



How to Tame the Cloud with One Call

E&I Cooperative Services, a member-owned, non-profit sourcing cooperative for education, does a lot more for K-12 than just provide better pricing for its over 5,500 members, as Vice President of Technology Keith Fowlkes explains in this interview.



Keith Fowlkes
Vice President, Technology
E&I Cooperative Services

A lot of districts belong to regional service providers already that help them with consortium buying. How do you set yourself apart from those providers?

E&I's extensive member base allows us to negotiate better contract terms and conditions and offer high-quality competitive contracts. Our contracts are much more flexible than most other cooperative and consortia contracts, offering full catalogs and staying current with the latest products and services. In addition, our contract process follows **NIGP** standards and meets most state and federal guidelines for competitive solicitations. So, if a school says, "Hey, I want x product," instead of going through the RFP process, picking the top three vendors and making the award, they can use our contracts off-the-shelf, because our contracts have already been competitively solicited. Oftentimes, the result is a better price, a faster vehicle to use, and superior terms and conditions.

Even at price parity with current sources, our members have the opportunity to save more, since member purchases are eligible for a patronage refund at the end of the year. For-profit organizations will just pocket that money as revenue. As a member-owned non-profit cooperative, we do not operate that way. We maintain a certain amount to operate, and pending Board approval, a percentage of the balance goes back to members who purchased that year in the form of patronage.

Are there other services besides negotiation and contract formulation that are provided by E&I?

Yes! Another valuable service we offer to members are Strategic Sourcing Assessments or SSAs. We work with an educational institution and analyze their spend over the course of six months to a year in terms of what they buy and where they buy it from. Our analysts and sourcing consultants then collaborate with procurement personnel at the district to review their data and determine how

E&I contracts can effectively help them streamline their activities and save money.

We also recently launched a new e-procurement solution for our members called the E&I Marketplace. This new service allows users across an institution's departments to shop for products and services available through E&I contracts. We are really excited to offer this new service designed to help our members optimize their sourcing operations.

Regarding our contract offerings, we are very excited about the new Carahsoft **Cloud Solutions and Services Distributor contract**, which is the one of the latest agreements in the E&I Technology portfolio. Carahsoft is the largest distributor of cloud software and services in education today. In fact, Carahsoft offers over 400 cloud products and services! Plus, the company provides the best support team and software tools to help schools and systems keep up with licensing. How do you buy all of the Software -as-a-Service (SaaS), Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) applications out there? How do you manage all those licenses for software users who may not actually work in your school anymore? How do you recover the licenses for others in your district who need them?

How does Carahsoft help schools get their cloud and managed services purchasing under control?

As a CIO in education for nearly 30 years, I understand the insurmountable challenge when dealing with dozens of different software companies doing individual licensing of software. It can be impossible to wrangle.

Carahsoft has a proactive renewal nurturing program known as "Affinity to Infinity." I love this program. It helps districts consolidate all of their "rogue spend" – those folks that have purchasing cards (P-Cards), and they're out buying cloud services here and there, and you're never really sure what price they're getting. IT and procurement people need to get that spend under control. Once that's



brought into a consolidation process, the licensing, renewals, and pricing for multiple titles can be assessed, reduced and controlled within an interface that's easy to use. Then it's also easy to see what products and seats you've got, your pricing, your renewal and your renewal dates.

You can take one look at the Carahsoft product catalog and see that it's large enough to include just about every cloud software title you can think of – DocuSign, AWS, and LinkedIn Learning, all the way to Adobe and Microsoft products. They've got everything. And, even better, all of these cloud solutions can be purchased through the E&I Carahsoft contract. You can also decrease your costs, sometimes dramatically, when you consolidate all of your licensing. Carahsoft helps you maintain your sanity by not having to manage a million different places where teachers and staff buy their products.

How would a school district take advantage of the E&I Carahsoft contract?

The first step is to visit E&I's [Carahsoft microsite](#), where you'll find background, contract, and ordering information, along with a link to the website. When you're ordering products and services covered under the contract, you should speak with us or go to Carahsoft directly and let them know you want to use the E&I Carahsoft contract.

You can also receive guidance on licensing along with a certified implementation/integration service provider for the

cloud product or service you'd like to use. Be sure to provide Carahsoft with the contract number from our microsite. Carahsoft will then list the E&I Carahsoft contract as a preferred contract vehicle for you.

Can you offer any additional advice to K-12 folks besides having their districts join the cooperative?

K-12 professionals are continually trying to keep their heads above water. They're drowning in paperwork, processes, regulations and general bureaucracy. And they just need relief. If you've got 100 different contracts, every time you touch those contracts to manage them, support them, make amendments, check that they meet state and federal compliance guidelines, and more, it increases the total cost of ownership for every one of those cloud products and services. E&I helps you reduce this work, so that you can spend more time and energy in what you love to do, which is helping students learn.
































[Learn more about E&I Cooperative Services and its Carahsoft contract online.](#)

Keith Fowlkes is the vice president of technology for E&I Cooperative Services. Previously, Keith served as CIO for Centre College in Kentucky, the University of Virginia's College at Wise and Saint Mary's College. He is a frequent speaker and author on technology in education.

Consolidate Your Institution's Cloud Solutions Through the E&I Carahsoft Contract

E&I Cooperative Services (E&I) is the only member-owned, non-profit procurement cooperative focused exclusively on education. By working together with industry-leading suppliers, E&I provides an exceptional member experience, helping institutions save time and money. Our new publicly sourced, competitively solicited contract provides E&I members with a direct distribution channel for cloud solutions and related technology. This contract provides competitive pricing on our complete cloud portfolio, including SaaS, PaaS, IaaS support and managed services from our partners.

Moreover, E&I members will receive additional support from Carahsoft and our reseller and OEM partners to ensure successful deployments, including installation guidance by certified professionals, documentation for operating and troubleshooting, and licensing consolidation.

					
	 				
		 <small>NEXT LEVEL NETWORKING</small>			 <small>Government Solutions</small>
					
 <small>Total Visibility. Focused Protection™</small>					

To learn more, call **(703) 673-3518**, email E&ISales@carahsoft.com or visit carahsoft.com/EandI.

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