

New Jersey community boosts productivity through cooperative contract

Document management complete overhaul saves city nearly \$45,000 a year

As Ocean City, N.J., officials were coming to the end of the city's 60-month copier contract, Joe Clark, the city's [purchasing](#) manager, knew he had some challenges to tackle.

At the time, the city was using the New Jersey state cooperative contract, but the specific equipment under this contract did not provide much flexibility. A contract with more options would enable the city to be more efficient and save on overall document management and new technology costs.

In order to identify the right solution for the city, Clark met with all the end-users of the equipment. He did a thorough needs assessment and identified current challenges. This process quickly highlighted areas where city managers and staffers could resolve ongoing impediments to productivity and escalating costs. Areas where change was needed included the following:

- Overage fees were escalating, so the city decided to move to a pay-per-use only structure.
- Users only had access to one printer, so if the machine went down, people could not print. The city decided to move to a networked solution.
- Users were printing documents more than once because someone else often picked up their materials, so the person would reprint. There was a need to address secured printing.
- Monthly billing for all the units was a payment challenge. The city decided to move to a six-month billing structure.
- The tax office had large printing projects five times a year that would tie up the machine for all other users.
- Downtime during the transition was a concern, so the city required that the contract holder remove all existing machines and return them at no additional cost.

- Due to the city's seasonality as a coastal resort, departments had units that were only used in the summer and then sat idle in an office the rest of the time. These machines needed to be moved elsewhere for use during their "off" season.

These were just a few of the business issues the city wanted to address in the new contract. Additionally, they wanted to move from 28 machines to 33 with four of the new machines capable of color printing. To do this, Clark put out an informal request for information (RFI) to make sure all the city's terms and conditions could be met. The department provided the option for vendors to respond with a cooperative purchasing solution while also allowing providers to highlight new technology.

The city received three responses: two local Ricoh Family Group dealers responded with U.S. Communities contract pricing and another responded with National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA) pricing. The NJPA pricing would enable the city to stay with Konica. One of the U.S. Communities responses was for Lanier and the other for Ricoh. With the addition of five more machines, the city was expecting an increase in cost, but was pleasantly surprised to realize the Ricoh response through U.S. Communities was the lowest, and would enable the city to save \$44,517 a year or \$222,585 over the term of the 60-month contract.

The [Ricoh](#) response through [U.S. Communities](#) provides hard cost savings to the city. In addition, implementing new technology and solutions provided by Ricoh will enable Ocean City to save in other areas:

- Machines will default to print double-sided to save on paper and print black and white to save on per-copy costs.
- The technology's centralized print management system stores all print jobs. In the setup, users enter a code to retrieve their documents so lost print jobs are no longer an issue.

Additionally, every user is assigned a primary machine and 1-2 secondary machines as a back-up, so there is no downtime. The new multi-function devices have replaced fax machines. The city is now able to eliminate toner and costs for maintaining separate single-function fax machines.

According to Clark, using a cooperative contract provided the flexibility to add nuances to the contract specific to the city's needs. "The broad scope afforded the city flexibility over the state contract which is bid specifically for the state needs. If we wanted to add options

there was usually an additional charge,” Clark says. “For the first time I could build machines from the ground up for specific applications – such as the need to accommodate special paper for marriage licenses.”

Mike Stowell, Sr. National Account Manager for Ricoh, was involved in helping the city address these needs through the U.S. Communities program. Stowell says the program enabled Ocean City to tailor its technology to meet current and future needs. “Ricoh’s contract focuses on additional applications and technology that are vastly different in today’s work environment than what local government agencies faced a decade ago.”

Clark says his agency has used a variety of cooperative contracts when it was a good fit. He says there are benefits of using a cooperative contract. “Going through U.S. Communities, we received national-level support from the Ricoh National Account Manager, local support from the dealer and U.S. Communities assistance through my program manager. I’ve not experienced that before – that was unique.”

The [U.S. Communities](#) contract with Ricoh is number [4400003732](#). The following products are covered in the pact: Multifunction Devices/Managed Print Services. The lead agency for the contract is Fairfax County, Va. The contract has been renewed for three years, effective July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019. Go [here](#) for additional information.