.

The financial impact extended far beyond the event itself. The proceeds allowed KPPA to award educational scholarships to 101 members, with individual awards ranging from $27 to $1,000 based on scholarship applications. The organization also funded an RFP training program with the RFP Dream Team, providing professional development to more than 100 members in early 2026 at no cost to participants. In addition, proceeds are used to provide free forum registrations and memberships through drawings at KPPA events.

The chapter's strong vendor outreach is another major factor in the program's success. The vendor recruitment chair and committee begin communicating with businesses several months in advance, starting with previous participants and expanding outreach through established vendor contact lists. For this event, more than 20,000 vendors were contacted with information about the opportunity to participate. This extensive communication helps ensure that businesses have an opportunity to learn about the event and connect with Kentucky's public procurement community.

That communication continues after the show through appreciation messages, follow-up information, and connections between vendors and agency representatives. This approach transforms the event from a single networking opportunity into the beginning of relationships that can continue throughout the year.

Ultimately, the greatest success of KPPA's Reverse Trade Show is its lasting impact on Kentucky's procurement community. The program introduces new vendors to the Commonwealth's procurement process, increases opportunities for competition, strengthens relationships between agencies and businesses, and can ultimately lead to new contracts and savings for Kentucky taxpayers.

The event represents what KPPA strives to accomplish as a chapter: providing meaningful education, creating valuable professional connections, supporting its members, and

strengthening the public procurement process. Its success is measured not only by the more than $35,000 returned to the membership, but by the 101 members who received educational assistance, the more than 100 members who will benefit from additional training, the agencies and vendors who built new relationships, and the opportunities created for greater competition and value for the Commonwealth.