

# Achieving Your Oregon Procurement Advanced Certification (OPAC)

## *A Guide to What You Need to Know*

### Contacts for the Program

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State of Oregon  
State Procurement Office  
1225 Ferry Street SE U140  
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# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the Oregon Procurement Advanced Certification (OPAC)?

OPAC is learning from a procurement project that you carry out in the course of your normal job duties. The project has agreed-upon goals. You submit progress reports and make a presentation the end of the project.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** OPAC projects begin shortly after you get approval to start the process. Consider *Life Learning Papers* for analysis of “lessons learned” from completed projects. *Life Learning Papers* earn the equivalent of one full-day elective class towards renewal points. Contact Vicky Narkon or Greg Hopkins for details: (503) 378-4663 or (503) 378-4654.

## What Are the Benefits of OPAC?

Attaining the OPAC means you have shown your ability to make effective decisions on the job. This is significant in a job interview. Everyone takes classes. OPAC is different because it focuses on how you respond to real-life challenges and what you do to manage a procurement project.

## What Makes a Project “Advanced?”

Generally, an advanced project introduces new or modified processes, procedures, or strategies that will provide value to the agency *and* a meaningful learning experience for you. In a nutshell, classroom training teaches you how procurement is supposed to be done. An advanced project is about actually implementing some of these best practices. In addition, an advanced project develops your skills and leadership abilities.

## How Do I Qualify for OPAC?

1) **Three years of hands-on contracting experience.** Experience outside of the State of Oregon can be included in the three years of experience. If you have done only occasional procurement work or mostly low-level tasks such as ordering off of price agreements, you will need more experience.

2) **A Current Oregon Procurement Basic Certification (OPBC)**. This requires:

- Completion of *Principles of Public Contracting* (BA161); **AND**
- Elective credits (35 points, of which at least 21 must be obtained from DAS-SPO classes; remaining points may be obtained from other sources.) **OR** a current national certification such as NIGP or ISM.
- Passing a certification test.

3) **The Oregon Contract Administration Certificate (OCAC)**. This requires completing three 7-hour training classes: Contract Administration, Rules, and Ethics. iLearn Oregon has a list of our classes: <https://iLearn.oregon.gov> When search use the key words “DAS SPO” and choose “exact phrase” as your search criteria. Please call Greg Hopkins or Vicky Narkon with any questions about your eligibility.

### What Does it Cost?

\$150, due when the proposal is approved, and \$50 for the OPAC credential when the OPAC project is completed. The fees pay for consultation time.

### How Do I Get Started?

1. Determine If you have 3 years contract experience, a current Oregon Procurement Basic Certification (OPBC) and an Oregon Contract Administration certificate.
2. Identify a project coming up in the next month or two that you think will make a good advanced project. Call Vicky Narkon or Greg Hopkins if you want to talk over your plans.
3. Submit a letter of support from a manager who is endorsing your participation. **See Page 4 for a sample letter.** The letter shows your management supports this project and they are aware of the value of the project to both you and your work section.
4. Include a description of your project with your letter of support. **See page 5 for a guidelines on what to include in your project description.** The project description is an important first step in identifying your project goals.
5. Once your project is approved you will remit a payment of \$150. This pays for the consulting time provided by the SPO Training Team. We will provide additional guidance about completing your project once you have been approved.

## Template for Your Letter of Support

*Submit your letter of support along with your project description in your initial application for your OPAC.*

**DATE:**

**TO:** DAS State Procurement Office  
ATTN: Vicky Narkon or Greg Hopkins  
1225 Ferry St. SE, U140  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE:** Statement of Support for OPAC Project—**[candidate's name]**  
OPAC Certification Project

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Dear Vicky or Greg,

I wholeheartedly support **[name's]** proposal for her Oregon Procurement Advanced Certification. The project she will be working on is **[name or brief description of project; e.g., an RFP for an on-line system for boating registrations]**. This will provide several benefits for our procurement section and also for **[name of candidate]: [list expected benefits, e.g.,**

- **(example) Close collaboration at the beginning of the project between the program manager, the procurement staff, suppliers at the market research stage, and end-users. This collaboration has been lacking and this project will serve as a useful pilot and hopefully establish new working norms.**
- **(example) Experience with a multi-step RFP that allows demonstrations, interviews, and revised proposals.**
- **(example) implementing a debrief session with the suppliers who did not receive the RFP award.**

The new on-line registration system is very important to our agency and must be done well. We are excited about the process we are implementing through this OPAC project.

Sincerely,

**(manager/supervisor/DPO)**

## Guidelines for Your Project Description

*Submit your letter of support along with your project description in your initial application for your OPAC.*

**Name of Candidate:**

**Title/Short Description of Project**

**Date:**

**Anticipated Start/End Dates of Project:**

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### **Project Details**

- Describe the scope of this project. Include expected outcomes.
- Describe your role.
- Describe how this project will incorporate best practices and new procedures.
- Provide an estimated project timeline. Include project phases if appropriate.
- List the people with whom you will partner on this project such as members of the project team.

### **Personal Learning**

- List or describe what you (the OPAC candidate) expect to learn from this project.