

APAC Success Story: Conway Wholesale Produce

Written by: Amanda Perez, Ozark District Outreach Coordinator

Did you know that Arkansas has a colony of primates that work for the federal government?

These primates actually serve a critical function for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's research on the risk of drug and chemical exposures. This colony of primates must be in excellent health to serve as subjects of research and this means they need to have a proper diet. A government contract was released in early 2017 to source food for the primate colony and our APAC team helped connect Conway Wholesale Produce to this opportunity.

I recently had a chance to speak with the Kelley Family, owner operators of Conway Wholesale Produce about their business, recent government contracts, and their long standing relationship with the Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center of over 12 years. Mr. Kelley said that this was a new opportunity for their company to meet the demand for produce and other food items, not their typical client but one they had the capacity to meet.

Conway Wholesale Produce is a private, minority-owned business that was established in 1996. The core of the business is to supply all types of fruits and vegetables to the public and private sector. Due to the low volume of produce grown in Arkansas, most must be sourced outside of Arkansas to meet the demand for these foods. Conway Wholesale Produce recognized this need and has been serving the state as both a primary contractor, but more often as a subcontractor on larger contracts to support federal, state and local purchasing bringing in several million dollars in contracts over the history of their business. They specialize in Arkansas grown produce when seasonally available. They have established relationships and teaming agreements with partners and vendors throughout the industry that will allow them to meet client demands for solutions and services at the highest quality and affordable levels. Conway Wholesale Produce has received and performed contracts with the USDA, Produce Buying Office (PBO) Birmingham, PBO Fort Worth, Arkansas Public Schools, Arkansas Prison Systems and many other food services industries.

Mr. Kelley explained that it would have been difficult to secure these government contracts without the assistance of the APAC team over the years. By being an APAC client, Conway Wholesale Produce was able to learn of upcoming contract opportunities, receive technical support during the application process, and diversify their business with new contract opportunities. Mr. Kelley said that "getting government contracts isn't easy, but it is worth it."

Connect with our APAC counselors to learn how you can expand your business into new areas.

