



2026 Cronin Submission Booklet

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The Cronin Club

George Cronin Massachusetts 1947	Charles Sullivan New Jersey 1964	Stanley Hanna Maryland 1981	Dugan Petty Alaska 1998	Dean Stotler Delaware 2013-2014
F. Carl Anderson Pennsylvania 1948	Alan Vessey Minnesota 1965	Hugh Carleton Louisiana 1982	David Gragan Texas July-Sept 1999	Deborah Damore Vermont 2015
Franklyn Adams Rhode Island 1949	Francis Brooks Nevada 1966	James Christiansen Utah 1983	Jan Hamik Wisconsin 2000	Paul Mash Utah Jan-March 2016
P.T. Peterson Minnesota 1950	William Finnegan Connecticut 1967	John Spath New York 1984	Joyce Murphy Missouri Sept 2000-May 2001	Larry Maxwell New Mexico April 2016-2018
Frank Free Vermont 1951	Hugh White South Carolina 1968	Jack Pitzer Iowa 1985	Pat Kohler Washington May-Dec 2001	Michael Jones Alabama 2018
William Stevenson Minnesota 1952	John Ayers Washington 1969	Giulio Mazzone New Jersey 1985-1986	Richard Thompson Maine Jan-Mar 2002	Lisa Eason Georgia 2019
Blaine Yoder Nebraska 1953	Thomas Blanco Illinois 1970	Howard White, Jr. Alabama 1987	Denise Lea Louisiana Mar 2002-Sept 2003	George Schutter District of Columbia 2020
John Bush Ohio 1954	John Short Wisconsin 1971	Thomas M. Bostick Georgia 1988	George Street Tennessee 2003-2004	Rosalyn Ingram Florida 2021
J. Stanley Bien Michigan 1955	Ramon Damerell Oregon 1972	Edward J. Erxleben Arkansas 1989	John Adler Arizona 2004-2005	Delbert H. Singleton South Carolina 2022-2023
C.L. Magnuson Connecticut 1956	Frank Pennoni Michigan 1972-73	Wayne A. Casper Arizona 1990	Ellen Phillips Massachusetts 2005-2006	Valerie Bollinger Idaho 2024
Charles Byrley Kentucky 1957	Willis Holding, Jr. North Carolina 1974	Robert J. Link Alaska 1990-1991	Voight Shealy South Carolina 2006-2007	Deb Damore Vermont 2025
Ira Baker Oklahoma 1958	Gerald Geer Washington 1975	William S. Warstler Michigan 1992	Jeff Holden South Dakota 2007-2008	Sherri Maxwell Colorado 2026
John Dyer Maine 1959	Herman Crystal New Jersey 1976	Paula Moskowitz New York 1993	Vern Jones Alaska 2008-2009	
Lacy Wilkinson Colorado 1960	John Fisher, Jr. Tennessee 1977	N. Kent Rose Alabama 1994	Dianne Lancaster Oregon 2009-2010	
Franklin Pierce Tennessee 1961	John Hittinger Florida 1978	Douglas G. Richins Utah 1995	Greg Smith Nevada 2010-2011	
E. Guy Martin Louisiana 1962	Homer Forester Texas 1979	Richard B. Thompson Maine 1996	Ron Bell Virginia 2011-2012	
Henry Knouft Kansas 1963	E.R. (Bud) Roon Colorado 1980	Donald G. Buffum Mississippi 1997	Carol Wilson Connecticut 2012-2013	

Past Gold Cronin Winners

2025 - Massachusetts
Smarter Service, Safer Contracts:
Transforming State Procurement with
Dual AI Agents

2024 - Michigan
Cloudy with a Chance of Savings:
Infrastructure as a Service

2023 - Michigan
Lifecycle Supplier Outreach &
Relationship Management

2022 - Michigan
Competitive Proof of Concept: Trying
Before You Buy While Complying with
Competitive Requirements

2021 - Wisconsin
Interagency, Data-Driven Collaboration:
Wisconsin's Innovative Approach to
Specification Development

2020-None Selected

2019 - Michigan
Circumventing Risk with
Contract Management

2018 - Alaska
Continuous Improvement in
Statewide Procurement

2017 - Utah
ValuePoint Cloud Solutions
Procurement

2016 - Tennessee
Radio Equipment and Services

2015 - Tennessee
Tourist Development -
Marketing and Advertising

2014 - Virginia
eVA Mobile Apps

2013 - Mississippi
Driving Efficiency into Business
Operations

2012- Oregon
Direct Dealership Price
Agreements

2011 - Oregon
Nationwide Lodging Services

2010 - Minnesota &
Wisconsin
Partnership Initiative

2009 - Oregon
Information Technology
Managed Service Provider for
Hourly and Project-Based
Services

2008 - Ohio
Multi-State Procurement
of Unique Services

2007 - Minnesota
Spend Analysis System

2006 - New York
Hazardous Incident Response
Equipment (HIRE)

2006 - Hawaii (IT)
Compliance Express
Program

2005 - Massachusetts
(Classic)
Envirocalc: Environmental
Benefits & Energy Cost
Savings Calculator for
Purchasers

2005 - Washington (IT)
WEBS: Washington Electronic
Business Solution

2004 - Illinois (Classic)
Transformation of
Procurement Performance

2004 - Arizona (IT)
SPIRIT: Automated
eProcurement System

2003 - Connecticut (Classic)
Weekly Information
Newsletter

2003 - Virginia (IT)
eVA Electronic Procurement
Solution

2002 - Alaska
Long Distance Learning

2001 - Idaho
Purchasing Modernization
Initiative

2000 - Utah
Vehicle Purchase Program

1999 - Ohio
Natural Gas Purchasing
Program

1998 - Missouri
PC Prime Vendor Contract

1997 - Wisconsin
Advantis Credit Bureau Access
Program

1996 - North Carolina
Micro-Computer & Peripherals
Contract as Developed &
Managed on the Internet

1995 - 1994
None Selected

1993 - Minnesota Document
Management System

1992 - Oregon
Vendor Information Program

1991 - Arizona
Contract for Abatement of
Underground Storage Tanks

1990 - New York
Contract for Electronic
Ballasts

1989 - Missouri
Pharmacy Service Contract for
Correctional Facilities

1988 - Kansas
Freight Management Systems

1987 - West Virginia Natural
Gas Contract

1986 - Alaska
Video - "A Better Way To Buy"

1985 - Missouri Competitive
Bidding of Residential
Rehabilitation Services



State of Arizona

Department of Administration
State Procurement Office

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Advancing Cooperative Reporting: A Data-Driven, Automated Model for State Procurement

Executive Summary

The State of Arizona administers a cooperative purchasing program that enables political subdivisions and nonprofit organizations to purchase from its statewide contracts. To support the cost of administering the program, each quarter suppliers are required to submit usage reports and corresponding administrative fee payments through the State's e-Procurement System, Arizona Procurement Portal (APP).

In Fiscal Year 2025, the integrity of the State Procurement Office's (SPO) contract management and financial forecasting was compromised by a significant backlog of incomplete usage reports. More than half all reports remained unsubmitted each quarter, and payments were consistently delayed. These gaps hindered revenue collection, limited Procurement Officers' access to essential contract data, and left many suppliers in breach of contract.

To address these issues, SPO launched a strategic, two phase initiative to shift the organization from reactive, manual tracking to a proactive, data-driven reporting framework. The initiative aimed to increase usage report submission rates to 80% and reduce payment cycle times by 30%. Following a root cause analysis, SPO executed an immediate cleanup effort followed by targeted process improvements to restore data integrity and strengthen ongoing contract management processes.

Phase I: Focused Short-Term Remediation (Targeting FY24 Backlog)

The immediate priority was reviewing all SPO-managed contracts with outstanding FY24 usage reports to identify trends among the highest volume backlogs. The project team identified several root causes contributing to non-submission:

- Suppliers were not receiving notifications
- Suppliers were not familiar with the cooperative program and its requirements
- Not all Procurement Officers were familiar with Cooperative Program processes

From this analysis, the cooperative team implemented several quick wins to ramp up momentum for the project. Among these, the most impactful was the development of automated supplier notifications, created in partnership with the APP team. These improvements immediately strengthened compliance, recovered missing usage data, and stabilized reporting for the most recent periods.

Phase II: Systemic Long-Term Process Improvement

Following the initial remediation, Phase II focused on building a sustainable reporting framework to prevent future data gaps in FY26 and beyond. A cross functional team, including the Cooperative Program staff, Procurement Officers from each commodity team, the APP Help Desk, and SPO compliance, developed a comprehensive set of countermeasures addressing training, communication, system controls, and process standardization. In total, eighteen countermeasures were implemented. Key examples include updated training materials for suppliers and Procurement Officers, improved contact verification steps at award and renewal, expanded Co-Op onboarding content, refined report status definitions, FAQ documents, and a cycle time dashboard. Automated alerts and micro-learning embedded within APP further strengthened adherence.

This initiative produced transformative results. By integrating automated system triggers and refining internal workflows, SPO achieved the key results as identified in Table 1, establishing a replicable model for cooperative contract management.

Improvement Area	Results
Submission Rate	~50% → 80%
Payment Cycle Time	193 day reduction
Revenue	\$700,000 in FY24
Annual Time Savings	384 hours

Table 1. Key Results

Innovation

With more than 1,200 cooperative contracts, cooperative usage reporting is essential to sustaining SPO's operations. Historically, cooperative contract management lacked standardization, resulting in siloed processes and inconsistent reporting. This initiative introduced a fundamentally new approach -- transitioning from decentralized, manual workflows to a collaborative, cross-functional model supported by standardized tools and system automation.

A core innovation was the development of comprehensive standard work procedures for Procurement Officers. Prior to this effort, SPO had no consistent guidance for managing cooperative contracts. The team created [standard work procedures](#) along with supporting materials such as standardized email templates, [Pre-Offer](#) and [Post-Award](#) conference slide decks, detailed [FAQs](#), and a [Cooperative Contract Award Letter Supplement](#). These tools established a uniform, repeatable process for contract administration for the first time.

Another key innovation of this initiative was the replacement of highly manual, time-intensive tasks with automated system functionality. Previously, identifying supplier contacts, cleaning data, and sending multi-day batches of alerts consumed significant staff time. By integrating these workflows directly into APP, the system now delivers accurate, timely notifications in minutes.

The initiative also leveraged APP's capabilities to automate and streamline the reporting workflow. Suppliers are now required to designate a specific "Supplier Contact (Cooperative Reporting) role" within 30 days of award, enabling direct system notifications. Automated alerts now provide reminders when reports are generated, notices seven days before the due date, day-of deadlines, and past-due notifications. SPO also introduced new report status categories to differentiate current, due, and overdue reports, greatly enhancing visibility and compliance monitoring.

Together, these innovations modernized the cooperative program, established consistent statewide practices, and equipped both Procurement Officers and suppliers with the tools and automation necessary for timely, accurate usage reporting.

Transferability

This cooperative reporting initiative was designed with high transferability, making it an ideal template for other states or entities seeking to improve cooperative contract compliance and administrative fee recovery. While Arizona leverages APP, the underlying framework, communication strategies, and workflow improvements can be easily adapted to any state's internal and e-procurement environments.

A core aspect of this project's transferability is the comprehensive standardized resources developed for both internal Procurement Officers and external suppliers. Other states can readily adopt and customize Arizona's standard work procedures, standard email templates, and the comprehensive program FAQs broken down for contract managers, cooperative members, and suppliers. Additionally, the Pre-Offer and Post-Award conference slide decks and the Cooperative Contract Award Letter Supplement provide a communication framework for establishing early compliance with suppliers right from the contract's inception.

Furthermore, the workflow improvements implemented as part of this project serve as replicable examples for other procurement offices. Requiring suppliers to designate a primary cooperative reporting contact within 30 days of a contract award can be implemented in nearly any vendor management system to ensure critical communications reach the correct individuals. Similarly, establishing a structured notification cadence, including alerts for when reports are generated, is a highly transferable technical solution that other states can configure in their own systems.



Collectively, these standardized tools and configurable workflows provide a robust and adaptable blueprint that any procurement organization can leverage to modernize cooperative contract reporting and strengthen overall program performance.

Service Improvement

This project significantly improved cooperative contract administration by making internal processes more efficient, consistent, and collaborative. A key driver of this success was a deliberate focus on change management and internal stakeholder involvement. The team piloted the new standards and material with procurement officers who had upcoming solicitations and contract renewals, ensuring early adoption and real time feedback.

Rather than treating reporting as an administrative task at the end of the process, the new approach promoted collaboration between Procurement Officers, suppliers, and the cooperative team right from the outset of each contract. Standardized materials and clear guidance supported Procurement Officers in communicating expectations early, resulting in stronger compliance and widespread buy in.

These operational improvements produced meaningful results. Reporting compliance increased from roughly 50% to 80%, and report submission and payment cycle times improved by approximately 190 days. By transforming a previously fragmented process into one centered on communication, standardization, and automation, the initiative significantly strengthened the State's ability to enforce mandatory contract provisions.

Automation also improved the quality of service provided to suppliers. With fewer manual tasks, the cooperative team can dedicate more time to helping suppliers understand reporting requirements and navigate the process. Suppliers now have clear points of contact, receive timely responses, and benefit from a more supportive and consistent customer experience.

Savings & Efficiency

Time Savings

The initiative eliminated the highly manual and time consuming alert process that previously required the cooperative team to extract supplier contract data, clean and cross reference reports, and send multi-day batches of emails limited by provider restrictions. Identifying contacts alone often required a full workday. By integrating alerts directly into APP, the system now, in a matter of minutes, automatically notifies the correct contract contacts with the contract reference included in the alert. Additional automated alerts are also sent for past due reports. Now, multiple alerts are sent automatically throughout the quarter with no manual input, which results in a time savings of minimum 16 hours per quarter. Overall, the automation has resulted in an estimated 384 hours of annual time savings.

Increased Notification Accuracy and Supplier Awareness

The new automated alert system dramatically improved both the accuracy of notifications and overall supplier awareness of reporting requirements. Previously, mass email notifications were sent to every contact within a supplier's profile, resulting in confusion among non-reporting staff and generating hundreds of undeliverable bouncebacks. With the introduction of the designated "Supplier Contact (Cooperative Reporting) role in APP, alerts now reach only those with reporting responsibilities, eliminating administrative burden and ensuring the right users receive timely reminders and past-due notices.

This improved accuracy has also strengthened financial reconciliation. Previously, the cooperative team would have to reach out to vendors in an attempt to properly match unidentified check payments. Now, the reminders and past due alerts often notify the vendor their report remains in balance due



status and they are able to proactively reach out to our team, sometimes before the check has even been processed by the accounting team, making it significantly easier to match previously unidentified payments.

Because alerts now reach the correct contacts at the right time, suppliers who had never submitted reports are engaging the cooperative team with questions, creating opportunities to clarify requirements and provide direct guidance. Procurement Officers are also reinforcing reporting expectations during solicitation and award, increasing supplier understanding from the beginning. As a result, awareness of both the reporting process and the APP system itself has increased substantially across the supplier community.

Increased Reporting Efficiency

The combined effect of automation, improved communication, and clearer expectations led to substantial efficiency gains. Report submissions increased approximately 50% to 80%, and reporting payment cycle time decreased from 223 days to just 30 days.

This initiative transformed cooperative contract reporting from a fragmented, manual, compliance-challenged process into a proactive, automated, and data-driven statewide model. The measurable improvements in accuracy, efficiency, service quality, and financial recovery establish a sustainable foundation for future growth, and provide a blueprint for other states seeking to modernize their cooperative procurement programs.





State of Arizona

Department of Administration
State Procurement Office

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Flipping the Procurement Classroom: A Blueprint for Scalable State Training Modernization

Executive Summary

In 2013,¹ the State Procurement Office (SPO) was statutorily required to “Establish and maintain a mandatory procurement training and certification program[...].”² However, the development, implementation, and continuous adaptation of a training program for approximately 300 procurement delegation holders requires an immense investment of time and resources.

Historically, SPO Academy³ curriculum was constrained by traditional design methods that focused almost entirely on information delivery. This defaulted the program to only meet the baseline cognitive learning levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy: *Remembering* and *Understanding*. Because our instructional design was limited to these foundational layers, our Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were forced to spend all of their valuable, live instructor-led training (ILT) time reciting facts and reviewing data.

This model created two critical gaps:

1. A Workforce Skills Gap: Learners lacked the hands-on application and practical experience needed to apply the training to the daily hurdles they faced in their positions.
2. Inefficient Resource Utilization & Risk: Highly valuable SMEs were relegated to acting as “talking textbooks,” which also introduced the operational risk of an instructor accidentally misspeaking and sharing misinformation.

Recognizing this deficiency, SPO made the strategic decision to restructure SPO Academy. We pivoted to a “flipped” model, shifting foundational knowledge and information from live lectures to asynchronous Computer-Based Training (CBT). This structural change freed up our SMEs and allocated training timeslots to focus exclusively on providing immersive, scenario-based learning that mirrors real-world challenges, which ultimately drives learners toward Bloom’s higher cognitive levels: *Application*, *Analysis*, and *Evaluation*.

The primary hurdle to executing this strategy is the sheer volume of content required to create engaging content and appeal to all primary learning styles⁴ for new CBTs, without straining already limited resources. According to industry benchmarks from the Association for Talent Development (ATD), for every 20 minutes of completed instruction, it takes an average of:

- 48 hours to develop passive eLearning training;⁵
- 67 hours for traditional classroom or face-to-face instruction;⁶ and
- 155 hours to develop fully engaging eLearning training that includes immersive games, scenarios, or simulations.

To bypass traditional development bottlenecks, we pioneered an innovative approach by feeding AI the existing recordings of our virtual ILT (VILT) sessions to rapidly generate well-formatted, conversational training scripts. These AI-generated scripts were then used to create high-quality voice-over audio, enhancing the CBTs’ effectiveness and appealing directly to multiple VARK learning styles. By combining this AI-driven approach with existing training slide decks, we eliminated the need to create foundational material from scratch and drastically cut content development time.

To pilot this methodology, we chose “Protests: Law & Practice” as the first SPO Academy course to be revamped, successfully transforming it into a comprehensive, three-part series on Protests (see Attachment 1 for full course details). This success serves as a proven blueprint for future course

¹ Procurement Code, § 11, 2013 Ariz. Legis. Serv. Ch. 190 (H.B. 2599) (Westlaw).

² A.R.S. § 41-2511(C)(6)

³ SPO Academy is Arizona’s State Procurement Office training program required by statute.

⁴ Primary learning styles referenced here refers to “VARK”: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic. For the article this information was pulled from, see Wilson College, “What Are the 4 Types of Learning Styles,” *Wilson College Online Blog* (blog), December 21, 2023, <https://online.wilson.edu/resources/what-are-the-4-types-of-learning-styles/>.

⁵ “Passive” training refers to learning information solely through reading text online without any engagement activities.

⁶ Robyn A. Defelice, “How Long Does It Take to Develop Training? New Question, New Answers,” *ATD Blog* (blog), Association for Talent Development, January 13, 2021, <https://www.td.org/content/atd-blog/how-long-does-it-take-to-develop-training-new-question-new-answers>.

development and, through this Cronin submission, offers an adaptable framework for other state procurement offices seeking to modernize their training infrastructure.

Innovation

Maximizing Limited Resources Through AI Use

SPO Academy's restructuring of offered protest training is a notable contribution to the procurement function as it introduces a novel solution to a universal government challenge: maximizing the use of limited organizational resources. Research from ATD found that 67% of talent development professionals cite "limited resources (time, talent, and money)" as the most common barrier to designing and developing learning content more quickly.⁷ The workflow developed during this project directly overcomes this industry hurdle, leveraging AI to automate the initial drafting phase and dramatically reduce the strain on agency resources.

Our approach demonstrates exceptional originality by completely reversing the traditional workflow of asynchronous CBT development. Under traditional CBT development, creating engaging and informative content requires instructional designers to author all of the content, scripts, and storyboards from scratch, taking months to complete. Delays are inherently encountered in this workflow due to a heavy reliance on limited SME availability to verify the accuracy of nuanced content. This bottleneck is compounded when urgent, higher-priority procurement projects inevitably pull these experts away, deprioritizing training development and stalling agency timelines. To bypass the resource bottleneck, SPO pioneered an innovative approach using AI during the Design and Development⁸ of our Protest Training Series:

- **Archived Content Ingestion:** Leveraged our existing library of ILT slide decks and unscripted audio transcripts, completely eliminating the need to author foundational content from scratch.
- **The P.R.O.M.P.T. Method Execution:**⁹ Deployed structured, well-engineered prompt boundaries to feed dense data into generative AI, synthesizing raw transcripts into conversational scripts ready for voice-over and design within minutes.
- **Human-in-the-Loop Validation:** Maintained strict control by routing AI-generated drafts through SPO's core training team and SMEs to review, refine, and polish every script for legal accuracy.

This rapid, AI-accelerated content development did more than just bypass the traditional development bottlenecks; it fundamentally altered what our instructional designers could achieve with limited resources. By compressing the time required to draft content from days and weeks into mere minutes, our training team reclaimed the operational capacity necessary to architect a far more sophisticated curriculum structure as the new standard for SPO Academy.

Arizona's Scaffolded Blended Learning Pathway (AZ-SBLP) Standard

Through this comprehensive restructuring, SPO has established a unique training standard that achieves transformative scale to address the pervasive workforce experience gap seen in procurement delegation holders. This strategy fundamentally changes our approach to curriculum design, development, and delivery models, intentionally moving learners beyond basic memorization and fact recitation to higher-order learning grounded in sound principles of cognitive science and educational psychology. Arizona's Scaffolded Blended Learning Pathway (AZ-SBLP) incorporates a "crawl, walk, run" curriculum framework with a blended environment and scaffolded delivery methods. AZ-SBLP framework, detailed below, breaks down complex processes and concepts into a three-tiered

⁷ Defelice, "How Long Does It Take."

⁸ Design and Development refers to the two "D"s in the A.D.D.I.E. model used in instructional design

⁹ Jason Fox, "Building an AI Beginner's Course: Teaching AI Literacy in 4 Steps," *Training Industry Magazine* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2026): 30-33, <https://trainingindustry.com/training-industry-magazine-winter-2026/>.

progressive learning ladder. To ensure a learner's success and competency, each tier acts as a strict, technically enforced prerequisite for the next.

Table 1. Arizona’s Scaffolded Blended Learning Pathways (AZ-SBLP) Standard		
Tier	Modality	Core Objectives
1: Foundations (The “Crawl”)	On-Demand/ Computer Based Training (CBT)	Establish a baseline understanding of applicable statute and rules, policies and procedures, terminology, timelines, ethics, and compliance.
		<i>Target Bloom’s Taxonomy: Remembering & Understanding</i>
Operational Rules: This tier must be completed independently and acts as a “gatekeeper” module to establish a baseline understanding of foundational principles, preventing learners from registering for subsequent tiers and arriving unprepared.		
Training Expiration: Tier 1 expires after six months and is required to be retaken if subsequent tiers are not completed during this timeframe to ensure information from Tier 1 is at the forefront of learners’ minds before attending Tiers 2 and 3.		
2: Mechanics & Tools (The “Walk”)	Live Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT)	Demystify the tools of execution through instructor-led demonstration, finding and using available resources, tools, and templates, reading process maps, and deconstructing case study examples to model what “good” looks like.
		<i>Target Bloom’s Taxonomy: Applying & Analyzing</i>
Operational Rules: This tier focuses on deconstruction and modeling. Instructors walk through completed case studies and “gold standard” examples so learners see exactly what a compliant and finalized product looks like.		
Training Expiration: N/A		
3: Masterclass & Execution (The “Run”)	In-Person Collaboration Workshop	Cumulative application workshop where learners are given real-world scenarios, simulations, or prompts to work through in small groups and defend outcomes to peers and instructors.
		<i>Target Bloom’s Taxonomy: Analyzing & Evaluating</i>
Operational Rules: This tier shifts the instructor’s role from the practitioner completing the process to facilitator and coach, moving learners broken into small groups to complete prompts and activities, taking turns sharing responses, and receiving feedback.		
Training Expiration: N/A		

Ultimately, AZ-SBLP standard replaces the legacy model of lecture-heavy training with a predictable, data-driven learning ladder designed for long-term knowledge retention. By utilizing a prerequisite registration structure and Tier 1 expiration timeline, synchronous learning environments are focused exclusively on advanced operational execution. This balanced integration of technological speed and adult learning (pedagogical) theory does not only represent an internal victory for the State of Arizona; it provides a highly structured, plug-and-play curriculum architecture that is immediately prepared for adoption by other state procurement offices.

Transferability

The process Arizona has pioneered through SPO Academy's restructuring is highly transferable and replicable by other state procurement offices due to the widely available commercial AI technology.

Because AZ-SBLP Standard is founded on supported adult learning theories proven to improve retention and integration, it functions seamlessly as an open-source template.

Transferability of the AI Framework

In anticipation of this Cronin submission, SPO has already laid the groundwork for showing how our technical methodology is adoption-ready through the preemptive sharing of our process with the broader NASPO trainer community. On April 23, 2026, SPO Chief Learning Officer, John Jimenez, and Training Manager, Sullynn Mvula, presented an interactive session titled “*Design at the Speed of Light Using AI*” at the 2026 NASPO State Trainer Virtual Forum (see Attachment 2 for slidedeck presentation). During this national forum, our team provided peer states with a turn-key model for adapting expert-led content into rapid on-demand training scripts using the P.R.O.M.P.T. framework:¹⁰

P	Purpose: Define operational objective and clarify the “why” (analyze, generate, summarize)
R	Role: Assign a professional identity and expertise level (state procurement expert)
O	Output: Define the format or resulting deliverable (script, slide deck)
M	Method: Provide “how” AI is to proceed, like specific steps, examples, and reason
P	Parameters: Identify any limits or boundaries (word count, target audience, or exclusions)
T	Tone: Specify the style or emotional quality of content (formal, encouraging, conversational)

This exact prompting workflow, adapted from proven instructional research published in the Winter 2026 issue of *Training Industry Magazine* by Jason Fox, is entirely transferable and offers an immediate pathway for other training offices faced with limited resources to adapt existing training libraries and reduce development bottlenecks.

Scalability and Adaptability of AZ-SBLP Standard

Attachment 1 serves as an example for other state procurement offices to adapt and scale AZ-SBLP Standard detailed in table 1 to meet the training needs of their respective offices. Training topics can easily be substituted into this three-part format to focus on narrowed concepts like Market Research, Price Increase Requests, and Contract Negotiations. This format can also be scaled up to comprehensive subjects like Requests for Proposals, Construction Procurement, and Contractor Performance Management, including segmented sessions integrated into AZ-SBLP structure to address incremental steps under an umbrella subject.

Training delivery methods can also be adapted to meet a state’s unique operational setups and preferences. If a state is unable to meet in person, the third tiered training can be adapted for a virtual environment using breakout sessions. Likewise, if a state prefers in-person delivery, the second tiered training can be offered in person instead of virtually to allow for face-to-face demonstrations and walk-throughs. The single exception to training delivery adaptability is the Tier 1 design which was strategically developed to be delivered through on-demand CBT to cover fundamental information and permanently reallocate instructor time for the high-ordered learning that occurs in Tiers 2 and 3.

Service Improvement

The restructured Protest Training Series was a collaborative development effort that specifically sought review and input on the CBT content and scripts from multiple stakeholders, such as legal counsel, SPO leadership, and agency procurement professionals. One of the primary benefits of using AI to create conversational scripts specifically from past training recordings is the ability to capture the hidden expertise, insights, stories, and tips provided candidly during historical live sessions, which are often missed when developing content from scratch. The purposeful integration of the audio scripts is what has made the CBT delivery method successful. Feedback captured from post-CBT surveys has

¹⁰ Fox, “Building an AI Beginner’s Course.”

been overwhelmingly positive and has specifically called out the value of the audio narration, with learners highlighting that the interactive formats, clear audio snippets, and narrative recaps provided the most effective self-paced training environment they had encountered within the State.¹¹

The Protest Training Series was piloted with a target of having 30 learners complete the entire series and gather feedback after each class and upon series completion. This goal was met. The Protest Training Series received an overall rating of 9.57 out of 10, reflecting a 96% overall satisfaction. Out of the three-part series, learners identified Part 3 as their favorite, with many noting that the hands-on sessions provided the clarity and confidence they had been missing in previous protest training. This impact was most visible during group activities where learners successfully applied acquired knowledge to draft formal Agency Chief Procurement Officer Decisions.

Our commitment to stakeholder responsiveness is demonstrated by our immediate loop for continuous improvement. The chief criticism received during evaluation was to request for additional time in Part 3 with 13% of respondents indicating that the allocated time was insufficient to cover the advanced course content. SPO's training team acted immediately on this user input, restructuring Part 3 from a three-hour, half day training to a six-hour, full-day training cycle.

Metrics to measure the successful integration of training by learners are being developed in collaboration with leadership, but are lagging in nature and not available to report on at this time. Therefore, SPO expects to be able to measure whether training is sticking and working to bridge the Workforce Skills Gap over a four-year time period. This is the average time between procurement compliance reviews, which include a review of state agency contracts and protest practices.

Savings & Efficiency

ATD's benchmarks for the average number of hours spent to develop engaging eLearning is 155 hours for 20 minutes of content.¹² Based on verified data pulled from our Learning Management System, it is taking learners an average of 62 minutes to complete the Protest CBT. Under traditional development methods, the Protest CBT would have taken an estimated 481 hours to create. If personnel involved in the development receives an averaged salary of \$100,000 annually, this is an actual assigned labor cost of \$23,126. By deploying the AI process outlined above, SPO's development time was reduced by 51% over industry benchmarks, requiring only 233 hours to complete from start to finish. Using the same salary assumptions, it cost Arizona \$11,203 to create the new CBT for Protest, which is a **measured cost savings of \$12,000.**¹³

Integrating AI has also transformed the developer's role from a content author creating scripts from scratch into a curator who selects the highest-quality instructional segments for inclusion in the CBT.

We have also optimized how we leverage our SMEs' time. In the past, SMEs spent a significant amount of time repeating the same foundational lectures several times a year. By capturing their expertise in permanent digital modules, we reclaimed dozens of hours of their time which allows SMEs to reallocate their time to focus on mentorship, hands-on application, and complex risk assessment rather than repeating foundational information that learners can easily access on-demand.

Finally, this structural shift serves as a tool for cost avoidance. Protests are a significant hidden cost in public procurement because they consume hundreds of staff hours and can stall important projects. By training our learners to be more effective and better at analyzing their decisions, we reduce the chance of procedural errors that lead to successful protests. This helps keep state projects on schedule and avoids the expensive delays and resource depletion that come with legal challenges.

¹¹ Direct quotes can be found in Attachment 2, slide 29.

¹² Defelice, "How Long Does It Take."

¹³ All calculated figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.



Katie Hobbs
Arizona Governor

Elizabeth Alvarado-Thorson
ADOA Director

David Steuber
State Procurement Administrator

SPO Academy: Procurement Protest Training Series Syllabus

Welcome to the State Procurement Office (SPO) Academy Protest Training Series. This comprehensive, three-part learning pathway is intentionally designed to equip public procurement professionals with both the foundational legal knowledge and the practical, hands-on skills required to effectively prevent, analyze, and resolve procurement protests.

By aligning each phase of the curriculum with Bloom's Taxonomy, this series transitions learners from baseline memorization to advanced, real-world evaluation. Our goal is to establish a proactive standard for procurement excellence and robust risk mitigation across all State Agencies.

This series is structured as a progressive learning ladder. To maximize the impact of the curriculum, each course serves as a strict prerequisite for the next. Therefore, learners must complete the parts in sequential order to build a complete, practical understanding of the protest lifecycle.

Series Curriculum Matrix

Important Note on Participation:

Because each course builds directly upon the concepts of the previous one, registration for Parts 2 and 3 will remain locked until the preceding course is fully completed. Thank you for partnering with us to build a more defensible, efficient procurement framework for our state!

Course Name & ID	Delivery Format & ID	Bloom's Taxonomy Level	Core Instructional Focus
Part 1: Introduction and Background to Protests ID:ADPROT100	On-Demand / Computer-Based Training (Self-Paced)	Remembering & Understanding	Statutory foundations, Arizona Procurement Code, and procedural timelines.
VARK Learning Styles: Visual (graphs, charts, infographic, short video) Auditory (AI-generated voice-overs that expand upon written text to give an instructor-led experience) Reading/Writing (on-screen text, voice over scripts available to read) Kinesthetic (flip tiles)			
<u>Course Description:</u> This self-paced, on-demand training establishes the structural framework of the protest and administrative review lifecycle. Through interactive components and practical scenarios, this module provides a comprehensive overview of the specific statutes and rules governing protests and appeals, key procedural milestones, and SPO's critical A900 Protest Response Process Overview Standard Work guidelines. Learners will examine frequently protested procurement determinations and the official SPO template for procurement officer decisions, with a strong emphasis on proactive procurement officer best practices designed to avoid protests entirely. By the end of this introductory course, learners will acquire the foundational knowledge and resource framework necessary to mitigate risks and navigate the initial stages of the protest process with confidence. <u>Learning Objectives:</u> By the conclusion of this module, learners will demonstrate the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and map the chronological stages of the state procurement protest process. • Identify the specific statutory conditions under which a protest is legally permissible within the Arizona Procurement Code. • Determine and verify whether an interested party has the necessary legal standing to file a formal protest. • List and execute immediate, time-sensitive compliance steps required upon the receipt of a protest filing. • Outline the formal hierarchy and timelines governing the administrative protest appeals process. 			

Part 2: Protest Templates and Standard Works ID: ADPROT200	Live Virtual Instructor-Led (VILT)	Applying & Analyzing	Practical execution utilizing the SPO Determinations Library, standard templates, procedural flow charts, and review of case study examples.
<p>VARK Learning Styles:</p> <p>Visual (slide deck graphics, live walk through resources, charts)</p> <p>Auditory (live instruction)</p> <p>Reading/Writing (case studies examples provided in folder–portions highlighted in training, with the remainder available for detailed review afterwards)</p> <p>Kinesthetic (walk-through demonstration of resources, how to find information, how to use templates and tools, breaks with movement encouraged)</p>			
<p><u>Course Description:</u></p> <p>Moving from theory to structured application, this live virtual instructor-led training shifts the focus to critical operational resources found within the SPO Determinations Library. This interactive session provides a deep dive into the practical application of protest templates, detailed Standard Work documents, and newly designed protest flow charts. Participants will learn how to accurately select, customize, and apply these resources to ensure seamless cross-departmental coordination, uniformity, and audit readiness. By walking through these essential materials, this course teaches learners how to effectively utilize the entire technical framework while providing a dedicated opportunity to ask specific questions about the documents and the broader protest process.</p> <p><u>Learning Objectives:</u></p> <p>By the conclusion of this live session, learners will demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately describe the detailed mechanics of the administrative protest progression and cross-departmental coordination requirements. • Understand, locate, and correctly utilize specialized protest templates and standard work documents within the SPO Determinations Library. • Interpret and apply newly updated operational flow charts to guide real-time procurement actions during an active dispute. 			

Part 3: The Ins and Outs of Writing a Protest Decision ID: ADPROT300	In-Person Application Workshop	Analyzing & Evaluating	Hands-on application, IRAC analysis methodology, and drafting formal ACPO Decisions.
<p>VARK Learning Styles:</p> <p>Visual (slide deck, introduction of IRAC acronym with color correlation as visual identifiers to identify the argument's basis)</p> <p>Auditory (small group discussions and sharing)</p> <p>Reading/Writing (reviewing protests and applying IRAC to identify their basis, practice writing the basis in the Procurement Officer's own words instead of reiterating the Protestor's words)</p> <p>Kinesthetic (moving into small groups, standing when speaking, and sharing)</p>			
<p><u>Course Description:</u></p> <p>This in-person, application-based workshop connects everything learned in the first two courses by placing participants directly into authentic real world protest scenarios to gain the practical experience necessary for handling disputes accurately. Working in collaborative peer-to-peer groups, learners will focus extensively on isolating structural claims and mastering the mechanics of writing an official Agency Chief Procurement Officer (ACPO) Decision. By drafting these formal responses in a simulated high-stakes environment, learners will leave this final phase with the practical hands-on skills required to author highly defensible and authoritative protest decisions.</p> <p><u>Learning Objectives:</u></p> <p>By the conclusion of this workshop, learners will demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the IRAC analysis method (Issue, Rule, Analysis, and Conclusion) to resolve specific protest claims. • Analyze protest filings to identify the legal and factual grounds being asserted and determine if they meet protest requirements. • Critically evaluate solicitation materials, scoring rubrics, and formal evaluation records to determine protest validity and synthesize a formal Agency Chief Procurement Officer Decision. 			

ATTACHMENT 2 - SLIDE DECK FOR "DESIGN AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT USING AI"

STATE TRAINER VIRTUAL FORUM

UNLEASH THE POWER OF
PROCUREMENT EDUCATION



2-DAY
EVENT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026



Design at the Speed of Light Using AI

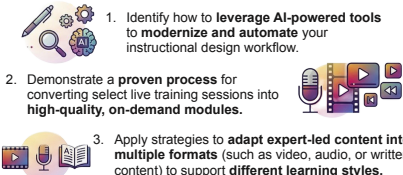
John Jimenez, CPTM, Chief Learning Officer
Sullynna Mvula, CPTM, Training Manager

ARIZONA
STATE UNIVERSITY
PROCUREMENT



Objectives

1. Identify how to leverage AI-powered tools to modernize and automate your instructional design workflow.
2. Demonstrate a proven process for converting select live training sessions into high-quality, on-demand modules.
3. Apply strategies to adapt expert-led content into multiple formats (such as video, audio, or written content) to support different learning styles.



The Opportunity



The Strategic Shift

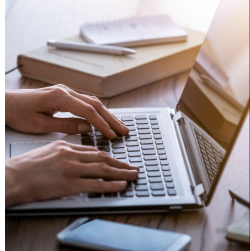
- Converting Foundational Knowledge into On-Demand Assets
- Target Statute and Code



The Strategic Shift

Training at their Fingertips

- Training Modules that are Readily Available
- Guaranteed Content Consistency



The Strategic Shift

Maximizing Training Experience

- From Passive Lecture to Active Application
- Accommodate Diverse Learning Styles

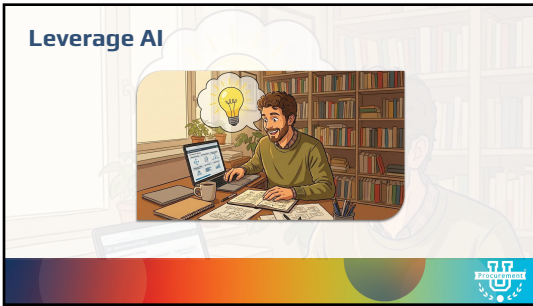
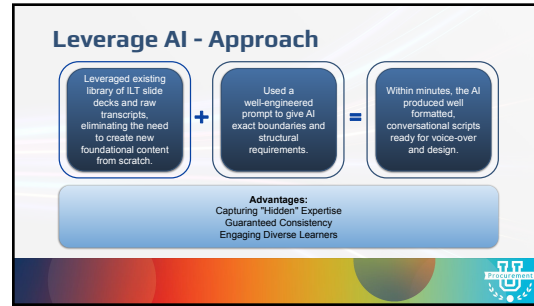
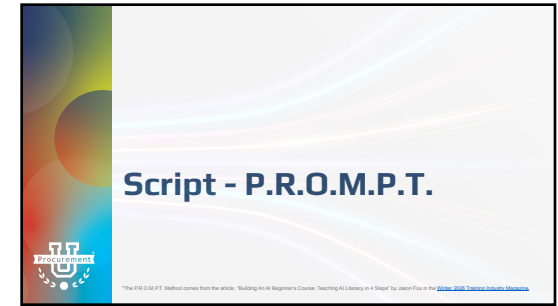
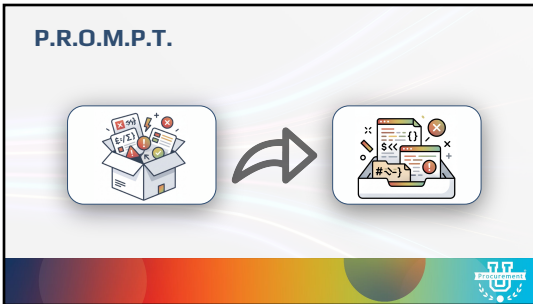
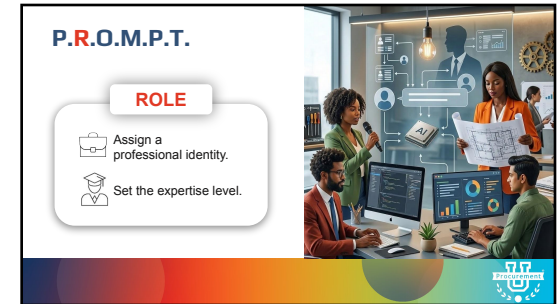
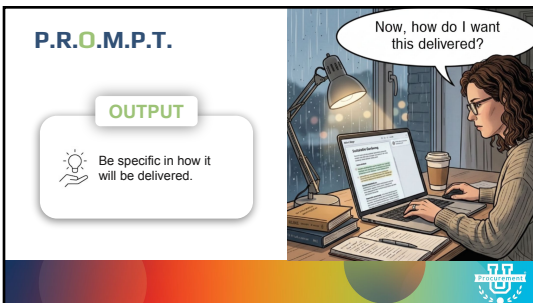
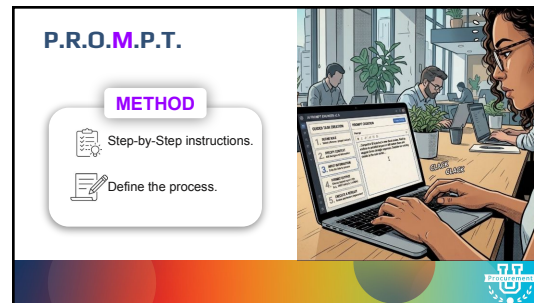
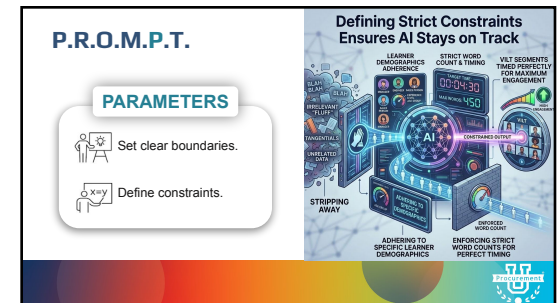


Busy SMEs



Instructor Led Training (ILT) Archive





P.R.O.M.P.T.

TONE



Define the voice of the response.



Establish the personality.



P.R.O.M.P.T.

A

Create a narrative script by incorporating the attached transcript and presentation information. You are the subject matter expert in the principles of Arizona State procurement. Keep the tone conversational, understandable, and professional. Do not include any outside information, or extras not found in the transcript or presentation. This script will be used for voice-to-text software, ensure the phrasing sounds natural when read aloud, use clear and rhythmic sentences that avoid robotic or overly complex language.

P.R.O.M.P.T.

B

I need a script written based off of the attached document. Keep it professional and make it easy to understand by a novice to the Arizona Procurement principle. This script will be used in another software, make sure it sounds natural when read aloud.

P.R.O.M.P.T.

Create a **narrative script** by incorporating the attached transcript and presentation information. You are the subject matter expert in the **principles of Arizona State procurement**. Keep the tone conversational, understandable, and professional. Do not include any outside information, or extras not found in the transcript or presentation. This script will be used for voice-to-text software, ensure the phrasing sounds natural when read aloud, use clear and rhythmic sentences that avoid robotic or overly complex language.

Demo

Examples

Early Wins

Design Efficiency



Accelerated Timelines

Turn what once took days into minutes, fractions of development time achieved.



Maintained Integrity

Use of authentic data ensures consistency and accuracy.



Turn-key Creativity

Guaranteed creativity and engaging learning modules.

Empowerment

Empowering Experts



Empowering Learners



Increase Retention



Takeaways

KEY LEARNING TAKEAWAYS

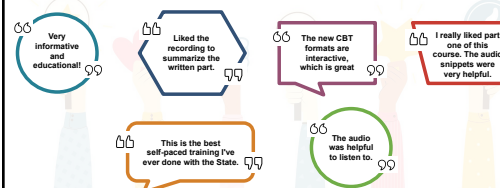


KEY LEARNING TAKEAWAYS

- 3 CORE COMPETENCIES**
 - Identifying and analyzing data
 - Communicating effectively
 - Collaborating
- 2 NEW SKILLS ACQUIRED**
 - Self-paced learning
 - Interactive learning
- 5 KEY INSIGHTS**
 - Identify your needs
 - Identify your strengths
 - Identify your weaknesses
 - Identify your opportunities
 - Identify your challenges
- 4 ACTIONABLE IDEAS**
 - Identify your needs
 - Identify your strengths
 - Identify your weaknesses
 - Identify your opportunities
- 3 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**
 - Identify your needs
 - Identify your strengths
 - Identify your weaknesses
- 2 CRITICAL QUESTIONS**
 - Identify your needs
 - Identify your strengths
- 1 GROWTH MINDSET**
 - Identify your needs
 - Identify your strengths

Procurement

What our Learners are Saying:



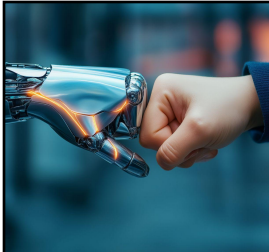
- Very informative and educational!
- Liked the recording to summarize the written part.
- The new CBT format is interactive, which is great.
- I really liked part one of this course. The audio snippets were very helpful.
- This is the best self-paced training I've ever done with the State.
- The audio was helpful to listen to.

Procurement

In Conclusion

Procurement

AI as the Assistant, Not the Replacement



- AI is not here to replace Humans
- Humans in the Loop
- AI tools lack the judgment, experience, and nuance of a human creator.

Procurement

Q&A

ANY QUESTIONS?

We value your inquiries and feedback!



Procurement

Contact



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Procurement



State of Michigan

Department of Technology, Management and Budget
Central Procurement Services

2026 NASPO CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Engage and Retain

Employee Engagement as a Strategic Pillar of
Procurement

Executive Summary

Michigan's Central Procurement Services (CPS) has spent the past two years on a deliberate, culture-driven journey, one that required its leaders to look inward before looking outward. CPS undertook a comprehensive employee engagement transformation designed to push authority and decision-making down to staff, elevate the procurement function statewide, and dramatically reduce the costly cycle of turnover that erodes institutional knowledge and service quality.

In a world that is solely focused on AI and the technology of the day, our biggest asset remains Human talent. Procurement professionals are the literal heartbeat of our profession, how do we engage in a way that ensures they remain effective, efficient and happy in their roles? Powered by internal and statewide surveys, skip level meetings, and broad overall listening CPS has set out a playbook to place culture and engagement at the forefront of strategic planning within procurement and not just an afterthought.

Innovation

Public procurement has long been skilled at innovating outward: improving solicitation tools, building supplier dashboards, modernizing eProcurement platforms. What it has rarely done is innovate inward. The assumption, often unstated, is that procurement staff are a fixed input: hire them, assign them work, and manage performance on the margins. Michigan's Central Procurement Services challenged that assumption directly. The true innovation in this submission is not any single program or policy, it is the recognition that the procurement office itself is a system that can be redesigned, and that the people inside it are the highest-leverage point for lasting improvement.

This reframe, from managing procurement staff to investing in them as the engine of procurement excellence, is genuinely uncommon in state government. Most engagement efforts in the public sector take the form of annual surveys that generate reports that sit in folders. CPS built something structurally different: a closed-loop system in which staff voice leads to visible action, visible action builds trust, and trust deepens engagement over time. Each initiative described below is a component of that system, designed to reinforce the others.

Innovation #1: Closing the Loop Between Listening and Action

The most common failure in employee engagement is the gap between asking and doing. CPS closed that gap by design. Internal and statewide surveys were not treated as reporting exercises, they were treated as diagnostic tools that obligated a response. CPS leadership took this further by instituting skip-level meetings, bypassing management layers to hear directly from front-line staff. This is not standard practice in state government, where hierarchical communication norms are deeply embedded. By going around the org chart to listen authentically, leadership signaled something powerful: your experience in this workplace matters at the top of the organization, not just to your immediate supervisor.

That signal was reinforced by the creation of the Employee Engagement Committee, a standing body that ensures staff voice has an institutional home along with investing in a Relationship Specialist whose role is tasked with facilitating engagement throughout the office. This committee also issued an anonymous pulse survey asking questions such as, "Do you feel your feedback from the previous survey was heard?" and, "Do you feel we took action to address the feedback received?" (68% and 78% of respondents said "yes" to those questions respectively). Together, these listening mechanisms transformed engagement



from a one-time event into a continuous improvement process, one that invites feedback and demands response.

Innovation #2: Handing Staff the Keys to the Office

Innovation Day represents a flip of the typical top-down improvement model. Rather than leadership identifying problems and assigning solutions, CPS asked its staff: what would you fix, and how? Ideas were brainstormed, iterated, submitted, and two were selected for full implementation in a Shark Tank style event. Leadership then backed the ideas and put plans in place to implement almost immediately. The distance between submitting an idea and seeing it become operational reality is where most employee-driven innovation dies in government. CPS crossed that distance.

The procurement implications of this approach are significant. The people closest to a process know it best. Buyers who execute solicitations daily see friction that leadership does not. By creating a structured pathway from staff observation to institutional change, CPS unlocked a source of operational intelligence that most organizations leave completely untapped. The two ideas? First, taking a variety of CPS pages and centralizing them into a SharePoint site called Inside Procurement that provides a daily home for Central Procurement Staff to navigate through for their daily needs. Second, a buddy buyer program where two staff are paired together on a solicitation, one the primary and the other in a more supportive role. Taking the stress of a procurement solicitation and allowing two buyers to work together to navigate the challenges has been a great success, especially in our IT area.

Innovation #3: Redefining What a Procurement Professional Is

Perhaps the most structurally significant innovation in this initiative is the reclassification of buyers into Category Managers and Category Specialists. This was not a title change. It was a redefinition of identity, a formal declaration by the State of Michigan that the people managing its contracts are strategic professionals, not transactional processors. This was an over decade long endeavor spanning multiple CPOs, until current CPS leadership was unwilling to take no for an answer. The first win was the acceptance from our Civil Service Commission to allow performance bonuses to be given to Central Procurement buyers on an annual basis. This led to continued conversations of the strategic work Central Procurement staff perform vs the transaction purchasing done at the agency level. Through many conversations the Category Manager and Category Specialist classifications were created.

The new classification came with an elevated pay scale that reflected the sophistication of category management work. But the deeper innovation is conceptual. When a procurement professional's role is defined as "Category Manager," they approach their work differently. They think about market strategy, supplier relationships, and contract lifecycle in ways that a buyer title does not invite. CPS effectively changed the mental model of the job, and with it, the quality of engagement practitioners bring to it. CPS leadership showed a strong commitment to making the connection between individual excellence and organizational recognition explicit and concrete, addressing one of public sector procurement's most persistent retention challenges.

Innovation #4: Restructuring Access to Leadership

Procurement Councils represent an architectural change in how CPS operates, not merely a scheduling change. By creating formal, recurring forums in which front-line staff meet directly with senior leadership on a monthly basis and where quarterly lunches bring one recognized representative from



each bureau to the table alongside bureau directors, CPS dismantled the communication silos that typically insulate leadership from operational reality.

These councils have resulted in real actions being taken to address staff needs such as more process driven job aids for processes within our systems.

In most public agencies, the distance between a front-line buyer and the top of the organization is measured in layers of management, months of escalation, and significant organizational risk. CPS made that distance close to zero. The result is not just better-informed leadership; it is staff who experience themselves as participants in the organization's direction, not subjects of it. That experience is a profound driver of retention. People do not leave organizations where they feel genuinely heard at the highest level.

Innovation #5: Protecting Time as a Form of Respect

The “no internal meetings on Fridays” policy deserves more credit than it typically receives in conversations about workplace innovation. In a government office culture where meetings multiply to fill available time and where calendar fragmentation erodes deep work, this policy is a structural intervention. It reflects a leadership philosophy that treating staff time as valuable is not a courtesy, it is an organizational strategy.

The innovation here is not the policy itself but what it represents: a leadership team willing to impose a constraint on its own behavior in service of staff productivity and wellbeing. That kind of downward accountability, leadership limiting its own access to staff time, is rare and consequential. Combined with Coffee Talks, engagement activities, and contract field trips that bring staff face-to-face with the real-world impact of their work, CPS built an office culture where people are treated as whole professionals, not just functional resources

Transferability

What really elevates this submission, is the overall simplicity of it. None of the actions taken are massive investments of time or resources. And furthermore, they can be done in an à la carte manner.

The following elements require no specialized technology, unique legal authority, or extraordinary budget; only leadership commitment and a willingness to listen:

- Innovation Day – Any procurement office can host a structured ideation event that invites all staff to submit improvement ideas, with a transparent vetting and selection process.
- Procurement Councils – Monthly direct-access sessions between front-line staff and senior leadership can be replicated with minimal overhead in any organizational structure.
- Employee Engagement Committee - We created this with one employee providing initial oversight and staff volunteering to help coordinate activities
- No-Meeting Fridays – A policy any office can implement immediately to demonstrate respect for staff time and focus.
- Onboarding Cadence and Mentorship – A structured checklist-driven onboarding experience paired with a mentor match program ensures new employees are not left to find their way alone.
- Pay for Performance Framework – While legal authority for bonuses varies by state, the underlying framework of defining clear, merit-based performance criteria can be adapted to any recognition system, monetary or otherwise.



- **Reclassification Model** — CPS's position description breakdown for the Category Manager/Category Specialist classification can serve as a template for other states seeking to professionalize their procurement role definitions.

Service Improvement

Employee engagement is not a soft benefit it is a driver of strategic service improvement. When procurement professionals feel heard, valued, and equipped to grow, they bring more energy, creativity, and commitment to their work. CPS's engagement journey has produced measurable service improvements across the office:

- Staff who perform their role as Category Managers, not just order-takers, engage more proactively with agencies and suppliers, driving better contract outcomes.
- The Innovation Day process has already generated two initiatives that improved operations or stakeholder experience.
- New onboarding processes and continuous learning sessions have accelerated the ramp-up time for new procurement professionals, reducing the period of reduced productivity that is typical of new hires.
- The Procurement Council sessions have improved communication between CPS leadership and front-line staff, leading to faster identification and resolution of operational issues.
- Adjustments to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) based on staff input have produced more realistic and agency-responsive timelines.

Further proof of improvement is shown through an employee pulse survey completed May 18, 2026. The employee engagement activities undertaken in this submission were implemented in response to the 2024 scores. The recent survey shows improvement in all areas.



Savings & Efficiency

Staff turnover is a significant cost driver in any procurement organization. The direct costs: job postings, interviews, onboarding, training are only the beginning. New staff require months before they operate at full effectiveness, which means every departure represents a gap in service capacity, not just a budget line item.

Published research places the cost of replacing a procurement professional at 50%-200% their annual compensation package. CPS's engagement journey has produced a measurable reduction in staff turnover, particularly within the IT procurement area. Turnover in the IT procurement area declined from 25% to 12.5% over the past two years, representing an estimated savings between \$171k-684k. (Using the average compensation of a procurement professional in CPS, \$81.97/hr x 2,088 = \$171,153.36. We reduced attrition by 2 people in 2025 versus 2023, so that savings at the 50% of compensation package (for two positions) is \$171,153.36, and at the 200% of compensation package \$684,613.44.)

Beyond turnover, the efficiency gains from a more engaged, better-trained workforce compound over time. Category Managers who are empowered, professionally recognized, and continuously developed become the institutional memory that anchors procurement performance over years and decades. Retaining that knowledge is a strategic asset that cannot easily be assigned a dollar figure, but its value to the State of Michigan is real and substantial.

Conclusion

Employee engagement is an important, oft overlooked concept in public procurement. In an environment where attracting and retaining talent is increasingly difficult, a new focus on employee satisfaction is critical. Human talent remains the most valuable asset in our profession. CPS's two-year engagement initiative demonstrates that the most effective procurement transformation begins not with systems or policies, but with people. By redesigning the internal environment to elevate staff voice, modernize role structures, strengthen access to leadership, and protect time for meaningful work, CPS has built a culture where procurement professionals can thrive. The results, lower turnover, stronger performance, measurable efficiency gains, and deeper trust, show that investing in people is not ancillary to operational excellence; it is the foundation of it. This work offers a practical, replicable model for any state seeking to strengthen procurement: start by valuing the professionals who make the system function, and lasting improvement will follow.





State of Michigan

Department of Technology, Management and Budget
Central Procurement Services

2026 NASPO CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

MiProData: From Custom Build to Enterprise Backbone



Executive Summary

In May 2024, Michigan's Central Procurement Services (CPS) launched MiProData, a custom-built contract lifecycle management platform that has since grown from a single-office tool into the enterprise backbone for procurement operations across state government. Within two years of launch, MiProData has been deployed to nine agency procurement teams serving 143 active users, with full statewide rollout to 24 teams and 203 users on track for August 2026. The system manages 2,531 active contracts and has supported over 5,800 projects since go-live. (Note: In the Great Lakes State, we love to put Mi in everything, so here we pronounce it My-Pro-Data.)

MiProData replaced an aging Microsoft Access database with a modern, secure platform. It generates contract cover page and change notice documents with 75% less manual effort, monitors vendor compliance across 1,230 contracts through 18,600+ automated Contract Monitoring Report (CMR) communications, manages \$14.5 million in cooperative purchasing revenue, uses a machine learning algorithm trained on 10,000+ historical projects to predict project durations with 93% accuracy on contract amendments, and automates Michigan's unique State Administrative Board approval process. Change notice completion times have dropped from 27 business days to under 12 in 2026, and customer satisfaction scores have climbed to a Net Promoter Score of 88 and a 98% customer satisfaction (CSAT) rating.

This is a resubmission. MiProData was submitted in 2024 just one month after launch, with no post-deployment data. Since then, the system has been deployed enterprise-wide, integrated with Michigan's ERP (SIGMA), IT approvals (Keylight), and project management (Clarity) systems through a shared DataMart, and enhanced with 356 new features across 39 releases, including machine learning, a vendor performance scorecard, and comprehensive savings tracking. A protest management system and vendor issue submission portal are in development and planned for June 2026 deployment. This is a fundamentally different story: not what we built, but what the program delivered.

"MiProData is the lifeblood of our office. It centralizes data, streamlines processes and gives us a foundation to further iterate improvements across the enterprise." - Jared Ambrosier, Chief Procurement Officer

Innovation

Building What the Market Couldn't Provide

Commercial Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) tools are designed for the private sector. Michigan evaluated available solutions and found none that could accommodate public procurement's unique requirements. Rather than force-fitting a commercial product, CPS partnered with Michigan's own IT development team to build a purpose-designed platform for public procurement.

Enterprise Architecture: One Platform, Many Processes

MiProData was designed from day one to serve multiple departments across state government, each with different procurement processes, approval workflows, and reporting needs. This multi-department design required configurable architecture where features can be toggled on or off per agency, adapting to each unique requirement rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all approach. The resulting flexibility is what also makes the platform viable for other states: Michigan-specific features like Administrative Board automation can be switched off while universal CLM capabilities remain active.

Automating Michigan's Unique Processes

The State Administrative Board approval process is a legal requirement unique to Michigan, involving four levels of approval from procurement through the Board itself. MiProData fully automates this workflow: 708 Ad Board forms have been processed since launch, with approval cycle times improving year-over-year from 21.4 workdays in 2024 to 15.5 workdays in early 2026 (see Appendix, Section 3). The system automatically generates agenda documents, routes approvals, records decisions, and notifies stakeholders, replacing what was previously a manual, paper-dependent process.



Similarly, the Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) Code of Conduct process, which previously required approximately one hour of buyer time per project to manually collect signatures, is now fully automated through MiProData. With 617 JEC-eligible solicitations processed across CPS and agency teams in the past year (116 CPS, 501 agency), the automation has eliminated this manual effort entirely while providing real-time tracking of outstanding acknowledgments (see Appendix, Section 4).

“MPD has cut this process by 60% if not more...it also makes it easier to track who you still need acknowledgment from. In most cases, I had acknowledgement the same day.”

- Katie McFarland, CPS Commodities Category Manager

Machine Learning: From Gut Feeling to Data-Driven Prediction

In October 2024, CPS developed a machine learning (ML) algorithm to predict project durations, replacing the previous method of manual estimation based on buyer experience and intuition. The model was trained on over 10,000 historical projects spanning 2017 to 2025 and achieves 85% overall accuracy, rising to 93% accuracy for contract amendments, which constitute approximately 90% of all CPS projects (see Appendix, Section 6 for more detail). After initial validation as an external report, the algorithm was integrated directly into MiProData and deployed as a live field visible to buyers on April 1, 2026.

The ML predictions help buyers and managers set realistic expectations with agency partners and customers. In one notable case, a Child Welfare system project had an SLA target of 180 business days; the ML model predicted it would exceed 251 days, which it did, validating the model's ability to flag unrealistic timelines before commitments are made.

Continuous Innovation at Scale

Since its May 2024 launch, MiProData has completed 356 user stories across 39 releases, averaging one release every two weeks. Major additions include the MiDEAL cooperative purchasing module (December 2024), vendor performance dashboards and scorecards integrating contract performance and SIGMA data (late 2025), comprehensive savings tracking and reporting (2025), and vendor group management with consolidated scorecards (early 2026). A protest management system and a vendor issue submission portal with external intake capability are currently in development and planned for June 2026 deployment. More feature enhancement details are available in Appendix, Section 11.

Enterprise Integrations and Data Visibility

MiProData connects to four enterprise systems through its DataMart integration. These systems capture contract data, spend data, commodity codes, contract releases, IT security approvals, IT project management, and the state's extended purchasing payment processing system. This single data repository allowed CPS to build more than 15 Power BI dashboards that capture operational details at both micro and macro levels. These dashboards provide executive-level views of statewide procurement activity and workload balance, operational views of project pipelines and compliance rates for managers, and granular detail views for individual contract performance and project timelines.

Transferability

A Platform Built to Scale Across Government

MiProData was designed to work across Michigan's many departments, each with distinct procurement processes and requirements. Building for this multi-department reality required a multi-tenant architecture, configurable feature toggles, and a standard technology stack (.NET/C#, Angular, SQL Server). The resulting flexibility has made the platform viable well beyond its original scope. This deliberate choice of standard technologies ensures the platform is maintainable, scalable, and replicable without proprietary dependencies.

The \$8 million development investment in MiProData has produced a licensable system, and several states have informally expressed interest because MiProData complements rather than replaces existing systems. It sits alongside a state's ERP, e-procurement, and IT governance tools, providing a procurement data visibility and workflow automation layer that most states currently lack.



The configurability is practical, not theoretical. When the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) joined MiProData, their procurement processes differed from CPS in several ways. Rather than requiring MDOT to change how they work, the system's feature toggles allowed CPS to configure the platform to match MDOT's workflows while keeping them on the same shared infrastructure. This same approach has been repeated across all nine agency deployments, each with its own configuration, and is the same mechanism that would allow another state to adopt the platform with Michigan-specific features (like Ad Board automation) simply switched off.

A Data Maturity Path Any State Can Follow

The problem MiProData solves is universal: procurement data scattered across spreadsheets, Word documents, shared drives, and email threads, with no enterprise-wide visibility into compliance, workload, or performance. Michigan's journey offers a practical progression that any state can follow regardless of the tools they choose:

Phase 1: Centralize Your Data - Get all procurement data into one place.

Phase 2: Understand Your Data - Once centralized, start measuring what you could not measure before.

Phase 3: Automate the Low-Value Work - Identify the processes where staff spend the most time on administrative tasks with the least strategic value: chasing signatures, sending reminders, generating cover pages, tracking due dates.

Phase 4: Scale Across the Enterprise - Extend standardized processes and data visibility to other agencies, adapting to their specific workflows while maintaining a shared data foundation.

Phase 5: Leverage Your Data for Insights - Clean, centralized, historical data opens doors that scattered records never could.

What It Takes to Deploy

States considering a platform like MiProData should focus on organizational readiness rather than technical specifications. The key requirements are (a) management commitment to data-driven procurement, (b) a dedicated change management team to work with agencies through onboarding and adoption, (c) willingness to standardize core processes while allowing configurability for agency-specific workflows, and (d) defined integration points with existing systems. Michigan's platform was built internally with collaboration between developers, technical leads, business analysts, project managers, business owners, and subject matter experts at a total investment of approximately \$8 million. By building the system in-house, procurement is the focus, not merely an add-on as in many ERP systems (see Appendix, Sections 10 & 12 for additional development and deployment details). Vision and goals can be baked into the system, creating a responsive future state.

Service Improvement

MiProData has delivered measurable improvements across every major procurement workflow, validated by nearly two years of production data and 3,893 post-project stakeholder surveys with a 49% response rate.

Faster Procurement Cycles

Change notice completion time, a process touching over 1,000 projects annually, has improved dramatically since launch. The average dropped from 27.2 business days in 2024 to 22.2 in 2025 to 11.7 in early 2026, a 57% reduction (see Appendix, Section 2). Cover page generation, previously a 30-to-40-minute manual task, now takes five to 20 minutes with approximately 85% of fields auto-populated, a 66%-to-75%-time reduction applied across 1,734 change notices per year (1,000 CPS + 734 agency).

"Things that used to take 2 hours, I can do in 20 minutes." - Christopher Martin, Agency User

Automated Compliance at Scale

Before MiProData, contract monitoring compliance was unmeasurable at the enterprise level. CMR records existed as Word documents scattered across shared drives and physical folders, with no



centralized tracking system. Buyers spent an estimated three to five hours per week manually identifying program managers, emailing them Word documents, following up on submissions, and filing completed reports. MiProData transformed this process: the system now monitors 1,230 contracts (840 CPS and 390 agency), automatically sending notifications at required intervals based on risk level. Since launch, it has sent over 18,600 automated CMR communications, achieving an 83% compliance rate where none was previously measurable (see Appendix, Section 5).

“Our team relies on MiProData to enhance contract monitoring and automate Contract Monitoring reports, enabling faster, more informed decisions while significantly improving our operational efficiency and oversight.” - Tammy Walderzak, MDOT Contract Services Division, Purchasing & PCard Manager

Rising Customer Satisfaction

Automated post-project surveys (3,893 sent since launch, 49% response rate) show improving satisfaction across all three measured dimensions: Net Promoter Score rose from 83 to 88, Customer Satisfaction from 97% to 98%, and Customer Effort Score from 84% to 94% between FY2025 and FY2026 (See Appendix, Section 7). Analysis of survey data revealed that communication frequency, not project duration, is the primary driver of satisfaction, a finding the CPO used to mandate improved customer communication practices across CPS.

Enterprise Adoption

MiProData has scaled from CPS (59 users) to 9 agency procurement teams, with 15 additional agencies scheduled for mass rollout in July. By August 2026, all 24 State of Michigan procurement teams with CPS authority will be active users, achieving a true enterprise deployment within 27 months of initial launch. For more detailed information about enterprise adoption please see Appendix, Sections 1 and 9.



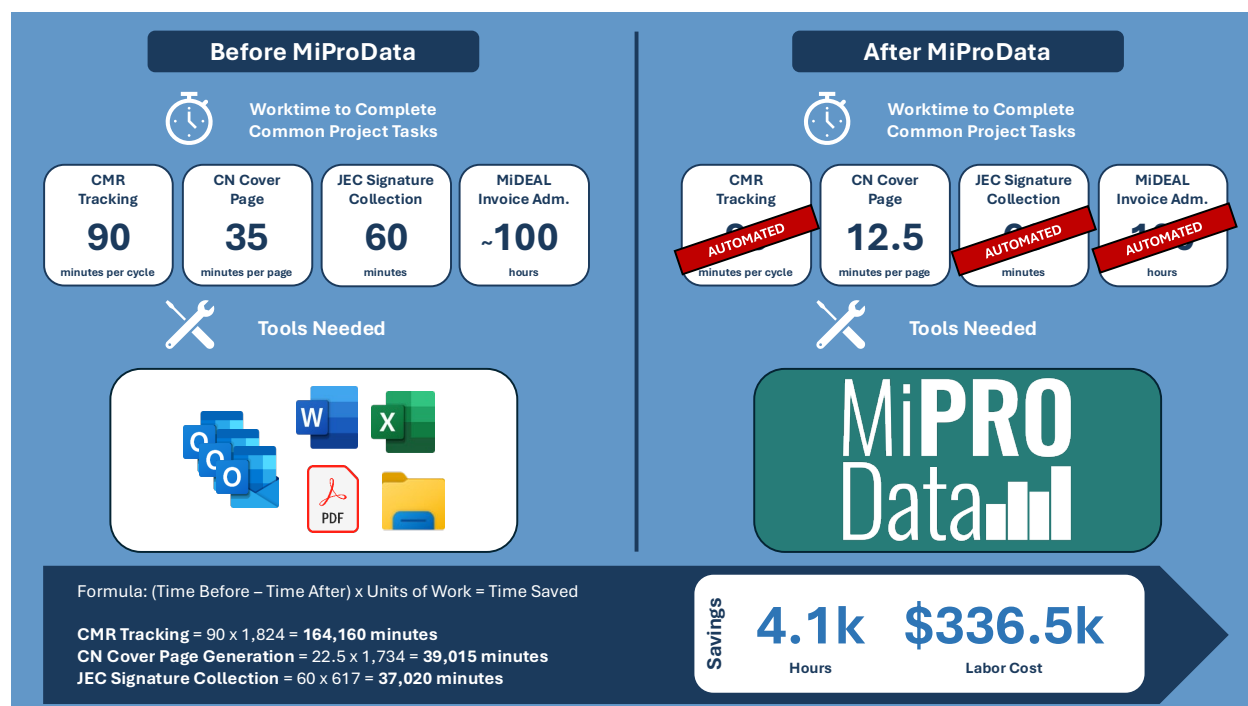
Savings & Efficiency

MiProData delivers measurable savings through process automation, calculated using the average cost of a CPS employee for FY26 (\$81.97/hour, inclusive of base pay and benefits) and documented before/after measurements. The figure below reflects actual measured activity across CPS and agency procurement teams currently using the system.

Total measured savings are \$336,490 per year (see Appendix, Section 13 for detailed methodology). This is a conservative baseline as several agencies have been active for less than a full year. The figure below also excludes Ad Board staff time savings, reporting automation, Machine Learning prediction value, error reduction from auto-populated fields, and the strategic value of redirecting buyer effort from administrative tasks to category management, contract performance, and achieving savings.

Beyond direct time savings, MiProData’s automations have fundamentally shifted how buyers spend their time. Before MiProData, buyers spent three to five hours per week chasing JEC Code of Conduct signatures, manually routing Administrative Board forms by email, and tracking CMR submissions in Word documents and spreadsheets. That effort has been redirected to strategic work: achieving cost savings, improving contract management, and strengthening vendor relationships. Managers who previously relied on multiple spreadsheets now have direct access to real-time data through the platform and more than 15 Power BI dashboards that capture operational details at both micro and macro levels.

Additional savings not captured in this figure include the Administrative Board automation, which has processed 708 forms through four levels of digital approval since launch, reducing the average cycle time from 21.4 workdays in 2024 to 15.5 in early 2026. The system also eliminates errors from manual data entry through auto-populated cover pages, reduces audit preparation time through built-in approval trails, and provides 24 standard on-demand reports that previously required manual compilation from multiple data sources.



Note: MiDEAL module information and estimation details available in Appendix, Section 8

Conclusion

MiProData demonstrates what is possible when a procurement organization builds exactly the system it needs, deploys it across an enterprise, and continuously improves it with the people who use it every day. In just two years, Michigan has moved from a single-office Access database to a custom-built enterprise platform serving 143 users across 9 agencies, managing 2,531 contracts, and saving over \$336,000 annually in documented administrative effort. Importantly, these numbers will continue to grow and improve as additional agencies come online.

With machine learning predicting project timelines, a vendor scorecard integrating performance data from multiple systems, numerous Power BI dashboards providing micro-to-macro visibility, and a protest management and issue resolution portal in active development for June 2026, MiProData is not a static tool. It is an evolving platform that grows with Michigan’s procurement needs. Its multi-agency configurable architecture and standard technology stack make it ready for adoption by other states today, and Michigan’s phased implementation framework and change management approach provide the roadmap to get there.

MiProData: From Custom Build to Enterprise Backbone

Supplemental Materials

2026 George Cronin Award for Procurement Excellence

1. ENTERPRISE ROLLOUT TIMELINE

MiProData has been deployed in a phased approach, starting with CPS and expanding to agency procurement teams based on agency readiness and change management capacity.

Agency / Team	Users	Go-Live Date	Status
Central Procurement Services	59	May 24, 2024	Active
Financial Services	13	May 1, 2025	Active
MDOT	9	July 10, 2025	Active
MDOS	7	August 27, 2025	Active
Treasury	5	August 27, 2025	Active
DNR	7	December 18, 2025	Active
LARA	6	December 18, 2025	Active
MDHHS	23	March 5, 2026	Active
MDOC	16	May 1, 2026	Active
15 Additional Agencies (Mass Rollout)	60	July 29, 2026	Scheduled

Table 1: Agency onboarding timeline. Total: 24 procurement teams, 203 users by August 2026.

2. CHANGE NOTICE PERFORMANCE TREND

Time Period	Avg. Workdays to Complete	Year-over-Year Change
Pre-MiProData (2017 to 2023 baseline)	32 to 22 (legacy system)	n/a
2024 (after May launch)	27.23	First year on new system
2025 (full year)	22.21	-18.4%
2026 (Jan to Mar)	11.74	-47.1%

Table 2: Average workday duration to complete a change notice.

CPS processes over 1,000 change notices annually. Agency teams have processed 734 change notices since joining MiProData. Cover page generation reduced from 30-40 minutes to 5-20 minutes (66-75% reduction).

3. ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD PROCESS AUTOMATION

Metric	Value
Total Ad Board forms processed since launch	708
Of which are Change Notice forms	579 (82%)
Approval levels automated	4 (Procurement > Secretary > F&C > Ad Board)
Median time: form creation to approval	16 to 17 workdays
Avg. cycle time (2024, outliers removed)	21.44 workdays
Avg. cycle time (2025, outliers removed)	19.97 workdays
Avg. cycle time (2026 YTD, outliers removed)	15.52 workdays

Table 3: Ad Board process metrics since MiProData launch (May 2024).

4. JEC CODE OF CONDUCT AUTOMATION

Metric	Before MiProData	After MiProData
Time per project (buyer effort)	~1 hour (manual collection)	0 (fully automated)
Elapsed calendar time	1 to 2 weeks	2 to 3 days
CPS solicitations requiring JEC (annual)	n/a	116
Agency solicitations requiring JEC	n/a	501
Total JEC-eligible solicitations	n/a	617
Median JEC members per project	n/a	9
Total projects with JEC requirements (all time)	n/a	470

Table 4: JEC Code of Conduct process comparison.

5. CONTRACT MONITORING REPORT (CMR) AUTOMATION

Before MiProData

CMR compliance was unmeasurable at the enterprise level. Records existed as Word documents scattered across shared drives and physical folders with no centralized tracking system. Buyers spent an estimated 3 to 5 hours per week identifying program managers, emailing Word documents, following up on submissions, and filing completed reports to the proper locations.

After MiProData

Metric	Value
CPS contracts with CMR requirements	840
Agency contracts with CMR requirements	390
Total monitored contracts	1,230
CPS CMR Level 5 (quarterly, 16%)	134 contracts, 536 cycles/yr
CPS CMR Level 4 (semi-annual, 23%)	193 contracts, 386 cycles/yr
CPS CMR Level 1-3 (annual, 61%)	512 contracts, 512 cycles/yr
Agency CMR (all annual)	390 contracts, 390 cycles/yr
Total CMR cycles per year	1,824
Initial notifications sent (total since launch)	11,353
Follow-up reminders sent (total since launch)	7,248
Total automated CMR communications	18,601
Overall compliance rate	83%
On-time rate (of compliant submissions)	73%

Table 5: CMR automation metrics. Data through March 13, 2026.

6. MACHINE LEARNING: PROJECT DURATION PREDICTION

Attribute	Detail
Initial development	October 2024 (external script for management validation)
Automated report deployment	Via Python script, used as management report
Full system integration	July 2025 (integrated into MiProData codebase)
Live deployment to buyers	April 1, 2026 (visible as field in system)
Training data	10,000+ historical projects (2017 to 2025)
Overall accuracy	85%
Accuracy on contract amendments (~90% of projects)	93%
Predictions generated to date	~300
Previous estimation method	Manual buyer judgment based on experience

Table 6: ML algorithm specifications and deployment timeline.

Validation Example: Child Welfare CCWIS

Measure	Value
SLA target (agreed timeline)	180 business days
ML prediction	>251 business days
Actual duration	800+ business days

Table 7: ML prediction vs. actual for the CCWIS project.

7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TRENDS

Metric	FY2025	FY2026 (YTD)	Trend
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	83	88	+5 points
Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)	97%	98%	+1%
Customer Effort Score (CES)	84%	94%	+10%
Total surveys sent (since launch)	n/a	3,893	n/a
Survey response rate	n/a	49%	n/a

Table 8: Post-project stakeholder survey results.

Survey analysis revealed that communication frequency, not project duration, is the primary driver of satisfaction. This insight led the CPO to mandate improved customer communication practices across CPS.

8. MIDEAL COOPERATIVE PURCHASING MODULE

The MiDEAL module launched December 4, 2024, automating management of Michigan's cooperative purchasing program.

Metric	Value
Annual program revenue (FY25)	\$14.5 million (\$14.2M admin fees + \$283K membership)
Active MiDEAL members	1,412
Unique vendors with admin fee contracts	406
Member contract spend	\$525 million
Automated invoices per year	~2,450 (initial + reminders + re-sends)
New entities joined since launch	56
Annual time savings (payment allocation)	62 hours
Annual time savings (reminder preparation)	40 hours

Table 9: MiDEAL program metrics managed through MiProData.

9. SYSTEM SCALE AND ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Metric	Count
Active users (current)	143 (59 CPS + 84 agency)
Users at full rollout (August 2026)	203 across 24 teams
Active contracts managed	2,531
Active CPS contracts	840
Total projects managed since launch	5,810 (4,479 CPS + 1,331 agency)
Completed projects	2,474
Completed solicitations	196
Completed change notices	2,101
Standard reports available	24
Releases shipped since launch	39
User stories delivered since launch	356
Average release cadence	Every ~2 weeks

Table 10: System-wide activity and scale metrics as of March 2026.

10. TECHNOLOGY ARCHITECTURE AND INTEGRATIONS

Component	Technology / Status
Frontend	Angular
Backend	.NET / C#
Database	SQL Server
Hosting	State of Michigan cloud environment
Authentication	OIDC / MiLogin Cloud (upgraded May to June 2025)
System uptime	No unplanned downtime since launch (updates only)
Architecture	Multi-tenant with configurable feature toggles per agency

Table 11: Core technology stack.

System Integrations

System	Type	Data Flow
SIGMA (ERP)	Connected	Contracts, spend data, commodity codes, contract releases
Keylight (IT Approvals)	Connected	IT approval data flowing into DataMart
Clarity (IT Project Mgmt)	Connected	IT project data flowing into DataMart
DataMart (Shared)	Connected	Pulls: SIGMA, Clarity, Keylight. Pushes: project status, CN value types

Table 12: System integration status. All four planned integrations are active.

11. MAJOR FEATURES ADDED SINCE LAUNCH (MAY 2024)

Feature / Module	Date	Description
MiDEAL Module	December 2024	Cooperative purchasing program management, invoicing, revenue tracking
Negative CMR Response Tracking	December 2024	Dropdown, comment boxes, follow-up workflow for non-compliant vendors
PM Report Suite	March 2025	Program Manager reporting with multiple filters and Excel export
OIDC / MiLogin Cloud Auth	May to June 2025	Upgraded authentication for enterprise-wide secure access
Savings Tracking and Reporting	Aug to Oct 2025	Comprehensive savings capture, approval workflow, filtered reporting
Vendor Dashboard and Profiles	Oct to Nov 2025	Vendor management with profiles, contact management, notes
Vendor Scorecards	Nov 2025 to Feb 2026	Performance scorecards integrating CMR compliance and SIGMA data
Agency Data Imports	Jul 2025 to Mar 2026	Data migration for MDOT, MDOS, Treasury, MDHHS
Vendor Group Management	Feb to Mar 2026	Group vendor codes, shared profiles, group scorecards
ML: Project Duration Prediction	Oct 2024 to Apr 2026	ML model; evolved from external script to in-system field
Protest Management System	In development	Planned June 2026: protest lifecycle dashboard, documents, notes
Vendor Issue Submission Portal	In development	Planned June 2026: 5-step external intake form
Issue Management Dashboard	In development	Planned June 2026: internal issue tracking with SRM assignment

Table 13: Major features and modules. 356 user stories delivered across 39 releases to date.

12. DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Role	Count	Source
Developers	7	State IT staff
Technical Lead	1	State IT staff
Business Analyst	1	State IT staff
Project Manager	1	State IT staff
Business Owner Team	Multiple	CPS leadership and management
Subject Matter Experts	Multiple	CPS procurement staff from various teams
Change Management Team	Dedicated	CPS staff: agency onboarding, training, support

Table 14: Team composition. Total development investment: approximately \$8 million.

The change management team was established based on Michigan's key lesson: customer support and change management are as critical as the system itself. Features are introduced incrementally per agency, starting with core contract visibility and expanding as staff gain proficiency.

13. SAVINGS METHODOLOGY

All savings calculations use the average cost of a CPS employee for FY26 (\$81.97/hour, inclusive of base pay and benefits). Before/after time estimates are based on staff interviews and documented process measurements. Figures reflect actual measured activity, not projections.

Part A: Process Automation Savings

Process	Before	After	Saved/Unit	CPS Vol./Yr	Agency Vol./Yr	Hours Saved
CMR Tracking	1.5 hrs/cycle	0 (automated)	1.5 hrs	1,434	390	2,736
CN Cover Pages	35 min/page	12.5 min/page	22.5 min	1,000	734	650
JEC Code of Conduct	1 hr/project	0 (automated)	1 hr	116	501	617
MiDEAL (combined)	Manual	Automated	Various	n/a	n/a	102

Table 15: Process automation time savings by area (CPS + Agency).

Calculation	CPS	Agency	Total
Hours saved per year	2,744	1,361	4,105
x \$81.97 avg. cost per employee			
Annual financial savings	\$224,925	\$111,565	\$336,490

Table 16: Annual savings calculation.

Part B: Effort Redirection

Beyond direct time savings, MiProData's automations have fundamentally shifted how procurement professionals spend their time. Before MiProData, buyers spent an estimated 3 to 5 hours per week on administrative tasks: chasing JEC Code of Conduct signatures, manually routing Administrative Board forms by email, tracking CMR submissions in Word documents, and compiling data across multiple spreadsheets. CMR compliance was unmeasurable at the enterprise level because records existed as Word documents scattered across shared drives and physical folders with no centralized tracking system.

This effort has been redirected to strategic work: achieving cost savings, improving contract management, strengthening vendor relationships, and focusing on category management. Managers who previously relied on multiple spreadsheets to monitor their teams now have direct, real-time access to operational data through MiProData and more than 15 Power BI dashboards that capture operational details at both micro and macro levels.

Methodology Notes

CMR: CPS has 840 contracts with CMR requirements (16% quarterly, 23% semi-annual, 61% annual) producing 1,434 CMR cycles per year. Agency contracts (390) are all annual. Before MiProData, each cycle required approximately 1.5 hours: identifying the program manager, emailing the Word document, following up, and filing the completed report. JEC: Before MiProData, each solicitation requiring JEC took approximately 1 hour of buyer time for signature collection; now fully automated. CPS processed 116 and agency teams processed 501 JEC-eligible solicitations. CN Cover Pages: Midpoint of staff-reported ranges (30-40 min before, 5-20 min after). MiDEAL: Direct estimates from MiDEAL analyst. Agency volumes reflect a ramp-up period (several agencies active for less than a full year) and will increase as remaining agencies join by August 2026.

14. STAKEHOLDER VOICES

"MiProData is the lifeblood of our office. It centralizes data, streamlines processes and gives us a foundation to further iterate improvements across the enterprise." - Jared Ambrosier, Chief Procurement Officer

"Our team relies on MiProData to enhance contract monitoring and automate Contract Monitoring reports, enabling faster, more informed decisions while significantly improving our operational efficiency and oversight." - Tammy Walderzak, MDOT Contract Services Division, Purchasing & PCard Manager

"Things that used to take 2 hours, I can do in 20 minutes." - Christopher Martin, DTMB Financial Services Category Specialist

"MPD has cut this process by 60% if not more...it also makes it easier to track who you still need acknowledgment from. In most cases, I had acknowledgement the same day to a couple of days." - Katie McFarland, CPS Category Manager

"Also a ton less work to do it thru MPD. Setup and sending time is much lower. Follow-up is a mere button click." - Jarrod, CPS Buyer



State of Washington

Department of Enterprise Services
Contracts & Procurement Division

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

***Washington's Bidder
Contracting Guide:
Clear, Transparent Communication
To Create Vendor Trust & Public
Confidence In State Contracting***

The George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State procurement authorities, operationally, are tasked to procure goods/services that state agencies need to perform their various missions. Typically, unless exempted or excepted, state procurement authorities procure such goods/services through a competitive procurement process. Not infrequently, however, the procurement process may be unfamiliar to non-incumbent vendors and, even when familiar, may not disincentivize unnecessary, time consuming, costly, and inappropriate bidder-proposed preferential contract negotiations and modifications that commonly also raise significant procurement integrity issues.

The Washington Department of Enterprise Services' Contracts & Procurement Division¹ ("Enterprise Services" or "Washington") realized – through repeated observation and experience – that its competitive procurement process for goods/services contracts was adversely impacted by two frequently occurring practices:

- Bidders seeking contract modifications to (a) delete required contract provisions; and/or (b) include contractual provisions that the state agency does not have authority to authorize; and/or
- Apparent successful bidders seeking material contract modifications after bid submission.

These practices – whether resulting from inexperienced bidders or experienced bidders seeking impermissible contract revisions or inappropriate preferential contract modifications – create unnecessary friction in the procurement process. Accordingly, to reduce these practices, Enterprise Services, in collaboration with its partners at the Washington Office of the Attorney General ("AGO"), developed and, in early 2025, implemented a *Bidder Contracting Guide for Enterprise Procurement Solution Contracts for Goods & Services* ("*Bidder Contracting Guide*")² to accomplish two important and interconnected procurement objectives:

1. Promote procurement integrity (i.e., increase public confidence in the state's procurement administration and vendor trust in the procurement process) through reasonable, clear, fair, and transparent requirements pertaining to modification of certain procurement contract provisions; and
2. Increase Enterprise Services' procurement efficiency and decrease unnecessary procurement costs and risks pertaining to bidder-proposed contract modifications regarding:
 - a. Required contractual provisions;
 - b. Impermissible contractual provisions; and
 - c. Material contract modifications proposed after bid submission (typically at contract award).

Washington's *Bidder Contracting Guide*, which is approximately thirty-four pages, is available at the following [website](#). This 2026 George Cronin Award Submission focuses on Section 4 of the *Bidder Contracting Guide*, which is approximately nine pages long.

This submission summarizes the following aspects of Washington's *Bidder Contracting Guide*:

- **INNOVATION:** The *Bidder Contracting Guide* is an innovative solution designed to promote procurement integrity and decrease unnecessary procurement costs and risks from bidder-proposed preferential contract revisions to: (a) Modify required contractual provisions; (b) Include impermissible contractual provisions; and/or (c) Make material modifications to the contract after bid submission.
- **TRANSFERABILITY:** The *Bidder Contracting Guide* easily may be used as a sample framework to expedite and provide the operational traction to enable other state procurement authorities to identify similar state-specific contracting and procurement restrictions and communicate the same in a reasonable, clear, fair, and transparent manner to all potential vendors.

¹ Enterprise Services functions, in part, as Washington's state procurement authority for goods/services and, through its cooperative purchasing authority, solicits and awards master contracts that may be used by all Washington state agencies to purchase goods/services. See [RCW 39.26.080\(3\)](#) and [RCW 39.26.060](#). See also, [RCW 43.19.005](#).

² Enterprise Services simultaneously also developed a similar agency-specific version of the *Bidder Contracting Guide* that Washington state agencies (including Enterprise Services) may utilize for their agency-specific competitive procurements.



- **SERVICE IMPROVEMENT:** The *Bidder Contracting Guide* foundationally improves procurement integrity and, importantly, benefits key stakeholders including, the public, vendors/bidders, purchasing agencies, the procurement authority and its procurement professionals, and the authorizing environment.
- **SAVINGS & EFFICIENCY:** In addition to improved procurement integrity, Enterprise Services' proactive implementation and utilization of its *Bidder Contracting Guide*, which has been welcomed in the vendor community, has resulted in meaningful procurement efficiencies and cost savings.

INNOVATION

Washington's *Bidder Contracting Guide* is a simple, but novel solution, grounded in common sense, that is designed to promote procurement integrity and decrease unnecessary procurement costs and risks to the procurement authority from bidder-proposed preferential contract revisions to: (a) Modify required contractual provisions; (b) Include impermissible contractual provisions; and/or (c) Make material modifications to the solicited contract after bid submission (typically at contract award).

Every procurement authority has limitations. Typically, each state, often through multiple legislative enactments, agency regulations and policies, executive orders and directives, judicial decisions, and attorney general opinions, limits the procurement authority's discretion regarding required and/or permissible contract terms and conditions pertaining to procurement contracts for goods/services.

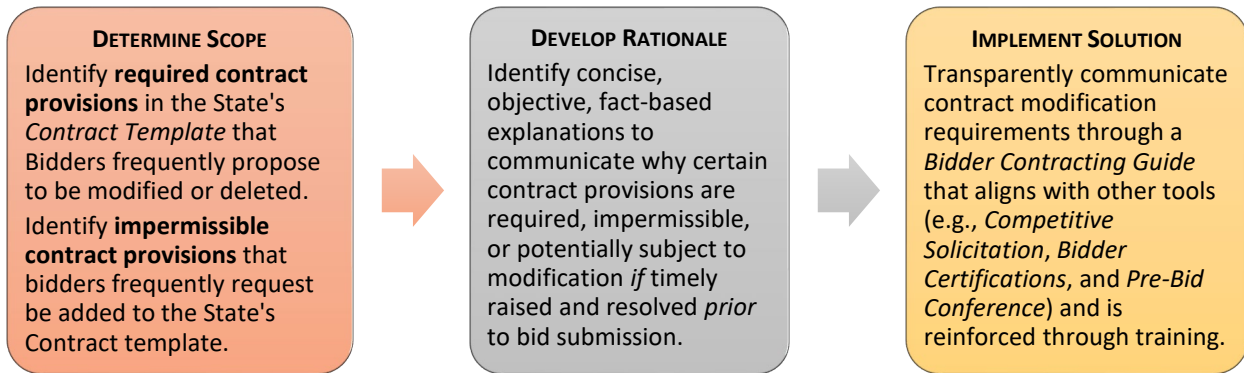
Problematically, however, vendors frequently do not have access to a summary of required contract provisions and impermissible contract provisions – along with transparent, fact-based, objective explanations regarding the same – to inform vendors and procurement professionals regarding permissible contract modifications. This information void unnecessarily adversely impacts the public procurement process by creating:

- Misaligned bidder and procurement authority expectations regarding the scope of permissible contract modifications which, in turn, creates avoidable friction, costs, and risks;
- A suboptimal procurement environment in which bidders may attempt to underprice competing bids because they later intend to seek preferential contract modifications to de-risk or improve the contract economics or refuse to contract and impose re-solicitation costs on the procurement authority; and
- Decreased vendor confidence in the procurement process (e.g., bidders wonder whether other bidders are subject to the same contract terms and conditions).

Enterprise Services, in developing master contracts, observed certain repeated, time consuming, but avoidable, friction points in the procurement process. Accordingly, as illustrated below, Enterprise Services recognized existing challenges in the procurement process, defined procurement goals pertaining to those challenges, and identified a desired solution that is fair and reasonable:

CHALLENGES	PROCUREMENT GOALS	SOLUTION
<p>The procurement process is adversely impacted by bidder-proposed preferential contract modifications to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise required contractual provisions; • Include impermissible contractual provisions; and/or • Make material contract modifications after bid submission. 	<p>Proactively reduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procurement authority's time and expense to negotiate required and/or impermissible contract provisions; and • Bidder incentives to seek preferential material contract modifications after bid submission. 	<p>Develop and implement consistent, fact-based, objective, and transparent procurement guidance to create awareness, set expectations, and provide a transparent, fair, and certain procurement process that all vendors can trust will result in the same contractual terms for all vendors.</p>

Before developing the *Bidder Contracting Guide*, Enterprise Services, in an effort not to 'bring sand to the beach,' first looked to identify whether other states already had developed a solution to these challenges. Although some states, whether by statute, administrative regulation, Attorney General declaration, or policy guidance, required or prohibited certain specific contract provisions in state procurement contracts for goods/services, Enterprise Services did not identify an existing comprehensive solution that could be adjusted and used. Accordingly, Enterprise Services, in collaboration with its AGO partners, proceeded as follows:

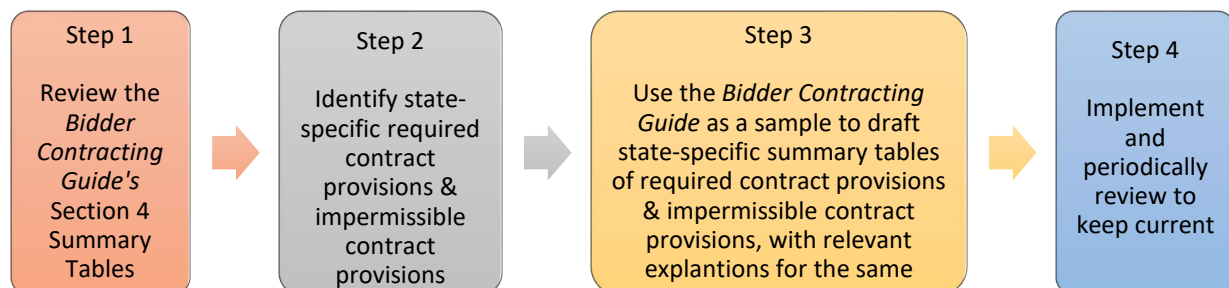


Importantly, because the resulting *Bidder Contracting Guide* is designed, in part, to adjust bidder behavior (e.g., such that bidders do not seek to modify required contract provisions or include impermissible contract provisions), Enterprise Services believed that simply declaring ‘no’ was insufficient. Rather, it was important to provide objective, fact-based explanations to explain the State’s rationale (including relevant citations). In addition, because some bidders infrequently may engage in public procurement, the *Bidder Contracting Guide* also provides contextual guidance to explain certain differences between private sector commercial contracts and state procurements.

TRANSFERABILITY

Washington’s *Bidder Contracting Guide* – especially Section 4 (the focal point of this submission) – easily may be used as a sample framework to provide the operational traction to enable other state procurement authorities to identify and explain state-specific contracting and procurement restrictions and communicate the same in a fair, objective, and transparent manner to all potential vendors.

Although state procurement differs across the U.S., state procurement authorities also have much in common. Importantly, procurement authorities, necessarily, must endeavor to improve procurement integrity – i.e., engage in procurement practices that instill public confidence in the procurement authority and that create vendor trust that the procurement process is fair. Accordingly, as illustrated below, because the *Bidder Contracting Guide* provides a sample framework, other states easily may utilize the *Bidder Contracting Guide* to expedite implementation of their own, state-specific, bidder contracting guide to address bidder-proposed modifications to required contractual provisions, impermissible contractual provisions, and/or preferential material contract modifications after bid submission.



Other states, of course, would have to invest some initial effort in steps 2 and 3. Importantly, however, as noted in the savings and efficiency discussion below, the resources invested in this proactive work – especially with the use of the *Bidder Contracting Guide* sample framework – very likely will be substantially less than the resources spent – on an ongoing basis – reacting to these issues.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

Foundationally, the *Bidder Contracting Guide* increases procurement integrity and is designed to improve important key stakeholder objectives, including:

- **The Public** has increased confidence that procurement professionals proactively are turning square corners and administering a fair and transparent procurement process in which contract modifications, when appropriate, apply to all vendors/bidders. In addition, because the *Bidder Contracting Guide* precludes preferential contract modification, the public has increased confidence that the procurement authority is engaging in responsible financial stewardship.
- **Vendors/Bidders** can trust the procurement process and be confident that competitors are precluded from obtaining preferential contract modifications. Similarly, bidders have increased confidence that all bids are based on the same contract and that no bidder will benefit from material contract modifications following bid submission.
- **Purchasing Agencies** who use the resulting procurement contract to purchase needed goods/services have confidence that the contract properly was solicited and awarded and includes certain required state contract provisions, does not include certain impermissible contract provisions, and did not include material contract modifications after bid submission.
- **The Procurement Authority & Procurement Professionals** tasked with implementing value-added procurement contracts have increased opportunities to invest their time and expertise to improve the procurement authority's value proposition rather than engaging in 'Groundhog Day' and perpetually addressing bidder-proposed preferential contract revisions that the procurement authority simply is not authorized to do.
- **The Authorizing Environment** (i.e., Legislature & Governor) is assured that the procurement authority properly is implementing stated public policy through the procurement process and not circumventing such public policy through inappropriate contract modifications at the request of bidders.

SAVINGS & EFFICIENCY

Enterprise Services' proactive implementation and utilization of its *Bidder Contracting Guide* has resulted in procurement efficiencies, cost savings, and improved procurement integrity. In addition, Enterprise Services has not experienced vendor objections. Quite the contrary. Multiple small businesses have welcomed the *Bidder Contracting Guide* as a practical, helpful, and sensible solution to address common vendor concerns regarding contract modifications.

Although precise economic savings are difficult to calculate, we can confirm that Enterprise Services definitely has realized meaningful, significant, economic savings since implementing the *Bidder Contracting Guide* approximately fifteen months ago. Realized gains may be categorized as follows:

- **Procurement Efficiencies:**
 - Common, enterprise-wide approach to contract modifications.
 - Address inappropriate contract modifications proactively, with consistent, objective, and transparent information rather than episodically and reactively.
 - Reduced potential for mistaken contract modification.
 - The procurement authority's resources may be redeployed to procurement efforts with higher return on invested effort.
- **Resource Savings & Cost Avoidance:**
 - Less time and effort spent by the procurement authority's professionals to:
 - Manage and address inappropriate bidder-proposed contract modifications that are precluded by the *Bidder Contracting Guide*; and
 - Address bidder questions regarding contract modifications that now are proactively covered and addressed in the *Bidder Contracting Guide*.
 - Less procurement authority resources spent on legal counsel to address inappropriate bidder-proposed contract modifications that are precluded by the *Bidder Contracting Guide*.
 - Less procurement professional and legal counsel time spent addressing preferential bidder-proposed material contract modifications after bid submission.
 - Decreased risk of procurement protests resulting from material contract modifications that are precluded by the *Bidder Contracting Guide*.



- Decreased risk of procurement failure (and re-solicitation costs) resulting from misaligned contract expectations.
 - Increased opportunity to allocate procurement authority resources to procurement efforts with higher expected return on invested effort.
- **Procurement Integrity Improvement:**
- Vendors and bidders have increased assurance that preferential bidder contract modifications are precluded and that their competitors do not receive preferential contract terms and conditions.
 - Precluding preferential bidder-proposed material contract modifications after bid submission requires bidders to propose contract modifications early in the procurement process resulting in common risk and economic analysis and improving vendors' ability to compete on price.
 - Increased vendor trust in the procurement process, which encourages increased participation and competition, which drives innovation and improved economics.

Unfortunately, unless removed, every avoidable step in the public procurement process uselessly consumes limited public resources and needlessly increases the administrative cost to procure necessary goods/services.

In terms of resource savings and cost avoidance, although each procurement is unique, as summarized in the following table, we estimate that, on average, the *Bidder Contracting Guide* saves Enterprise Services approximately twenty total hours of procurement professional time per procurement:

PROCUREMENT COSTS ³ /RESOURCE SAVINGS	GOODS/SERVICES PROCUREMENTS FOR MASTER CONTRACTS ESTIMATED AVERAGE COSTS/SAVINGS PER PROCUREMENT	
	PRIOR TO USING <i>BIDDER CONTRACTING GUIDE</i>	AFTER IMPLEMENTING <i>BIDDER CONTRACTING GUIDE</i>
Addressing bidder requests to modify required contract provisions:	1.75 hours (\$115.08)	De minimis
Addressing bidder requests to include impermissible contract provisions:	2.25 hours (\$147.96)	De minimis
Negotiating bidder-specific material contract modifications:	16 hours (\$1,052.16)	De minimis
Re-solicitation costs (e.g., ASB conditioned contract award on material modifications after bid submission):	<i>Note: These costs, when incurred, are substantial.</i>	Zero
TOTAL:	20 hours (\$1,315.20)	De minimis

CONCLUSION

Washington's *Bidder Contracting Guide* is both an innovative and a commonsense solution. Other states, with modest effort, easily may adjust the *Bidder Contracting Guide* and, in particular, the *Section 4 Summary Tables* pertaining to required, impermissible, and negotiable contract provisions to improve procurement integrity substantially, significantly reduce administrative and transactional procurement costs, and create a more competitive marketplace for public procurement that, ultimately, benefits citizens, vendors, purchasing agencies, and procurement authorities and their procurement professionals.

³ Costs are based on an average wage of \$65.76 for procurement team members. *Note:* Procurements for Master Contracts often include bids (and the potential for contract modifications) from at least a dozen bidders to in excess of a hundred bidders.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

The following are links to the Supplemental Materials:

- *Bidder Contracting Guide.*

This document is the *Bidder Contracting Guide*. Note: The 'Section 4 Summary Tables' (which are the focus of the submission) are set forth at pages 16 – 24.

[Bidder's Contracting Guide](#)

- *Competitive Solicitation Template.*

This document is Washington's *Competitive Solicitation Template* that is used for goods/services procurements. The *Competitive Solicitation Template* references the *Bidder Contracting Guide* in the following sections: the introduction (second paragraph); Sections 2.4, 2.8, 3, 3.5, 4.6; and the Appendix.

[Competitive Solicitation Template](#)

- *Exhibit A – Bidder's Certification.*

This document is Washington's *Bidder Certification Template* that is included as an exhibit to the *Competitive Solicitation*. As part of a responsive bid, every bidder must certify that the bidder has read, thoroughly examined, and fully understands the *Bidder Contracting Guide*. See Certification No. 1 (Understanding).

[Exhibit A – Bidder's Certification Template](#)

If you have any difficulty or issues in accessing supplemental materials through the above-referenced links, please contact Angie McLane at Angie.Mclane@des.wa.gov





State of Arizona

Department of Administration
State Procurement Office

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Beyond the Compliance Review: Compliance through Corrective Action

Executive Summary

For several years, the Arizona State Procurement Office (SPO) has utilized a Procurement Compliance Review (PCR) as one of the primary tools to assess how State Agencies exercise their delegated procurement authority. While the PCR effectively identified noncompliance with the Arizona Procurement Code and State of Arizona (State) policy, it often functioned as a point-in-time assessment without a formal accountability mechanism to ensure that recommendations issued were implemented by the State Agency. In FY26, SPO changed this model by implementing a formal Corrective Action Plan (CAP) as a standard requirement for all PCRs with findings.

This initiative balanced the focus of PCRs of identifying problems with implementing solutions. The CAP process requires State Agencies to commit to specific, measurable improvements, such as contract actions or policy updates, within an agreed-upon timeframe. SPO then follows up with the State Agency to determine whether the corrective action has been implemented, including reviewing evidence of implementation.

After almost a year of implementing this requirement, SPO has seen noticeable benefits from corrective action plans, including State Agencies requesting clarification from SPO on their PCR findings, asking for additional support, asking us to provide feedback on their procedures prior to the PCR followup. The CAP process has also helped connect State Agencies with additional resources within SPO, such as solicitation templates, best practices materials, and our procurement support team.

Innovation

The core innovation of the CAP initiative is the transition from a traditional review with a list of observations/findings and recommendations to an accountability-based model, where SPO holds State Agencies accountable to implement corrective actions post-review. Previously, State agencies might have received a finding and intended to fix it, but there was no requirement to provide proof of remediation to SPO. The CAP process is designed to help ensure that required corrective actions address the noncompliance identified during the PCR, with State Agencies having to commit to an implementation timeline. Most importantly, SPO documents a final disposition of the CAP only after reviewing corroborating evidence, thereby ensuring that corrective action is a verified result rather than just an aspirational goal.

The innovation of this initiative also stems from SPO's role in assessing the quality of State Agency corrective actions. For example, when a State Agency updates its procedures in response to a CAP, SPO reviews the procedures to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Arizona Procurement Code and/or address the noncompliance originally identified. If the documentation submitted is insufficient, SPO requires the State Agency to revise the procedures until the deficiency is fully addressed. Then, during the next PCR cycle, SPO can assess whether the State Agency has sustained implementation of the corrective action.

As a result of the collaboration with State Agencies, SPO is also innovating the compliance and oversight relationship. Specifically, State Agencies that have been engaged through a

corrective action plan are now more likely to contact SPO for assistance before noncompliance occurs, effectively utilizing the Compliance unit as a preventative resource.

Transferability

The Transferability of the CAP initiative relates to the fact that it helps address a universal challenge of central procurement agencies: the gap between review findings and actual remediation. To implement the CAP process, SPO updated its policy on compliance and monitoring. This update was essential to establish the formal authority required to issue and enforce corrective actions across State Agencies. By documenting this authority in public-facing policy, SPO created a blueprint that other states can use to bridge compliance and oversight gaps without needing to start from the beginning.

SPO also made major updates to its PCR standard work, supported by a specialized CAP template and an enhanced PCR tracker. These tools allow for biweekly status meetings to monitor progress in real-time, ensuring that CAP activities are treated with the same urgency as the initial PCR review. This initiative was not dependent on specific software; rather, it is a management framework that can be adopted by any state to bridge compliance and oversight gaps of central public procurement agencies.

Service Improvement

The CAP process has also improved the technical support SPO provides to State Agencies. Moving beyond issuing PCR findings, the SPO Compliance unit acts as a resource, making itself available throughout the CAP phase to discuss specific corrective actions in detail. This collaboration allows SPO to help solve noncompliance issues alongside stakeholders, including State Agency leadership at times, by providing additional guidance that a standard report may lack.

Through the CAP initiative, SPO has also been able to connect State Agencies with essential internal resources, ensuring they do not have to duplicate efforts. By integrating these resources into formal corrective actions, the team has partnered State Agencies with their SPO procurement liaisons, the eProcurement System Help Desk, and other subject matter experts.

The tangible value of this shift is reflected in the formal feedback received from stakeholders. Following the rollout of the CAP process, one State Agency Head noted that their organization is *"better for having gone through this audit and corrective plan"* and that the resulting changes will enable them to *"stay in compliance with SPO going forward."* This feedback confirms that the CAP process has helped shift the perception of compliance from a punitive hurdle to a beneficial service that strengthens State Agency operations.

Savings & Efficiency

SPO's implementation of the CAP process has significantly increased its efficiency in mitigating compliance risks across the State. With over 90 State Agencies holding delegated procurement authority, SPO faces the challenge of providing meaningful compliance



monitoring with a small team. The CAP process allows SPO to engage in State Agency procurement compliance with a wide variety of State Agencies in a highly efficient and meaningful manner.

While SPO recognizes that internal controls are the responsibility of State Agency management, these controls are part of the foundation of procurement compliance. SPO found that the PCR process effectively highlights areas where poor internal controls, such as outdated policies, a lack of quality assurance, or workflow issues, may be driving procurement code noncompliance. The CAP process allows SPO to target and address these specific vulnerabilities without needing the capacity to perform a comprehensive review of every State Agency's full internal procedures. For example, SPO has leveraged the CAP process to require that small or independent State Agencies adopt the State's eProcurement system to replace manual or siloed workflows, driving long-term administrative efficiencies. By focusing on root causes, the CAP process delivers long-term efficiency gains by helping prevent recurring PCR findings. By requiring documentation to corroborate the implementation of corrective actions, SPO ensures that risks are addressed rather than just noted in the PCR.

Although it is too early to provide data on repeat findings avoided, SPO has already systematically engaged the procurement controls of 13 State Agencies and requested corrective actions, including updating procedures, implementing monitoring and quality assurance processes, and enhancing workflows. Previously, SPO's review would have concluded with the delivery of the PCR report; now, by providing feedback on implemented controls and requiring specific evidence of remediation, SPO is proactively strengthening the State's procurement foundation without having to systematically review all State Agency procurement controls.

Appendix

Attachment I - Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

SPO has included an active CAP currently in process for a State Agency to exemplify the real-world application of this initiative. This document demonstrates the transition from identifying noncompliance to establishing a verified roadmap for remediation, such as the cancellation of unauthorized contracts and the implementation of formal review checkpoints for solicitations. This CAP exemplifies how SPO now partners with agency leadership to ensure that high-risk findings are resolved through specific, documented evidence of completion.



Attachment I - Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

STATE OF ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (ADOA)
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE (SPO)
PROCUREMENT COMPLIANCE REVIEW (PCR)
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)
AGENCY NAME (AGENCY)

Contact Person and Title: Chief Procurement Officer

Date issued: 01-29-2026

Instructions:

(1) Enter the estimated completion date for each corrective action and the email sheet to SPOCompliance@azdoa.gov within **ten (10)** business days from the date issued. You may also add any notes or comments at the bottom of the document.

(2) Enter the actual completion date when you have implemented the corrective action. SPO Compliance may request the completed corrective action plan as part of the PCR follow-up process.

	Corrective Action Description	Estimated completion date	Actual completion date
Corrective Action 1:	As soon as practicable, cancel all CI contracts that were established without authority. If Agency has a continued need for the services, it shall conduct a competitive solicitation or submit a new CI request to SPO Compliance with detailed rationale and a fixed term following the instructions on the CI form.	5/31/2026	
Corrective Action 2:	Add maximum end date for [Contract #] on the Header tab in APP. The contract effective date of the original contract [Contract #] should be used as the basis.	3/31/26	2/27/2026

Corrective Action 3:	[Solicitation #]: Two determinations for mistakes discovered after award were issued on the evaluation tool for this solicitation. Based on the error found in the calculations of total scores as referenced in the determinations above, all total scores need to be verified from the initial and BAFO evaluations to ensure that any other mistakes are caught, especially those that could have impact on the non-susceptibility determinations, and the non awarded. Provide SPO Compliance with a copy of the revised tools and publish a revised ranking to the procurement file to support the determinations referenced above.	3/31/26	3/4/2026
Corrective Action 4:	Going forward, Agency shall submit all sole source determination requests to SPO Compliance for review and approval by the SPA, and use the sole source notification templates available in SPO's Solicitation and Contract templates.	N/A - Ongoing	N/A - Ongoing
Corrective Action 5:	Develop an internal process to ensure timely and accurate notification and submission of reporting requirements as required in the CPO Delegation Certificate, including submission of ad hoc filings required by personnel changes.	3/31/26	3/31/2026
Corrective Action 6:	Develop and implement a tracking process for Agency protests and appeals. The process should align with the timeframes outlined in Article 9 of the Arizona Procurement Code and in the A900 Standard Work available in the SPO Determinations Library. A protest flowchart is also available as a resource at: https://spo.az.gov/for-agencies/resources-and-documents/additional-resources	3/31/26	3/31/2026
Corrective Action 7:	Maintain a listing of all executive leadership and programmatic personnel required to sign the annual procurement disclosure statement (APDS). This list of personnel should be included on SPO Form 208 and readily available to procurement staff.	5/31/26	

Corrective Action 8:	Agency shall review current templates and identify which Special Terms and Conditions are specific or unique to Agency vs. the Special Terms and Conditions in the templates published by SPO Compliance. Agency shall share the final version of the identified Agency special terms and conditions to SPO for review and feedback.	5/31/26	
Corrective Action 9:	Agency shall implement a review process for solicitations and contracts. At a minimum, review checkpoints should be implemented at the following stages: -Prior to Publication: Review draft solicitation, including scope of work, terms and conditions, and evaluation criteria. -Prior to Award: review all evaluation and award determination documents. Ensure the evaluation tool, summary, and committee recommendation is compared to the published evaluation criteria in the solicitation.	4/30/2026	
Corrective Action 10:	Agency CPO shall meet monthly with SPO leadership to discuss ongoing coaching and support needed for Agency.	N/A - Ongoing	N/A - Ongoing
Corrective Action 11:	Agency CPO to develop a training program for staff to ensure staff members are up to date on the latest changes from SPO and procurement best practices.	Ongoing	Ongoing



State of Delaware

Office of Management and Budget
Government Support Services

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Less Clutter, More Clarity: Transforming Procurement Information Delivery

Executive Summary

The State of Delaware Procurement Office undertook a comprehensive transformation of its public-facing procurement website to improve accessibility, usability, and overall service delivery for both vendor and agency stakeholders. While the initiative was initially driven by accessibility compliance requirements, it evolved into a broader effort to reimagine how procurement information is structured, accessed, and understood.

Although the procurement website, <https://mymarketplace.delaware.gov>, was actively maintained and updated over time, it had developed in a largely incremental manner. Similar to many contract and policy frameworks, updates were typically added in response to specific needs or issues rather than through a comprehensive, holistic review of structure, usability, and user experience. This resulted in a fragmented information environment that required a broader redesign approach to improve clarity, consistency, and ease of navigation for users.

Prior to the redesign, procurement resources were distributed across a highly fragmented, link-based environment that required users to navigate multiple pages and documents to locate essential information. Stakeholder feedback, including results from 2025 agency & vendor surveys, highlighted persistent challenges in information accessibility, navigation clarity, and awareness of available resources such as training materials. Notably, approximately 40% of respondents indicated they were unaware of existing training offerings, reinforcing the need for a more intuitive and guided approach to information delivery.

The Procurement Office implemented a full-scale redesign of its website, transitioning from a static repository of links and documents to a streamlined, user-centered experience. This redesign focused on consolidating and reducing redundant content, improving logical organization, and guiding users through procurement information in a more structured and intuitive manner. As a result, the overall volume of online resources was reduced by approximately 50%, while simultaneously improving clarity, accessibility, and ease of use.

Importantly, the redesign was not treated solely as a technical remediation effort, but as an opportunity to improve service delivery and reduce friction in how users interact with procurement information.

To validate the effectiveness of these changes, targeted post-implementation surveys were distributed to both vendors and agency end users. These surveys were designed to assess improvements in navigation, clarity, efficiency, and overall user experience. The feedback collected is being used to further refine procurement communications, training delivery, and digital resource organization.

Web analytics from Google Analytics indicate that users adopted the redesigned structure, with stronger engagement on core procurement pathways and reduced reliance on fragmented legacy navigation.

The redesign also aligned the website with the State's Lighthouse framework, which extends consistency beyond shared headers and footers to full-page layout, mobile responsiveness, and accessible navigation design.

By leveraging accessibility requirements as a catalyst for broader transformation, the State has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement information delivery while establishing a sustainable framework for ongoing continuous improvement.



Innovation

The State of Delaware Procurement Office transformed its public procurement website from a traditional, link-heavy repository into a more guided, user-centered experience designed to improve how vendors and agency users find and use procurement information.

Like many government websites, the prior structure had developed incrementally over time, with updates added as needed rather than through a comprehensive review of overall usability or information design. As a result, users often had to navigate multiple pages and documents to locate key resources.

What makes this effort innovative is not just the redesign itself, but the decision to use a required accessibility update as the catalyst for a broader structural change. Instead of simply remediating documents or updating pages, the team stepped back and rethought how procurement information should be organized and experienced.

The redesign also leveraged the State's Lighthouse common look and feel framework, which introduced full-page layout cohesion, breadcrumb-based navigation, mobile-responsive design, and accessible page components that were not available in the prior CLF4 structure.

The result was a simplified and consolidated structure that reduced overall content by approximately 50% while improving clarity and navigation. Information is now organized in a more logical flow, helping users move through procurement processes without needing to know where specific documents or guidance are stored.

This approach also incorporated stakeholder feedback, including input from vendors and agency users, which helped validate where confusion existed and where navigation improvements were most needed.

Early post-implementation Google analytics show users are consistently engaging with the redesigned procurement pathways rather than legacy navigation structures, reinforcing the effectiveness of the guided experience approach.

Rather than expanding content to address every possible question, the project focused on reducing complexity and improving usability—an approach that is not yet common in public procurement environments. The result is a more intuitive, accessible system that better supports both internal and external users in completing procurement-related tasks.

Before & After Images provided under separate attachment.

Website Experience Transformation Chart provided under separate attachment.



Transferability

This project is highly transferable because it does not rely on custom technology, proprietary tools, or state-specific systems. Instead, it is grounded in a practical redesign of content structure, navigation, and user experience that can be replicated by other procurement organizations using standard website platforms.

Most public procurement offices face similar challenges: large volumes of policy documents, solicitations, templates, and guidance materials that accumulate over time and become difficult for users to navigate. The approach used in Delaware directly addresses this common issue by focusing on consolidation, simplification, and guided navigation rather than expanding content or adding additional layers of pages.

The methodology used in this project can be replicated in other states through a straightforward sequence:

- Conducting a basic review of existing procurement website content and structure
- Identifying redundant, outdated, or duplicative information
- Grouping content into logical user-focused categories or “task pathways”
- Reducing unnecessary pages and consolidating documents
- Reorganizing navigation to support a guided user experience rather than a static list of links

Because the approach does not depend on statutory change or organizational restructuring, it can be implemented within existing legal and operational frameworks. It is compatible with most standard government content management systems and does not require significant technology investment.

In addition, the process to incorporate vendor and agency stakeholder feedback can also be replicated by other jurisdictions as a low-cost method of validating usability improvements and prioritizing content changes.

Early Lighthouse results demonstrate that this model of simplified, guided navigation produces measurable improvements in usability and engagement patterns, supporting its applicability in other jurisdictions.

Agency & Vendor Website Redesign Survey data provided under separate attachment.

While the specific content of procurement websites will vary by state, the underlying principles of this project, of reducing complexity, improving navigation, and structuring information around user needs, are broadly applicable across procurement environments. This makes the approach a practical model for other states seeking to improve accessibility and usability without significant resource burden.



Service Improvement

This project improved the day-to-day experience of both agency staff and vendors by making procurement information easier to find, understand, and use. It also strengthened internal document inventory and management by consolidating content, reducing duplication, and improving the overall organization and maintenance of procurement resources.

Previously, users often needed to navigate multiple pages and documents to locate basic procurement materials such as policies, templates, solicitations, and training resources. This created inefficiencies and increased reliance on procurement staff to help users locate information.

The redesigned website addressed these issues by streamlining content, eliminating redundancy, and reorganizing information into clearer, more intuitive groupings. Overall content was reduced by approximately 50%, with an emphasis on surfacing high-value resources and reducing unnecessary navigation steps.

Adoption of the Lighthouse framework also improved usability by replacing side-navigation layouts with breadcrumb-based navigation, creating more usable page space and supporting a cleaner path to procurement resources across desktop and mobile devices.

Stakeholder feedback directly informed these improvements. 2025 surveys identified challenges with navigation and awareness of available resources, including training materials.

Post-implementation Google Analytics show increased engagement with core procurement hubs such as agency eMarketplace, vendor resources, and bids and contracts pages, indicating improved usability and more direct task completion paths.

Following implementation, targeted surveys of vendors and agency users indicated improved ease of navigation, reduced time spent locating information, and increased ability for users to independently find needed resources.

Compared to pre-implementation CLF4 data, navigation patterns are more concentrated around structured entry points, suggesting reduced reliance on dispersed or duplicate content.

Overall, the redesign reduced friction in accessing procurement information, improved internal efficiency in maintaining content, and enhanced the ability of users to complete routine procurement-related tasks independently.



Savings & Efficiency

Post-implementation analytics indicate reduced navigation fragmentation and more direct user pathways to procurement resources. Users are reaching key task-based pages with fewer navigation steps and higher engagement consistency, reducing the need for staff-assisted guidance.

A key outcome of the redesign was the consolidation of procurement resource documents and templates from more than 140 items to 63, or 55% reduction in provided templates. This reduction eliminated duplicate and overlapping materials, improved consistency, and created a more streamlined structure for ongoing maintenance and updates.

For end users, this consolidation reduced the time and complexity associated with locating procurement policies, templates, solicitations, and training resources. Information that previously required navigating multiple pages or reviewing several similar documents is now more directly accessible through a simplified structure, reducing the number of steps needed to complete routine tasks. The Lighthouse page structure also improved content presentation efficiency by providing reusable design components and layouts that support clearer organization of information without requiring additional custom development.

For internal staff, the reduction in total documents and templates has significantly improved content management efficiency. Fewer resources requiring updates means fewer touchpoints for revisions, less duplication of effort, and improved consistency across procurement materials.

Overall, the project produced tangible efficiency gains through document consolidation, reduced maintenance workload, and improved user access to procurement resources in a more structured and intuitive format.





State of Delaware

Office of Management and Budget
Government Support Services

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

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**Less Clutter, More Clarity:
Transforming Procurement
Information Delivery
Attachments**

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Agency Learning Center

The Agency Learning Center is your central hub for procurement knowledge, guidance, and training. Whether you are new to State procurement or building on existing experience, this page connects you to the resources, tools, and learning opportunities needed to support compliant and effective procurement activities.



Training & Development

Build your procurement knowledge and stay current on processes, tools, and best practices through instructor-led sessions and curated learning opportunities. Training is designed to support all experience levels and reinforce consistency across agencies.

Current Agency Training Offering:

Procurement Basics



Developing Your Scope of Work



Recipe to a Successful Solicitation - Key Players, Scope Development, Timeline, Resources, Outreach



Now Showing - Active Bid and Beyond



For schedule and registration, please visit [Delaware Learning Center](#). Once logged in, search for [GSS](#).

Knowledge Resources

Access reference materials that provide regulatory guidance and broader context for procurement activities.

- ◆ [Budget and Account Policy Manual](#)
- ◆ [Business Licensing and Registrations Index](#)
- ◆ [Delaware Code](#)
- ◆ [Food Service \(Vending\) in Public Buildings](#)

How-To Resources (Employee Access Only)

Find practical, process-driven guidance and internal resources to support day-to-day procurement activities.

- ◆ [Ethics Policy](#)
- ◆ [GSS Procurement Manual](#)
- ◆ [Central Contracts](#)
- ◆ [Formal Procurements](#)
- ◆ [Evaluating Proposals in Bonfire](#)

Registering for GSS Contract Notifications

In order to better serve our State Agencies, Government Support Services, Contracting Section, electronically sends out our Award Notices and contract updates directly to you. To add yourself to the list, please follow the instructions below. yourself to the list, please follow the instructions below.

Registration Instructions:

Send an email to: listserv@listserv.delaware.gov

The email should have a **blank Subject** and the body of the email should be exactly as listed below with nothing but the following information. Please make sure you remove any signature information your email may have.

- ◆ Subscribe Contract Firstname Lastname

Example Email:

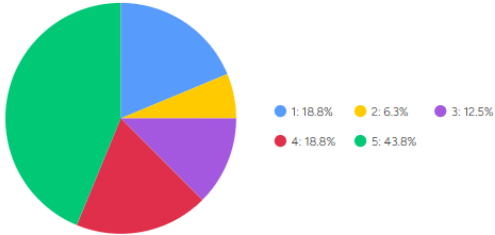
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2026 Survey Agency – Website Redesign ▾

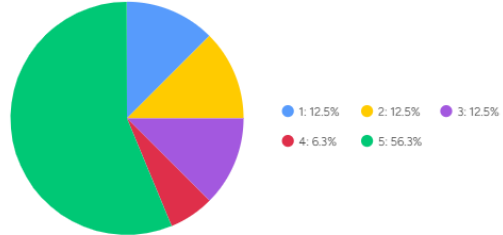
Main table Form WorkForms Submissio... Build Vibe view Chart ... +

New Item ▾ + Add widget Search Person Filter ▾

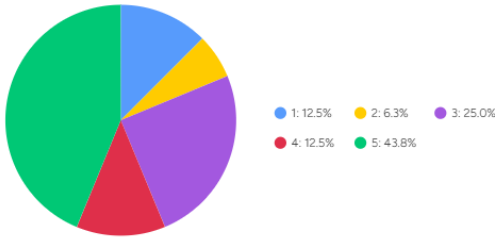
Overall, the redesigned website improves how I interact ... ▾ ...



I can locate procurement policies, template, and guidan... ▾ ...



The redesigned website provides a more guided experie... ▾ ...

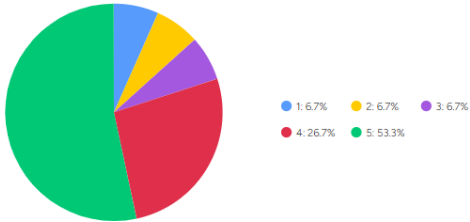


2026 Survey Vendor – Website Redesign ▾

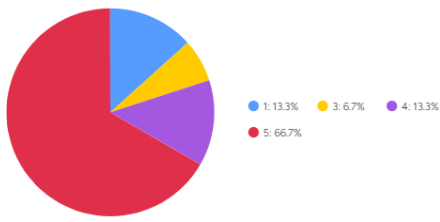
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New Item ▾ + Add widget Search Person Filter ▾

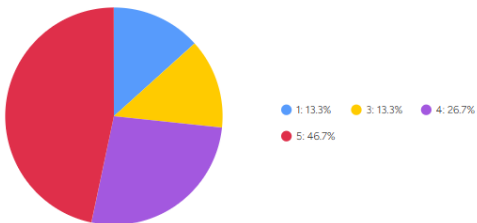
The Procurement website is easy to navigate ▾ ...



The guidance provided helps me understand the procur... ▾ ...



Overall, the new website improves my experience interacting with... ▾ ...



Website Experience Transformation Chart

Area	Before (CLF4)	After (Lighthouse)	Impact
Site framework	Shared headers and footers	Cohesive full-page layout	More consistent user experience
Navigation	Side-menu navigation	Breadcrumb-based navigation	More usable content space, clearer pathways
Mobile usability	Limited layout flexibility	Mobile-responsive design	Better access across devices
Accessibility structure	Incremental remediation	WCAG 2.1 AA-aligned components	Improved accessibility at page level
Content volume	140+ documents/templates	63 consolidated resources	Reduced duplication and maintenance effort
User behavior	More fragmented page access	More concentrated use of core hubs	Improved discoverability and task completion
Analytics source	Google Analytics	Google Analytics	Comparable pre/post measurement





State of Massachusetts

Administration and Finance
Operational Services Division

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Category Management Transformation Initiative

Executive Summary

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD) launched Category Management both as a function and as a process, to improve how the procurement process is managed, and how Statewide Contracts are planned, developed, managed, and utilized. The goal was to move the Strategic Sourcing function from a model in which staff each worked on only a section of the procurement lifecycle, to one in which Category Managers worked on the complete procurement end to end, understand better the full history of their assigned contracts, the supplier market, buyer needs, and opportunities for improvement.

OSD developed this model because traditional transactional purchasing did not consistently give buyers the support, continuity, or market insight they needed. Agencies and municipalities rely on Statewide Contracts to deliver public services, and those contracts work best when procurement staff understand how buyers use them in practice. Category Management was designed to create that connection earlier, maintain it longer, and use it to build stronger, more responsive contracts.

To support the category management framework, OSD reorganized the products and services available through Statewide Contracts into nineteen categories based on industry similarities and contract scope. To manage those categories, Strategic Sourcing restructured procurement staff into Category Manager pairs. As previously mentioned, under the prior structure, contract managers were generally responsible for only a specific section of the procurement process. Under Category Management, the same Category Manager pair remains involved throughout the full procurement lifecycle, from planning and sourcing through contract management and future improvement.

This structure allows Category Managers to develop deeper category expertise, better anticipate buyer needs, improve supplier relationships, and create more useful contract solutions. Category Manager pairs are supported by Coordinators, who provide administrative assistance, and Senior Category Managers, who provide leadership, direction, and consistency across the model.

Also, as a part of the reorganized structure, OSD created a new role for Vendor Development. While the category managers are focused on improving the relationship with our buyers, this vendor development function will provide vendors with the attention and support they need to be successful partners. This way, all of our stakeholder partners will be attended to.

In addition to reorganizing categories and staff responsibilities, OSD introduced cross-functional collaborative teams, buyer listening sessions, workforce competency assessment and development, AI-assisted procurement solutions, centralized knowledge-sharing systems, and a deliberate culture shift. Together, these changes moved Strategic Sourcing toward a more practical, buyer-focused, and data-informed Category Management approach to statewide procurement.

Innovation

OSD shifted to Category Management because improving public procurement required more than revising a procedure or adding a tool. The change altered the operating model for Strategic Sourcing. In addition to reorganizing the one hundred plus Statewide Contracts into nineteen categories and assigning Category Manager pairs to manage related contracts across the full lifecycle, OSD also added Coordinator support, and began building better ways to collect buyer feedback, use data, and share contract knowledge.

Buyer-Centered Procurement Model

A key innovation was the transition from traditional contract administration to a buyer-centered category management model. Category Manager pairs are now responsible for the full procurement

lifecycle within their assigned category groups. This gives them more consistent contact with buyers and suppliers and allows them to make better sourcing and contract management decisions over time.

This model improves continuity because the same Category Manager pair stays with a contract from development through management. Over time, the pair builds deeper knowledge of the category, the supplier market, buyer needs, and recurring contract issues. Having two Category Managers assigned to each category group also gives buyers and suppliers clearer points of contact and improves contract usability. Instead of treating contract development and contract management as separate functions, Category Management connects them so lessons learned during contract management can inform the next procurement.

AI-Enabled Procurement Intelligence

Massachusetts began exploring how artificial intelligence and other data tools could support category management planning to improve data analysis and operational efficiency. OSD identified opportunities to use AI and other data tools to synthesize customer feedback, summarize agency listening session information, identify market trends, and organize procurement insights. The purpose was practical and gives Category Managers better information faster so they can spend more time improving contracts and less time sorting through information manually.

Workforce and Culture Transformation

OSD recognized that Category Management would succeed only if the organization changed how people worked, not just how positions were assigned. The model requires Category Managers to collaborate more closely with buyers, suppliers, Strategic Sourcing Team members, Coordinators, Senior Category Managers, other OSD units, and each other. To support this shift, OSD embedded innovation, adaptability, collaboration, and continuous learning into hiring, training, communications, and performance management strategies. OSD also developed innovation workshops, competency development programs, rollout communications, and organizational readiness strategies to help staff adjust to the new model.

This was not simply a change in titles. Category Management changed day-to-day work across planning, sourcing, contract management, buyer support, supplier engagement, and internal collaboration. It also saw the relationships between and among category manager pairs being strengthened as well.

Transferability

Both as a structure and as a process, Category Management is scalable, adaptable, and transferable across public-sector procurement organizations regardless of size or governance structure. The essential idea is simply to organize contracts in a way that builds subject matter expertise, clarifies ownership, and improves service to buyers.

Scalable Organizational Framework

The Category Manager pairing model can be implemented by procurement organizations of different sizes. Smaller states may assign broader categories, or group related categories together, while larger states can create more specialized category assignments. OSD applied this principle by organizing nineteen categories into nine category groups, each managed by a Category Manager pair.

The groupings were intentional. Related categories were combined where it made operational sense. For example, Vehicle Fleet Management and Vehicle Acquisition and Maintenance are separate categories, but OSD grouped them together because they share similar market knowledge, buyer needs, and supplier considerations. This allows other states to adapt the model to their own staffing levels, contract portfolios, and procurement structures. A state does not need the exact same number of categories or staff positions to benefit from the model.

Replicable Procurement Practices

With category management, OSD established procurement activities that can be broadly adopted by other states. These include buyer listening sessions (a group of agency buyers invited to in-person sessions to give direct feedback on OSD contracts and procurement process), category-based sourcing, collaborative governance, supplier engagement, centralized knowledge management, dashboard reporting, and performance tracking. These practices are operational rather than state-specific. They do not depend on unique Massachusetts or any state statutes, proprietary systems, nor do they require a particular organizational chart.

Transferable Workforce Development Model

Many public procurement organizations face similar challenges of staff capacity limitations, changing buyer expectations, complex supplier markets, siloed work, and resistance to change. Massachusetts addressed these challenges by building workforce development directly into the Category Management model. OSD emphasized competency-based hiring for the additional category managers and coordinators required to build the team, collaborative leadership, direct training for the Category Management team, behavioral competency development, and culture transformation.

Incremental Implementation Strategy

OSD designed Category Management as a phased transformation involving structural, process, behavioral, and cultural improvements. The model was implemented over the course of a year with opportunities for feedback from key stakeholders. Other states can begin with category grouping, then add lifecycle ownership, Coordinator support, stakeholder listening sessions, dashboards, or workforce development as resources allow.

Massachusetts believes this model can help other states improve how they organize procurement work, support buyers, manage statewide contracts, and build stronger sourcing teams.

Service Improvement

Under Category Management, direct service to buyers improved because OSD created better and more consistent relationships between and among Category Managers, agency buyers, municipal buyers, suppliers, and Strategic Sourcing Team members. The model moved Strategic Sourcing closer to the people who use Statewide Contracts every day and gave buyers clearer points of contact throughout the contract lifecycle.

Enhanced Customer Engagement

Category Managers now have more regular contact with buyers, attend more conferences, work with OSD's Local Government Enablement team to better understand municipal buyers' needs, and include buyer perspectives in the supplier business review process. This improved service because Category Managers are no longer limited to a narrow part of the procurement process. They remain engaged from planning through contract management and back into future sourcing, helping them understand what is working, what is not working, and what buyers need next.

OSD also implemented structured agency listening sessions to gather feedback, identify procurement challenges, and better understand opportunities for improvement. These sessions strengthened relationships between Category Managers and buyers while helping OSD align Statewide Contracts more closely with operational needs.

Improved Collaboration and Consistency



Collaboration with Strategic Sourcing Teams, which include agency buyers, was strengthened under the Category Management model. The new structure improved coordination among Category Managers, agencies, municipalities, suppliers, Coordinators, Senior Category Managers, and other stakeholders.

Through Category Management, OSD also developed standardized procedures, communications plans, buyer and Category Manager toolkits, lifecycle management processes, and knowledge-sharing systems. These tools create a more consistent experience for buyers and a clearer operating model for staff. The result is improved procurement consistency, greater transparency, stronger internal alignment, and better communication with the public entities that rely on Statewide Contracts.

Workforce Capability Improvement

OSD invested in workforce development through technical training, competency-based training, innovation workshops, collaborative problem-solving, behavioral competency development, and continuous learning opportunities.

These helped staff adjust to new responsibilities, work more effectively with buyers, and prepare for future process improvements. These investments also strengthened OSD's ability to continue improving procurement systems, tools, and processes beyond the initial Category Management rollout.

Savings & Efficiency

Category Management made OSD's work more efficient by clarifying responsibilities and transitioning administrative tasks to Coordinators. Sales reporting management, contract renewal paperwork, key performance indicators (KPI) monitoring, and certain contract document tasks transitioned from Category Managers, allowing them to spend more time on sourcing strategy, supplier engagement, buyer collaboration, and identifying gaps in Statewide Contract coverage.

This change created immediate operational value. With more time available for strategic work, Category Managers were better able to organize and lead Strategic Sourcing Teams, engage suppliers, collaborate with buyers, and identify new areas where Statewide Contracts could meet unmet needs. As a result, OSD has been able to pursue or expand contract areas such as legal research services, academic research services, accessibility services, cloud services, medical equipment for crime laboratories, and biodiesel to name a few.

The new structure also strengthens Statewide spend oversight. By improving alignment with buyer needs, OSD is better positioned to ensure that the goods and services buyers need are available through Statewide Contracts. When contracts better match buyer needs, buyers have fewer reasons to go off of contract for their purchases, which supports increased spend under management, reduced fragmented purchasing, and promotes stronger supplier negotiations.

Category Management also improved OSD's use of data. By collaborating with our Performance Analytics team, OSD began developing dashboards, improving contract lifecycle tracking tools, and standardizing processes that reduce duplication of effort and improve coordination across procurement activities. OSD also explored AI-enabled and other data tools to help Category Managers reduce manual work and make better use of buyer feedback, supplier information, and market research.

The Category Management model is becoming more valuable over time as Category Managers build deeper category knowledge and stronger relationships with buyers and suppliers. It also supports stronger supplier performance management, better procurement planning, improved customer alignment, and more informed procurement decisions.

By assigning Category Managers to own the full lifecycle of related Statewide Contracts, OSD created a model that helps buyers find usable contracts, gives suppliers clearer points of contact, and allows Category Management to manage statewide spend with better information and greater consistency.





State of Massachusetts

Operational Services Division
Quality Assurance Unit

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

Awards for Procurement Excellence

From “Compliance” to Capacity Building:

*A Modular, Risk-Informed Framework for
State Procurement Quality Assurance*

Executive Summary

The Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD) Quality Assurance (QA) Program provides strategic oversight, policy guidance, and procurement monitoring services to 63 Commonwealth Executive Branch agencies. The program supports fair, transparent, and competitive procurement practices while helping agencies both maximize economic value and comply with statutes and regulations governing the procurement of goods and services.

This initiative is guided by OSD's vision of making procurement easier, a broader organizational shift focused on reducing the administrative burden for agencies while maintaining procurement integrity and accountability. The framework's modular architecture, standardized processes, and risk-based planning model improve procurement oversight efficiency, reduce administrative burden, strengthen Statewide Contract utilization, and create measurable operational value for agencies and taxpayers alike.

The QA Program represents a modernized approach to procurement oversight by transitioning from a traditional financial management model to a collaborative and proactive quality assurance framework. Through proactive engagement, real-time procurement monitoring, stakeholder collaboration, and targeted service delivery improvements, the QA framework helps agencies identify and resolve procurement risks before they escalate into operational, legal, or financial challenges. To enhance efficiency, a dedicated QA Analyst was assigned to each Secretariat and its departments to deliver personalized support and services aligned with the agency's specific procurement needs. This approach is in stark contrast to the previous audit process which assessed procurements retroactively and mostly in writing, thus limiting the scope to conducting only five to six reviews annually, often covering purchases from several years prior.

The QA Program now centers on risk identification, operational support, and continuous improvement. This framework is divided into distinct, standardized components which cover risk assessment, transaction testing, data analytics, reporting and corrective action tracking. The QA Program consists of three integrated oversight activities:

- **Spot Check Monitoring** of newly posted solicitations to identify and correct compliance issues early in the procurement lifecycle.
- **Quarterly Procurement Practice Reports** that evaluate agency performance against procurement compliance metrics.
- **Biennial Quality Assurance Reviews** that assess agencies' procurement transactions for fairness, transparency, accuracy, and completeness.

Together, these processes establish a comprehensive governance structure that promotes procurement excellence, operational consistency, and continuous improvement across the Commonwealth.

Innovation

Building an Innovative and Adaptable Oversight Framework

Importantly, the QA framework was intentionally designed to be modular, scalable, transferable, and adaptable to changing operational environments. By focusing on internal control assessment and quality management principles rather than rigid statutory interpretation alone, the framework remains resilient



to changes in leadership, procurement policy, and administrative priorities while promoting consistency and process efficiency across agencies.

The result is a modern, agile oversight framework that strengthens procurement integrity, improves operational consistency, enhances accountability and transparency, supports efficient stewardship of public resources, and can be readily adapted by other states and public sector organizations seeking to update procurement oversight.

Reimagining Procurement Oversight for a Complex Government Environment

One of the program's most innovative features is its use of real-time procurement data from the state eProcurement and accounting management systems to identify compliance risks, purchasing trends, and opportunities for operational improvement. By integrating analytics with oversight functions, the QA Program enables agencies to address procurement issues before they escalate into legal, financial, or operational risks.

The **Spot Check Monitoring** process further strengthens this model by allowing QA Analysts to review publicly posted solicitations from a weekly system generated summary. This enables the QA team to identify procurement concerns in real time before awards are finalized, strengthening solicitation quality, and fosters collaboration with agencies to resolve issues proactively.

In addition, **Quarterly Procurement Practice Reports** assess and rate agencies' compliance in the areas of mandatory training, the accuracy and completeness of procurement files, bid solicitations and system accounting records. This provides agencies with performance metrics, benchmarking tools, operational insights, and continuous improvement opportunities that support stronger procurement decision-making across the Commonwealth.

Finally, having a traditional **QA Biennial Review** of selected transactions in a fiscal year provides a definitive snapshot of procurement practices during a recent fiscal year. This structured feedback loop encourages agencies to strengthen procurement practices while fostering a culture of transparency and compliance.

Examples of these reports are available upon request.

Transferability

Built to Address a Common Government Challenge

Throughout FY26, OSD leadership engaged with oversight and audit agencies across the Northeast, including procurement counterparts in New York State and the Commonwealth's Office of the Comptroller, where a common challenge became increasingly apparent: government procurement oversight programs often struggle to balance accountability, consistency, efficiency, and adaptability across agencies with vastly different procurement environments, staffing capacities, operational complexities, and risk exposure. These discussions reinforced the need for a modern oversight framework capable of strengthening procurement integrity without relying on rigid, resource-intensive compliance structures that can quickly become outdated as statutes, leadership priorities, and operational needs evolve.



A Scalable and Adaptable Framework

In response to a dynamic procurement landscape, the OSD QA Program was intentionally designed as a highly transferable and scalable oversight model that can be adapted by other states, municipalities, and public sector organizations seeking to modernize procurement oversight and strengthen operational accountability. This framework integrates effectively into centralized state procurement environments with similar audit or oversight authority. As a baseline, the program utilizes procurement data from categorized agency spend reports and analytics, bid processing and product/services acquisition data and accounting records management data. Rather than focusing solely on retrospective compliance review, the framework emphasizes procurement process evaluation, operational risk identification, performance monitoring, and process efficiency. This allows organizations to better understand where procurement risks and gaps exist within their operations while creating a more resilient and sustainable oversight model.

The program's modular architecture relies on standardized review methodologies, risk-based scheduling, data analytics, performance reporting, benchmarking tools, corrective action tracking, and collaborative agency engagement practices that can be implemented regardless of organizational size, procurement maturity, or governmental structure. Importantly, these components such as conducting risk assessments, transaction sampling and compliance reviews, can be integrated using existing procurement and financial systems without requiring significant infrastructure investment. The program also demonstrates how procurement oversight can move beyond traditional audit functions and evolve into a partnership-oriented model focused on education, prevention, and operational improvement. Organizations adopting this model can improve procurement transparency, reduce compliance risks, and increase stakeholder confidence.

Because the QA Program leverages existing procurement and financial systems, implementation does not require significant additional infrastructure investment. Instead, the framework maximizes the value of existing operational data and resources while improving governance and accountability. Central to the success of the QA Program is a strategically designed unit structure with defined roles and areas of focus. The OSD QA model was designed with two QA Analysts and a Contract Auditor who report to the QA Director. The team is supported by the General Counsel and other members of the Legal team.

Service Improvement

Modernizing the Agency Oversight Experience

The QA framework significantly improves service delivery by making procurement oversight more transparent, collaborative, efficient, and less burdensome for participating agencies. Rather than functioning solely as an enforcement mechanism, the program was intentionally designed to strengthen procurement operations while supporting agencies in achieving compliance, operational consistency, and long-term procurement capability across vastly different procurement environments and staffing capacities.

The QA Program improves service delivery by concentrating reviews on high-impact procurement activities, including:

- **Solicitation Quality** – Bids are reviewed to ensure that procurement timelines are reasonable, and that scope and requirements are clear and impartial.



- **Evaluation Integrity** – Evaluation criteria are assessed for fairness and to ensure that there is no apparent exclusion of any category of potential bidders.
- **Competitive Bidding Compliance** – Procurements are reviewed to ensure that appropriate acquisition methods and processes are applied.
- **Statewide Contract Utilization** – Procurements are reviewed to determine whether the goods or services were available on Statewide Contract and, if so, whether OSD approved the procurement to ensure best value.

This targeted oversight approach allows agencies to spend less time navigating broad administrative review processes and more time advancing mission-critical operations. By focusing on procurement processes and operational performance rather than purely retrospective compliance outcomes, the framework creates a more practical and supportive oversight experience for agencies.

Proactive Partnership and Real-Time Support

The Spot Check Monitoring process further improves service delivery by allowing QA Analysts to review publicly posted solicitations in real time and identify procurement risks before procurements are finalized. This proactive support reduces delays, improves solicitation quality, and minimizes disruptions to agency operations.

In aiming to strengthen its partnership with the state agencies it serves, OSD created a Secretariat Liaison Program with a designated point of contact for procurement support. Members of the QA team also serve as liaisons with a view of understanding agencies' procurement needs, plans and challenges and to provide coordinated response and assistance.

Quarterly Procurement Practice Reports provide agencies with timely performance feedback and actionable insights. Agencies are better equipped to understand compliance expectations, identify operational weaknesses, and implement corrective actions. The framework enables OSD to monitor procurement activity more strategically while helping agencies identify purchasing trends, improve planning, strengthen Statewide Contract utilization, and improve procurement consistency across the Commonwealth.

The biennial QA Review Process further enhances service quality by providing agencies with comprehensive assessments, recommendations, and post-review consultations. These reviews support continuous improvement and help agencies maintain fair, transparent, and compliant procurement practices. This process employs standardized reporting templates, corrective action monitoring to create a more consistent and transparent oversight experience while reinforcing shared accountability across all sixty-three Executive Agencies.

Collectively, the QA Program has created a more responsive and supportive procurement oversight environment that improves service quality for agencies and ultimately benefits the residents of the Commonwealth.

Savings & Efficiency

Preventing Costly Procurement Risks Before They Escalate

The framework improves efficiency through early identification of procurement risks and process deficiencies before they escalate into costly procurement errors, missed competition opportunities, bid protests, contract disputes, or noncompliant purchasing practices. Real-time procurement monitoring,



Spot Check reviews, and performance-based reporting allow agencies to address procurement concerns proactively, reducing administrative rework and improving procurement cycle efficiency. Corrective actions, monitoring, and standardized follow-up procedures further reduce repeat findings, strengthen long-term compliance, and minimize future review burdens while improving procurement transparency and accountability statewide.

A recurring issue identified through the spot-checking process is agencies issuing non-Statewide Contract solicitations for products and services that are already available through existing Statewide Contracts. For example, one department posted a non-Statewide Contract solicitation to establish a five-year contract print and mail contract with an estimated value of \$3.75 million. Through early intervention, the procurement was redirected to the appropriate Statewide Contract, which will save the Commonwealth time, money, and resources.

Standardizing Oversight to Reduce Duplication and Administrative Burden

A key driver of these efficiencies is the implementation of a repeatable four-phase review lifecycle - Planning, Fieldwork, Reporting, and Follow-Up - which standardizes engagement procedures, streamlines documentation requirements, reduces duplication of effort, and improves consistency across all agency reviews. Standardized templates, reporting methodologies, and risk-based review planning reduce preparation and review time for agencies and QA staff alike while improving the overall scalability and efficiency of statewide oversight activities.

Maximizing Existing Resources Through a Scalable Model

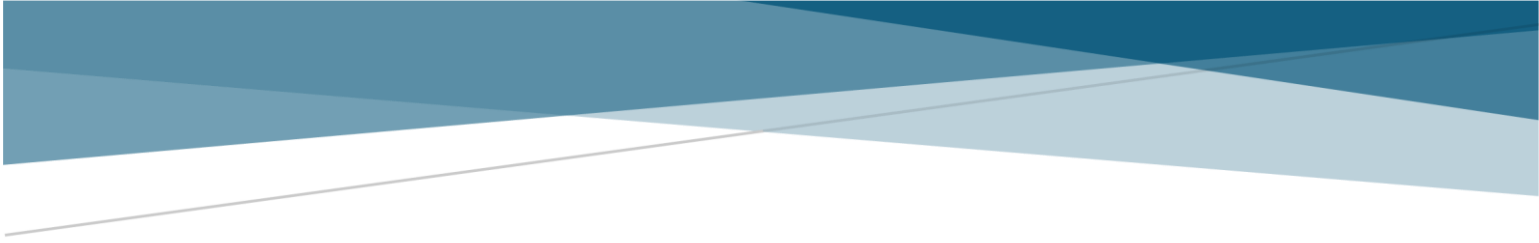
Importantly, the QA framework maximizes the value of existing Commonwealth procurement and financial systems rather than requiring significant new infrastructure investment. By leveraging existing procurement data, standardized reporting, and modular review methodologies, the program improves operational effectiveness and stewardship of public resources while creating a scalable oversight model that can be readily adapted by other states and public sector organizations seeking to modernize procurement oversight and improve efficiency. Improving procurement accuracy, transparency, and compliance, the QA Program helps safeguard public resources while ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and efficiently.

Conclusion

Redefining Modern Procurement Oversight

The OSD Quality Assurance (QA) framework represents a fundamental redefinition of how procurement oversight can function in modern government by transforming a traditionally reactive compliance review process into a proactive, risk-informed, and relationship-centered model focused on procurement performance, operational consistency, and continuous improvement. Developed to support 63 Executive Agencies with vastly different procurement environments, staffing capacities, operational complexities, and risk exposure, the framework improves oversight efficiency while strengthening accountability, reducing compliance risks, and creating long-term operational value for the Commonwealth.





THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS “PARIS APPROACH”

From Data Quality to AI-Ready Procurement
Performance and Analytics

Abstract

An in-house data model that consolidates fragmented procurement data from multiple systems into a single, standardized source, eliminating repetitive reporting and manual data preparation. By enabling consistent, reliable analysis of procurement performance, PARIS reduces reporting from weeks to minutes and improves decision-making. This approach improves transparency, supports better decision-making, and establishes a practical foundation for advanced analytics and AI-ready procurement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public procurement systems generate large volumes of high-value data, but the data is often fragmented across systems that operate independently, use different structures, and update on different schedules. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, core systems such as COMMBUYS, Vendor Reporting Management (VRM), and MOSAIC each capture critical parts of the procurement process. However, because these systems use different structures and are updated separately, it has been difficult to form a coherent, enterprise-wide view of procurement activity at any given point in time.

As a result, even basic questions have required extensive manual effort. Staff must extract, reconcile, and align data across systems to approximate a complete picture, often taking weeks to produce information that was already outdated by the time it was finalized. At its core, this is not just a reporting challenge, but an identity challenge, where the same vendors, buyers, and contracts exist differently across systems.

To address this challenge, the Operational Services Division (OSD) developed the Procurement Analysis and Reporting Information System (PARIS). PARIS is an in-house operating data store that brings together data from these multiple systems into a single, structured, and continuously updated view of procurement activity. By aligning data across systems, PARIS enables the Commonwealth to see a complete, point-in-time view of procurement activity that reflects the full scope of enterprise operations.

Rather than replacing existing systems, PARIS works across them, connecting vendors, buyers, contracts, and financial activity into a consistent structure that can be analyzed in real time. This allows the Commonwealth to move from fragmented, delayed reporting to faster, more informed decision-making.

PARIS delivers value across three critical areas:

- **Complete Enterprise Visibility:** Provides a coherent and consolidated view of procurement activity across systems at any point in time;
- **AI-Ready Foundation:** Establishes a structured and continuously updated dataset that prepares the data for advanced analytics and future artificial intelligence use;
- **Cost-Effective, In-House Solution:** Built using existing staff and infrastructure, reducing reliance on external vendors.

By creating a unified and continuously updated view of procurement activity, PARIS accelerates reporting and provides a complete, enterprise-wide picture, enabling faster and more informed decision-making.

INNOVATION

PARIS represents a shift in state procurement by moving away from system-driven reporting toward a unified, procurement-led performance model. Rather than layering new tools on top of disconnected systems, PARIS restructures underlying data into a consistent foundation that supports enterprise-wide analysis.

The Challenge: Structural Silos

Prior to PARIS, generating a statewide report required weeks of manual data collection and reconciliation across COMMBUYS (e-procurement transactions), VRM (vendor self-reported sales), and MOSAIC (the Commonwealth's financial system). Because these systems operated independently, results were often inconsistent, and there was no reliable way to track procurement activity from contract award through payment. For example, staff frequently identified and corrected the same data issues (such as duplicate vendor profiles) across multiple reports. PARIS addresses this through identity resolution, resolving these inconsistencies once within the data foundation and eliminating the need for repeated corrections. This creates a reliable enterprise dataset that supports consistent analysis. By ensuring every entity has a consistent reference across all systems, PARIS provides a single source of truth that transforms procurement data into a strategic enterprise asset.

Innovation Solution: The PARIS Framework

PARIS is an in-house operating data store and analytic foundation that integrates information from multiple procurement and financial systems into a single, consistent structure. It resolves a core challenge: the same vendors, buyers, and contracts are represented differently across systems, creating multiple versions of the same entity. PARIS standardizes these entities into a single reference, linking identifiers across systems and maintaining that relationship over time. This eliminates the need for manual reconciliation and removes the risk of inconsistent results. By fixing identity at the data level, PARIS enables direct, consistent, and reliable analysis across the enterprise.

- **Holistic 360-Degree Entity Model:** PARIS standardizes and links vendors, buyers, and contracts to create complete entity profiles. These profiles combine transaction history and key behaviors, such as payment patterns and contract utilization, into a single view. The result is a level of visibility and insight that was not previously possible.
- **Procurement-Led Design & Ownership:** Built by OSD's Performance Analytics team, the system reflects real operational processes and policy needs. By retaining full ownership of the data logic, OSD can make updates quickly without the costs, delays, or limitations associated with external vendor-built solutions.
- **Phased, Adaptive Development Approach:** PARIS is developed in phases, allowing the system to expand as business needs evolve. Rather than relying on fixed structures, it adapts by incorporating new data sources and requirements over time. For example, PARIS has expanded beyond executive agencies to include municipalities, integrating additional datasets such as population and budget data to provide broader insight into procurement activity.
- **Rapid Adaptability:** New data elements and reporting requirements can be incorporated quickly without requiring full system redesigns.
- **AI-Enabled Data Structure:** By establishing a structured and connected dataset, PARIS creates the essential architecture required for **artificial Intelligence** and advanced analytics. Analyses that once required manual "data preparation" can now be performed dynamically, enabling faster insight generation and proactive performance management.

PARIS introduces a new approach to procurement analytics by addressing data fragmentation at its source. By structuring and connecting data across systems, it replaces one-time reporting with a reusable and scalable foundation for continuous analysis.

TRANSFERABILITY

PARIS provides a practical and replicable model for other states because it focuses on organizing existing data rather than replacing legacy systems. Its primary strength lies in its simplicity: it introduces a centralized data layer that aligns information across systems, allowing organizations to maximize current infrastructure.

The Resource Requirements Model: PARIS demonstrates that a robust data foundation can be developed using a small, in-house team. The project shows that meaningful results do not require large external implementations or expensive consultants. Instead, it relies on a focused, three-person team with clearly defined roles:

1. **Data Analyst Lead:** Uses SQL (a standard database language) to combine and structure data from multiple systems.
2. **Procurement Subject Matter Expert (SME) Lead:** Ensures the data reflects real procurement processes and aligns with policy.
3. **Reporting Lead:** Defines reporting needs and delivers clear outputs such as reports and dashboards.

This model allows states to build internal capacity and institutional knowledge by leveraging existing staff while remaining highly cost-effective and reducing reliance on external consultants. It is designed to work within current systems and can be implemented using existing infrastructure and tools.

- **SQL-Based Foundation:** Uses standard database environments (e.g., SQL Server, PostgreSQL)
- **Seamless Integration:** Connects with existing procurement and financial systems
- **Tool Compatibility:** Works with commonly used tools such as Excel, Power BI, and Tableau

Phased Implementation: PARIS can be implemented incrementally. At OSD, the initial foundation linking vendors, contracts, buyers, and financial activity was developed in approximately six months. By starting with a single entity and expanding over time, organizations can demonstrate early value while building toward full integration. Hence, other states can build toward a fully integrated environment without a large upfront investment. This “build-as-you-go” approach allows the system to remain flexible and scale as priorities shift or new data sources become available.

Mindset Over Technology: PARIS highlights that successful implementation depends on more than technology. Moving from one-time reporting to structure, repeatable data design ensures that knowledge is embedded within the system itself. This creates a stable, scalable asset that evolves with organizational needs and remains reliable despite staff turnover.

PARIS demonstrates that meaningful improvement does not require replacing systems or large external investments. By focusing on data structure, internal ownership, and incremental development, organizations can build a scalable foundation using existing resources and adapt it to their own operational needs.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

PARIS improves procurement service delivery by connecting and organizing data from the Commonwealth’s core systems: COMMBUYS, VRM, and MOSAIC. While each system captures a different aspect of the procurement process, they operate independently, limiting visibility across the enterprise.

Innovative Staffing and Capacity Building: OSD implemented a hybrid model that pairs a technical analyst with a procurement SME. The analyst builds and maintains the data structure by integrating datasets and standardizing data across systems, while the SME defines, and validates how procurement data should be interpreted and applied. This model ensures that the data structure reflects real operational needs and can be updated quickly as requirements evolve.

Impact: This approach embedded procurement knowledge directly into the data structure while building internal technical capability. PARIS now operates as a dynamic, continuously updated system that reflects procurement activity at any point in time. Because the data is structured and maintained internally, staff can perform analysis directly, reducing reliance on external consultants and accelerating decision-making.

From Reactive Transactions to Proactive Performance: Traditional systems capture transactions but do not provide a complete view of enterprise activity. Before PARIS, answering fundamental questions required weeks of manual effort to reconcile inconsistencies and rebuild reports. These questions include total vendor sales across systems, which contracts are most or least utilized, and how a buyer's purchasing behavior changes over time.

PARIS changes this by connecting data across systems and organizing it into a consistent, reusable format. This eliminates labor-intensive data preparation and allows staff to move directly from data assembly to analysis and decision making. As a result, leadership and agencies can quickly understand complete vendor sales and performance across all state contracts, track purchasing trends across agencies, and gain real-time visibility into which contracts are driving value and which are underutilized.

Concrete Example: Cross-System Vendor Performance (SDP)

An example of PARIS in action is the analysis of the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP). In the past, it was difficult to compare a vendor's diversity commitments to their actual spending because the data was spread across separate systems that did not align. PARIS addresses this by bringing these data sources together into a single, connected view:

The PARIS Solution: Combines vendor commitments from VRM, contract activity from COMMBUYS, financial payments from MOSAIC, and external SDO certification data into one structured and connected dataset.

Result: Enables the Commonwealth to identify vendors with high levels of spending but low participation in diversity goals, while also clearly identifying whether vendors are SDO-certified. This provides a clearer understanding of how procurement dollars align with policy objectives and allows agencies to take more targeted, proactive action to support equity and inclusion.

Adoption has been driven by results. As reporting became faster, more consistent, and more reliable, and as workloads were significantly reduced, staff transitioned from data gathering to strategic analysis. PARIS is now used regularly to support reporting across agencies, with many reports generating on a recurring basis rather than being built from scratch each time.

By integrating with familiar tools such as Excel and Power BI, PARIS ensures low barrier to entry and supports a smooth transition for uses across the enterprise. It has become a core resource for analysts

and leadership, providing timely access to consistent data for ongoing decision-making. This foundation prepares procurement data for advanced analytics and future AI use, enabling the Commonwealth to generate faster, more complete insights as new tools adopted.

SAVING & EFFICIENCY

The core efficiency gain of PARIS is the transformation of repetitive, manual work into automated, reusable data assets. By implementing a "build once, reuse continuously" approach, it eliminates redundant data preparation and ensures consistent results across reporting cycles.

Concrete Example: The Secretary Liaison Report

The Secretary Liaison Report is a key leadership report that provides a comprehensive view of each agency's procurement performance on statewide contracts (SWCs). It connects purchasing activity in COMMBUYS with financial spending in MOSAIC and vendor-reported sales in VRM to present a complete and validated picture of procurement activity. Previously, producing this report required approximately 100 hours of manual effort per cycle. Staff had to extract and reconcile data from multiple independent systems, including manually aligning inconsistent identifiers across spreadsheets to create a complete view. PARIS addresses this by streamlining and structuring the reporting process.

The PARIS Solution (90%+ Efficiency Gain):

Integrates data from all relevant systems into a single, structured dataset that automatically:

- Links agency purchase orders to financial spending categories (object codes)
- Aligns vendor activity across systems to validate reported sales
- Flags SDO-certified vendors, Identifies key vendors and compliance indicators in real time
- Tracks agency usage and performance on statewide contracts

Results:

Reduces report preparation time from approximately 100 hours to under two hours. By standardizing and preserving reporting logic, PARIS eliminates repeated data reconciliation, ensures consistent results, and allows reports to be generated quickly at any point in time. Staff are able to shift from manual data preparation to high-value analysis, focusing on agency and vendor performance, compliance, and spending patterns.

CONCLUSION: A New Standard for Procurement Excellence

PARIS fundamentally changes how procurement reporting is performed by eliminating manual reconciliation and enabling faster, more reliable analysis. By resolving how vendors, buyers, and contracts are represented across systems, it creates a single, trusted foundation for enterprise reporting. PARIS establishes a dynamic data environment where information is continuously updated, preserved, and reused. This shifts the focus from producing reports to maintaining a consistent data structure. As a result, procurement data is accurate, reusable, and readily available for decision-making.

PARIS represents more than a system, it establishes a new operating model where data is continuously maintained, internally owned, and ready to support the evolving needs of the Commonwealth.



State of Michigan

Department of Technology, Management and Budget
Central Procurement Services

2026 NASPO CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Managing Categories,

Before Categories Manage You.

General Instructions

Executive Summary

Everyone has discovered they have two subscriptions to the same thing at some point. Wasted spend that has gone unnoticed for who knows how long. It's frustrating, costly, and an easy trap to fall into. State procurement faces the same issues with so many different purchasers across many different agencies. Every state agency needs their own telecom contract about as much as every member of a family needs their own Netflix subscription. Michigan's central procurement office went hunting for efficiencies and found many.

Innovation

The innovation in this project came in stages, each building on the one before it. Back in 2017, the State of Michigan implemented a new ERP system. The addition of more robust reporting made it possible to better grasp our spend across agencies and across our vast portfolio of procured things. This made our data better, but still had drawbacks.

To address the missing pieces, Central Procurement Services (CPS) set about building a statewide database of all Central and Agency contracts. We built in house a new system, MiProData, rolled out in 2023, which loaded all contracts into a single system that made them accessible across agencies. The ERP system had security features that made, "no-peeking" the rule across agencies. Spend across vendors could not be seen from agency to agency. This centralized repository made reporting even more robust, allowing more granular and timely understanding of contracts and spend.

Building on this new information, CPS created a Category Development Manager (CDM) position to oversee the development of Category Management throughout the IT Division. The commodities and services divisions had utilized these principles for a period beforehand, but IT had remained elusive. When the CDM position was filled they set about working with IT Buyers to create category plans for their contracts. These plans took a set of contracts for similar products and created a category plan. An example plan, concerning Data Collection & IT Reporting Systems, is attached. This plan gathers all pertinent information in one place. It lists all contracts in the category, their spend year over year, along with expiration dates and expected re-bid timelines. Market research is then done for each contract and vendor. This lays out additional use cases for the contracts and vendor offerings. The market landscape is also noted. This market research helped CPS understand there were multiple contracts with different vendors offering the same services. The creation of the CDM position made this type of deep market research possible and lets our sourcing team get a better understanding of our contract portfolio. This helps CPS move beyond single sourcing events to be more strategic and consider the entire existing contract portfolio when seeking new services.

Transferability

This Contract Management scheme is fully transferable. Category plans could be created from our templates. Our use of internal databases mirrors many databases other states already have. Internal market research can be done by looking at existing contracts across agencies to find areas where sourcing events can be aligned to allow one contract to take the place of multiple. External market research is becoming increasingly easy using AI tools. While the information returned by these tools cannot be assumed accurate, it can guide where to look.

These are the steps and sections Michigan uses to create a category plan:

1. **Scope of the category.** Determine what is included in this category. Also create a table with a list of all included contracts and other information about each contract.

2. **Spend to date of contracts in this category.** Determine the spend for these contracts, it will help prepare for the stakeholder and vendor meeting.
3. **On/Off contract spend analysis.** Determine what spend is occurring on/off contract, one also might discover that an agency has their own contract with the same vendor for the same thing (this is not uncommon). Off-contract spenders can now be pulled into stakeholder meetings.
4. **Contract monitoring report/vendor performance.** Gather any vendor performance information, positive or negative. This will help in a stakeholder meeting.
5. **Stakeholder meeting frequency.** Set up a meeting with all stakeholders as soon as possible once they are all identified. Go over every contract within this category plan to get a high-level understanding of each one. Go through the category plan, explain to them what category management is, and explain to them the importance of each section. Have a discussion with the stakeholders on how often they want to meet.
6. **Vendor meeting frequency.** Same thing with Vendors as the stakeholders. Meet with each vendor and discuss all things that are going on with their contract and discuss how often they would like to meet.
7. **SWOT analysis of the category.** After meeting with both the stakeholders and vendors, perform a high-level SWOT analysis of each vendor or the category as a whole.
8. **How to use these contracts.** After meeting with both the stakeholders and vendors, it will be easier to fill out a section about how to use these contracts effectively.
9. **Strategic goal for sourcing category.** With all the above information, build a strategic plan for this category. It could be cost savings, consolidation, expansion, etc.
10. **Market research and analysis.** Ongoing and important when contracts are coming up for rebid or option year.
11. **MiDEAL/Administrative fee status.** Record the percentage applied under any expanded purchasing agreements. This allows a buyer to identify opportunities.
12. **History.** Ongoing and information gets recorded as it comes up. Information from subsequent stakeholder/vendor meetings is documented here.
13. **Category level research.** Examine the importance of the goods/services involved in the category and determine the risk level. (Category Segmentation criteria and examples are included in the supplement).

Service Improvement

Category management improves customer service in several ways. Understanding the breadth of categories lets CPS schedule proactive meetings with agency partners and stakeholders to discuss the market and future of the contracts. Procurement timelines have been accelerated in instances where the deliverables sought were already on contract with an existing vendor.

This was found when Michigan's Department of Health and Human services needed a new tray ticket system for food service. This was originally to be at least a year long build for internal IT resources, but research within category management revealed a license for an existing software product from an existing contracted vendor. This became a change notice and negotiation versus a build, saving at least a year of time. Creating a category plan also creates a document that can be shared with agencies to



give them a sense of the market and what contracts and deliverables are already contracted for when a new need arises.

In the past year there have been 5 additional opportunities where scheduled procurements could be cancelled in favor of consolidating into another project of the same scope, or adding the goods/services to an existing contract. These will be change notices (CNs) instead of full RFPs. In 2025 the average RFP took 171 days, whereas the average change notice took 26 days. By these numbers these 5 projects, as CNs versus RFPs will save 725 days of total time. The savings are larger than this, as the amount of development work surrounding a change notice is also much less than an RFP.

Savings & Efficiency

The savings realized through Category Management get more and more impactful the deeper one looks into their portfolio. For example, Central Procurement worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop/purchase the previously mentioned meal ticket system for patients within Michigan's psychiatric hospitals. The estimated first year cost was \$1,129,930 and a 5-year total of \$1,957,930. After market research and looking into existing contracts within the category, a solution was found within an existing contract. This solution was a \$1,900 monthly licensing fee for an existing solution through the Michigan Master Computing program. Over 5 years this would be \$114,000. This reveals a 5-year savings of \$1,843,930.

Another example can be found in Michigan's Bureau of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). LARA needed a new regulatory system for managing aboveground and underground storage tanks. After several rounds of refining requirements, DTMB and LARA confirmed that a current vendor could deliver this solution as a customized version of an existing system used by another State Agency, LARA and DTMB are conducting structured discovery sessions with the vendor to validate requirements, assess system fit, and clarify configuration and integration needs. After those sessions conclude, the vendor will be asked to submit their best proposal for implementation. The vendor will be able to accomplish this for \$2.25M. The original system cost \$3.3M in 2018 (\$4.38M today), so the savings for this project amount to ~\$2.13M.

Future moves to help strategically bid Telecom contracts could yield even higher savings. Michigan currently has three Telecom projects, covering Audio Video Web Conferencing, Internet Service Providers, and Local Long Distance Services. These projects are managed by two separate buyers. As these buyers looked at these projects together it was discovered that the current vendors for the three projects all offered services to cover all three. Additional related projects were pulled into this new category and now five projects will be bid in a single sourcing event. While this sourcing event will be more complex it will easily save 50% of the time and effort all 5 would require. This also helps cost saving goals of standardizing pricing and contract terms, especially within IT contracting.

Conclusion

Michigan's category management effort shows how better data, coordinated strategy, and disciplined market research can transform statewide procurement. By centralizing contract information, building actionable category plans, and empowering staff to think strategically across agency lines, CPS unlocked efficiencies that were previously invisible. The results, millions in avoided costs, dramatically faster procurement cycles, and reduced duplication of effort, demonstrate that smarter structures, not larger budgets, drive real value. This work provides a practical roadmap any state can follow: understand your contract portfolio, align sourcing events, and leverage existing solutions before buying new ones. Michigan's experience proves that when procurement shifts from isolated purchasing to coordinated category strategy, the savings are immediate, scalable, and substantial.



Category Segmentation Criteria						
	1	2	3	4	5	Notes on Criteria
Size of Annual Spend	\$0-\$1,000,000	\$1,000,001-\$5,000,000	\$5,000,001-\$10,000,000	\$10,000,001-\$25,000,000	>\$25,000,000	Actual spend on average (3-5 years)
Business Process Impact	No Service Interruptions	Minor Service Interruptions	Major Service Interruptions or Partially Agencies Shut Down	Near Total Agency-Shut Down/Multiple Agencies Partially Shut-Down	Near Total State-Shut Down	Based on if the system goes down for a period of time, what is the business process impact?
State Data	No Data, Public	Internal Data	Confidential (PII)	Confidential (HIPAA/FTI)	Restricted (CJIS)	Note: Need to reference the Data Classification policy
Public Safety	Low Public Safety Impact		Possibility of Direct Injury or Death		Certainty of Direct Injury or Death	Assume that the offering is gone a month.
Multi-Agency	1	2	3	4	5 or more	Based on average of agencies using contract
Market Landscape (Risk/Volatility)	Low		Medium		High	Do things change annually? Do they change over a 5-year period? What is the risk? Leverage (who has the

						leverage in the situation?)
Contract Sensitivity	Not Sensitive		Somewhat Sensitive		Highly Sensitive	High Profile, Prone to Compliance Issues, or Legal Complications

Category	Grouping	Size of Spend	Business Process Impact	State Data	Public Safety	Multi Agency	Market Landscape	Contract Sensitivity (doubled)	Total Score	Category Level	Score	Level
Electrical Supplies	MRO	2	3	1	3	5	1	2	17	2	31-40	5
Janitorial Supplies	MRO	4	3	1	3	5	1	6	23	3	25-30	4
Plumbing Supplies	MRO	3	3	1	3	2	1	2	15	2	20-24	3
Tools & Hardware	MRO	4	3	1	3	5	1	6	23	3	10-19	2
Water Softener Salt	MRO	1	1	1	1	5	1	2	12	2	0-10	1
		5	3	1	3	5	1	6	24	3		



State of Ohio

Department of Administrative Services
General Services Division

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

A Modern Analytics Framework for Statewide Procurement

Executive Summary

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Office of Procurement Services (OPS) has fundamentally changed how the State of Ohio sees and manages procurement data. By unifying data from the Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS), the state's accounting system, and OhioBuys, the state's eProcurement system, along with legacy spreadsheets into a single, governed data warehouse and reporting platform, OPS replaced outdated, manual, error-prone, and inconsistent processes with an automated platform that delivers fast, reliable insight.

The establishment of an OPS Data Governance Board also helped ensure trust in metrics and published products. Procurement teams now have one place to understand contract portfolios, statewide spending, new sourcing opportunities, cycle times, and agency adoption without chasing disconnected reports or relying upon institutional knowledge to compile and prepare data.

Powered by the state's InnovateOhio Platform, the new solution standardizes data, eliminates duplicative systems, improves performance, and strengthens security. A modern portal with single sign-on gives immediate access to curated datasets, dashboards, and visualizations backed by transparent governance. What once required manual compilation and irregular refreshes is now streamlined, accurate, and continuously updated.

The result is a transformative foundation for statewide procurement: clearer visibility, faster decisions, and stronger compliance across state government.

Innovation

OPS's innovation lies not in building another reporting tool, but in changing how procurement information is organized, governed, and used across the state. Instead of treating data as an afterthought within individual systems, OPS created a warehouse of shared information that connects the full procurement lifecycle — from sourcing events to contract management to spending — into a single, coherent picture. This approach has never existed in Ohio procurement before and represents a major shift in how agencies can understand and manage their work.

The innovation is rooted in how OPS brought together information from OAKS, OhioBuys, and historical records and transformed it from raw system outputs into business-ready intelligence. The warehouse fills long-standing gaps, especially in areas that previously had no enterprise-level reporting at all, such as solicitation activity, supplier performance indicators, and detailed workflow history. By applying data curation methodologies, standardizing this information and aligning it to shared definitions approved by the Data Governance Board, OPS made it possible for procurement staff across state agencies to analyze their work the same way — without reconciling spreadsheets, interpreting data inconsistently, or moving between multiple systems.

Equally innovative is the way OPS designed the warehouse to strengthen operational systems. By separating heavy analytical workloads from OAKS and OhioBuys, agencies now get faster insights without creating performance issues. Each platform can now excel at what it does best: OAKS and OhioBuys handle transactions; and the warehouse handles data processing to support more effective data analysis and long-term insight through its reporting platform.

This initiative uses curated data to address real procurement challenges. Instead of relying only on raw operational data, OPS created curation processes that add business context and organize the information in ways that match the questions procurement staff need to answer. For example:



- Standardized solicitation data allows agencies to compare sourcing events consistently, regardless of amendments or cancellations. This gives users clear insights into cycle times and other process metrics. See Supplemental Exhibit (Page 3).
- Consolidated contract data provides a clear view of the state’s contract portfolio, including coverage, renewal needs, and workload trends. A summary dataset shows high-level portfolio information, while a separate amendment dataset highlights contract changes and patterns over time. See Supplemental Exhibit (Page 2)
- Automated spend-under-management classification replaces a manual, error-prone process. Voucher data is now consistently categorized based on the type of contract referenced, making it easier to see where unmanaged spend occurs and where new contracts may be needed. See Supplemental Exhibit (Pages 4-5).

These improvements address long-standing operational challenges and give Ohio’s procurement community a shared, reliable, and actionable understanding of statewide activity – something the state has never had before. They also create a foundation for more strategic, consistent, and transparent procurement moving forward.

Transferability

This initiative is transferable because OPS built it on principles – not products. The underlying approach of shared data definitions, business-driven prioritization, and consistent decision-making is anchored by the OPS Data Governance Board. This board reviews and approves use cases, aligns definitions across agencies, and provides a clear “seal of trust” for published datasets and visualizations. Any state or large organization can replicate this model with minimal resources.

The solution was architected using industry-standard tools already supported within Ohio’s enterprise environment. This allows other programs to adopt the same approach without introducing new technology platforms or requiring specialized expertise. By relying on existing, widely used tools rather than custom-built applications, the state can implement solutions more quickly while ensuring long-term maintainability and scalability.

Additionally, OPS developed repeatable methods for preparing data so it can be used consistently across agencies. The same techniques that were applied to procurement – bringing together data from separate operational systems, standardizing definitions, and producing business-ready views – can be applied to any function where information is fragmented. These methods can effectively support areas such as grants, human resources, facilities management, or program oversight.

The access model is equally adaptable. Single sign-on and role-based permissions make it simple to control who sees what, reducing administrative burden for program areas while maintaining strong security controls. By sharing curated datasets and visualizations through standardized products, OPS established a pattern that other teams can follow to deliver analytics in a way that is trusted, consistent, and easy to adopt.

Ultimately, while the OPS data warehouse uses a specific set of tools, its real value – and its transferability – comes from the repeatable blueprint it demonstrates: start with strong governance, use existing enterprise investments and industry-standard tools, apply consistent curation practices, and deliver insights that are ready for immediate use.

Service Improvement



The OPS data warehouse has delivered measurable improvements in how procurement teams work day-to-day. The following changes illustrate how the new approach directly enhances service delivery, reduces administrative burden, and increases confidence in statewide procurement information.

Before this initiative, OPS and agency partners relied on data that had to be manually extracted from separate systems and reassembled in spreadsheets. These files were refreshed infrequently because the process was so time-consuming and results often differed depending on who performed the analysis. Even basic questions, such as the count of active contracts or the amount of spend associated with them, produced inconsistent answers. Staff also depended on informal knowledge of those who were employed to compensate for gaps in the underlying data model; examples included inferring contract types based on contract numbering conventions, spending categories, or workflow cycle times, increasing the risk of errors and adding significant time to already busy workloads.

The new approach replaces this patchwork of systems and manual effort with a single portal and a simplified user experience, using curated datasets that refresh regularly and apply standard rules every time. Staff no longer need to manipulate data offline or rely on individual interpretation. Reports and dashboards now draw from consistent, approved definitions, allowing teams to make decisions based on a shared and reliable understanding of procurement activity.

These improvements have reshaped daily operations by removing the need to search for data or construct reports from scratch. Staff can now focus on defining the questions they need answered. Close collaboration between contracting teams and the Data Analytics team ensures that new visualizations are aligned to business needs. This partnership has already resulted in more than 70 targeted visualizations that support operational management and strategic planning.

With access to accurate and timely information, managers can now set meaningful performance goals and track progress toward them. Metrics such as solicitation timelines, renewal pipelines, and request processing times help teams identify bottlenecks, evaluate workloads, and adjust when needed. The ability to view work at the team or individual level supports better assignments of tasks and gives staff a clearer view of accomplishments over time.

Strong data definitions and approved metrics further reduce confusion across agencies. When all teams use the same criteria and measurements, analysis becomes faster, decisions become more consistent, and confidence in the state's procurement information improves. The result is a more efficient operation that offers better service to customer agencies and a more reliable foundation for statewide procurement decisions.

Savings and Efficiency

The OPS data warehouse and reporting platform delivers measurable financial savings while also creating significant efficiency gains in how procurement work gets done. These two benefits reinforce one another: by reducing system and reporting costs, OPS can reinvest resources more strategically; and by streamlining day-to-day work, analysts and managers gain more time for activities that directly support agencies and statewide procurement goals.

One of the largest direct savings came from consolidating reporting and data-management functions into Ohio's enterprise platforms, rather than maintaining separate legacy environments. This shift reduced licensing, hosting, and maintenance costs, enabling OPS to lower annual support expenses for the warehouse by \$44,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Automation has produced even greater efficiency gains. Previously, OPS relied on manual data extraction, reconciliation, and report assembly – work that required a staff position focused almost



entirely on generating routine outputs. With the new automated pipelines and curated datasets, OPS no longer needed to backfill this role, avoiding approximately \$69,000 in annual staffing costs. The actual impact is substantially higher when considering the staff hours saved across the organization by eliminating repetitive spreadsheet manipulation and reanalysis.

These efficiencies reach into core procurement activities. For example, contract analysts routinely assess statewide contracts to determine whether they should be renewed, resolicited, or retired. Over just six months, 30 analysts completed 459 such reviews. Under the old process, each review required consulting multiple manually-constructed reports and filtering the same data repeatedly – hundreds of times across the team. Now, analysts can access a standardized Contract Spend tool that provides accurate, on-demand spend information using approved calculations. This reduces workload, increases accuracy, and ensures consistent results no matter who performs the review.

Because of these efforts, OPS has realized approximately \$113,000 annual savings, with additional value gained from improved allocation of staff time.

Further operational efficiencies come from approaches that streamline access and reduce administrative overhead. Incremental data refresh strategies improve data timeliness while reducing the workload placed on systems to analyze and process data. Single sign-on and enterprise access groups simplify onboarding, strengthen security, and accelerate adoption for new users. Publishing curated datasets and reusable dashboards eliminates duplicative development and ensures analysts across OPS work from the same trusted information. These improvements allow the organization to deliver insights faster and at lower cost, while raising the overall maturity of analytics across statewide procurement.

Together, these efficiencies strengthen statewide procurement operations and demonstrate the continuing value of the OPS data warehouse investment.





State of Ohio

Department of Administrative Services
General Services Division

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

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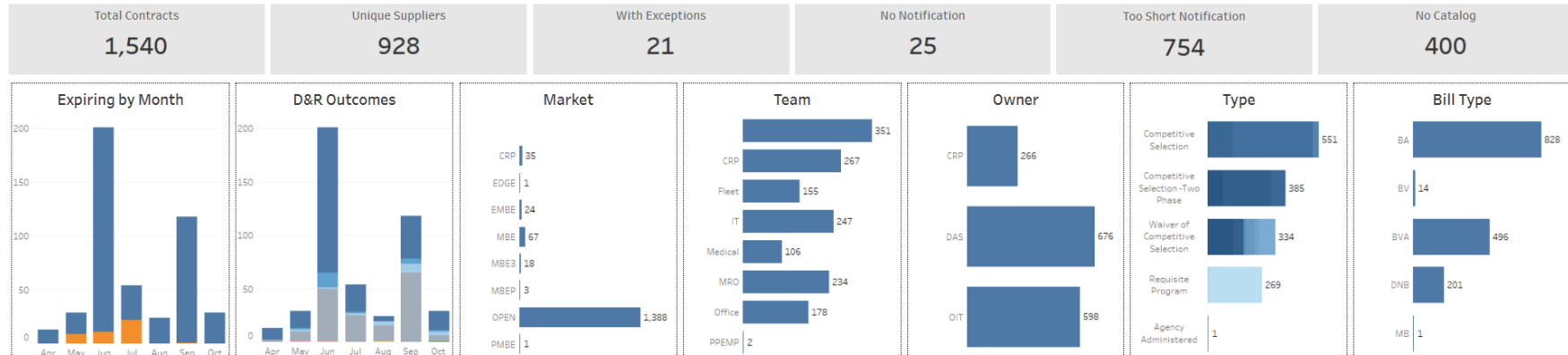
A Modern Analytics Framework for Statewide Procurement (Supplemental Exhibit)

Contract Dashboard



Contract Dashboard

Contract Responsible (All) Revenue Share Contract (All)



Contract Details

Contract Number	Index	Sup Name En	Contract Responsible	Market Type	Bill Type	Type	SubType	Notification	Team	Original Effective Date	Expiry Date	Max End Date	
0A1140	DPSCSP	Veridos America Inc	Lauren Brown	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	Information Technology	6/7/2017	6/30/2027	6/30/2027	Abc
0A1188	MDCDSC	DELOITTE CONSULTING LLP	Adrianna Smith	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	Information Technology	4/30/2018	6/30/2027	6/30/2029	Abc
0A1189	JFSCSP	MONSTER WORLDWIDE INC	Daniel Myers	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	12	Information Technology	1/26/2018	6/30/2027	6/30/2027	Abc
0A1190	DASCSP	KPMG LLP	Jeff Miller	EMBE	BA	CompSel	SAC	12	Information Technology	8/31/2018	6/30/2027	6/30/2029	Abc
0A1191	DNRCSP	JOHNSON MIRMIRAN & THOMPSON INC	Connor Estell	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	Information Technology	6/15/2017	6/30/2027	6/30/2027	Abc
0A1193	DASCSP	NORTHWOODS CONSULTING PARTNERS INC	Connor Estell	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	12	Information Technology	8/22/2017	6/30/2027	6/30/2027	Abc
0A1202	BWCCSP	CUSTOM APPLICATIONS MANAGEMENT LLC	James Sutton	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	9	Information Technology	3/2/2018	6/30/2026	6/30/2030	Abc
0A1208	JFSCSP	Sagitec Solutions LLC	Michael Eshelman	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	Information Technology	12/13/2018	6/30/2027	6/30/2029	Abc
0A1220	DRCCSP	FUSION CAPITAL MANAGEMENT LLC	Adrianna Smith	PMBE	BA	CompSel	SAC	16	Information Technology	9/10/2018	6/30/2027	6/30/2027	Abc
0A1223	DOTCSP	BEM SYSTEMS INC	Jeff Miller	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	Information Technology	1/14/2019	6/30/2027	6/30/2029	Abc
0A1228	TAXCSP	FAST LP	Lauren Brown	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	13	IT	5/25/2022	6/30/2027	6/30/2033	Abc
0A1229	GLOBAL TEL LINK CORPORATION	Wendy Seri	OPEN	BA	CompSel	Statewide Contract		13		5/21/2021	6/30/2027	6/30/2031	Abc
0A1232	DNRCSP	US eDirect Inc	Daniel Myers	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	9	Information Technology	5/3/2019	12/15/2026	12/15/2029	Abc
0A1237	JFSCSP	SIVIC SOLUTIONS GROUP LLC	Daniel Myers	OPEN	BA	CompSel	SAC	12	Information Technology	7/11/2019	6/30/2027	6/30/2029	Abc

The Contract Dashboard lets Office of Procurement Services' (OPS) staff quickly assess coverage, renewal needs, and workload trends. An aggregated contract header dataset contains summarized information about each contract in the portfolio, which is best suited to answer questions about the total size and nature of the State's contract portfolio.

Solicitations Dashboard



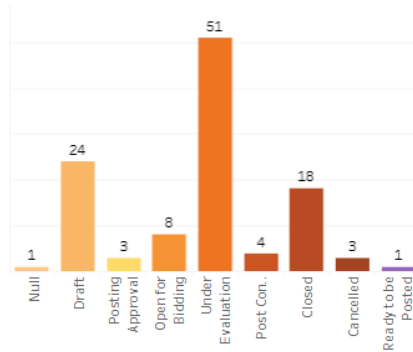
OPS Solicitations

Team: (All) | Type: (All) | Solicitation Status: (Multiple values) | Workflow Status: (All) | Start Date: 7/1/2024 | End Date: 4/28/2026

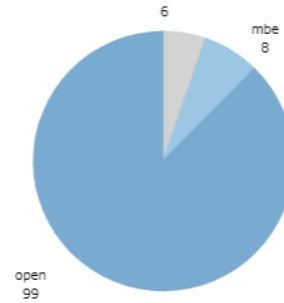
Total Solicitations

113
 ITB
52
 RFP
44
 IFP (incl. DBITS)
17

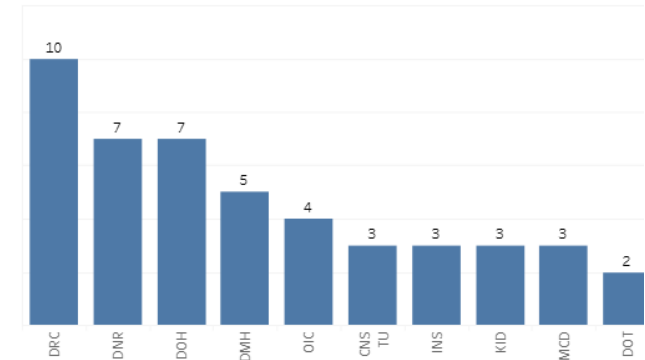
Workflow Status



Market Type



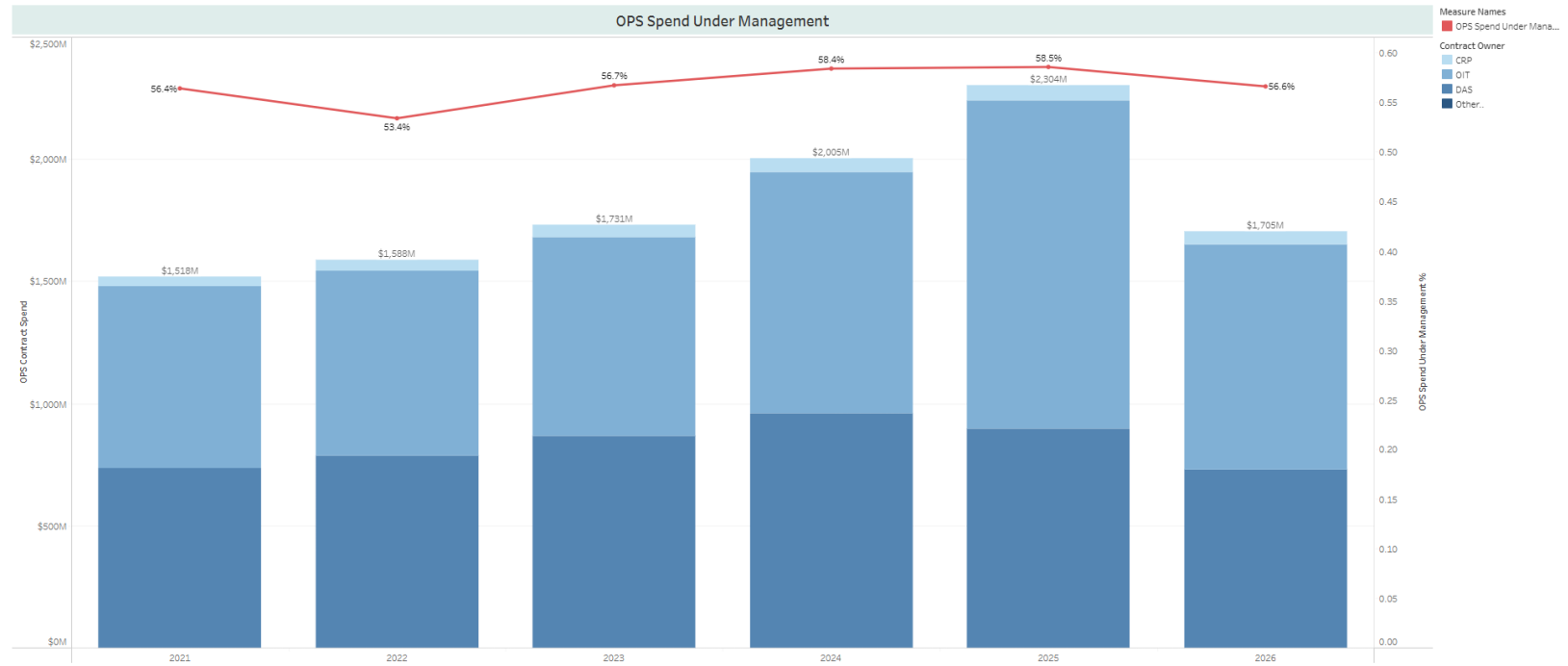
Top 10 Participating Agencies

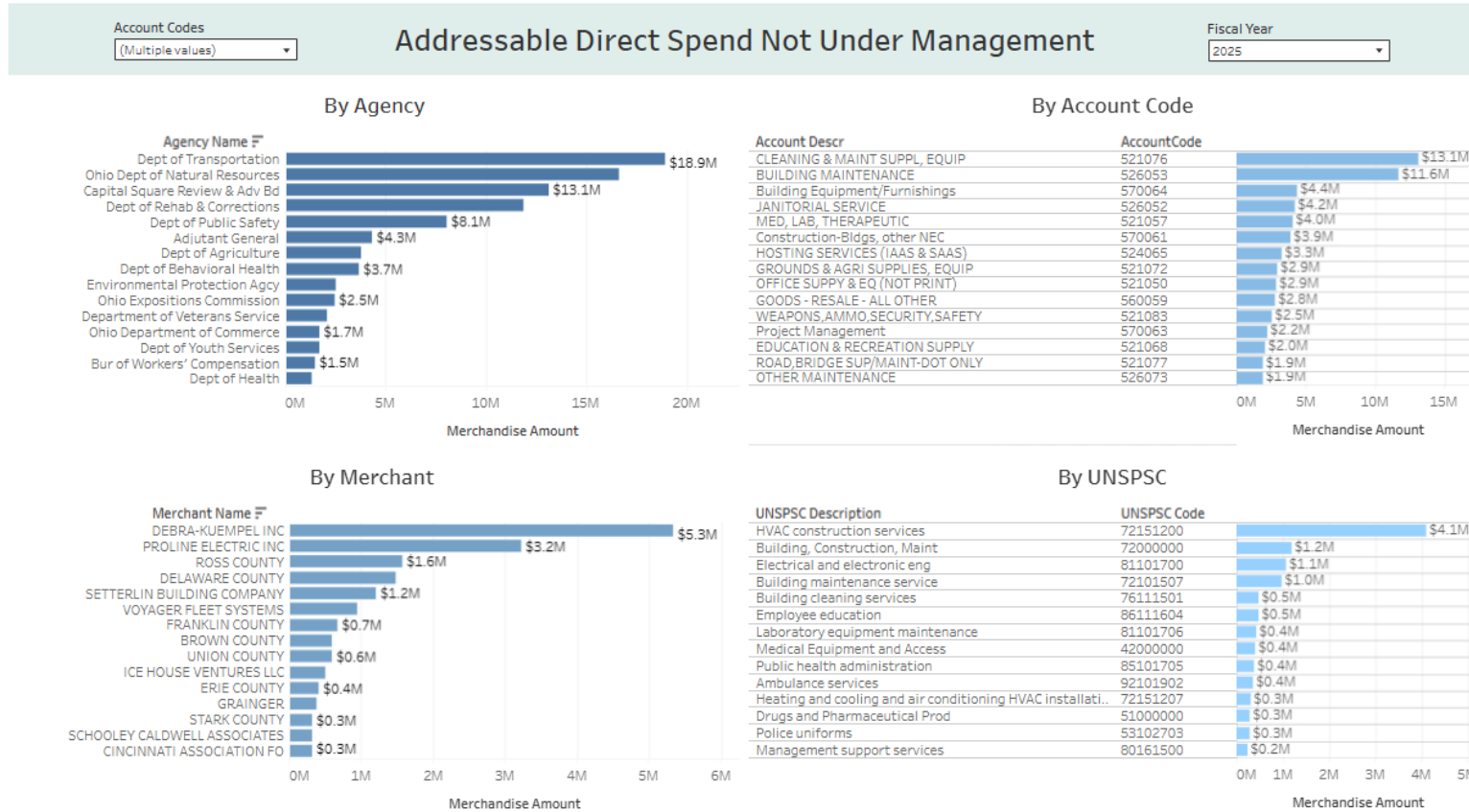


Solicitation ID	Solicitation Label	Participating Agency	Solicitation Created	Open Date	Sourcing Type	Type	Lot	Round	Solicitation Status	Workflow Status
SRC0000021660	BWC Employer Rates and Payments System Modernization		03-Jul-2024	25-Nov-2024	Double Envelope	Request For Proposal (RFP) (Double Envelope)	1	4	Cancelled	Under Evaluation
SRC0000021757	DDD COMPLETE HVAC AND REFRIGERATION MAINTENANCE & REPAIR	DMR	09-Jul-2024		Single Envelope	Invitation To Bid (ITB)	1	1	Draft	Draft
SRC0000021880	Enterprise Patrol Vehicle Emergency Lighting, Sirens, and Related Accessories		11-Jul-2024	9-Sep-2024	Single Envelope	Invitation To Bid (ITB)	1	1	Cancelled	Open for Bidding
SRC0000021894	EPA Operation of a Vehicle Emissions Testing Program in the Cleveland/Akron Area	EPA	11-Jul-2024	31-Jan-2025	Double Envelope	Request For Proposal (RFP) (Double Envelope)	1	1	Under Evaluation	Closed
SRC0000022101	DNR One (1) New, Model 2024 or Newer, Never Registered, Multi-Engine or Single Turbine Engine Powered Fixed-Wing Ai..	DNR	18-Jul-2024	20-Nov-2024	Single Envelope	Invitation To Bid (ITB)	1	1	Under Evaluation	Closed
SRC0000022122	LOT - Marketing Services	LOT	19-Jul-2024	15-Nov-2024	Double Envelope	Request For Proposal (RFP) (Double Envelope)	1	1	Under Evaluation	Closed
SRC0000022123	DAS INDEPENDENT BENEFITS AUDITING SERVICES		19-Jul-2024	8-Nov-2024	Double Envelope	Request For Proposal (RFP) (Double Envelope)	1	1	Under Evaluation	Closed
SRC0000022127	ENTERPRISE PAPER PRODUCTS		19-Jul-2024	6-Feb-2025	Single Envelope	Invitation To Bid (ITB)	1	1	Cancelled	Under Evaluation
SRC0000022160	DAS - Active Directory Service Modernization RFP		22-Jul-2024	20-Sep-2024	Double Envelope	Request For Proposal (RFP) (Double Envelope)	1	1	Cancelled	Under Evaluation

The OPS Solicitations Dashboard provides a reliable way to compare sourcing events by controlling amendments or cancellations, empowering users to evaluate cycle times and other attributes of the process without manually interpreting or modifying complex data structures.

OPS Spend Under Management





Spend under management visualizations, such as those depicted above, categorize spend based on the type of contract the voucher references. Curated spending data ensures that these types of analyses can help identify where unmanaged spending is occurring, and where new statewide or agency level agreements may be warranted.



State of Oklahoma

Office of Management & Enterprise Services
Central Purchasing Division

2026 NASPO CRONIN AWARDS:

George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

From Fragmentation to a Single Source of Truth: Oklahoma's Unified Model for Competitive Procurement

Executive Summary

Every Oklahoma state purchase deserves real competition. Every Oklahoma buyer deserves to find the right vendor in seconds. Every OMES contract manager deserves a system that is logical, efficient, and designed to support accuracy, consistency, and high-value stewardship of statewide contracts. When new leadership in the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) Central Purchasing assumed responsibility in 2023, none of those conditions existed. The function lacked written SOPs, contract documents were scattered across Teams, network drives, personal folders, and an aging public directory, and no authoritative record of contract data existed. The reliability of statewide procurement depended largely on individual staff habits rather than structured governance. We stabilized the environment through immediate cleanup and standard operating procedures, but lasting improvement required a higher-order solution that didn't rely on manual discipline to maintain data integrity.

OMES Central Purchasing set out to make finding the right vendor in state government as easy as searching for anything else online, and to turn that capability into the foundation for every kind of state purchasing decision. **Oklahoma Contract Search** is the result: a public, consumer-grade catalog of every authorized statewide contract vendor and all their products and services, with a natural-language assistant and an AI Research workspace that takes the guesswork out of finding a contract vehicle. Two new related platforms draw on its data and design: **MyOK Staffing & Services**, the state's contractor and project procurement portal, and **Solicitations Search**, an integrated historical solicitations document repository.

NASPO Technology Asset Improvement funds made this work possible without state appropriations, giving OMES the freedom to invest in a unified platform rather than incremental tools. The result is a statewide system developed cost-effectively and in alignment with NASPO's mission to support state procurement excellence.

Innovation

Oklahoma Contract Search is unusual in three ways. The first is its data model. OMES stopped treating contracts, contractors, solicitations, and reporting as separate IT projects and built them as different views of the same underlying data. Public search, the administrative console, the MyOK contractor and project portal, the in-flight Solicitations Search, supplier usage reporting, and admin-fee reconciliation all read from one normalized model. 98% of catalog rows carry a PeopleSoft contract identifier, so the contract a buyer searches against is the same record that tracks the supplier's sales and admin fee owed under that contract.

The second is that AI is a first-class capability, not a bolt-on. Oklahoma Contract Search contains two distinct AI workflows; each designed for a specific job. The search assistant turns conversational questions into structured catalog filters. The AI Research workspace produces asynchronous research briefs against the catalog. An automated keyword-extraction pipeline has already produced 28,362 keyword mappings from Pricing PDFs. Every keyword carries a provenance link to the source attachment and a confidence score, so AI augments the buyer's judgment rather than substituting for it, and every answer is grounded in current authoritative records the buyer can verify.

The third is that the platform presents those connections to users on every page. A buyer viewing a statewide contract sees every supplier currently awarded under that contract and every related document in one place. A category manager viewing a supplier sees every statewide contract that supplier holds and the attachments tied to each. Historical solicitations are visible alongside the catalog. The connected view replaces the back-and-forth that previously required multiple systems and lets a buyer make a competition-aware decision without leaving the platform.



The point of it all is competition. Easier vendor discovery means more state spend flows through pre-competed statewide vehicles. Additional competitive bidding on every contractor and project posting routes more state work to more qualified suppliers and results in better project pricing for agencies. Every design decision is in service of getting more competitive offers in front of Oklahoma buyers, on every category of spend.

The platform is real and in motion. Oklahoma Contract Search now indexes 1,411 active statewide contracts across 194 distinct statewide vehicles, 1,123 suppliers, and 1,944 indexed solicitations. The catalog is actively curated: 117 new contracts entered the catalog in the last 90 days, an automated keyword-extraction pipeline runs on every new attachment to any contract, and every contract change is captured in a field-level audit log with full provenance. A small number of other states are already working toward potential adoption of the Contract Search architecture.

“Our approach to modernization centers on a single, authoritative platform that strengthens statewide procurement discipline. By unifying contracts, suppliers, solicitations, and reporting in one data model, we improved oversight, reduced administrative friction, and made qualified vendor discovery nearly instantaneous for agencies. The result is a procurement environment where compliance is clearer, competition is easier, and purchasing decisions are consistently grounded in accurate, verifiable information.” Lesli Bajema, Director of Statewide Procurement Strategy

Transferability

Oklahoma Contract Search was designed to be replicated. Twelve months of work distill into a five-step path that any other state procurement office can follow.

(1) Start with the public catalog. Contract search is the highest-leverage starting surface because it has the lowest internal-stakeholder count and the broadest external audience. Get it right and the rest of the platform has gravity.

(2) Write the data model once and surface it many ways. Design one normalized contract and supplier data model with audit logging built in, so contracts, solicitations, statewide vehicles, and supplier usage reports can talk to each other without a synchronization layer.

(3) Build on commodity cloud components. The implementation required no custom legislation and relies solely on standard, commercially available cloud components ensuring that the model can be adopted by any state, without dependency on Oklahoma-specific law, systems, or infrastructure.

(4) Pick a forcing function and commit to a date. A planned cutover from a legacy system, mandated from procurement office leadership, drives adoption faster than any pilot. A target date for legacy decommissioning anchors every adoption decision in the rollout window.

(5) Treat AI as a designed capability, not a feature. Decide what each AI workflow is supposed to do, constrain it to that job, and ground every answer in your authoritative records. AI that augments judgment compounds value; AI that substitutes for judgment erodes trust.

OMES pilots procurement for the State of Oklahoma. Any agency buyer can use Oklahoma Contract Search for competitive pricing, MyOK for competing bids on contractor and project work, and Solicitations Search for active and historical solicitations. Any other state procurement office can offer the same posture by following the five steps above.

Service Improvement

Finding the right vendor is now a thirty-second task. Oklahoma Contract Search replaced an aging directory that required users to know the exact contract number they were after, and that punished agencies who did not know which suppliers covered which categories. The new system inverts the task. A buyer describes what they need, and the catalog surfaces every authorized supplier who can deliver it. Search runs across structured and unstructured fields, including inside attached price sheets and pricing workbooks, with

hierarchical UNSPSC navigation across the standard 15,000-code taxonomy. The natural-language assistant turns conversational questions like “which contracts cover penetration testing?” into structured filtered searches. The assistant is intentionally constrained: it converts each question into single-word, domain-specific search terms, rejecting generic words like “services” in favor of words like “landscaping,” so a buyer’s question always lands on a real catalog filter rather than a generic AI summary.

An AI Research workspace empowers deeper market research. Beyond the search assistant, Oklahoma Contract Search includes an AI Research workspace where a buyer uploads a draft scope of work or requirements document and receives an asynchronous, structured research brief mapping their requirements against the statewide contract portfolio. The brief identifies candidate vehicles, the suppliers authorized under each, the relevant fee structures, and known recent task orders for similar work, with citations back to the original catalog records. The same data model that powers public search also powers this workspace, so research findings are always grounded in current authoritative records.

Behind the public site, the same data drives an administrative console where category managers edit contracts, manage attachments, configure keywords, and receive automatic 180-, 90-, and 30-day expiration notifications. The platform also handles supplier quarterly usage reporting and admin-fee reconciliation on the same data model, with approximately 290,000 line-items processed across approximately 1,200 supplier reports to date. Every contract change is captured in an immutable audit log with field-level before-and-after values.

The difference for OMES contracting officers is significant. Under the previous system, even simple contract updates required multiple, duplicative entries across PeopleSoft, the statewide directory, personal trackers, and assorted SharePoint files, and compiling metrics for leadership or the Legislature could take days as officers attempted to reconcile individually maintained spreadsheets. With the new platform, the backend workspace automatically synchronizes updates in real time. Contracting officers maintain information in one place, errors surface quickly, and statewide data can be retrieved in seconds rather than days.

MyOK Staffing & Services is the contractor and project procurement system OMES is rolling out to every Oklahoma state agency, and its core service is competitive bidding. When an agency posts a contractor need or a project under certain statewide staffing or deliverables-based service contracts, qualified suppliers from the statewide pool submit competing bids; the agency reviews bids in one place; and the platform routes the resulting selection through approval, integrated background-check and legal-agreement workflows, and timesheet verification for active engagements. Every MyOK posting puts state spend in front of multiple suppliers who compete for it, on the same data model as Oklahoma Contract Search.

Solicitations Search, in active build for OMES rollout this summer, completes the platform. 1,944 active and recent solicitations are already visible alongside the contract catalog, synchronized from the state’s existing bidding system every six hours, with four years of historical solicitation documentation coming soon. The public availability of this consistent, accurate information greatly reduces open records requests and provides a level of transparency that aligns with the fidelity owed to Oklahoma taxpayers.

Savings & Efficiency

Cost discipline anchors the savings story. Oklahoma did not finance a multi-year, multi-million-dollar IT modernization program to deliver Oklahoma Contract Search, MyOK, and Solicitations Search. The platform runs on commodity cloud-native services with no upfront implementation fee, and designing three products around one shared data model eliminated redundant builds, integrations, and licensing.

But the savings story is only half of the transformation. The other half is risk mitigation. Prior to this initiative, statewide procurement operated without consistent SOPs or uniform document storage, with contract files spread across Teams, network drives, personal folders, and an aging public directory. The unified data model replaces that structural risk: contract inputs follow standardized formats, documents follow a controlled lifecycle, and every change is captured in an immutable field-level audit log. Contract accuracy no longer depends on individual staff habits, and OMES leadership has transparent insight into contract status,

performance, and completeness that did not exist before. Mistakes that once took weeks to uncover can be identified immediately, and contract audits that previously required days of manual reconstruction can be completed in minutes.

“Before this system, compiling even basic data could take days because every contracting officer kept different records in different ways. Now the same information is available in seconds. One platform didn’t just make our work easier; it made our data trustworthy for the first time.” Barry Timberlake, OMES Category Manager

Risk mitigation also extends to competition. Under legacy processes, the burden of identifying and contacting suppliers for quotes was so high that agencies often reverted to familiar vendors, creating uneven competition and protest risk. MyOK Staffing & Services eliminates this vulnerability by introducing a mandatory second layer of competition: agencies post a job once, and every awarded supplier on the statewide contract receives automatic notification and an equal opportunity to submit a mini-bid. The result is competitive tension on every project posting, and better prices and outcomes for state projects follow.

Conclusion

Oklahoma’s new procurement model demonstrates how unified data, disciplined governance, and purpose-built AI can transform statewide procurement. By replacing fragmented systems with an authoritative, cloud-native platform, OMES delivered faster vendor discovery, stronger competition, and verifiable contract integrity without major implementation costs. The model is fully replicable and offers a practical roadmap for any procurement office seeking accuracy, transparency, and competitive outcomes at scale. This initiative proves that when contract data, solicitations, supplier usage, and competitive bidding operate from a single source of truth, states can raise the standard of public purchasing and deliver measurable value.

Oklahoma Contract Search at a Glance

Theme	Oklahoma Evidence
Vendor Finding	Full-text search across structured and unstructured fields (including inside attached pricing workbooks). Hierarchical UNSPSC navigation across the standard 15,000-code taxonomy. Natural-language assistant constrained to single-word, domain-specific catalog filters. A buyer describes the need; the catalog returns every authorized supplier who can deliver.
AI Research	Buyers upload a draft scope or requirements document and receive an asynchronous, structured research brief mapping requirements to candidate statewide vehicles, authorized suppliers, fee structures, and recent comparable task orders, with citations back to authoritative records.
Unified Platform	One normalized data model behind Oklahoma Contract Search, the MyOK contractor and project portal, and the in-flight Solicitations Search. Contracts, solicitations, vehicles, suppliers, and admin-fee reconciliation cross-reference each other natively rather than living in separate systems.
Driving Competition	Easier vendor discovery routes more state spend through pre-competed statewide vehicles. Every MyOK posting draws competing bids from the statewide supplier pool. Better prices and outcomes for state projects follow.
Footprint	1,411 active contracts across 194 statewide vehicles · 1,123 suppliers · 1,944 indexed solicitations · 28,362 automated keyword mappings · 5,196 searchable attachments · ~290,000 reconciled supplier line items · 3 OMES-specific products on one shared data model.



Exhibit 1 – Public statewide contract search using structured catalog filter.

The search assistant turns conversational questions into structured catalog filters.

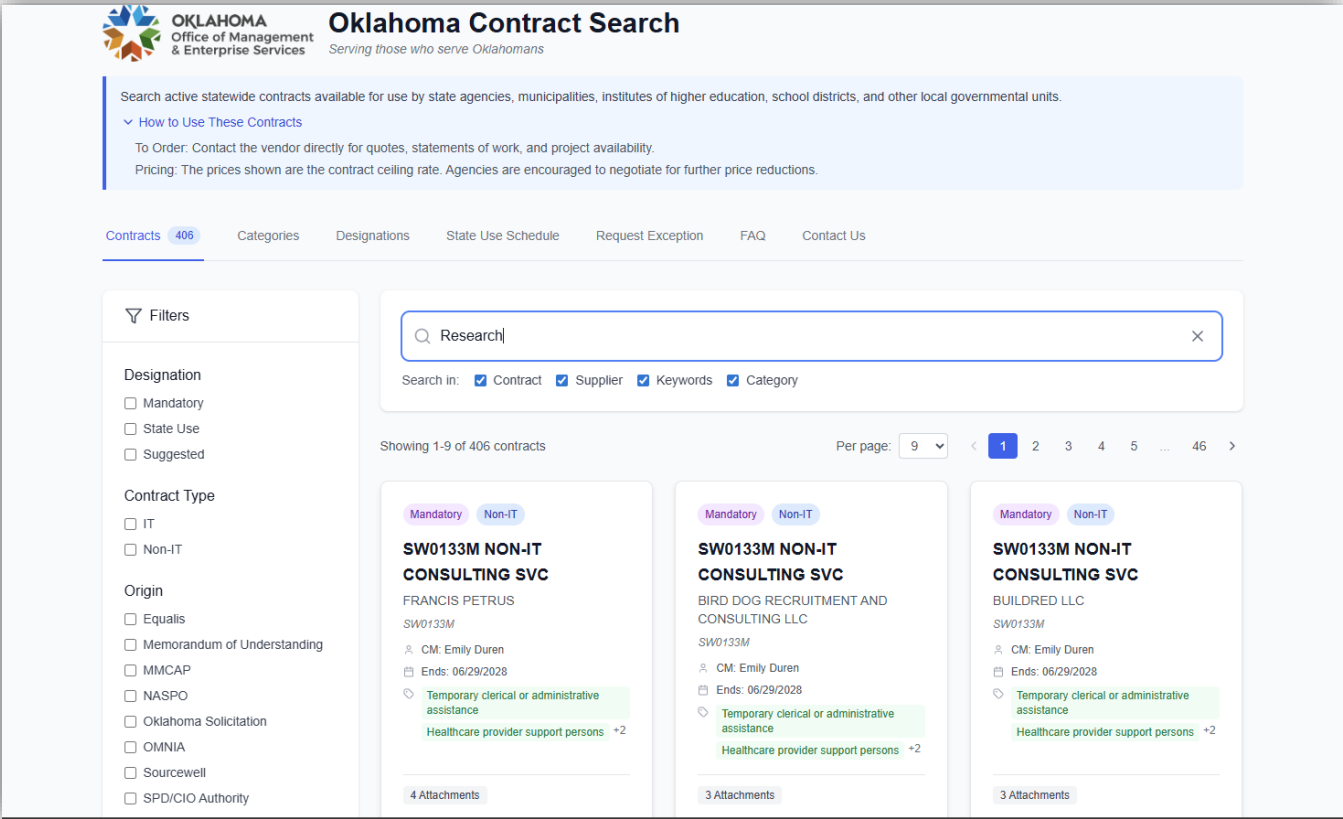


Exhibit 2 – Provenance.

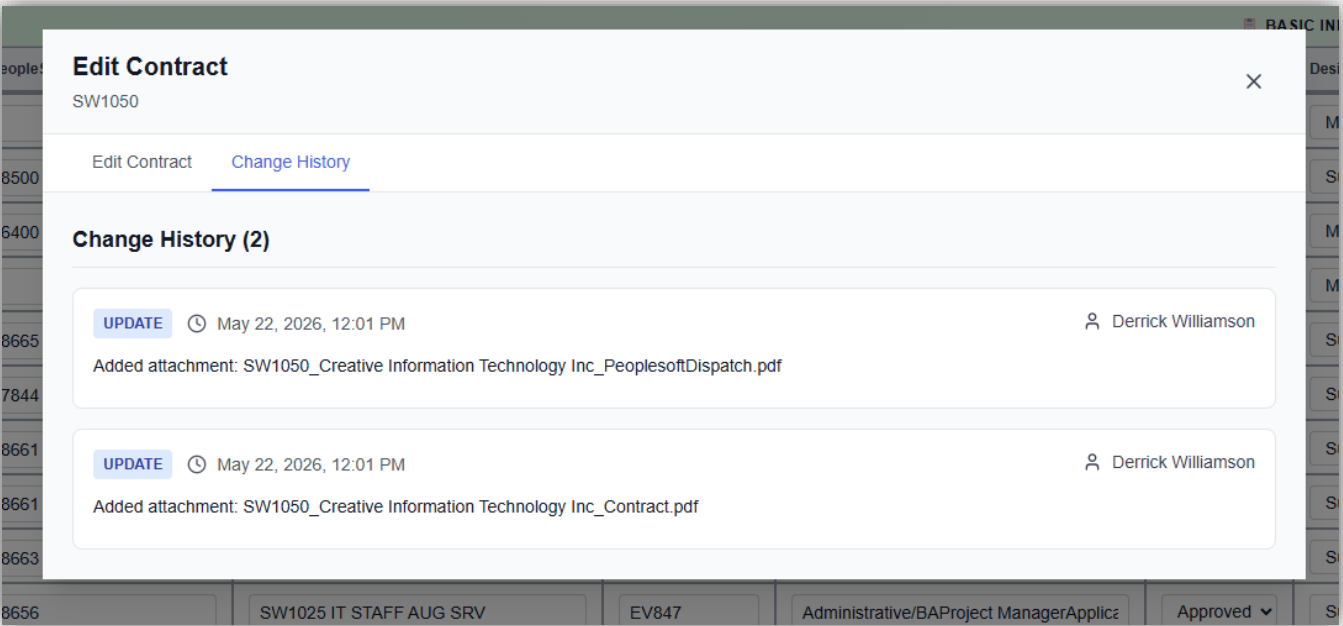


Exhibit 3 – Contract table constrained fields.

Contract entry is guided by constraints to fields, eliminating inconsistencies.

OKLAHOMA

Office of Management & Enterprise Services

Internal Contract Tool

Serving those who serve Oklahomans

Contract Mgmt

Dashboard

Contract List

Contract Table

Supplier Table

Research

Exception Requests

Resources

Admin

No unsaved changes • 1655 of 1655 contracts

	REFERENCE		BASIC INFO						
	SW Number	Supplier	PeopleSoft Dispatch C...	Contract Title	Solicitation...	Summary	Status	Designation	IT / No...
	SW0092M						To Delete	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW1189	NICUSA INC	8500	SW1189 WEB PLATFORM PYMT PROC		Web platform, application development a	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1178M	MICHAEL BAKER INTER...	6400	SW1178M 911 GIS TRAINING	0900000429	This statewide contract provides the prov	Approved	Mandatory	IT
	SW0615M			SW0615M ROAD SALT			In Develop	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW1050	CREATIVE INFORMATI...	8665	SW1050 DELIVERABLE IT SVCS	EV846	IT Technology Assessment, Planning & P	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1050	INSIGHT PUBLIC SECT...	7844	SW1050 DELIVERABLE IT SVCS		IT Technology Assessment, Planning & P	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1025	EPCHPEL INC	8661	SW1025 IT STAFF AUG SRV	EV847	Administrative/BAProject ManagerApplic	To Delete	Suggested	IT
	SW1025	EPCHPEL INC	8661	SW1025 IT STAFF AUG SRV	EV847	Administrative/BAProject ManagerApplic	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1025	ASTERISM IT Solutio...	8663	SW1025 IT STAFF AUG SRV	EV847	Administrative/BAProject ManagerApplic	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1025	CLOUD CONSULTING S...	8656	SW1025 IT STAFF AUG SRV	EV847	Administrative/BAProject ManagerApplic	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW1025	AGAMA SOLUTIONS INC	8657	SW1025 IT STAFF AUG SRV	EV847	Administrative/BAProject ManagerApplic	Approved	Suggested	IT
	SW0670M	KEMP STONE INC	8655	SW0670M AGGREGATE STONE	EV00000867	For the purchase of Aggregate and Stone	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0670M	KEMP STONE INC	8654	SW0670M AGGREGATE STONE	EV00000867	For the purchase of Aggregate and Stone	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0670M	SOBER BROTHERS	8659	SW0670M AGGREGATE STONE	EV00000867	For the purchase of Aggregate and Stone	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0670M	LIGHTLE SAND & CONS...	8660	SW0670M AGGREGATE STONE	EV00000867	For the purchase of Aggregate and Stone	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0135M	CANDOR PUBLIC RELA...	7643	SW0135M ADVERT MARKETING SVC	EV00000444	Please refer to the PIM in the attachment	Expired	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0135M	SALIENT HOLDINGS LLC	8664	SW0135M ADVERT MARKETING SVC	EV00000444	Formerly Candor PR, currently operating	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT
	SW0111M	NO FAULT LLC	8662	SW0111M PARKS REC EQUIP	S-10700-00001	NASPO contract for Parks and Recreatio	Approved	Mandatory	Non-IT

Exhibit 4 – Guided contract entry.

Create New Contract

Section 1: Basic Information
Core contract details visible to the public

Contract Title *
Enter contract title...

SW Number * **Solicitation Number** **PeopleSoft Dispatch ID**

SW-2024-001 SOL-2024-001 Enter numbers only

Contract Origin **Designation** **Type** **Supplier Type**

Select Origin Select Designation Select Type Select Supplier Type

Summary
Enter contract summary (optional)...



State of Massachusetts

Operational Services Division (OSD)
Strategic Communications and Learning

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

Cronin Procurement Impact Award

The Story Behind the Contract: Creative Procurement for Statewide Impact

The Cronin Procurement Impact Award

Executive Summary

The Operational Services Division (OSD) partners with state agencies, local governments, and institutions of higher education through its Statewide Contracts, connecting them with the essential goods and services they need. To complement this work, the agency's Strategic Communications and Learning unit uses storytelling to enhance visibility into procurement processes, highlighting how the Commonwealth meets executive orders and serves the public. Together, OSD's procurement activities and storytelling strategies reinforce one another to amplify their overall impact and build a better Massachusetts.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and Salem State University (SSU) are leveraging OSD's Statewide Contracts for SSU BOLD and the associated North Campus Decarbonization Project – two capital projects prioritizing modern infrastructure, sustainability, and student success. SSU BOLD includes the renovation of two primary academic buildings to modernize program facilities.

The North Campus Decarbonization Project, on the other hand, is one of several energy initiatives managed by OSD's agency partners at DCAMM in support of Massachusetts' environmental goals. Most notably, the state is targeting carbon neutrality by 2050 as established by [Executive Order No. 594: Leading By Example: Decarbonizing and Minimizing Environmental Impacts of State Government](#).

OSD recognizes that meeting state climate objectives requires creative procurements in the form of contracts specifically designed to bridge the gap between state agencies and the specialized environmental services they need. In support of that mission, OSD developed Statewide Contract PRF74 - Energy, Climate Action, and Facility Advisory Services (see Exhibit 3). For DCAMM, this contract is instrumental in turning ambitious decarbonization plans into reality.

To share the impact of this collaboration between agencies empowered by strategic procurement, OSD developed and launched [Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts](#) (see Exhibit 1). This three-episode podcast series details SSU BOLD and the Decarbonization Project, reporting how the power of public procurement made it all possible.

Through the lens of the *Building Bold* series, OSD successfully highlights the intersection of public procurement and meaningful public impact. By providing both the contractual framework for decarbonization via PRF74 and the platform to share its story, OSD remains a vital engine for progress, helping Massachusetts state agencies and institutions build a more efficient, sustainable, and collaborative future.

Impact

Facilities Management and Decarbonization staff at DCAMM utilize Statewide Contract PRF74 to develop Energy Projects that reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions at state-owned and managed buildings, including higher education facilities such as Salem State University.

The launch of Statewide Contract PRF74 represented a pivotal shift in how the Commonwealth approaches climate action. "Statewide Contracts are critical to this decarbonization work," says Krista Lillis, Director of Energy and Sustainability at DCAMM. "The process starts with a Decarbonization Roadmap, where we use PRF74 Statewide Contract advisors to identify actionable carbon energy and water reduction projects to reduce or eliminate emissions from on-site fossil fuels."

By providing a specialized framework for decarbonization via Statewide Contracts, OSD has empowered the Commonwealth and its agencies, leveraging the expertise of Statewide Contract advisors, to move



beyond conceptual planning and into active implementation through a rigorous, three-phase methodology:

1. **Existing Conditions Review:** An exhaustive audit of facility mechanicals and end-of-life equipment to identify immediate opportunities for improvement.
2. **Project Recommendation:** The development of customized decarbonization projects designed to reduce Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and fossil fuel consumption.
3. **Implementation Planning:** The creation of a comprehensive roadmap that prioritizes high-impact energy initiatives.

These roadmaps have successfully launched various energy projects throughout the state. Currently, a Phase I project at Salem State University is underway, implementing an underground geothermal wellfield to deliver fossil-free heating and cooling to the university's North Campus. The podcast enhances this work by featuring in-depth interviews with voices from the organizations involved—procurement staff, students, and university faculty—making complex, large-scale environmental initiatives more tangible and accessible.

The sustained impact of decarbonization initiatives in the Commonwealth is evidenced by Statewide Contract spend data (see Exhibit 4), which tracks the continued and expanding use of PRF74 for energy-related projects. This data-driven insight confirms that the contract is a reliable, recurring resource in progressing toward the Commonwealth's goal of carbon-neutrality by 2050, ultimately creating a safer, healthier environment for its residents.

Beyond the technical implementation, OSD has increased public awareness of state sustainability efforts by making complex initiatives more comprehensible through audio storytelling. Notably, the *Building Bold* podcast's deep dive into DCAMM and SSU's decarbonization project contributed to OSD reaching 349 unique podcast listeners/viewers in Quarter 3 of Fiscal Year 2026—a 41% increase from the previous quarter. This increased transparency showcased through *Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts* serves as a powerful tool for building public trust and demonstrates that government processes can be efficient, effective, and aligned with the values, needs, and well-being of the residents they serve.

Exceptional Elements

Unlike many procurement offices, OSD makes a deliberate investment in its communications strategy, demonstrating to government and business partners how we live our values of service, responsiveness, partnership, and creative problem-solving. By leveraging social media, editorial content (see Exhibit 2), and audio storytelling through podcasts, we highlight the power of public procurement in meeting the state's diverse needs and its function as a catalyst for public good.

The agency's podcast strategy hinges on a creative approach, using audio storytelling techniques to engage stakeholders and subject matter experts while recounting how procurement drives impactful initiatives like SSU BOLD. Building on this framework, the Strategic Communications team developed *Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts*, a specialized three-episode podcast that serves as a deep-dive companion to OSD's monthly flagship podcast, *WOSD News: Procurement Insights* (see Exhibit 5).

Throughout the production of this podcast series, key SSU BOLD stakeholders were engaged in a comprehensive interview process, including the Deputy Commissioner from DCAMM's Office of Facilities Management and Decarbonization and the President of Salem State University. These conversations detailed the necessity of such a vast capital project and the critical value that Statewide Contracts and public procurement resources provided at every milestone.



"I am proud that SSU BOLD is being recognized in this podcast. It showcases how collaboration with state partners helps us build a more efficient, responsive, and future-ready university," shared John D. Keenan, President, Salem State University. "We are grateful for the Commonwealth's partnership as this work is central to ensuring we remain a mission-driven university that delivers excellence for our students and the region."

By centering the voices of those leading the work, OSD transformed a technical procurement achievement into a narrative of institutional progress. This innovative use of audio storytelling shares valuable information while fostering a unique level of transparency and public trust, ensuring that the citizens of the Commonwealth can see (and hear) exactly how their resources are being leveraged to build a more sustainable future.

Professional Value

The Operational Services Division elevates the procurement profession by using strategic communications methods, such as audio storytelling, to reinforce public procurement as a cornerstone of policy implementation in Massachusetts. Through informative and thought-provoking podcasts, the agency raises public awareness of statewide initiatives and highlights the procurement profession as a proactive solution provider. In this case, *Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts* illustrates the unique need for Statewide Contract PRF74 and the operational benefits it provides, directly supporting progress toward the Commonwealth's most ambitious infrastructure and sustainability goals.

OSD has established itself as an influencer in public procurement by solidifying its position as a strategic storyteller, demystifying the impact of the field for both high-level stakeholders and the public. For government partners, this visibility ensures the procurement function is recognized as a vital engine for project success. For residents, these communications provide exposure to the power of procurement and public-sector initiatives driving meaningful change.

The Operational Services Division's procurement and storytelling model through this project offers several high-impact practices that are readily transferable to other states:

- **The Three-Phase Decarbonization Roadmaps:** Other states may replicate the three-phase methodology (Existing Conditions, Recommended Projects, and Implementation Planning) to standardize their own decarbonization efforts across diverse facilities.
- **Strategic Communications for Transparency:** States may leverage the effectiveness of multimedia communications, such as podcasts, to humanize complex government processes, demystify procurement for the public, and gain stakeholder buy-in for large-scale capital projects.
- **Creative Contract Specialization:** Demonstrates the value of specialized contracts that directly help agencies fulfill the requirements of executive orders and connect them with highly specialized industry experts—much like how PRF74 connected DCAMM with essential environmental advisors.

Ultimately, the Operational Services Division's synergistic procurement and storytelling strategy redefines the role of the modern, innovative state procurement office. By merging technical excellence with creative transparency, OSD has moved beyond the traditional bounds of the profession to become a driver of public policy and a builder of public trust. This model, demonstrated by the success of *Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts*, is proof that when we communicate the story behind the contract, we secure goods and services and procure progress for every citizen of the Commonwealth and beyond.

Supplemental Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Podcast Series [Building Bold: Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts](#)



- [Part 1: The Blueprint for a Better Massachusetts](#)
- [Part 2: The Path to Net Zero Carbon Emissions](#)
- [Part 3: The Future of Salem State University](#)

Exhibit 2: [Buy the Way Magazine, Issue #34, Cover Story](#)

Exhibit 3: [Statewide Contract PRF74 Contract User Guide](#)

Exhibit 4a: Statewide Contract PRF74 Lifetime Contract Spend as of 5/27/2026

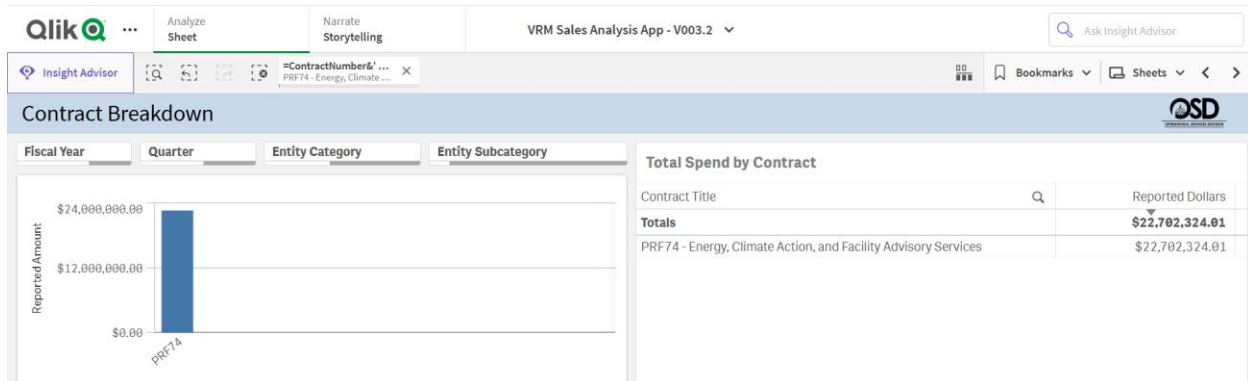


Exhibit 4b: Statewide Contract PRF74 Lifetime Contract Spend by Buyer Type as of 5/27/2026

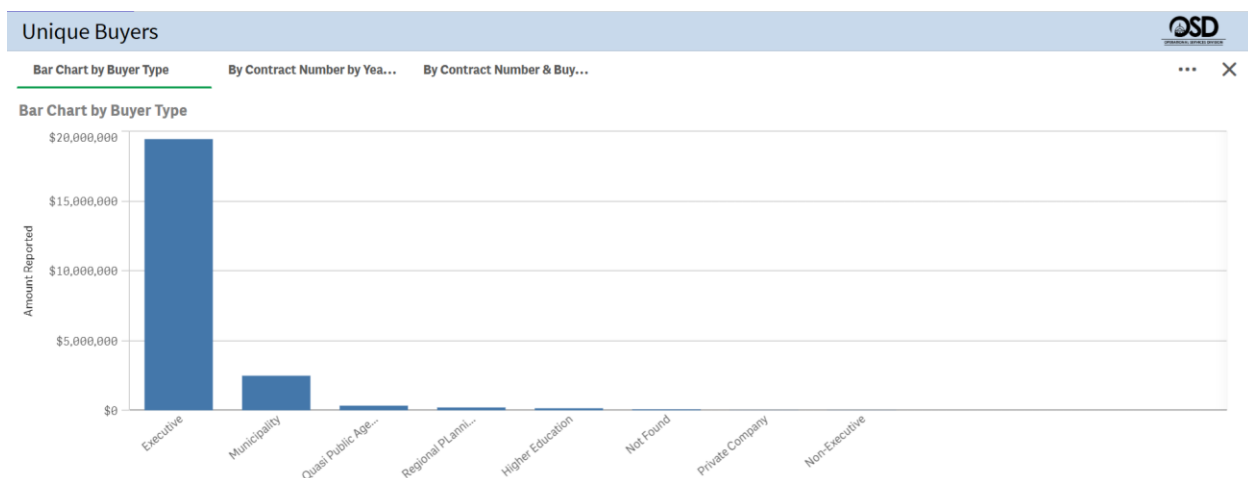


Exhibit 4c: Statewide Contract PRF74 Contract Spend by Fiscal Year as of 5/27/2026

Unique Buyers					
By Contract Number by Fiscal Year-Quarter					
ContractNumber	FiscalYear				
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
PRF74	\$782,820	\$3,423,184	\$5,332,367	\$7,519,811	\$5,644,142

Exhibit 5

[WOSD News: Procurement Insights Podcast Series](#)





State of Ohio

Department of *Administrative Services*
General Services Division

2026

NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

Cronin Procurement Impact Award

Building a Lifesaving Infrastructure: Ohio's Procurement-Driven Overhaul of 988 Services

Executive Summary

This submission highlights Ohio's statewide procurement initiative to modernize and fully redesign the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine identified the expansion and improvement of 988 as a statewide priority, emphasizing that every Ohioan must be able to reach lifesaving support when it is needed most. To advance this priority, the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) led a cross-agency procurement effort to replace Ohio's dependence on a nationally controlled 988 system with a secure, integrated, state-managed platform capable of meeting Ohio's operational, data, and public safety needs.

The problem:

Before this initiative, Ohio relied on a national 988 model administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), operated by a vendor with no contractual obligations to states. This arrangement deprived Ohio of essential operational data, prevented enforcement of performance or reliability standards, and limited visibility into critical system functions. Ohio experienced service outages — including one lasting more than 24 hours — and had no reliable method to transfer calls between 988 and 911. These conditions created risks to public safety, reduced crisis-care responsiveness, and hindered compliance with federal reporting requirements.

Procurement's role:

To solve these challenges and meet Ohio's needs, the DAS Office of Procurement Services developed and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 988 State Centralized Platform as an enterprise procurement designed to secure a partner capable of delivering:

- Seamless call, text, and chat routing
- Integrated 988–911 interoperability
- Statewide redundancy and cybersecurity
- Real-time operational and performance data
- Compliance with state and federal standards

DAS Procurement facilitated a highly coordinated process involving the DAS Office of Information Technology, the Ohio Governor's Office, the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, existing Ohio-based 988 call centers, and technical subject-matter experts. This collaboration ensured the solution reflected statewide needs and aligned with Ohio's broader crisis-care strategy.

Project status:

The contract was executed June 23, 2025. Since then, the state and its supplier have completed requirements and design and development and integrations. Testing and training are underway, and full deployment and statewide go-live is scheduled for August 2026.

Why it matters:

This procurement establishes a modernized, accountable, and Ohio-controlled



crisis-response infrastructure that strengthens safety, expands access, and ensures more equitable, reliable support for all Ohioans.

Impact

Ohio's procurement-driven modernization of the state's 988 system delivers measurable improvements to public safety, crisis-care responsiveness, and statewide governance. Under the previous national model, Ohio lacked operational control, reliable performance, and access to essential data — conditions incompatible with an effective crisis-care system. The new platform directly resolves these issues and significantly improves services for the entire state.

I. Reliable access to lifesaving crisis support

Ohio previously endured national 988 outages — including one lasting more than 24 hours— that left residents without access to critical support. The new state-managed platform introduces full redundancy, prioritized routing, and modern cybersecurity protections, ensuring that calls, texts, and chats consistently reach trained responders when every second matters.

II. Seamless interoperability between 988 and 911

Under the national model, 988 and 911 had no standardized or secure method for transferring behavioral-health-related emergency calls. Transfers relied on outdated 10-digit numbers that stripped caller information, increased the likelihood of dropped or “cold” transfers, and delayed handoffs during high-risk situations. The new platform enables secure, data-preserving, real-time transfers between 988 and 911, improving response times, and enhancing safety for both callers and responders.

III. Real-time operational data to drive decision-making

Ohio previously lacked access to key operational metrics — including call volume, call outcomes, regional demand, and demographic insights — because the national vendor did not consistently share reporting information. The new system provides comprehensive real-time data with all 19 Ohio-based 988 call centers, enabling state leaders to monitor performance, identify trends, allocate resources effectively, and maintain public dashboards that support transparency and evidence-based policymaking.

IV. Strengthened coordination across the crisis-care continuum

Ohio's crisis-care framework — Connect, Respond, Stabilize, Thrive — requires integrated communication between mobile crisis teams, behavioral-health providers, and crisis call centers. The new platform improves visibility into resource availability, supports timely deployment of mobile crisis teams, and enhances information exchange needed to resolve crises quickly and safely. This ensures individuals receive the right care at the right time, regardless of where they enter the system.

V. Statewide accountability and alignment with Ohio's priorities



For the first time, Ohio will be able to operate all 19 in-state 988 call centers on a unified platform aligned with state-defined performance standards, cybersecurity expectations, and reporting requirements. This ensures consistent service quality, improves compliance with federal reporting requirements, and strengthens accountability across the entire crisis-response network.

Collective Impact Statement

Together, these improvements create a resilient crisis-response system that enhances public safety, improves equity, and supports thousands of Ohioans each year. The modernized platform ensures more than 11 million residents benefit from a system that is fast, reliable, transparent, and built specifically for Ohio's long-term needs.

Exceptional Elements

This initiative is distinguished by several unique, award-worthy elements that demonstrate innovation, collaboration, and statewide impact.

A state-controlled multilayer network

Ohio is replacing an externally controlled national system with a robust, redundant statewide one, designed specifically for Ohio's operational, reporting, and public safety needs. This represents a transformative shift toward a more resilient and accountable crisis-response infrastructure.

Advanced interoperability between 988 and 911

Ohio's design overcomes long-standing barriers between emergency and crisis-care systems by enabling secure, data-rich, real-time transfers between 988 and 911. This integrated approach reduces delays, preserves caller information, and strengthens outcomes during behavioral health emergencies.

Unified statewide data architecture

For the first time, every Ohio-based 988 call center will operate on a single reporting platform. This unified system provides real-time visibility into call trends, demographics, outcomes, and regional patterns — empowering state leaders to make informed, evidence-based decisions and ensuring transparent accountability to the public.

Public transparency through modern analytics

The project includes a dynamic public facing dashboard that transforms complex operational and outcome data into accessible visual insights. Policymakers, researchers, and community partners can track trends, understand performance, and make informed decisions that strengthen crisis care across the state.

Overcoming significant structural barriers

This initiative succeeded despite major challenges, including the absence of national standards for state-run 988 systems, the technical complexity of integrating with Next



Generation 911 system, the need to coordinate across multiple agencies, and a high-priority timeline driven by public-safety expectations. These achievements position Ohio as a model state and nationwide leader in crisis-hotline modernization.

Professional Value

This project elevated the procurement profession within Ohio by demonstrating procurement can lead complex, high-stakes, multi-agency transformations with speed, discipline, and strategic vision.

Strategic leadership and coordination

DAS Procurement served as the operational backbone of the initiative — structuring the process, coordinating stakeholders, managing timelines, and ensuring alignment across DAS, the Governor’s Office, the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, and the statewide network of 988 call centers. This leadership demonstrated DAS Procurement’s ability to drive statewide level transformation.

High-quality results delivered on an aggressive timeline

The DAS procurement team completed a fully competitive IT solicitation — including vendor demonstrations, extensive clarifications, and negotiation of statewide IT data, security, and privacy terms in just 84 days from RFP posting to award. This accomplishment showcased the DAS Office of Procurement’s ability to deliver high-quality work under pressure while maintaining fairness, transparency, and rigor.

Driving innovation and fair competition

The Office of Procurement’s objective, criteria-driven evaluation surfaced a newer industry provider as the highest-scoring, lowest-cost offeror — demonstrating the office’s role in fostering innovation, ensuring competitive markets, and selecting partners aligned with statewide priorities.

Transferability and national relevance

Ohio’s model offers a scalable framework for other states seeking greater control over nationally administered crisis systems. Key transferable lessons include:

- Establishing cross-agency governance early
- Defining rigorous data and interoperability requirements
- Prioritizing transparency and performance accountability
- Applying disciplined procurement project management to accelerate modernization

Elevating procurement’s influence and reputation

By delivering Governor DeWine’s priority initiative with statewide impact, the DAS procurement team demonstrated its ability to shape strategic outcomes, modernize essential infrastructure, and deliver meaningful public value. This project sets a new benchmark for procurement excellence in Ohio and reinforces the profession’s role as a trusted, high-impact partner in state government.





State of Maryland

Department of General Services
Office of State Procurement

2026 NASPO CRONIN AWARDS:

Cronin Procurement Impact Award

From Backlog to Breakthrough: Modernizing Maryland's Procurement Review Group (PRG) Process

Executive Summary

The Maryland Office of State Procurement (OSP), through its Innovation and Continuous Improvement (ICI) Team, launched a transformative modernization initiative to redesign the State's Procurement Review Group (PRG) submission and oversight process. The initiative addressed longstanding operational inefficiencies, inconsistent agency accountability, and administrative barriers that hindered the State's supplier diversity and procurement oversight objectives.

Under Maryland's procurement framework, State agencies are required to conduct market research and establish subcontracting goals for major procurements through the PRG process. These goals include participation targets associated with Maryland's Certified Small Business (CSB), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), and Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) programs. Once completed at the agency level, procurement packages are submitted to OSP PRG for oversight review and approval.

Prior to modernization, the PRG process relied heavily on manual workflows, fragmented communications, and shared email inboxes that created significant inefficiencies and weakened accountability. Agencies frequently submitted incomplete packages or requests with 0% MBE participation goals absent sufficient market research or justification. This created a growing backlog of pending submissions, delayed procurement timelines, strained limited OSP staffing resources, and reduced OSP's ability to provide strategic oversight and data-driven decision-making.

Recognizing both the operational challenge and the broader opportunity to strengthen procurement governance, OSP's ICI Team partnered with PRG staff and agency stakeholders to redesign the process from the ground up. Through direct stakeholder interviews, workflow analysis, and continuous improvement practices, the team developed and implemented a centralized online PRG submission platform using Smartsheet technology.

The new system replaced a cumbersome 13-page manual process with a streamlined, responsive, and user-friendly digital intake form that:

- Requires agencies to enter subcontracting goals prior to submission;
- Requires written justification for any 0% MBE goal request;
- Allows direct upload of supporting documentation;
- Standardizes data collection across agencies;
- Enhances transparency and accountability;
- Enables improved reporting, metrics tracking, and KPI analysis; and
- Significantly reduces administrative burden for both agencies and OSP staff.

The project directly supports Governor Wes Moore's statewide emphasis on increasing MBE participation and advancing equitable procurement opportunities. By redesigning the process to reinforce accountability while simultaneously improving customer experience and turnaround times, Maryland transformed the PRG process from a reactive administrative review function into a proactive strategic procurement oversight capability.



Impact

The PRG Modernization Initiative has generated immediate and measurable improvements across procurement operations, supplier diversity accountability, and agency service delivery.

Elimination of Operational Backlogs

Prior to implementation, OSP PRG faced a substantial processing backlog of pending submissions due to manual intake methods, incomplete submissions, and limited staffing resources. Within three months of launching the online submission platform, the backlog was eliminated.

This reduction significantly improved procurement timelines for State agencies and reduced delays impacting critical contracts and services delivered to Maryland residents.

Increased Efficiency and Operational Capacity

The modernization initiative dramatically improved operational efficiency despite limited staffing resources. Previously, PRG processing relied heavily on manual email coordination, repetitive follow-up communications, and fragmented documentation review.

The new centralized platform streamlined intake, standardized submissions, and reduced administrative friction, enabling a single dedicated staff resource to process requests more efficiently and strategically than under the prior system.

By reducing manual administrative work, OSP staff are now better positioned to focus on higher-value procurement analysis, market research validation, and strategic oversight responsibilities.

Increased Accountability and Improved MBE Participation Efforts

One of the initiative's most significant outcomes has been the dramatic reduction in procurement submissions containing 0% MBE participation goals.

Prior to implementation, approximately 70% of monthly submissions included a 0% MBE goal. Since implementation of the modernized process, that figure has dropped to 7% or less over a five-month period (*Supplemental Exhibit A*).

The new process requires agencies to proactively establish and enter subcontracting goals prior to submission and provide justification when requesting a 0% MBE goal. This change fundamentally shifted accountability back to agencies while reinforcing the importance of meaningful market research and supplier diversity planning.

The initiative directly supports Maryland's statewide goal of achieving 29% MBE participation and aligns with Governor Moore's broader priorities around equity, economic inclusion, and accountable government operations.

Improved Data and Executive-Level Visibility

The initiative also created significant improvements in data collection and performance monitoring. Previously, fragmented manual processes limited OSP's ability to capture actionable statewide procurement data.

The modernized platform now supports centralized reporting, improved KPI tracking, and enhanced visibility into procurement trends, agency performance, subcontracting goals, and operational workload metrics. These enhanced analytics capabilities support executive leadership decision-making and strengthen statewide procurement governance.



Exceptional Elements

Several elements distinguish Maryland's PRG Modernization Initiative as an innovative and impactful procurement transformation effort.

Procurement as a Strategic Driver of Public Policy

Rather than treating procurement oversight as a purely administrative compliance exercise, Maryland leveraged the PRG modernization effort to advance broader statewide priorities related to supplier diversity, accountability, and operational excellence.

The initiative demonstrates how procurement modernization can directly support executive priorities while simultaneously improving customer service, transparency, and operational performance.

Behavioral and Cultural Change Through Process Design

A key innovation of the project was its intentional focus on accountability through process redesign.

Previously, agencies could submit procurement requests with incomplete market research or default 0% MBE goals with minimal friction, effectively shifting the burden of analysis onto OSP staff. The redesigned submission process established structured accountability by requiring agencies to actively engage in goal-setting and provide documented justification for exceptions.

This simple but impactful change produced measurable behavioral shifts statewide while reducing unnecessary administrative back-and-forth between agencies and oversight staff.

Human-Centered Design and Continuous Improvement

The ICI Team approached the project using continuous improvement principles and direct stakeholder engagement. Before designing the solution, the team conducted interviews with PRG staff to understand operational pain points, workflow inefficiencies, and user frustrations.

The resulting platform was intentionally designed to be responsive, user-friendly, and operationally practical for agencies while still strengthening oversight controls and data integrity.

Doing More With Limited Resources

The initiative is particularly notable given the limited staffing environment in which it was implemented. At the time of modernization, OSP PRG operations were supported primarily by one dedicated staff member and limited management oversight capacity.

Despite these constraints, the project successfully transformed a statewide oversight function into a more scalable, data-driven, and strategically aligned operation.



Professional Value

The PRG Modernization Initiative significantly elevated the role and visibility of procurement within Maryland State government.

Elevating Procurement as a Strategic Partner

The initiative demonstrated procurement's ability to serve as a strategic operational and policy partner rather than solely an administrative review function. By aligning procurement modernization efforts with gubernatorial priorities around supplier diversity and operational accountability, OSP reinforced procurement's role in advancing statewide policy outcomes.

Strengthening the Influence of Procurement Oversight

The project enhanced the credibility and effectiveness of procurement oversight by creating clearer expectations, improving transparency, and enabling more meaningful engagement between OSP and State agencies.

Rather than functioning as a bottleneck, OSP PRG is now better positioned to provide strategic guidance, market insight, and performance oversight while simultaneously improving agency customer experience.

Transferable Lessons for Other States

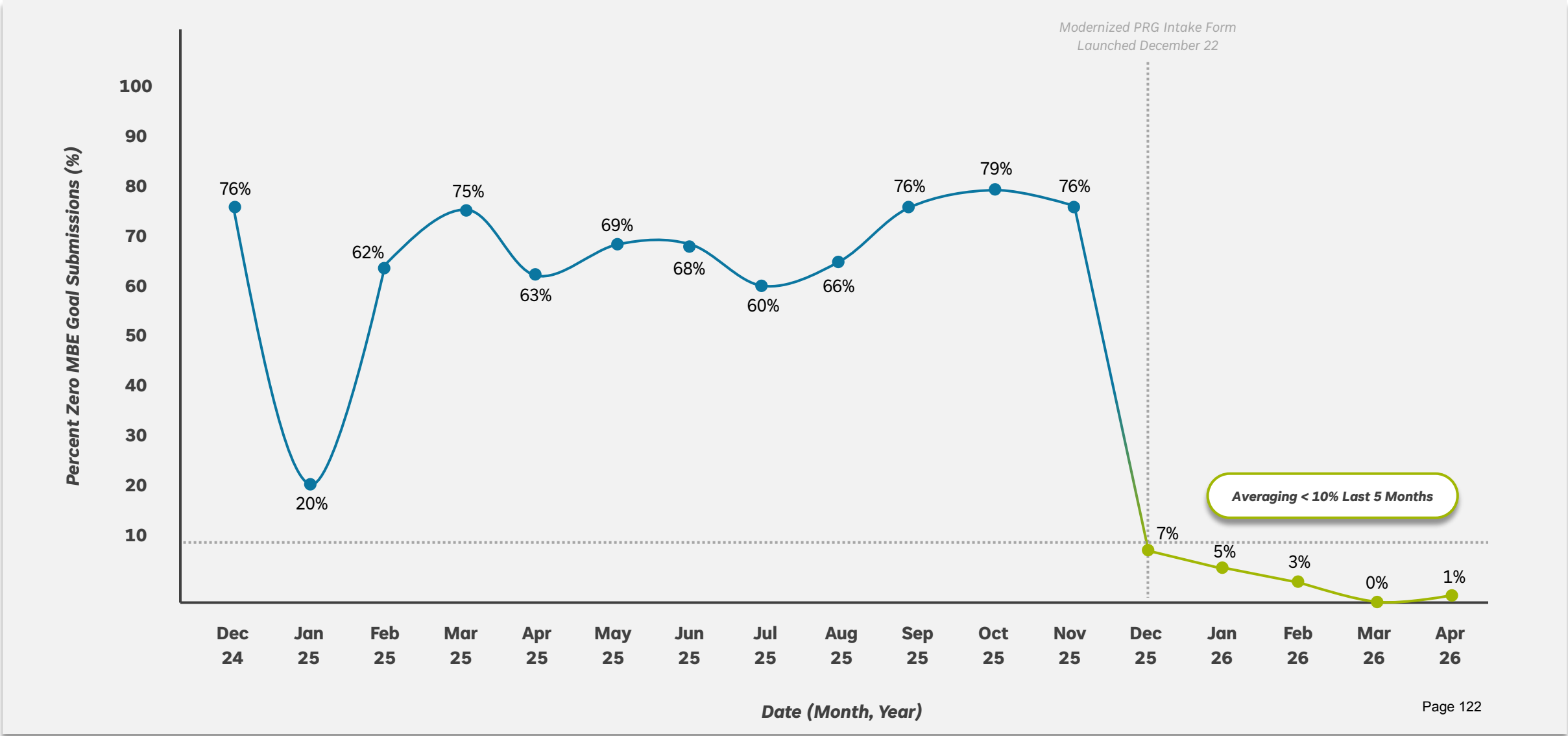
Maryland's approach offers several transferable lessons for other states:

- Process modernization does not always require expensive enterprise technology solutions;
- Strategic workflow redesign can drive cultural and behavioral change;
- Procurement oversight functions can simultaneously increase accountability and improve customer service; and
- Supplier diversity goals can be strengthened through thoughtful process engineering and data visibility.

The initiative demonstrates how procurement organizations can leverage innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and operational redesign to improve governance outcomes, increase efficiency, and deliver measurable public value.



SUPPLEMENTAL EXHIBIT A: ZERO-GOAL PRG SUBMISSIONS BY MONTH – SINCE DEC. 2024





State of Minnesota

Department of IT Services

Division of Procurement and Contracting

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

Cronin Procurement Impact Award

**Incremental procurement to
build Minnesota's Paid Leave
program from the ground up**

Executive Summary

Minnesota's Paid Leave (Paid Family Medical Leave, or PFML) program is one of the most consequential social programs the state has launched in decades. Getting it off the ground required building a new technological program from scratch, on a two-year legislative deadline, and within a fixed budget. Procurement played a crucial role in the creation of this program, which in the first quarter of 2026 distributed more than \$245M in benefits to Minnesotans experiencing a critical life event.

Perry Egertson, Assistant Director of IT Procurement at Minnesota IT Services (MNIT), led the procurement strategy that made this possible. Working across the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), MNIT, the Governor's office, and Paid Leave leaders across the state legislature, Egertson designed and executed a procurement model that was structured, risk-conscious, and helped deliver a program that has already paid benefits to tens of thousands of Minnesotans.

Minnesota launched the brand new Paid Leave program \$70 million under budget and met every legislative deadline. Since the program went live in January 2026, nearly 65,000 Minnesotans have applied for benefits, with approximately 34,000 approved to date. The procurement strategy Mr. Egertson developed is directly responsible for making that outcome possible.

Impact

Supporting Minnesotans during critical life moments

Minnesota's new Paid Leave program is built to provide significant public benefit: Paid Leave provides job protections and partial wage replacement to Minnesotans who need time away from work during serious life events, whether that's caring for a new child, addressing a serious medical issue, or supporting a family member in a health crisis. Workers can qualify for up to 12 weeks of bonding leave and up to 12 weeks of medical leave, with a combined annual maximum of 20 weeks. Wage replacement scales with income, ensuring that lower-wage workers recover a higher percentage of their normal pay, up to approximately \$1,400 per week.

The program's early data speaks for itself. Since launching in January 2026:

- Nearly 65,000 Minnesotans have applied for Paid Leave benefits
- Approximately 34,000 applications have been approved
- 87 percent of claims are for medical or bonding purposes, directly supporting people through critical life transitions
- The state expects to approve approximately 130,000 leave claims in the first year, with three-quarters of Minnesota workers projected to receive more benefits than they had access to previously

In the short term, the program launched on time and \$70 million under budget. That is not a minor operational achievement for a brand new program experience built under legislative mandate. The budget discipline and timeline adherence were direct results of a procurement structure designed to control risk from the outset.

Long term, Minnesota has established a durable, scalable technology system capable of administering a benefits program for the full Minnesota workforce. The program places Minnesota among 14 states that have adopted paid family and medical leave, with even more states poised to pass across the nation. Mr. Egertson's procurement model is one that other states can study and replicate as they build their own programs.

Exceptional Elements

A procurement strategy built around risk management

The most distinctive feature of Mr. Egertson's approach was his decision to structure the procurement around a narrow, limited-scope initial delivery phase, rather than awarding a single large contract at the outset. This was followed by an intent-to-negotiate period and subsequent delivery phases that expanded scope only after the vendor had demonstrated real capability.

The key was building an option for the state to expand to full delivery without initiating an entirely new procurement process. This gave Minnesota flexibility most states do not have when awarding large technology contracts. If the vendor performed, the state could proceed efficiently. If they did not, Minnesota could exit before significant dollars were committed. That safeguard directly addressed the vendor lock-in problem that has plagued similar programs in other states.

The approach also reflected a conviction that actual delivery is a better indicator of vendor capability than demonstrations or written proposals. By evaluating the vendor's performance on a real, bounded scope of work, Minnesota got practical visibility into what the team could actually do, including which specific individuals would be running the project. This mitigates one of the most common procurement failure modes: a vendor proposing a strong team during evaluation and assigning different, less experienced staff to do the actual work.

Cross-agency collaboration in a complex environment

Minnesota has centralized IT through MNIT, which is a separate entity from the agencies it serves. That structure meant the Paid Leave procurement involved several distinct organizations with different leadership, different priorities, and different operational languages: DEED agency leadership and program leadership, MNIT, the Governor's office, and other state officials working on Paid Leave.

Mr. Egertson brought those stakeholders together in a way that was direct and structured. His facilitation extracted real requirements from each group and translated them into procurement scoring criteria. That translation work, from stakeholder input to procurement language, is often where cross-agency efforts break down. Perry's ability to keep the process moving, hold the right people accountable, and build consensus on what the state needed from a vendor was central to the program's outcome.

He also played a critical role in ensuring value alignment during vendor selection. Rather than optimizing narrowly for price or technical specifications, Perry structured the evaluation to surface whether the vendor's approach and values matched what the program needed to succeed. That alignment proved to be one of the more important factors in the program's successful delivery.

Professional Value

Elevating procurement within state government

Programs like Paid Leave are often described in terms of their policy goals or their technology requirements. What is less often acknowledged is the degree to which procurement decisions shape

whether those goals are achievable at all. Mr. Egertson's work on this project is a clear example of procurement playing a strategic, outcome-determinative role rather than a transactional one.

The fact that Paid Leave launched on time and \$70 million under budget is not just a fiscal success story. It is evidence that a thoughtfully designed procurement process can protect public resources, reduce risk, and deliver programs that work. That case, when made clearly, helps procurement earn the kind of influence it needs to make similar contributions in future state initiatives.

As more states pass paid family and medical leave programs, more are evaluating similar legislation. Each one of them faces the same procurement challenge Minnesota did: how do you select a technology vendor for a brand new program, under political and legislative pressure, without locking yourself into a high-risk, single-award contract?

Perry's incremental procurement model offers a practical answer to that question. The core elements are transferable to any complex state technology procurement:

- Start with a small, well-defined initial scope rather than awarding full delivery upfront
- Structure the contract to allow scope expansion without a new procurement process if the vendor performs
- Evaluate vendors on actual delivery, not demonstrations or proposals, to get an honest read on capability
- Pay attention to which specific personnel will lead the work, and build in protections against bait-and-switch staffing
- Bring stakeholders together in direct and structured way that extracts real requirements from each group and translates them into procurement scoring criteria

These practices are not specific to PFML programs or to Minnesota's technological or governmental structure. They are applicable to any state undertaking a large-scale technology procurement where the stakes and risks are high. Minnesota's experience provides a concrete model that other states can draw on.



State of Utah

Department of *Government Operations*

2026 NASPO

CRONIN AWARDS:

Cronin Procurement Impact Award

Elevate Together: Utah's HCM Transformation

Executive Summary

In late summer of 2021, Utah's Department of Government Operations realized its fragmented HR and payroll systems could no longer support a modern government workforce. Disconnected legacy systems created administrative silos, redundant efforts, and data inconsistencies. This environment hindered reporting functionality, complicated integrations, and lacked the digital tools necessary for employees and managers.

Previous audits identified the absence of Employee Self Service (ESS) and Manager Self Service (MSS) functionality as a significant gap in the State's workforce technology capabilities. Enhancements to the legacy HRIS and performance management systems were costly, time-consuming, and difficult to implement, while interfaces between the HR and payroll systems frequently required manual intervention and correction.

Payroll operations faced similar obstacles. Reporting tools were limited, data exports required extensive manual manipulation, and interface and batch-processing issues between HR and payroll systems created daily correction efforts. The State also faced increasing complexity in tracking out-of-state employees and complying with varying withholding and reporting requirements. From a technical perspective, the State needed to modernize core infrastructure capabilities to minimize the operational burden associated with system maintenance, upgrades, backups, and disaster recovery.

Recognizing that its HR and payroll ecosystem could no longer effectively support the operational needs of a modern government workforce, Utah kicked off a multi-year, cross-functional initiative to modernize and unify this technology to support the more than 26,000 state employees. The Vantage initiative addressed these challenges by consolidating multiple systems into a single modern platform designed to improve operational efficiency, standardize processes, strengthen security, and deliver a more intuitive experience for agencies, managers, and employees alike.

The success of the Vantage project depended on close collaboration between State leadership, agency stakeholders, and CGI, our vendor implementation team. Utah assembled a lean but highly focused core project team representing payroll, HR, finance, security, technical operations, quality assurance, communications, and centralized project leadership. CGI partnered closely with the State throughout planning, implementation, testing, organizational change management, and deployment activities.

Leadership support was critical throughout the initiative. Executive sponsorship and governance structures helped maintain organizational alignment, prioritize enterprise objectives, and sustain momentum during key implementation phases. In forming the project's Executive Steering committee, the goal was to keep the core group efficient, drawing from the HR, Finance, and Technology divisions. Additionally, we included representatives from three major departments: Health and Human Services, Public Safety, and Workforce Services. By involving these key stakeholders, we were able to incorporate diverse perspectives and better understand how implementation decisions would impact the organization.

Impact

The Vantage project team, with the backing of executive leadership, identified that a successful implementation depended on standardizing enterprise-wide processes and maintaining a strict focus on core requirements. By establishing a concrete definition of success and clear project objectives, we ensured minimal deviation from the baseline product and successfully minimized the need for enhancements or change requests.



The unified architecture significantly reduced complexity by eliminating redundant systems, removing outdated interfaces, and standardizing workflows across agencies. Vantage introduced real-time integration capabilities, centralized workforce data, and substantially enhanced reporting and analytics functionality.

By consolidating systems, eliminating obsolete interfaces, and modernizing data-sharing agreements, Utah improved governance, enhanced compliance, and mitigated operational risk. The transition to a secure, cloud-based environment with standardized workflows allowed the state to reduce technical debt while strengthening resilience and scalability. This initiative established a sustainable technology foundation designed to support future efforts in workforce modernization.

Successful implementation was measured through multiple operational and organizational outcomes. The State decommissioned six legacy systems during FY26, with an additional system scheduled for retirement in FY27. The implementation established accurate employee records across critical workforce data elements including organizational structure, position information, titles, compensation, and leave balances.

The procurement process yielded a solution featuring a centralized, cloud-based data lake designed for the secure storage, integration, processing, and management of workforce data across all functions and systems. Because the reporting suite included integrated Microsoft PowerBI tools, the state eliminated the need to acquire or maintain extra products and licenses.

The launch introduced over 60 operational reports that enhanced data accuracy and accessibility. Furthermore, by leveraging the new system's baseline functionality and addressing redundancies, the State was able to retire more than 250 legacy reports.

Previously, the HR and Payroll systems lacked the capability to manage employees holding multiple positions effectively. This limitation necessitated manual oversight by HR, the use of paper timesheets, and laborious data entry by payroll coordinators. Employees can now be assigned multiple roles and submit time for each one directly. This transition provides managers with the necessary visibility to review employee details and approve time, effectively eliminating the manual burdens formerly placed on our central payroll team and payroll coordinators.

The system now features automated candidate dispositioning. Instead of manually launching emails, HR Generalists simply update the candidate's status - such as "not qualified" or "withdrawn" - and the appropriate notification is sent automatically. The transition to automate payroll cycles has replaced the need for manual job execution, and the integration of workflows now supports all payroll transactions. HR gained the flexibility to overfill positions, eliminating the delay of waiting for a role to be completely vacated. These advancements represent just a portion of the initial successes and operational efficiencies we continue to realize.

Exceptional Elements

The success of this project was only achieved by close collaboration between the state of Utah and its vendor partner, CGI. The collaboration was strengthened and made possible by establishing clear expectations from the very beginning of the procurement process and leading up to the transition of a steady state environment. Throughout the project, we were able to use the implementation statement of work as a reminder and roadmap of what we were collectively working towards. In instances where decisions required a shift from the initial plan, the teams collaboratively analyzed alternatives and evaluated their subsequent effects on the project's resources, budget, and schedule.



The State views the Vantage initiative as the foundation for ongoing modernization rather than a one-time implementation. Our progress in refining the onboarding experience has only just begun, with initial successes such as enabling email and network access before an employee's first day. As we look ahead to enhancing the entire journey for new hires—from their initial application to their first system login—we are certain that our combined expertise, updated processes, and robust toolset will allow us to achieve these goals.

Having Executive leadership and support to prioritize the project among other enterprise initiatives was vital to maintaining the timeline and delivery of the Vantage system. Monthly check-ins were scheduled during the first year of the project and then we moved to bi-weekly as we entered the last 9 months. The meetings created additional accountability for the project directors and allowed for open communication around additional help required and why.

In addition, Utah recognized that success depended heavily on employee and agency engagement. Throughout the rollout, communication channels were designed to encourage feedback, foster ownership, and support continuous improvement. To facilitate effective communication and manage organizational change, we appointed Camp Guides across all state branches, both Executive and Non-Executive. These champions played a vital role in the core project team's strategy by disseminating essential information to staff members. The Camp Guides also assisted in providing feedback to the project team, gathering specific questions and concerns from their respective departments.

The project team consistently incorporated stakeholder feedback into training guides, enhancement planning, and communications materials. This collaborative approach helped strengthen adoption and reinforced a culture of partnership between agencies and the implementation team. The State's post-launch employee feedback process has further reinforced this culture of continuous improvement by giving employees a direct voice in shaping future enhancements.

Implementing a Human Capital Management system is a massive project for any organization. One of the biggest challenges was controlling scope creep. Throughout the implementation and contract phases, we relied on the concept of a "Minimum Viable Product" (MVP) to keep the team focused. This served as a constant reminder that while our goal was to provide significant value to the state and its employees, we could not succeed if we allowed "nice-to-have" features to expand the project's boundaries. Defining the MVP and maintaining that focus proved difficult, particularly when it required shifting the agency's perspective from established legacy habits to the new operational model.

To manage potential future enhancements without distracting from immediate goals, we established a project backlog for features and improvements to be evaluated later. Agency-specific requests were gathered through a feedback survey using Google Forms to document the distinct requirements and preferences of employees. Our ongoing post-implementation strategy remains centered on increasing reporting functionality, optimizing workflows, integrating user feedback, and fostering a culture of iterative advancement.

Professional Value

The Vantage procurement showed the value procurement can bring to large, complex projects that impact the entire State. Procurement was not just responsible for issuing the solicitation and managing the contract process, but also played an active role in helping the State identify the right long-term solution for workforce modernization.



To strengthen the solicitation, the State hired a consultant team to extensively review the requirements. Their expertise helped ensure the requirements reflected industry standards, reduced confusion for vendors, and identified gaps or missing requirements that could have impacted the project later. This helped create a stronger solicitation and gave vendors a clearer understanding of what the State needed.

The procurement process also focused heavily on stakeholder involvement and fairness. Vendors were given two and a half days for demonstrations so evaluation team members had enough time to fully understand each solution. The evaluation committee was intentionally split evenly between Technology Services, Finance, and Human Resources Management to ensure all major stakeholders had an equal voice in the selection process. This balanced approach helped the State make a more informed decision and reinforced procurement as a collaborative partner in major initiatives.

This project highlighted procurement's role as a strategic partner instead of only an administrative function. Procurement helped bring together stakeholders from different areas, guided the development of clear and effective requirements, and helped create a fair and transparent process for selecting a vendor.

Because this was a large, statewide investment that will impact employees for years to come, the success of the procurement process helped build confidence in procurement's ability to manage complex projects, reduce risk, and support enterprise-wide priorities. It reinforced that procurement can play an important role in helping agencies make informed, long-term decisions.

One of the biggest lessons learned was the value of hiring consultants during the solicitation process for large, long-term technology investments. Their experience helped the State write stronger requirements, understand what was standard in the industry, and identify areas that needed additional clarification. For systems that states expect to use for many years, this type of support can improve the quality of the procurement and reduce challenges during implementation.

Another lesson was the importance of involving the right stakeholders early and equally. Having balanced representation from Technology Services, Finance, and Human Resources Management during evaluations helped ensure the selected solution met broad statewide needs instead of only one business area.

Finally, giving vendors enough time to fully demonstrate their systems made a difference. The extended demonstration period allowed evaluators to better understand the capabilities of each solution and make a more informed decision. These are practices other states could apply to improve large procurements and ultimately deliver better services to employees and citizens.

