

Vendor Outreach

Financial Services Area - Procurement Group



Great Lakes Water Authority
Feedback Survey Results
Vendor Outreach Event
2018 Compared with 2017
Presented by
Financial Services Area – Procurement Group
October 10, 2018



Executive Summary

Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) held Vendor Outreach events in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The purpose of this report is to communicate vendor feedback to assess the effectiveness of the events as well as better understand vendor community priorities in developing future vendor outreach activities. Overall, interaction from Vendor Outreach participants were very positive at the event which is further substantiated through an online survey after the event.



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Background

The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) hosted its third annual Vendor Outreach event on May 17, 2018. Objectives for this event included the following.

- ✓ Expand awareness of the business opportunities for current and future vendor partners to increase the supplier base.
- ✓ Establish GLWA as a customer of choice by relationship building, demonstrating transparency, presenting fair and equitable procurement practices, and addressing prompt payment.
- ✓ Provide in-person interaction between GLWA staff and the vendor partner community to foster excellent working relationships.
- ✓ Explain business processes and programs as well as demonstrate new technology to ensure ease of doing business with GLWA.
- ✓ Obtain feedback essential to our mission of continuous improvement.

The 2018 event was a key opportunity in rolling out two new initiatives. The first is Bonfire – a new procurement system which manages the competitive procurement workflow more efficiently. The launch date was July 1, 2018. This event was also the rollout for the Small Business Initiative launched in April 2018. This new program is designed to better engage small, minority-owned, and/or women-owned businesses in GLWA's procurement activities and service delivery.

Attendance Summary

The table on the next page summarizes key statistics related to the three Vendor Outreach events held by GLWA. Each year, as we mature as a procurement organization, the level of data for analysis has improved.

Event Date	Location	Vendors Represented	Vendors Considered New*	Number of Participants	Number of Survey Responses
Thursday, May 17, 2018	Michigan State University Management Education Center, Troy, MI	168	82	261	66 (25% of attendees)
Monday, September 18, 2017	Shriners Silver Garden Events Center Southfield, MI	169	89	218	38 (17% of attendees)
Tuesday, June 14, 2016	Crown Plaza Hotel Detroit, MI	Data not available	Data not available	230	No Survey Conducted

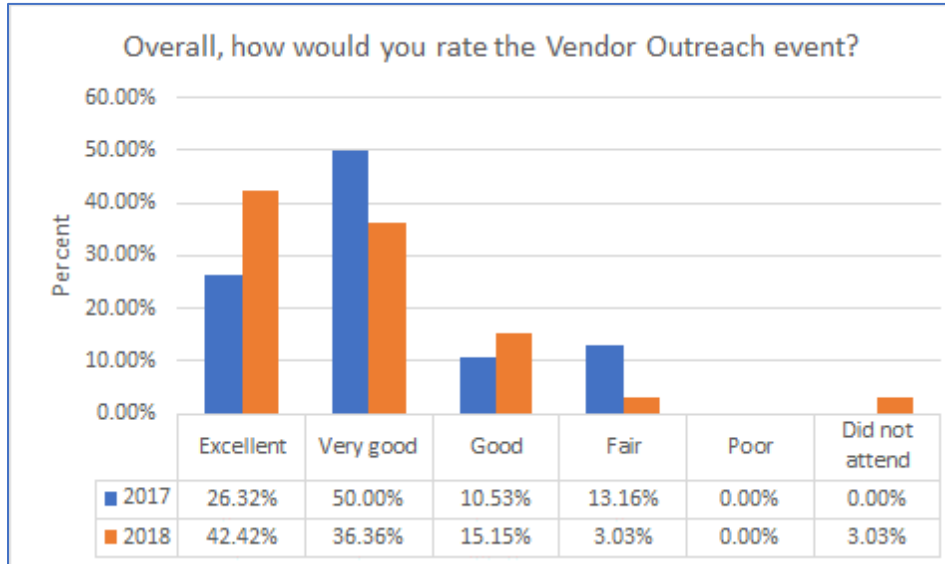
* "New" - vendor that had no procurement activity with GLWA in over one year or has never done business with GLWA. Current data systems do not provide refinement of that information.

Survey Responses and Analysis

The charts on the following pages are from a post-event online survey conducted after each event. The survey response rate of 25% in 2018 is an increase from 17% in the prior year. Given the nature of the survey, the response rate is acceptable. Additional methods and incentives to secure feedback are being explored for future events.

Questions from 2017 were repeated in 2018 to gauge progress from year to year with some minor additions in 2018.

Overall, how would you rate the GLWA Outreach event?

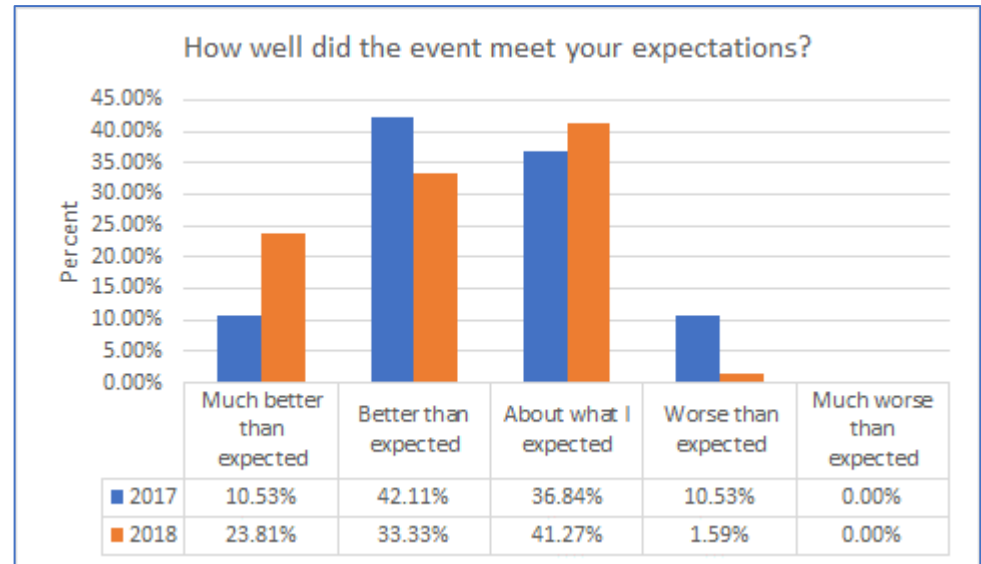


Responses indicate an increase in satisfaction with the 2018 event (“excellent” up to 42% in 2018 from 26% in 2017).

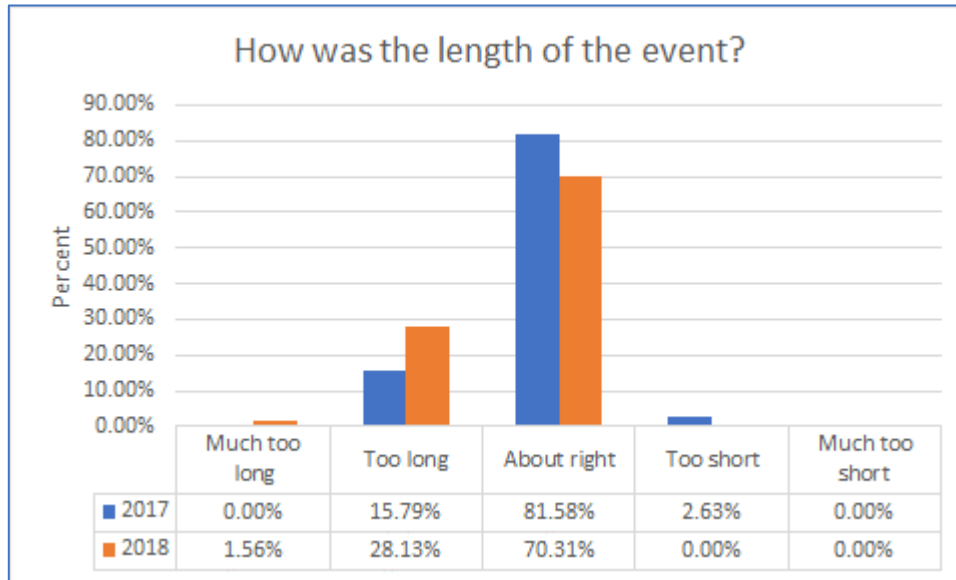
Satisfaction was positive for both years with the sum of “good”, “very good”, and “excellent”. However, 2018 produced a total favorable response of 93.93% versus 86.85% in 2017.

How well did the GLWA Vendor Outreach event meet your expectations?

Responses indicate an increase in meeting attendees’ expectations with 98.41% responding “Much better than expected”, “Better than expected”, and “About what I expected” compared with 89.48% in 2017.



Do you think the GLWA Vendor Outreach event was too long, too short, or about right?



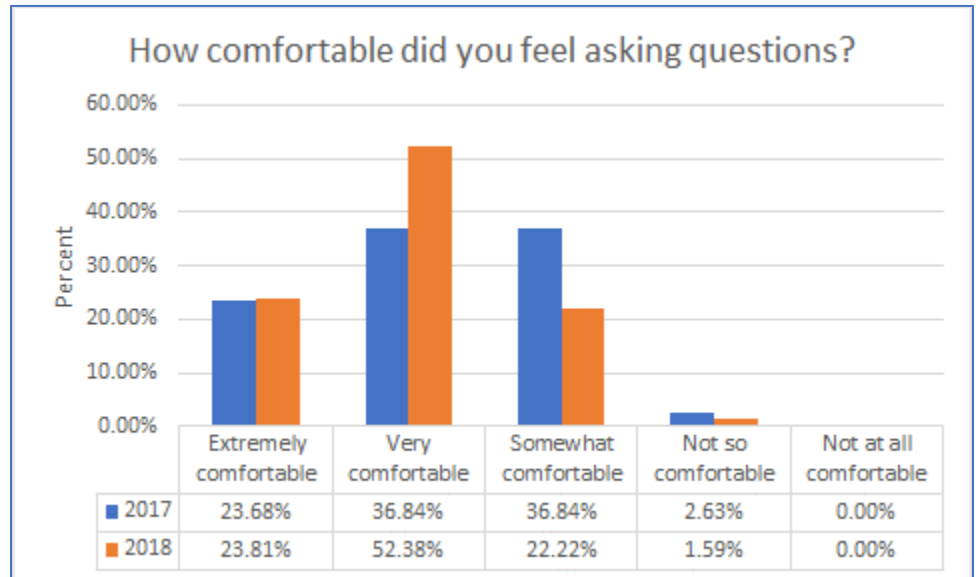
Responses indicate that the majority felt that the length of the event was “About Right” (70.31% in 2018 and 81.58% in 2017).

Those responding that the event was too long in 2018 reflect an ambitious agenda compared to 2017. Additional comments on this topic are presented in the Lessons Learned section of this report.

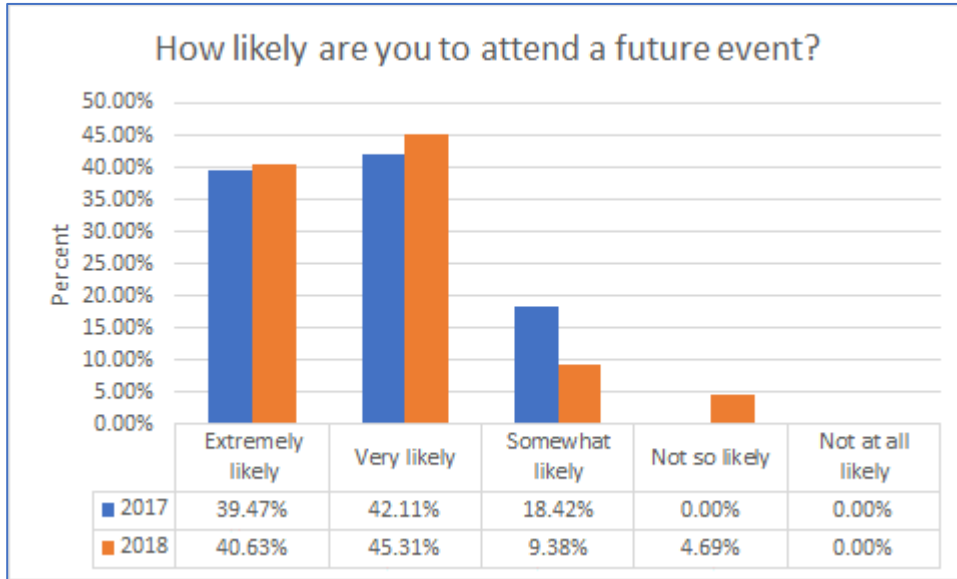
How comfortable did you feel asking questions at the GLWA Vendor Outreach event?

There are three ways that attendees could participate during the general session, one-on-one breakout sessions, and with identified GLWA staff at any time during the event.

The 2018 responses indicate a greater comfort level with a total of 76.19% feeling “Extremely Comfortable” or “Very Comfortable” in 2018 which is up from 60.52% in 2017.



Based on your experience at the GLWA Vendor Outreach, how likely are you to attend future events?



Response to interest in future events was positive with 85.94% in 2018 responding that they would be “Extremely Likely” or “Very Likely” to attend a future “Vendor Outreach” event. This is a slight increase from an equally strong response of 81.58% in 2017.

Thinking about this year's program content, do you want to know more, was it about right, or too much?

Responses to this question shape future Vendor Outreach programs. The right balance was struck with the majority responding, "It was about right". Responses of "Want to know more" inform not only assist planning future events but provide insight into developing additional vendor engagement.

Thinking about this year's program content, do you want to know more, was it about right, or too much?								
Topic	Want to know more		It was about right		Too much		N/A - Did not attend	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
GLWA Annual Operational Update	5.26%	13.79%	86.84%	75.86%	5.26%	8.62%	2.63%	1.72%
GLWA Financial Outlook	15.79%	5.26%	71.05%	78.95%	10.53%	14.04%	2.63%	1.75%
Procurement Overview	34.21%	18.97%	60.53%	75.86%	2.63%	3.45%	2.63%	1.72%
Transformation Team Continuous Improvement Efforts	23.68%	12.07%	63.16%	74.14%	10.53%	10.34%	2.63%	3.45%
Accounts Payable Overview	13.16%	3.45%	73.68%	77.59%	10.53%	15.52%	2.63%	3.45%
Contracts Overview	18.42%	12.07%	68.42%	74.14%	10.53%	12.07%	2.63%	1.72%
GLWA Team Member Introductions	7.89%	3.45%	71.05%	70.69%	18.42%	24.14%	2.63%	1.72%
Questions and Answers	24.32%	10.53%	72.97%	80.70%	0.00%	7.02%	2.70%	1.75%
Voice of the Vendor breakout sessions	13.16%	1.75%	39.47%	38.60%	2.63%	1.75%	44.74%	57.89%
Small Business Initiative breakout session (2018 Only)		17.54%		36.84%		1.75%		43.86%
Bonfire Rollout breakout sessions (2018 Only)		10.53%		38.60%		3.51%		47.37%
Bonfire Rollout (2018 Only)		22.41%		60.34%		5.17%		12.07%
Average of All Topics	17.32%	10.99%	67.46%	65.19%	7.90%	8.95%	7.32%	14.87%

For future events, how interested would you be in the following program changes and topics?

The previous question focused on topics presented at the Vendor Outreach events to date. This question is designed to elicit priorities for *future* vendor community engagement activities. When combining the responses for “Extremely Interested” and “Very Interested” there are eight responses that carry a response rate of 50% or higher.

For future events, how interested would you be in the following program changes and topics?												
Program Change and/or Topic	Extremely interested		Very interested		Somewhat interested		Not very interested		Not at all interested		Extremely/ Very Total	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Innovation and the Procurement Process	25.00%	22.22%	38.89%	46.30%	27.78%	29.63%	5.56%	1.85%	2.78%	0.00%	63.89%	68.52%
Reverse trade fair where customer communities and GLWA staff are stationed at booths to meet potential vendors	30.56%	16.67%	30.56%	44.44%	30.56%	25.93%	8.33%	9.26%	0.00%	3.70%	61.12%	61.11%
Vendor to Vendor networking opportunity	16.67%	20.37%	47.22%	38.89%	16.67%	27.78%	19.44%	9.26%	0.00%	3.70%	63.89%	59.26%
How to use Bonfire and MITN	22.22%	20.75%	19.44%	37.74%	25.00%	30.19%	30.56%	9.43%	2.78%	1.89%	41.66%	58.49%
Introduction to Qualifications Based Selection	25.00%	16.98%	36.11%	35.85%	30.56%	37.74%	8.33%	7.55%	0.00%	1.89%	61.11%	52.83%
Capital Improvement Program update	30.56%	24.07%	38.89%	25.93%	25.00%	31.48%	5.56%	18.52%	0.00%	0.00%	69.45%	50.00%
Procurement policy review	19.44%	11.11%	38.89%	38.89%	30.56%	42.59%	11.11%	7.41%	0.00%	0.00%	58.33%	50.00%
Make the event more interactive	16.22%	7.14%	48.65%	42.86%	27.03%	39.29%	8.11%	10.71%	0.00%	0.00%	64.87%	50.00%
Shorter general session to provide smaller group breakout sessions	20.00%	9.26%	28.57%	37.04%	34.29%	37.04%	14.29%	16.67%	2.86%	0.00%	48.57%	46.30%
Lean and Process Improvement at GLWA	13.89%	11.32%	33.33%	33.96%	41.67%	39.62%	8.33%	15.09%	2.78%	0.00%	47.22%	45.28%
Operating group presentations	22.22%	7.41%	36.11%	37.04%	25.00%	31.48%	16.67%	22.22%	0.00%	1.85%	58.33%	44.45%
Effective Utility Management	11.43%	5.56%	25.71%	27.78%	48.57%	46.30%	11.43%	18.52%	2.86%	1.85%	37.14%	33.34%

2018 Question only: Was this the first time you attended the GLWA Vendor Outreach event?

A “Yes” response was provided by 63.08% of survey respondents with “No” from 36.92% of respondents.

Written Comments from 2018 Survey Responses

The following are free form comments from the 2018 Survey.

What was the single most valuable thing you learned at the GLWA Vendor Outreach event?

- Approachability of the leadership staff!
- Better understanding of how procurement is structured.
- Bonfire (15 responses)
- Ease of communication with GLWA.
- Easy to do business.
- Everything.
- GLWA needs more language services, and the procurement department's Small Business Initiative can open the door for my agency to provide those services
- Hearing from the contacts we deal with!!
- How GLWA operates. This was my first time. New vendor.
- How to be able to do business with you.
- It was valuable to learn about the future projections and why you all developed.
- Networking, getting to understand GLWA Processes.
- New Team leaders and structure of procurement.
- Openness of the GLWA staff.
- Overview of GLWA and its independent nature of operations.
- Equally impressive was the importance on 'Transparency' as emphasized at all the levels during the event."
- Pre-bid meetings can be essential.
- Process of the requests being issued. How important it is to attend pre-bid meetings in order to team up with primes.
- Procurement Staff Introduction.
- Putting names with faces.
- Small Business Incentive (3 responses).

What was the single most valuable thing you learned at the GLWA Vendor Outreach event? (continued)

- Structure of teams and general operational information.
- That as a smaller engineering firm it would be difficult to get "work" at GLWA.
- That GLWA is very open to new vendors! I hope this is true!
- That there are direct opportunities with GLWA. I am happy that it is opening up to new vendors and not just historical vendors who have traditionally won awards.
- That you are open to giving contracts to qualified small companies. This is the biggest thing that can happen and I consider it to be fair practice.
- The improvement that is taking place is amazing since a couple of years ago. I am impressed with you; the Leadership is driving the team atmosphere and creating a collaborative relationship with supplier partners.
- The new small business initiative was amazing to hear about.
- Upcoming project outlook.
- What are the opportunities for firms like mine.
- What capabilities our company has that is most valuable to GLWA.
- When RFP's are for large scopes of work, subcontractors should attend bid meetings as an opportunity to meet general contractors, so as to have an opportunity to participate in the RFP.
- Who my procurement contact is.

For future events, how interested would you be in the following program changes and topics?

- More communication and information regarding bidding against manufacturers of products which we cannot offer competitive pricing.
- I'd enjoy the opportunity to use the Reverse Trade Fair as a means of introduction our company's services to different GLWA department staff!

Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

- Overall a very information and helpful event.
- The agenda attempts to fit a lot of topics in to one event, also attempts to reach several different audiences, which is difficult to do successfully. Consider instead several shorter events, with specific target audience (supplier, contractors, engineers, etc.).
- Thanks for reaching out to inquire on our opinions!
- As a provider of services, not a provider of goods, I felt that the event, was not very applicable to my industry. I am glad I attended, but it does not seem to be something for my industry to attend on an annual basis.
- I think it was an amazing event, and I'm grateful that GLWA takes the time to involve their suppliers.
- We enjoy attending the Event and listening to the updates and don't think you need to change up the format.
- Great job Nicolette and team.
- Just want to make sure we're on top of Bonfire capabilities on the vendor side.
- I was very happy to have attended. Well worth the morning! Food was good too!
- The event had Engineering Consultants, Contractors, and Suppliers all in one room. A lot of the question were specific to one group only. It would be more helpful if the event was split to accommodate the specific needs of the different groups.
- Thanks again for a very well-run event. And I truly appreciated the hot breakfast with quiche and sausages! It sounds superficial to say, but it added a lot to the experience.
- Sticking to the schedule to allow more time for the planned breakout sessions would be great next time.