Maricopa County Discovers
New Resources and Lowers Costs
with U.S. Communities

As part of the fourth largest county in the country – with 13,000 employees and a budget topping $2.2 billion – one highly specialized department of Maricopa County, Arizona, had a pool of 75 temporary staff positions they needed to fill and maintain. Although the vacancies were for specialized positions, there were plenty of qualified candidates available in this County of 3.8 million people.

Under Maricopa County’s previous Temporary Labor Program, the County utilized three cooperative use temporary staffing contracts, but there were dozens of vendors on each of the contracts.

Additionally, each County department was tasked with identifying, qualifying, and managing their own vendor(s), which was proving to be unwieldy. Because of logistics and communications concerns, this particular department had been utilizing a single vendor. While the selected staffing company had successfully filled more than 30 of the 75 open positions, they had been unable to fill the other 50-60 percent of open orders. This was largely due to a lack of dedicated vendor recruiting resources, coupled with “candidate fallout” caused by an eight to 10 week background investigation process. This lengthy background investigation process meant that by the time candidates were finally approved, more than half of them had found other employment and were no longer available.

Acro Quickly Delivers a Total Solution Approach – A Managed Staffing Program

Acro Service Corporation (Acro), which also has a comprehensive staffing division, became the approved supplier for Temporary Personnel and Related Services. Their services included a Managed Staffing Program option within the U.S. Communities cooperative purchasing program, through a competitive solicitation issued by Maricopa County as the U.S. Communities Lead Agency.

Michigan-based Acro quickly assessed Maricopa County’s Temporary Labor Program, and with County approval, replaced it with a Managed Staffing Program for Contract Labor Personnel services. Unlike the traditional temporary personnel supplier program, this new program provides a “Buy Contract Labor For vs. Sell Contract Labor To” approach. This method delivers value to Maricopa County beyond just simply filling a temporary position; it also includes establishing a dedicated Program Management Office in Central Phoenix that provides a single point of contact for all Contract Labor Personnel needs for the County.

Additionally, the Acro Managed Staffing Program concept contractually engages multiple categorically-qualified Associate Vendors, at consistent approved pricing, and simultaneously releases new requirements to all qualified vendors on a “Vendor Neutral” basis. Many of the Associate Vendors that are a part of the program are the same vendors that have been providing staffing service to the County under various County contracts. Acro further supplemented the Associate Vendor network with additional Associate Vendors to provide contract labor in labor categories that had not been well supported.

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Through the Acro contract, the Maricopa County Office of Procurement Services and Acro jointly addressed the unique needs of this specialized department and were able to:

♦ Contractually engage and provide “needs orientation” to six new vendors, including the incumbent vendor, thereby more than tripling the number of qualified candidates available to be interviewed;
♦ Move to a weekly “in person” interview schedule by a centralized Contract Labor Personnel Screening Team vs. scheduling multiple interviews with individual departmental bureaus
♦ Implement a streamlined timekeeping process and on-boarding system that delivered an average cost reduction of more than $2.00 per hour on 40+ new Contract Labor Personnel;
♦ Convert 30-plus existing Contract Labor Personnel into the Acro program with no cost increase;
♦ Institute a program whereby candidates awaiting the lengthy background investigation are placed on other short-term assignments throughout other Maricopa County departments, thereby keeping them off of the job market and cutting candidate “fallout” losses by more than 50 percent. Fill 65 of the 75 vacant positions and have at least two candidates for each of the remaining 10 positions undergoing background checks.

“Besides delivering an immediate 10 percent savings on all new departmental placements, which will result in $150,000 in annualized savings (and another $125,000-plus in savings as original higher priced Contract Labor Personnel naturally transition out of the program), this new strategy provides faster access to more qualified candidates and reduces the recruiting losses due to the background investigation “fall-out” — dropping the loss from almost two in three candidates to less than one in three,” explained Larry McLennan, the Acro Program Implementation Manager for Maricopa County.

Plus, other County clients get the benefit of using Contract Labor Personnel who have already undergone an extensive in-person interview for their shorter-terms needs.

“Acro also helps us better understand the contract labor market, and with their single point of contact for the entire County, they’ve eliminated the silo approach and helped us build institutional knowledge,” said James. “With the success of this new centralized, single-point of contact approach, we’re moving most (if not all) of our Contract Labor Personnel ordering, time reporting, and billing to the new online Acro XRM system. This will simplify the management of the program immensely for the County.”

The Acro XRM℠ System aggregates all data related to the Contract Labor Personnel process, providing the County with extensive real time data. “The XRM℠ System has added a level of transparency to our Contract Labor Personnel population that was never before available to the County’s management,” said Foley.

“Maricopa County regularly uses contracts available through U.S. Communities because the procurement processes of the lead agencies meet or exceed our standards. The program provides great value and it also reduces our administrative burden,” James added. It is a win for agencies when they can eliminate the need to go out to bid, can still get advantageous government pricing, and get to partner with solution-focused suppliers. “Acro brought in a whole new concept of partnering. They assessed our business needs and created a centralized program that makes this a strategic process. Acro changed the whole dynamic of our program.