

Innovations in EBT Procurement

Did you know that two out of three Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) administrators' favorite color is blue? At least that is the unofficial poll of Chris Dunham, EBT Project Director, California Health and Human Services Agency Data Center, Kay Jones, Director, Program Operations, Texas Department of Human Services and Jeffery Cohen, Branch Chief of EBT, Food and Nutrition Service who attended the Innovations in EBT Procurement.

As Chris Dunham explained during her presentation, California's theme in EBT procurement was to develop a partnership with the bidder. One of the most crucial steps in ITP process was the confidential discussion that clarified outstanding issues or deficiencies. All final proposals were scored for administrative, technical and price proposals. Following a successful contract negotiation, a contract is awarded. For more information about California's EBT project, please visit the Website: www.ebtproject.ca.gov.

Kay Jones provided a Texas perspective on their contract negotiation process. EBT was implemented in November 1995; however, since their contract was going to end, they needed to explore their alternatives. One of the highest priorities Texas had was to transition EBT service without disruption in delivery of Food Stamps and TANF benefits. After considerable analysis, the state decided to purchase EBT software, have multiple vendors, and the state would serve as the system integrator. Texas' new contract, referred to as EBT-2, brings the cost of delivering EBT down. Successful transition to EBT-2 took place in February 2001.

Jeffery Cohen, Food and Nutrition Services, stated that, to help states share procurement information nationwide, the federal government is developing a new website. The website will have general information about state procurement and a chat room for EBT administrators. The site will be secure so that only certain users will have access to it. More information about the website will be shared with states when it is complete.