

## GRANTEE GROUP PURCHASING FAQ

*Based on questions received during the introductory webinars*

### **Q: How do we enroll in the program?**

A: Visit the PurchasingPoint portal at <http://gatesfoundation.purchasingpoint.org> and enter the invitation code “Equity” in the blue box on the right, then complete the short registration form.

### **Q: I have already registered on the PurchasingPoint portal. What are my next steps if we want to transition to the program’s pricing?**

A: The next step is to sign up with any vendors you are interested in, whether they are vendors you use today, or new ones you’d like to consider using in the future. Follow the “Sign Up” instructions provided on each vendor’s profile page. In many cases, signing up is as simple as filling out a brief web form and clicking the button; however, in some cases you may be directed to contact the vendor’s designated representative. (Just follow the instructions on the portal and you’ll be fine!) If you have an existing account with a program vendor, that account can usually be linked to HPG’s pricing, with little to no impact to your existing processes, but you should inquire with each vendor to confirm.

*Please note: Whenever you interact with vendor representatives, it is important to identify yourself as “a participant in the HealthTrust Purchasing Group (HPG) AdvantageTrust program.” (Depending on the rep, they may or may not be familiar with the PurchasingPoint name, or know of the Gates Foundation’s program.) If you are asked for your GPO ID—the number that identifies your organization as a member of the program—it can be found on the home page of the PurchasingPoint portal; however, it generally takes 2-3 weeks for HPG to complete the enrollment process and assign the ID, so you may need to let the vendor representative know that you just recently enrolled and are awaiting assignment of the GPO ID. For questions about the status of your enrollment or GPO ID, please email Member Services at [memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com).*

### **Q: I attempted to use a participating vendor, but when I called that vendor the person I spoke with was not aware of the program. Why was the vendor not aware of the program? Who should I contact?**

A: Depending on who you speak with at a given vendor, it’s possible he/she may not be familiar with this program. For example, if you contact a local rep for a vendor, or call a general-purpose call center, the rep may not know of HPG/AdvantageTrust because HPG negotiates at the national level. Whenever possible, we recommend you contact the vendor representative indicated on the vendor’s PurchasingPoint profile page when you have questions about how to engage with that vendor. If you ever have any trouble connecting with the right person, please email Member Services at [memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com) and they can assist you.

### **Q: I want to make sure I understand the process... Using FedEx as an example, we “sign up” with them on the PurchasingPoint portal and enter our existing account number. Once the request is processed, we would just receive the preferential pricing on future orders made directly through our existing account at FedEx?**

A: Exactly! ☺ First, however, you need to register on the portal to begin the enrollment process and get your facility’s GPO ID number assigned (which can take 2-3 weeks). You can use the FedEx sign-up form before you receive your GPO ID, but your request will be held by Member Services until your enrollment is completed. Once your enrollment is done and your GPOID has been assigned your sign-up request will automatically be sent to FedEx. Approximately 3-5 business days later your account will be linked to the program’s rates—no need to change air bills, processes, or anything else. (By the way, if you don’t currently have a FedEx account, there is a toll-free number on their vendor profile which you can call to open an account. Once you have the new account number, you can complete the sign-up form.)

**Q: Where can I get a list of all the vendors in the program?**

A: The PurchasingPoint portal provides up-to-date information on participating vendors. Please note that while the most popular vendors are listed on the Vendors tab, there is a link to a list of over 100 additional vendors at the very bottom of that page.

**Q: Do you plan to send out notices each time you add new vendors to the program or should participants just check back in periodically?**

A: Everyone who registers on the PurchasingPoint portal will receive a bi-monthly electronic newsletter called iNews (unless you opt out). This newsletter will generally highlight new vendor additions, but it's not a bad idea to revisit the portal periodically, especially if you anticipate a sizable purchase coming up, are considering changing vendors, or are undertaking a cost-cutting program in a particular area of spending.

**Q: What if we already have a corporate account with Staples? Do we have to change this? How much more is the savings through this program?**

A: For most vendors, including Staples, if you already have an account with the vendor, signing up with that vendor via the PurchasingPoint portal will simply link your account to the program's contract pricing. Depending on the vendor there may or may not be changes to the way you place orders. (Since it is difficult to generalize, you should confirm the transition process for your organization with the vendor.) As for the magnitude of the savings, much depends on what you are paying today, but generally the pricing available through the program's contracts will be significantly better than what most organizations are paying.

**Q: What if we already have an account with one of these vendors, do we have to close it and reopen a new one?**

A: No, generally you can keep your existing account; however, there may be cases when you might need to open a new account. If you have any questions after reviewing a vendor's profile, please either contact the vendor's designated representative, or email Member Services at [memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com).

**Q: For vendors we already have existing accounts with, will we have a new vendor rep if we move our account over to this program?**

A: Generally yes, but this should be confirmed with each vendor.

**Q: If we have an existing contract with a vendor in the program (e.g., Pitney Bowes) will we be able to utilize this program's discounted pricing?**

A: Yes. HPG's contracts with program vendors provide for the ability of members to transition from existing contracts to the HPG contracts. Please consult the vendor representative designated on the PurchasingPoint portal (on the vendor's profile page), or contact Member Services at [memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com) for more information.

**Q: Can we keep our existing processes and procedures? For example, we require the use of expense codes on all purchases. Will the program's vendors support these?**

A: Generally yes, but this should be confirmed with each vendor. For example, with FedEx nothing changes (except your rates). With Staples, they provide access to their online ordering system, Eway, which may require some process changes if you are not already using that system. While the program itself does not proscribe how you interact with each vendor, vendors may have specific capabilities or requirements, so it's a good idea to discuss ordering, delivery, and billing logistics with each vendor up front.

**Q: How will the discount be shown on our invoice? Will the discount related to this program be shown on a separate line?**

A: When you sign up with a program vendor and link your account to the contract negotiated by HPG/AdvantageTrust, you gain access to HPG's pricing, which is expressed on a net basis on your invoices. In other words, the individual line item (unit) prices you see on your invoices will reflect the program's discounts, so there will not be a separate "discount" line.

**Q: We have offices in different cities in the U.S. Each office manages its own orders and billing. Do you recommend that we still use the same account? Can we have separate accounts? If we use the same account, is there a way to keep our billing and shipping addresses separate?**

A: If the billing and shipping addresses are different for each location, then each office should enroll in the program separately. To do this, representatives from each location must visit the PurchasingPoint portal and register with their contact information and location. If, however, you want a single billing address to be shared among multiple offices, register the billing location on the portal and then contact Member Services at [memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com) to set up accounts for the various ship-to locations.

**Q: Can we have more than one person from each office register on the portal?**

A: Yes. In fact, we encourage everyone involved in purchasing/procurement in your organization to register so that they will have direct access to the information about participating vendors and discounts. Just use the invitation code "Equity" to get started and then choose your location from the list of registered facilities at the end of Step 1 (or enter a new facility location in Step 2, as needed). Log-in information to the PurchasingPoint portal (i.e., username and password) should not be shared by multiple users. (And the invitation code should not be shared with anyone outside your organization.)

**Q: Once we've signed up with a vendor, do we place orders via the PurchasingPoint portal?**

A: No. The portal is simply the conduit by which you access the program's discounted pricing. Once you sign up with a vendor, and they have linked your account to the program's contract rates, you maintain a direct relationship with that vendor, placing orders with and making payments to that vendor. For all intents and purposes, your relationship with a participating program vendor will be just like any other vendor relationship, only you will have the benefit of better pricing and other contract terms thanks to the combined purchasing power (and negotiating clout) of HPG/AdvantageTrust.

**Q: Do we have the option to try this program to analyze the savings and decide whether we'd like to keep using it or not?**

A: Yes. You can use the program for as long as you like, and should you decide you'd like to stop using it, you can do so at any time.

**Q: If our Gates Foundation funding ends, would we still be eligible to participate in the program?**

A: Yes. As long as you enroll in the program while you are an active grantee, you can continue to use the program at no cost for as long as you like, including after your foundation-funded project(s) have completed.

**Q: Do purchases we make via the program need to be with Gates Foundation funds, or are all purchases eligible?**

A: With the very limited exception of airline tickets purchased through the grantee travel program (see next question), all purchases are eligible for program pricing regardless of the source of your funding.

**Q: Are air travel discounts limited to travel funded by a Gates Foundation grant?**

A: We are currently only allowed to extend the program's negotiated discounts on airfare for travel related to foundation business (i.e., travel that is in support of work that the Gates Foundation is funding). For travel not related to foundation business, you will still receive special rates on hotels, cars, and other services. You will also receive market rates for airfare (just not the negotiated discounts).

**Q: For travel... Are there blackout dates?**

A: No.

**Q: Regarding the travel program you're offering in partnership with Carlson Wagonlit Travel... Who negotiates the contracts?**

A: The discounts available through the program are based on the Gates Foundation's contracts with participating air carriers, hotels, and car rental companies. In short, we approached all the travel suppliers we use for our own travel and asked them to extend our contract discounts to our grantee partners. The hotel and car providers agreed to extend our discounts on all grantee travel. The air carriers agreed to do so for travel related to foundation business (i.e., in support of work that we are funding through our grant making). As noted above, air travel that is not related to foundation business may still be booked through the program, but is not eligible for the contract rates at this time.

**Q: How much can we save through the travel program on airfare, both domestic and international? How about on hotels and car rentals?**

A: Airlines participating in the program typically provide discounts that average 2%-15% off published fares, though some discounts may be as high as 30%+ in some circumstances. As you might expect, carrier discounts are typically lower on domestic coach travel (due to the competitive nature of the industry) and higher on international and/or business class where airline profit margins are generally higher. Participating hotels typically provide discounts that average 10%-20% off corporate rates. Car rental discounts, including those from Enterprise Rent-A-Car and National Car Rental, which were sourced through PurchasingPoint, range from 10% to over 50%. Overall, average savings on airfare under the foundation's contracts is estimated at 11% is based on the actual net effective discount experienced by the foundation on air travel during 2009. Discounts on hotels in 2009 averaged 10% off corporate rates. These discounts were calculated by Carlson Wagonlit Travel based on actual prices paid by the foundation versus published rates. Results for 2010 are still being calculated, but are expected to equal or exceed 2009 discounts. *Please note: While these discounts are indicative of the type of savings available, the overall effective discount experienced by organizations using the grantee travel program will vary based on a variety of factors including individual travel patterns; volume of travel related to foundation business; specific air carriers, hotels, and car companies used; classes of service selected; etc.*

**Q: Can we use FedEx for deliveries overseas?**

A: There are no restrictions on your use of FedEx, and we believe that the HPG/AdvantageTrust rates will offer value around the globe, but as with all things it's always a good idea to confirm specifics with each vendor before placing orders. In the case of FedEx, if you do a lot of shipping from one place to another, you should compare the rates you would pay under this program with what you are paying today, just to be certain that *in your particular circumstances* the savings are what you would expect.

**Q: We are currently conducting an RFP for our office supplies business. How can we get Staples (or other program vendors) into the process so that we can determine if the program's pricing is better than the bids we're seeing?**

A: Register on the PurchasingPoint portal and sign up with the vendor(s) you are interested in, then speak with the designated representative for each vendor (as indicated on their vendor profile) to discuss your RFP. The vendor representative will be familiar with the HPG/AdvantageTrust program and pricing.

**Q: Can we try this program and then withdraw if we have access to another GPO?**

A: If your organization is currently participating in another GPO, then you can't enroll in this program unless you first disengage from your current GPO because HealthTrust Purchasing Group (the GPO behind this program) requires that HPG be your exclusive GPO. If your organization is not currently participating in another GPO, then you are welcome to enroll in the program; however, if at some later date you join another GPO, you would then need to quit this program.

**Q: Why does HPG/AdvantageTrust require exclusivity?**

A: The exclusivity requirement is required by HealthTrust Purchasing Group (HPG), the GPO behind the program, to protect the integrity of the contracts it negotiates. HPG is not alone in requiring exclusivity—most of the major GPOs have similar requirements. In short, if exclusivity were not required, and organizations were able to join multiple GPOs and then cherry pick the lowest prices item by item, it would make it very difficult for a GPO to negotiate contracts with suppliers. Much of a vendor's incentive for giving deep discounts to a GPO is tied to winning a significant amount of sales volume in return. Exclusivity helps ensure that the GPO can deliver the volume needed to continue to negotiate favorable pricing over time.

**Q: Is a GPO the same as having a contract with a vendor?**

A: No. A contract you might have with a vendor is generally negotiated between your organization and the vendor. A GPO (or Group Purchasing Organization) typically negotiates contracts with many different vendors on behalf of a group of organizations, using the combined purchasing power of that group to negotiate better pricing and other contract terms for the group. Individual participants of that group may still maintain distinct relationships with the vendors they use, but the terms of the contract they utilize are based on what the GPO negotiated.

**Q: Because we are a technology group, we have the option of joining our state technology council, but this is not a national buying consortium. Would we be allowed to participate in both programs?**

A: Most likely not. Often one of the benefits of membership in a trade organization is discounted pricing negotiated on the basis of the group's overall purchasing volume. Even if the scope of such an organization is not national, if it provides group-oriented discounts on the same kinds of products or services available through the HPG/AdvantageTrust program, it is effectively a competing "group purchasing organization" and would therefore conflict with HPG's exclusivity requirement.

**Q: We are a Gates Foundation grantee, but we are part of a government agency (or large university, or medical center). Are we eligible for this program?**

A: In theory, yes, but in practice you may need to decline participation due to conflicts with HPG's participation terms and conditions (available [here](#)), most commonly the "exclusive GPO" provision which requires that you not be part of another group purchasing program. Government agencies (and schools, universities, medical centers, etc.) that already have group purchasing arrangements in place cannot participate in both their current program and the HPG/AdvantageTrust program. However, they are welcome to use the grantee travel services we're offering in partnership with Carlson Wagonlit Travel because that is administered outside the HPG program.

**Q: How do we ensure we are not a part of another group purchasing organization (GPO)?**

A: We recommend checking with your purchasing/procurement department, contracts department, CFO, or COO, since these are the folks who are most likely to be involved in establishing any relationship with a GPO. Generally, the larger your organization, the more likely that you have an existing relationship in place. This is especially true for universities, school districts, hospitals, medical centers, and government agencies, which have tended to be the earliest adopters of GPOs.

**Q: We receive grants from various sources including some from the Federal government. Would that preclude us from participation?**

A: Receiving grants from various sources does pose a problem in and of itself. You are welcome to use the PurchasingPoint portal and enjoy program discounts on all purchases, regardless of the source of your funding. (See the caveat regarding air travel above.) However, if your other funders impose requirements on how their money can be spent, then it's possible you might need to decline participation. Because much depends on your particular circumstances, we recommend that you and your grant administrator carefully review HPG's Participation Agreement (available [here](#)) before you enroll to ensure that you are able to participate.

**Q: How many other GPOs were reviewed before a commitment was made to go with the National Assembly and HPG/AdvantageTrust?**

A: The foundation looked at over 20 major purchasing programs and invited about half of those to submit a proposal detailing how their program would help our grantee partners save money. We evaluated the 7 responses we received on a comprehensive set of criteria including size (purchasing volume, number of members, etc.), pricing/discounts, breadth of products and services offered, ease of use, availability of customer service, general organizational fit with our mission as a foundation, etc. In the end, the National Assembly's program, being of and for nonprofits, and combining their easy to use PurchasingPoint portal with HPG's \$17 billion in volume, was the strongest solution.

**Q: If we are leasing equipment from a vendor, such as Xerox, can we still utilize the program?**

A: Yes.

**Q: I'm interested in your advice on cancelling (expensive) accounts we have already with a provider and reconnecting with them through PurchasingPoint?**

A: In many cases, you may not need to cancel your account to move your purchases onto the program's contracts. For example, vendors like FedEx and Staples can update their systems to associate your current account with the program's pricing. (In the case of FedEx, you would not even need to change air bills.) As a general rule, if you are interested in taking advantage of the program pricing available from a specific vendor, you should initiate the sign up process with that vendor. This will get you access to the program's pricing, which you can evaluate to assess your specific savings potential. You can also discuss transition logistics with the vendor representative. In all cases make sure the vendor representative knows you are enrolled in the HealthTrust Purchasing Group (HPG) AdvantageTrust program so they understand that your organization is qualified to receive the contract pricing.

**Q: Once we sign up with a vendor, are we locked into an exclusive contract with that vendor?**

A: No. Signing up with a vendor just enables you to establish an account with them (if you are a new customer) or transition your current account to the program's pricing (if you are an existing customer). In either case, you become eligible for program pricing, but there is no "lock in"—you are free to stop using a vendor at any time, and you can withdraw from the program entirely if you like. That said, there are a couple of vendors—Staples and Entegra—that require you to purchase at least 80% of your office supply or food volume, respectively, with them in order to get the program prices. This 80% requirement is intended to ensure that they have sufficient share of your volume to compensate for the greatly reduced profit margins they will earn.

**Q: What if there is a vendor that is not part of the program that we would like to purchase from?**

A: To be clear, after you enroll in the program you are still free to use vendors that are not in the program. (In other words, enrolling in the program does *not* mean you are required to use only program vendors.)

**Q: We have some vendors that might be interested in joining the program. Is there a mechanism for adding vendors to the program?**

A: There is no automatic mechanism in place. Please feel free to send any suggestions you may have to [grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org). You are also welcome to submit suggestions for HPG/AdvantageTrust consideration via the "Help" link on the portal, but their sourcing decisions are necessarily strategic and based on whether there would be sufficient volume and savings across all participants to warrant going through the competitive bid process. Vendors that are eager to submit themselves for HPG/AdvantageTrust consideration can do so at [http://www.healthtrustcorp.com/prospective\\_vendor2/index.htm](http://www.healthtrustcorp.com/prospective_vendor2/index.htm).

**Q: Are there plans to open up more of the "medical only" vendors to organizations outside the medical field?**

A: New opportunities arise from time to time and are announced by PurchasingPoint on the portal or via the bi-monthly newsletter, iNews. Vendors are added to the program after a lengthy bid process that is administered and awarded by HealthTrust Purchasing Group.

**Q: Are the discounts available through the program based on volume? Is there tier pricing factored into this program or does everyone get the same discount regardless of the volume we give vendors? (i.e. Do you get a greater discount percentage with greater volume?)**

A: The discounts negotiated by HPG/AdvantageTrust are based on overall program volume (currently in excess of \$17 billion). As a rule, every participating organization, regardless of size or volume, is eligible for the same pricing. A small organization buying in smaller quantities will pay no more for a given product than a large organization—and both are likely to pay much less for that product under this program than they do currently. That said, some vendors may provide additional price concessions when purchase volume reaches certain thresholds. Others may provide an additional discount in exchange for larger drop sizes or for prompt payment (e.g., pay net 10 days instead of net 30). Please consult the vendor profile or inquire with the vendor representative for specifics related to each vendor.

**Q: What if we can only buy thru a distributor (e.g., Cardinal Health)?**

A: Distributors do participate in the HPG contracts and in some cases ordering takes place through them and they honor the HPG discount pricing. Medline is an example and Cardinal (for healthcare facilities only).

**Q: Are there any fees involved to participate in this program? (An “admin fee” was mentioned during the webinar.)**

A: No. The “administrative fee” mentioned is a fee that participating vendors pay to HPG/AdvantageTrust to administer the program. This fee is standard practice with GPOs, negotiated into the vendor contracts, and capped by law at no more than 3%. Part of this fee is shared with the National Human Services Assembly to administer their portion of the program, including the Gates Foundation’s program, as well as support the development and maintenance of the PurchasingPoint portal. There are no fees charged to participants.

**Q: Does the Gates Foundation get any monies from this program?**

A: No. The only financial benefit the foundation gets out of the program is saving money on its overhead, like other participants do.

**Q: Is National Human Services Assembly the “administrator” component of Advantage Trust which is a division of HealthTrust?**

A: No. The National Human Services Assembly is an independent 501(c)(3) which is much older than the GPO.

**Q: I’m curious as to why the National Assembly does this? I can see our benefit of using PurchasingPoint, but what is their reason for providing this service?**

A: PurchasingPoint was originally developed by the National Human Services Assembly as a benefit for their nonprofit members; however, consistent with their mission to strengthen health and human services in the United States, they have expanded the program to serve other nonprofits as well, including the Gates Foundation and its grantees.

**Q: Is this program only available to nonprofit organizations?**

A: Yes. The National Human Services Assembly’s PurchasingPoint portal and the AdvantageTrust program supporting it are focused solely on the nonprofit sector.

**Q: Do we need a nonprofit tax ID for our purchases under the program? (We have non-profit status in some states where we operate, but not yet all.)**

A: You need to be a nonprofit to participate in the program, but you don’t need to provide a tax ID to enroll. You may need to have evidence of your nonprofit status to avoid paying sales tax on purchases you make, depending on the state and vendor. Please discuss specific requirements for your situation with the vendor(s) you sign up with.

**Q: What is the tendering process? How can we access tendering process documentation? (This would be needed to support purchasing based on internal and donor procurement policies.)**

A: HPG’s tendering and contract negotiation processes are proprietary and not something that we have access to; however, they do provide some information about how vendors are selected [here](#). Additional questions may be directed to Member Services at [memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com).

**Q: Does buying through these vendor contracts satisfy competitive bid requirements when using Federal funds?**

A: We’re not able to speak to federal or state contacting requirements. If you have questions about the program’s compliance with specific requirements your organization is subject to, please submit them to the Member Services team at [memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagetrustpg.com) or via the “Help” link on the PurchasingPoint portal.

**Q: Are our purchases via the program tracked in any way?**

A: Vendors report sales by category to HPG/AdvantageTrust, which rolls this information up and shares it with the National Human Services Assembly to help administer the program. High-level, aggregate data may be shared with the Gates Foundation for the purpose of assessing the impact and effectiveness of the program. Detailed purchase data is not tracked.

**Q: Are there minimum purchase requirements (by order, or annually)?**

A: Generally, no. There are a couple vendors that have minimum drop sizes and/or require that you make a certain percentage of your purchases through them, but these are the exception. See each vendor's profile page for information about any such requirements.

**Q: Once someone has signed up with National Car rental, for example, will the way they rent cars still be the same as they are accustomed to?**

A: Yes, but with any vendor it is a good idea to confirm in advance what the expected experience will be so you can assess whether this will require a change from your current mode of business.

**Q: Can we use the program's discounts for personal use, such as rental cars?**

A: In most cases the contract discounts are not available for personal use, but some vendors may allow it. (Please review the vendor profile on the PurchasingPoint portal or inquire with the vendor representative.) In the case of National and Enterprise you can present your own personal credit card when renting a car.

**Q: Are we still able to get rewards points from vendors? Can we still use online coupons?**

A: Depends on the vendor, but generally no; however, you should confirm these and other specifics with the vendor's designated representative before signing up, just so there are no surprises. However, you should find that the pricing available through the program more than makes up for any lost points or coupon opportunities, and has the added benefit of being simpler to administer.

**Q: Regarding savings, are the discounts offered off retail or wholesale? (Specific interest in Herman Miller.)**

A: The "Average Savings" figures cited on the PurchasingPoint portal are generally based on the National Human Services Assembly's analyses of actual member invoice costs before and after joining the program. While these figures provide an approximation of the magnitude of real-world savings possible, your organization's savings will obviously depend on your specific circumstances, so we recommend performing your own savings analysis as you evaluate potential vendors. For Herman Miller, according to their representative they follow furniture industry practice of quoting discounts off of published list prices as indicated on their website, [www.hermanmiller.com](http://www.hermanmiller.com). For other vendors, please contact the representative listed on their vendor profile.

**Q: Is there an annual analysis of the cost savings provided to the participants?**

A: No. The National Human Services Assembly has conducted a number of analyses of actual cost savings for its members based on before/after invoice costs they have experienced, but there is no annual review process in place. Since each participating organization's savings will vary based on what they buy through the program and what they were paying before joining the program, we recommend that you conduct your own periodic savings analyses based on your particular circumstances.

**Q: Can we offer this program to our own grantees (e.g., to subgrantees of the Gates Foundation)?**

A: Our goal is to be able to extend the program's benefits to subgrantees of the Gates Foundation, but we're not there yet. If your Gates Foundation grant has been regranted to other organizations via subgrants and you are interested in getting those subgrantees into this program, please email [grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org) and we can discuss the potential for doing so.

**Q: Our nonprofit organization is a Gates Foundation grantee and Gates funds go to only one of several distinct programs we operate. My understanding is that our entire organization may take advantage of this program. (Can you confirm?) Also, down the road if it is determined that the Gates-supported program would be more effective spun off as separate 501(c)(3) would both our organization and the spun off entity be eligible to participate in the program?**

A: Your organization, as a nonprofit grantee of the Gates Foundation, is indeed eligible regardless of the specific activities the foundation may support. Also, once you are enrolled in this program, you can stay enrolled as long as you like—including after any Gates-funded projects are completed. As for the potential spin-off, if that comes to pass just enroll the entity in question as its own facility on the PurchasingPoint portal while they are still under your control and they will be grandfathered as well. (If you need assistance at the time, please contact Member Services at [memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com](mailto:memberservices@advantagestrustpg.com).)

**Q: Our organization is a coalition (or association) of many different independent member organizations some of which may not have a direct relationship with the Gates Foundation. Can we offer this program to them?**

A: At this time we are only allowed to offer the program to direct grantees of the Gates Foundation. If the members that comprise your organization are not Gates Foundation grantees, then they would not be able to participate in this program; however it may be possible for your organization to work with the National Assembly to develop a similar program of your own. (See next question.)

**Q: We are a nonprofit membership-based organization... Is it possible to work with you on a program to help our members achieve savings through PurchasingPoint?**

A: Depending on the size and nature of your organization, it may be possible to work with the National Human Services Assembly to serve your members via your own custom version of the PurchasingPoint portal. To discuss specifics, please contact Phil Collyer of the National Assembly at [pcollyer@nassembly.org](mailto:pcollyer@nassembly.org).

**Q: Our staff is small (4-5 staff at a time) but we maintain a membership of 40-45 that convene multiple times a year in different locations. Would this program benefit our unique structure?**

A: The answer really depends on what sort of purchasing your staff does (e.g., types of products and services, volume, vendor requirements, etc.) and how well that purchasing fits with the vendors available through the program. A dollar saved is a dollar saved, but realistically if your total purchases on, say, office supplies, are only \$1,000 per year, the average savings of 22% (or about \$200) on that amount may not be worth the staff time required to manage the transition to a new vendor. Or it may be... it really depends on your situation. Our recommendation would be that you register on the PurchasingPoint portal, review the participating vendors, and consider your options in the context of your own purchasing patterns. If you feel you will benefit from participating in the program (perhaps by continuing to use a current vendor, but at the program's contact pricing), great, if not, no harm in taking a look, and no obligation. 😊

**Q: I registered on the portal but my address (or contact info, etc.) has changed. How can I fix this?**

A: Just log into the portal with your email address and password and access your profile using the "Profile" link at the top of the page. Select the "Edit profile" link next to your name, then update any data and click "Save profile." *Note: Other "How to" questions about the portal can be submitted to the Member Services team using the "Help" link on the portal.*

**Q: I've forgotten my password to the PurchasingPoint portal. How can I retrieve it?**

A: It happens! 😊 Just go to <http://gatesfoundation.purchasingpoint.org/profile/forgotpassword.aspx>, which is also accessible from the login page of the portal.

**Q: If I have additional questions about the program, who should I contact?**

A: Please email [grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:grouppurchasing@gatesfoundation.org).