



On the Road to **PROCUREMENT INNOVATION**

PIL Yearbook 2022

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Chief Procurement Officer



Procurement
Innovation
Ahead



Procurement Innovation Lab

PIL



Homeland
Security

The PIL Mission

Foster a culture of procurement excellence where smart risk-taking and innovation assure DHS mission success.

At the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO), we believe DHS acquisition professionals serve as innovative and flexible business advisors, delivering the right solutions to enable the DHS mission in an ever-changing threat environment. Fostering this success is the idea behind the DHS Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL), which was launched in March 2015 as a platform for continuous learning and sharing across the procurement community.

This Yearbook highlights stories from projects that the PIL supported during Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. These stories share the outcomes of the innovation journeys that teams across DHS and many other federal agencies realized in FY 2022. The PIL hopes that these stories inspire all to begin their own procurement innovation adventure.

Message from the Chief Procurement Officer



PAUL COURTNEY

DHS Chief Procurement Officer

There is no one path to innovation, nor is innovation a destination in and of itself. An innovative state of mind enables procurement professionals to creatively and confidently enhance the quality of service delivery and mission capability that Government provides in support of its various missions. Throughout this Yearbook, you will read about the journeys procurement teams across DHS and the Federal Government have taken as they embrace an innovation mindset. Additionally, this Yearbook will present data demonstrating how innovative procurement techniques used by PIL procurement project teams have contributed to meeting agency small business goals.

FY 2022 marks the first time that this Yearbook will serve as the official annual report published by the Undersecretary for Management (USM) in accordance with the Promoting Rigorous and Innovative Cost Efficiencies for Federal Procurement and Acquisitions Act of 2021 (PRICE Act of 2021). Beginning in FY 2023 and continuing through FY 2025, the DHS USM will report annually on PIL-supported projects that have used innovative procurement techniques to effectively improve or encourage better competition, reduce time to award, realize cost savings, produce better mission outcomes, or contribute to meeting the goals for contracts awarded to small business concerns under section 15(g) of the Small Business Act.

The acknowledgement of the importance of procurement innovation by our lawmakers is an exciting honor, and we are pleased that this Yearbook includes data on procurement innovation and small business trends. This Yearbook also includes stories about how innovative procurement techniques were used to improve services when responding to federal emergencies and protecting our land and sea borders. Finally, as the PIL's framework and training continued to extend across the Federal Government, we are privileged to share the innovation journeys of procurement teams at other federal agencies, where new techniques and creativity supported improved contract outcomes and positively impacted service delivery at our national parks and for our nation's food supply.


The DHS Office of the Chief Procurement Officer is honored to support you on your innovation journey.

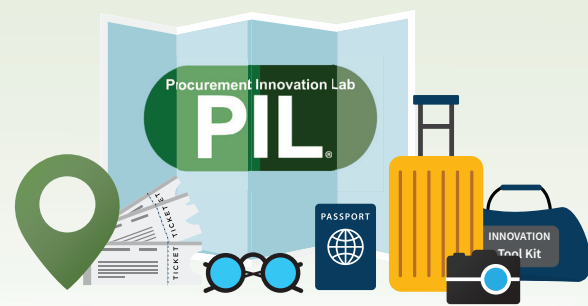
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Courtney', written over a light blue background.



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 **PRICE ACT** Throughout this Yearbook, this symbol denotes areas reporting on the PRICE Act of 2021 requirements. Read the [full act](#).



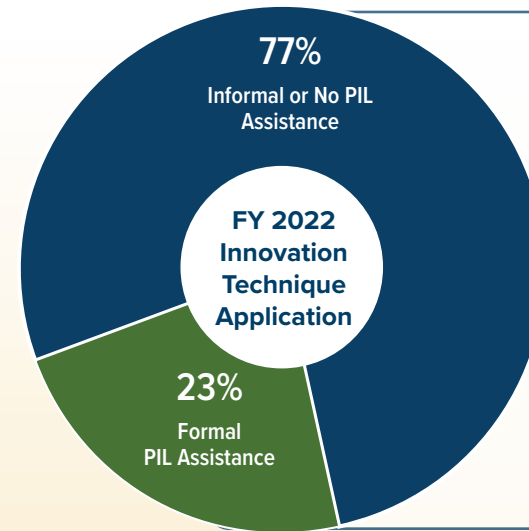
It's the journey, not the destination

Component Acronyms

- USCIS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- USCG: United States Coast Guard
- CBP: Customs and Border Protection
- CISA: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
- FLETC: Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- MGMT: Management
- USSS: United States Secret Service
- TSA: Transportation Security Administration

On the Road with the PIL

Since 2015, the PIL has served as a safe environment for DHS procurement teams to test innovative procurement techniques and ideas. When a procurement team steps into the PIL, they remain fully behind the wheel, navigating their own procurement while being encouraged and supported by a PIL coach.

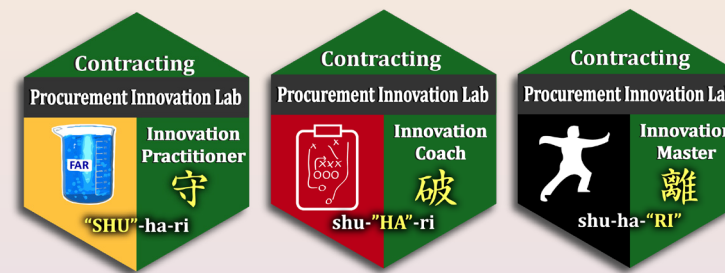


Innovation Advances Across Components

FY 2022 marked significant growth in Component level application of innovative procurement techniques without formal PIL support – only 14 DHS procurement teams and 6 external teams were directly assisted by the PIL, almost half the number of teams coached in FY 2021 (34). The FY 2022 Competing Values Framework (CVF) Assessment showed that acquisition workforce members consistently use innovative procurement techniques independently or with only informal PIL assistance.

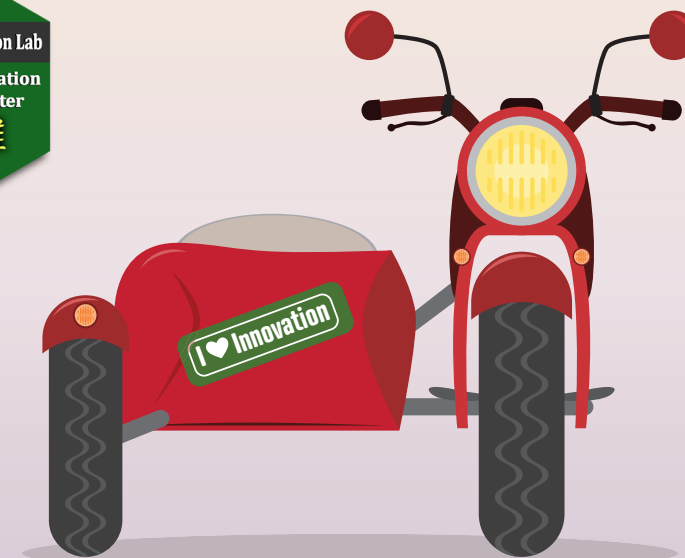
AIAs Learn How to Support Others with Innovative Techniques

Two Component Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs), one at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and one at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), earned Level 2 Digi-Badges (Innovation Coach) this fiscal year. To earn the Level 2 certification, the AIAs completed a PIL Coaching Clinic and supported a procurement team, shadowed by a primary PIL Coach working under a Coach-the-Coach framework. To date, three Component AIAs have earned their Level 2 Coaching Digi-Badges, enabling them to use their unique understanding of local culture to support procurement teams and champion procurement innovation to improve the mission.



Data for FY 2022 Procurement Projects

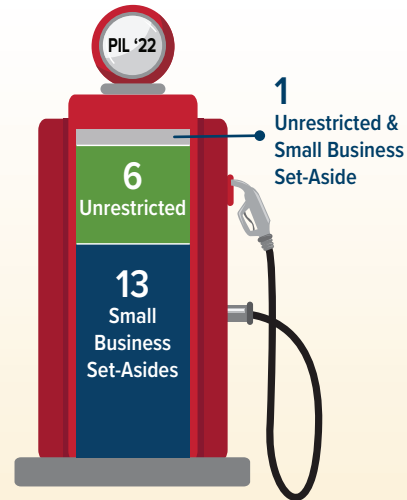
Projects Coached.....	20
Cumulative Value.....	\$2.97 billion
Cost Savings in FY22.....	\$814 million
Avg. Days to Award.....	138 days
Avg. Days to Award (Small Business).....	113 days
Avg. Competition Rate.....	8 proposals



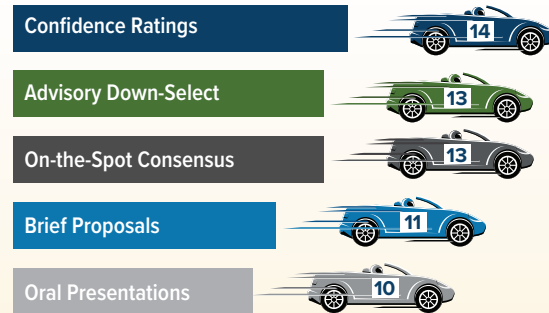
Small Business Trends

FY 2022 marked the PIL's first complete year of data collection under full functionality of the Knowledge Management System (KMS) launched in April 2021. Interesting trends have emerged from this data, particularly trends regarding innovative procurement techniques and small business.

PIL Projects Coached in FY 2022



Most Frequently Used Innovations for Small Business Set-Aside Projects in FY 2022



Listed are the top five most frequently used techniques, along with how many projects used the technique out of the 14 small business set-aside projects. For example, all 14 projects used confidence ratings.

The PRICE Act of 2021

The PIL is excited this year about congressional attention to procurement innovation under the Promoting Rigorous and Innovative Cost Efficiencies for Federal Procurement and Acquisitions Act of 2021. This Act requires the DHS Undersecretary for Management to report on the innovative procurement techniques used to:

- Improve or encourage better competition
- Reduce time to award
- Provide cost savings
- Provide better mission outcomes
- Meet the goals for contracts awarded to small business concerns.



Innovation Strategies and Winners

Putting the learning culture in high gear, this Yearbook *shares* the achievements of the many DHS and external procurement teams who *tested* innovations in support of the mission. The journey included a new training, PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level, a new crowdsourcing tool known as PIL Idea Competition, and an emerging technology tool, Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Market Research. The road to innovation has many different routes; this Yearbook highlights just a few of them.

Aquisition Innovation Advocates on Board



Component Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs) help the workforce navigate the road to procurement innovation. In FY 2022, DHS AIAs led their respective contracting organizations on their own journeys to implement innovation action plans, guided by a checklist, which recommended approaches to promote innovation within a procurement organization.

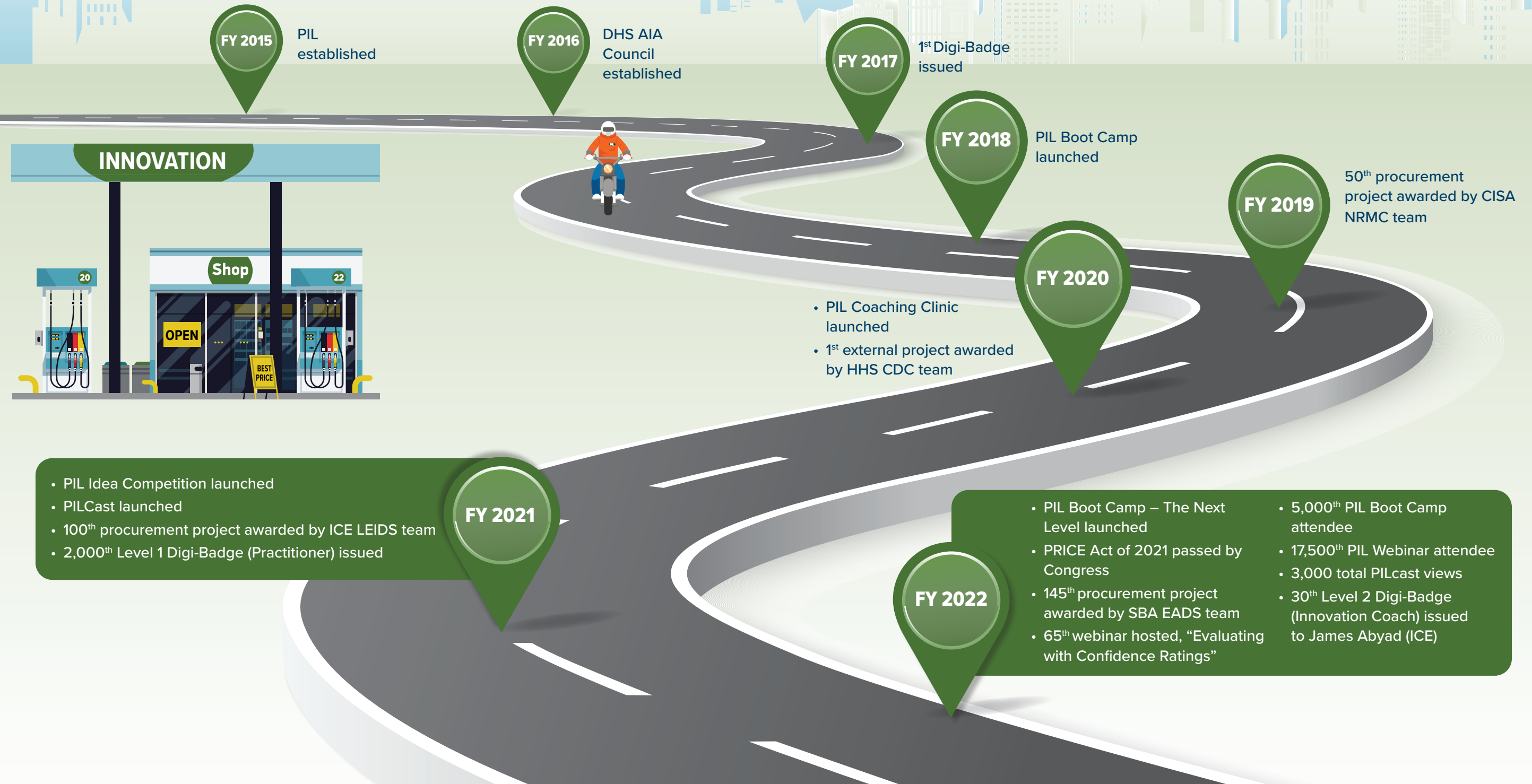
- On the last day of each AQN 201B course offering — the capstone course for program managers seeking their FAC-PM Level 2 certification — Brenda Peterson, OPO AIA, and Nettie Straub, USCG AIA, co-presented with the PIL a set of innovative procurement techniques that can be used by program managers.
- Stacey Huther, TSA AIA, led a baseline survey to measure the use of procurement innovation across her Component's acquisition workforce.
- Garnel Palin, USSS AIA, and James Frye, FLETC AIA, created an opportunity for AIAs from smaller Components to meet and collaborate on a recurring basis to discuss procurement innovation topics that were important to their unique missions and workforces.
- James Abyad, ICE AIA, co-hosted a [PILCast](#) on effective ways to evaluate key personnel in proposals.



Chad was recognized for improving DHS mission outcomes through the application of innovative procurement techniques.

Meaningful Mile Markers

The PIL supports teams across DHS and the Federal Government as they innovate to streamline procurements, mitigate risk, and ensure mission success. The journey to change culture is a long and winding road, but since 2015, the PIL has been sharing lessons learned to help teams overcome obstacles and support their missions. Some of these PIL milestone events are marked below.





ARRIVALS

TIME

FROM

07:00

INNOVATIVE PROCUREMENT TECHNIQUES

FLIGHT

PIL22

STATUS

SUCCESSFULLY TESTED

LOWERING ENTRY BARRIERS

Advisory Down-Select — Notify low-rated offerors that they have little chance to receive an award before they submit detailed technical and price proposals. If those low-rated offerors self-select out, they have no standing to file a protest.



Discovery — Help prospective offerors to fully understand requirements before submitting full proposals (think site visits or reading rooms before technical bids). Let the offerors ask questions about the requirements and the “as-is” operational landscape during a discovery session.

Find New Technologies That Strengthen National Security — Consider challenges, prizes, or Other Transactions to attract firms that are not familiar with the traditional acquisition process.

Follow-on Production Authority Clause — If using competitive procedures to award a contract using Other Transaction or Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program Authority, consider a clause that allows for possible follow-on production without further competition.

Leveraging Procurement Flexibilities — In addition to the flexibilities in the FAR and the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, DHS has other procurement flexibilities to ensure access to the right companies in order to meet mission needs: Other Transactions, Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program, and Prizes and Challenges.

Leveraging Use of Prototypes — Prototypes provide access to innovative technologies and solutions for the mission’s most challenging problems.

Multi-Phased Evaluations — Narrow the number of offerors to evaluate. The PIL suggests two to three offers for every anticipated award to maximize each offeror’s Probability of Win.

* Luggage tags represent the most often used innovative procurement techniques in PIL coached projects since 2015.

+ Underlined innovations are linked to PIL videos posted to YouTube.

ENCOURAGING COMPETITION

Affordability — Give vendors a target price or range to reduce gamesmanship in bidding. The Government can select a vendor with a price under, in between, or over the target or range.

Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry — Release draft solicitations with requirements and evaluation criteria (Sections B, C, L, and M) to get early feedback and maintain communication throughout the acquisition.

Evaluate Innovation — Ask questions relevant to innovation during proposal submission by including innovation as a technical factor.

Group Oral Debriefing(s) — Too many offerors for oral debriefings? Consider group oral debriefings in addition to individual written debriefings. OMB’s “Myth-busting 3” memo highlights this DHS approach.

Highest Technically Rated Offeror with Fair and Reasonable Price — Only evaluate price as fair and reasonable while focusing on the technical factors. This evaluation model does not follow the rules of a best-value tradeoff.

Interview-Style Questions — Make “experience as a technical evaluation factor” meaningful by asking targeted questions. For example, “Describe your experience working with large quantities of data from a variety of sources.”

Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria — Focus evaluation criteria on mission outcomes and challenging areas of performance such as “usability” or “mission alignment” to differentiate among offerors.

Qualified Bidders List/Qualified Products List — Use this FAR 9.2 technique to create lists (QBL/QML/QPLs) of examined and qualified products or vendors.

Rates Only Pricing — Ask vendors to submit their best hourly rates, then apply the rates to a Government-developed estimate, in hours, for each labor category.

NEW Share Evaluation Documentation — Sharing these documents with vendors promotes transparency, manages protest risk, and improves understanding for future proposal submissions.

SHORTENING TIME TO AWARD

Brief Proposal Submission — Minimize the burden on industry and Government by reducing proposal submissions. Consider minimal page counts for all factors, e.g., how about five pages for Factor 1?

Comparative Evaluation — After documenting observations, streamline the evaluations by skipping adjectival ratings and compare the quotes directly to one another.

Confidence Ratings — Replace traditional adjectival ratings with confidence ratings to provide technical evaluators more flexibility, ensuring the best companies receive the best ratings.

Fusion Procurements — For closely related requirements, consider a single solicitation that allows for stand-alone awards to multiple vendors against multiple scopes.

Interviews — Use interviews to ask questions related to an evaluation factor such as the company’s prior experience or an overview of its proposed solution.

On-the-Spot Consensus — Don’t wait days or weeks to document evaluations. Skip individual evaluation reports and do it right away — “on-the-spot”!



Phased Prototyping — Use modular contracts/options to prototype/test solutions. If the solution proves successful, exercise options for low rate of initial production, or for full rate of production. User feedback during prototyping/testing with vendors is crucial.

Risk-Based Contract Administration — Prioritize resources to high-risk activities and explore ways to manage low-risk activities.

Streamlined Documentation — Reduce the length and formality of documentation. Use brief, bulleted statements in consensus evaluation reports.

Video Proposals — Offerors use smartphones or laptops to record 10-minute videos detailing technical factor(s) and upload them to an application such as YouTube for evaluation.

INCREASING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

Betterment — Invite offerors to propose solutions exceeding the requirement in a meaningful way. The offeror should explain the betterment and its value to the Government in its proposal submission.

Case Studies — A focused way for vendors to elaborate on specific projects. Vendor responses are provided through a case-study format detailing methods, metrics, and outcomes/results from specific project-based experiences.

Enhanced Contract Type Conversion — Build flexibility into your solicitation to allow conversion from one contract type to another (e.g., from time-and-materials to firm-fixed-price) after award.

Interactive Dialogue — The FAR states that “oral presentations provide an opportunity for dialogue among the parties.” Interactive dialogue between an offeror and the Government that is relevant to/part of the oral presentation itself does not constitute discussions.

Involve End-Users — Structure the solicitation and evaluation factors based on what is most important to end-users. Include them throughout the process.

Oral Presentations — Substitute for all or portions of a written proposal. Try on-the-spot questions. Can be performed in person, by video conference, or by phone.



Sample Products — Include a project-related deliverable as an evaluated element of the proposal submission process.

Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate — After evaluations, negotiate solely with the apparent awardee on issues, e.g., technical and price matters, to finalize the award. (This technique does not apply to source selections under FAR 15.3.)

Technical Challenges — Evaluate how an offeror powers through a real-world exercise.

Technical Demonstrations — Let an offeror prove its product by having evaluators see and test the product.

The Innovation Journey

Cultural change, like a cross-country trip, becomes more challenging as the destination grows closer. The first few miles are easy going, with early adopters climbing up the mountain, but changing institutional culture takes time and may involve some detours and mosquitoes.

The first seven years of the PIL's existence saw early adopters eagerly using innovative procurement techniques to award 125 projects, mostly across DHS. This same process is now playing out across the Government, as additional agencies adopt innovative procurement techniques. Of the 20 procurement teams that stepped into the PIL to award their procurements in FY 2022, six of them were from external agencies!

Since 2015, teams who stepped into the PIL have seen gains and setbacks on the road to innovation, but they continue to share their experience so that others can learn forward. Even as innovations are adopted, the learning culture of testing, sharing, obtaining feedback, and testing again will remain critical to the continuous improvement of how the innovations are used in procurements. The innovation community continues to grow:

in FY 2022, the DHS micro-credential program that encourages innovation added over 400 new Digi-Badge holders. Additionally in FY 2022, an average of eight proposals were received per solicitation, with an average time of 138 days from solicitation release to award — just over four months! Teams supported by the PIL saved over \$800 million in FY 2022 when comparing actual award values to Government estimates.

The annual Competing Values Framework (CVF) Assessment that measures cultural change across DHS has demonstrated in FY 2022 that the closer we come to the goal line, the more challenging the journey becomes. The CVF data shows that the vast majority of innovation is happening independently, without PIL support or with only informal PIL support. To better support the growing community of innovators, the PIL is now pivoting to empower the DHS acquisition workforce to improve the processes that are hindering innovation and preventing procurements from moving at the speed of need.

Cumulative Digi-Badges

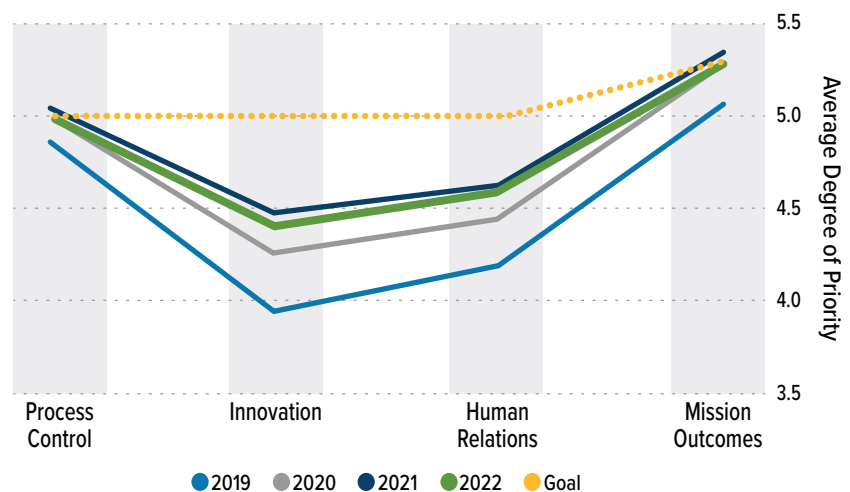
Level 1: 2,384
Level 2: 19
Level 3: 6
Total: 2,409



Component	All	FY22
USSS	92	14
USCIS	183	25
USCG	328	44
TSA	168	25
OSA	33	8
OPO	536	94
ICE	253	33
FLETC	92	9
FEMA	424	112
CBP	275	36
MGMT	25	13
Total	2,409	413

Digi-Badges awarded in FY22 may include employees who have since left DHS.

DHS CVF Results of Contracting Organization 2019 to 2022




DEFINITIONS

Process Control: Predictable outcomes; stability and continuity; order and structure
Innovation: Innovation and change; creative problem solving; new ideas
Human Relations: Teamwork and cohesion; employee morale
Mission Outcomes: Getting the job done; goal achievement

Innovation Highway

Many procurement journeys are packed with innovations, but not every trip has the same needs. Swimsuits and sunscreen may be needed for a trip to the beach, hats and gloves may be needed for a ski trip, yet both might need sunglasses. It's important to select and apply the right innovations to meet each project's specific mission goals.

PIL Procurement Teams

In FY 2022, a total of 20 procurement teams from DHS and the government-wide community stepped into the PIL to test innovative procurement techniques. Participating DHS Components and agencies are listed below. If the listed project includes a fuel pump symbol , accelerate the learning about these stories on pages 12 to 17.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Medical Services

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Communication Access Strategic Sourcing Vehicle

Data Science Integrated Support (Coach-the-Coach)


Language Services Strategic Sourcing Vehicle

Lifecycle Process Management System

Preparedness Toolkit

Risk Methodology and Programmatic Support

Office of Procurement Operations (OPO)

 Science and Technology (S&T) Information Technology (IT) Support Services

Office of Selective Acquisitions (OSA)

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Operational Collaboration Support Services (OCSS)

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

IMPACT II


Human Capital Operational Support (HCOS) Services

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

LRS C-130 Missionization


National Security Guard Contract

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

 Fraud Investigation National Security Coordinated Heuristics (FINCH) (Coach-the-Coach)


External Agencies


U.S. Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau: IT Services

 U.S. Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration: ServiceNow Professional Services IDIQ

U.S. Department of Education: Acquisition Management Systems (AMS)


U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: Wild Cave Simulator


 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: CARI Texas and Pacific Railway Depot

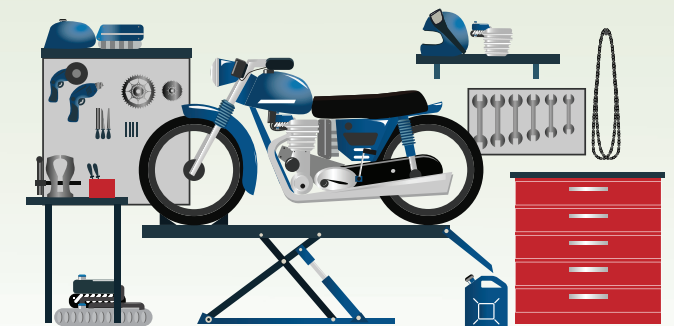
 U.S. Small Business Administration: Enterprise Agile Delivery System (EADS)

PIL Process Improvements

FY 2022 Process Improvements are highlighted on pages 18 and 19.

 Artificial Intelligence for Market Research

 PIL Idea Competition: HSAM Appendix G, Streamlining Procurement with Technology, and CBP Congressional Notification Process





“Expert coaching from the PIL led to a successful implementation of these techniques, giving the evaluation team great insight to quoter capabilities not available from a traditional written proposal. The evaluation team loved it and so did the quoters. I never thought I would hear a quoter say, ‘Thank you for the opportunity and that technical challenge was a lot of fun!’”

SPENSER SAMS, FEMA ACQUISITION INNOVATION ADVOCATE



“We used the PIL as a sounding board to introduce innovation in all phases of requirement. Their procurement acumen enabled our process to withstand protests.”

GARTH WHITE, S&T CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Challenge

It was time to recomplete the DHS-wide multiple-award blanket purchase agreement (BPA) for foreign language translation and interpretation services, supporting nearly 180 languages/dialects. The incumbent effort was unrestricted; however, market research for the recomplete supported a small business set-aside even though most incumbents were large businesses under the GSA Special Item Number (SIN). The FEMA team envisioned an evaluation approach to minimize the burden for small businesses while affording FEMA the confidence that vendors could meet the mission.



Innovation

Expecting many submissions, and informing vendors in the solicitation that FEMA expected to award 7 to 10 BPAs, the team used FAR subpart 8.4 procedures to establish a two-phase advisory down-select approach. Phase 1 focused on Demonstrated Prior Experience, submitted as a 10-minute YouTube video. Phase 2 focused on oral presentations with interactive dialogue, a written performance work statement (15 pages), and price. The oral presentations began with

a one-hour caucus for the vendors to prepare a response to scenario-based questions, followed by a 30-minute presentation of its response, a Government caucus, and interactive dialogue. Each technical factor was evaluated using confidence ratings and an on-the-spot consensus evaluation, resulting in bulleted evaluation reports for each technical factor.

Results

The contracting officer delayed the submission of quotes by one month to account for GSA’s change in size standards under the SIN. This reclassification (\$8M vs. \$20M) allowed more vendors to compete as small businesses. The advisory down-select was effective at streamlining the evaluation. Out of 11 Phase 1 quotes, four vendors were advised not to proceed, and all took FEMA’s advice. Phase 2 consisted of seven quotes, and each instilled enough confidence in the FEMA team to receive a BPA. Solicitation to award was just under four months, and the BPA award dates aligned with the expiration of the incumbent BPA.

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations
- Streamlined Documentation
- Video Proposals

PIL
113 DAYS TO AWARD

Challenge

The Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) Chief Information Officer (CIO) needed a new Blanket Purchase Agreement for information security (infosec), app development, IT program management, engineering, and operations and maintenance (O&M) support. S&T came to the PIL with the idea to consolidate five existing contracts into one unified IT solution, allowing S&T to take advantage of economies of scale, while still setting aside for small businesses. S&T wanted to have confidence in their awardee’s ability to perform all the work required across the five areas.



Innovation

The S&T team used FAR subpart 8.4 procedures to establish a three-phased down-select approach. In Phase 1 (firm down-select), the S&T Office of Security evaluated whether vendors had a facility security clearance. In Phase 2 (advisory down-select), the technical evaluators assessed vendors’ responses to 10 tailored corporate experience questions. Finally, in Phase 3, vendors participated in an oral presentation, addressing five prepared questions and responding to one question

on-the-spot. Phases 2 and 3 were designed to evaluate the likelihood that a vendor would be successful in performing the work required.

Results

In Phase 1, S&T received 34 quotes. They evaluated these one-page responses in just two days, down-selecting to 33 vendors. Twenty-six vendors submitted Phase 2 responses, which S&T evaluated in just two weeks. The team advised five vendors to proceed to Phase 3; all took the Government’s advice. Oral presentations were held over the course of five days, with on-the-spot consensus after each presentation. After awarding this \$111 million BPA in approximately nine months, two vendors filed protests with GAO, one of which questioned S&T’s application of confidence ratings. Both GAO protests were denied. [B-420660, Citizant, Inc.; Steampunk, Inc. \(Jul 13, 2022\)](#)

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations

PIL
288 DAYS TO AWARD



“FINCH was executed using many different procurement innovations. Early and frequent engagement with the team provided for collaboration in the development of nearly all contract documentation.”

CHAD PARKER, CONTRACTING OFFICER



“The innovative procurement techniques worked! For our requirement, they reduced the number of proposals needing a comprehensive evaluation from 19 to 4, and shortened the time between solicitation and award by 50 percent. The PIL coaching team also made my transition — from traditional FAR part 15 solicitation and evaluation to the innovative solicitation and evaluation — smooth and stress-free.”

MIN JIE (TERRY) ZENG, CONTRACTING OFFICER

Challenge

USCIS needed to recompete two DevSecOps Services task orders — one for Risk and the other for Fraud — to operate, maintain, and enhance the current fraud detection and national security systems that protect the nation from foreign terrorists entering the United States. The two task orders were expiring around the same time, and USCIS wanted to recompete the similar requirements together, without bundling them, to streamline the procurement process. For this project, a USCIS contracting officer served as an innovation coach for the team while being shadowed by a PIL coach.



Innovation

Using fusion procurements, USCIS created one solicitation to solicit proposals for the two FINCH requirements, with a plan to issue two separate task order awards. The team also established a two-phased advisory down-select approach. In Phase 1, vendors submitted a four-page response to three questions about their specialized experience related to one or both of the FINCH requirements. In Phase 2, vendors submitted a written past performance questionnaire and participated in an all-day coding challenge, followed by an

oral presentation. The coding challenge involved an unexpected surprise: the cloud platform they were using failed to capture the code that was written!

Results

USCIS received 18 quotes in Phase 1 and advised seven vendors to proceed to Phase 2; all but one vendor took the Government’s advice. On learning that the cloud platform did not capture the all-day coding challenge submissions in Phase 2, a decision on how to proceed was made, with the contracting officer asking all eight vendors to repeat the coding challenge. This time, the procurement team had their subject-matter experts (SMEs) fully test the cloud platform to ensure it met all requirements and would save the submissions. Using the fusion procurement process to award two task orders from one solicitation significantly cut down on the administrative processes. USCIS awarded both task orders with a combined value of \$231 million seven months after the release of the solicitation.

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Affordability
- Confidence Ratings
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Fusion Procurements
- Involve End-Users
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations
- Share Evaluation Documentation
- Technical Challenges

PIL 220 DAYS TO AWARD

Challenge

The FDA had a need for a ServiceNow Professional Services Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract to streamline the issuance of task orders to design, develop, support, and maintain new and existing FDA ServiceNow applications. The effort aligned with FDA’s new strategic objectives in machine learning, use of artificial intelligence, and robotic process automation. Market research indicated a lot of interest in this requirement.



Innovation

The FDA team used a variety of innovative procurement techniques for the first time to award this 8(a) small business set-aside. Phase I comprised a five-page written prior experience submission. Phase 2 comprised an oral presentation with interactive dialogue, written past performance submission, and price. The team was able to provide Phase 1 advisory notifications just one week after receipt of proposals, allowing two weeks for vendors to prepare their Phase 2 submissions. The team used on-the-spot consensus

and streamlined evaluation documentation to complete the evaluation process quickly and efficiently.

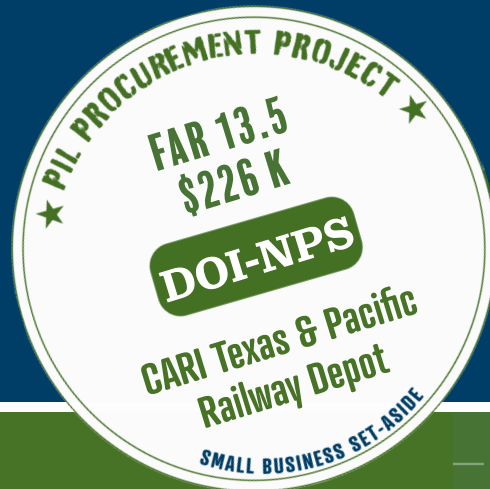
Results

The FDA team successfully awarded the contract just 94 days after release of solicitation (much shorter than the typical 180+ days). The number of offerors was reduced from 19 in Phase 1 to just four in Phase 2, meaning 15 out of 15 offerors in Phase 1 took the FDA’s recommendation not to proceed. Four vendors provided one-hour oral presentations to the FDA on their technical solution, with an additional hour dedicated to on-the-spot questions and dialogue between the offerors and the FDA team. After contract award, the team conducted comprehensive oral debriefings with all unsuccessful offerors, resulting in zero protests.

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- Interview-Style Questions
- Involve End-Users
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations
- Streamlined Documentation

PIL 94 DAYS TO AWARD



“Using PIL techniques allowed our team to quickly evaluate proposals from top design teams to ensure we got the quality service and the best interpretive exhibits within our limited budget. The PIL coach provided regular support and helpful insights, which allowed us to streamline the acquisition process and award the contract in record time.”

CARRIE A. MARDORF, SUPERINTENDENT
CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



“We solicited 3,600 small businesses. We streamlined the acquisition by having three phases (with both advisory and firm down-selects), on-the-spot consensus, and confidence ratings. Our submissions required a total of seven pages for non-price factors, one spreadsheet for price evaluation, and 40 minutes of oral presentation via MS Teams. We started with 111 quotes; we awarded six BPAs just seven weeks after issuance of the solicitation.”

FAZAL MIRZA, CONTRACTING OFFICER

Challenge

The NPS’s Cane River Creole National Historic Park was rehabilitating the Texas and Pacific Railway Depot — located in the heart of an African American neighborhood — into the park’s visitor center and administrative offices. The NPS had \$250,000 to provide for the installation and design of two interpretive exhibits at the depot. The exhibits were intended to be the foundation for the park, and the park superintendent wanted to ensure an award to the best qualified small business.



Innovation

The procurement team wanted to see vendors’ completed design exhibits while also hearing directly from the vendors, but market research indicated healthy competition. The team implemented a two-phased proposal process with Phase 1 (advisory down-select) focusing on demonstrated prior experience (five pages) and pictures of previously completed design work (five pages). Phase 2 included an Exhibits Solutions Pitch delivered via oral presentations and written price proposals. The NPS team did not want

to burden small businesses with lengthy oral presentations, so each pitch was 15 minutes, followed by a Government evaluation team caucus, then interactive dialogue with the vendor. The solicitation included an affordability statement providing a range of \$211,000 – \$360,000 for all base period tasks. The team used confidence ratings, on-the-spot consensus evaluations, and streamlined evaluation documentation for all factors.

Results

Phase 1 received seven quotes. It took the team only three days to evaluate and send advisory notifications. The pictures were instrumental in deciding which quoters were advised to proceed. Phase 2 received four quotes. The interactive dialogue served as a major discriminator in the award decision, allowing the team to clarify important elements of the proposed solutions. The contract was awarded within the affordability range, just 33 days after release of the solicitation.

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Affordability
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations
- Sample Products
- Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate
- Streamlined Documentation

PIL
33 DAYS TO AWARD

Challenge

The fundamental scope of the EADS multiple-award BPA project was to provide a streamlined process to support the agency’s need for Agile delivery services, including user-centered design, Agile software development, and DevOps. The BPAs were intended to be available for use by all SBA program offices. The SBA wanted to cast a wide net for this total small-business set-aside, meaning it was open to all 3,600+ small business vendors with the applicable SIN. The team sought a streamlined and Agile process to handle a high volume of quotes with only two months left in the fiscal year!



Innovation

The team implemented 10 innovative procurement techniques in their quote submission, evaluation, and award process to streamline the procurement. This included a three-phase evaluation process. Phase 1 included a Compliance Review as a go/no-go factor as well as an Experience Evaluation as an advisory down-select. Phase 2 included a Technical Approach (five pages) and Mock Sprints (3 Epics and 15 user stories – two pages) as firm-down-selects. Phase 3 covered

Oral Presentation (40 minutes with two challenge questions) and Price. All factors were evaluated using confidence ratings. The solicitation provided a target number of quotes envisioned for each phase of the process.

Results

Quoters had three days from release of the solicitation to provide Phase 1 quotes. The team evaluated 111 quotes in just four days, sending an advisory notification on day five. The team advised only 20 quoters to proceed; however, 34 proceeded to Phase 2. The 34 quotes were evaluated in just four days, with the firm down-select notifications issued on day five, informing them of oral presentations beginning the next week. Phase 3 concluded with 12 oral presentations and consensus evaluations completed in four days. Six \$203 million BPAs were awarded just 51 days after release of solicitation. Many small business vendors reached out to the team with appreciation for the streamlined process, as it helped them save significant quote preparation costs.

INNOVATION PASSPORT

- Advisory Down-Select
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- Firm Down-Select
- Interview-Style Questions
- Involve End-Users
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations
- Sample Products
- Streamlined Documentation

PIL
51 DAYS TO AWARD



"I am encouraged by how the Government-wide acquisition community came together with industry to improve usability of automation tools, as we explore responsible uses of emerging technologies to build supplier base diversity and improve agility in the acquisition system."

MATHEW BLUM, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR,
OFFICE OF FEDERAL PROCUREMENT POLICY



"I am excited that the PIL Idea Competition is gathering feedback from the workforce on this important process. We can now use that information to make meaningful improvements to the Appendix G process."

SARAH TODD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
OCPO ACQUISITION POLICY & LEGISLATION BRANCH

Description

Reducing the time to award can also be extended to reducing the time acquisition workforce members spend performing basic acquisition planning functions, therefore enabling them to shift time to high value work. Although FAR Part 10 gives broad discretion in how to perform market research and explicitly requires that procurement teams request only the minimum information necessary, some teams release large requests for information on SAM.gov in order to develop a list of potential sources, while other teams struggle with where to begin. In recent years, the PIL and other Government partners have been collaborating with vendors to improve the market research process through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Innovation

Acquisition workforce members from across the Federal Government highlighted the tedious process of finding both potentially capable vendors and vehicles as a challenge in their market research journey. The PIL partnered with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to award three contracts to develop cloud-based software solutions that use AI to assist acquisition workforce members in quickly starting the market research process.

Outcome

In September 2022, the three vendors demonstrated working software that used open-source data, such as from SAM.gov and the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), to find companies that have performed work similar to an agency's upcoming requirement and visualize the data in a report. Ordering vehicles were awarded to all three vendors that allow any federal agency to place an order for one of these AI for Market Research software tools. During the course of FY 2023, DHS will pilot these solutions internally to track the amount of time saved and the increase in quality of overall market research.



Launched in FY 2021, the PIL Idea Competition is a crowdsourcing platform that empowers the DHS acquisition workforce to solve procurement process challenges that are preventing procurements from moving at the speed of innovation. Each competition begins with an executive sponsor working with the PIL to create a problem statement and then opening the competition to the workforce through the PIL Idea Competition portal. After ideas are submitted from the frontline acquisition workforce, a panel of judges reviews the ideas to choose finalists for prototyping. Once the prototype phase is complete, the judges select the final winner or winners! Potential prizes include cash awards, time-off awards, one-on-one time with senior leaders, and DHS branded items.

FY 2022 saw the launch of three idea competitions:

HSAM Appendix G—Checklist for Sensitive Information Process

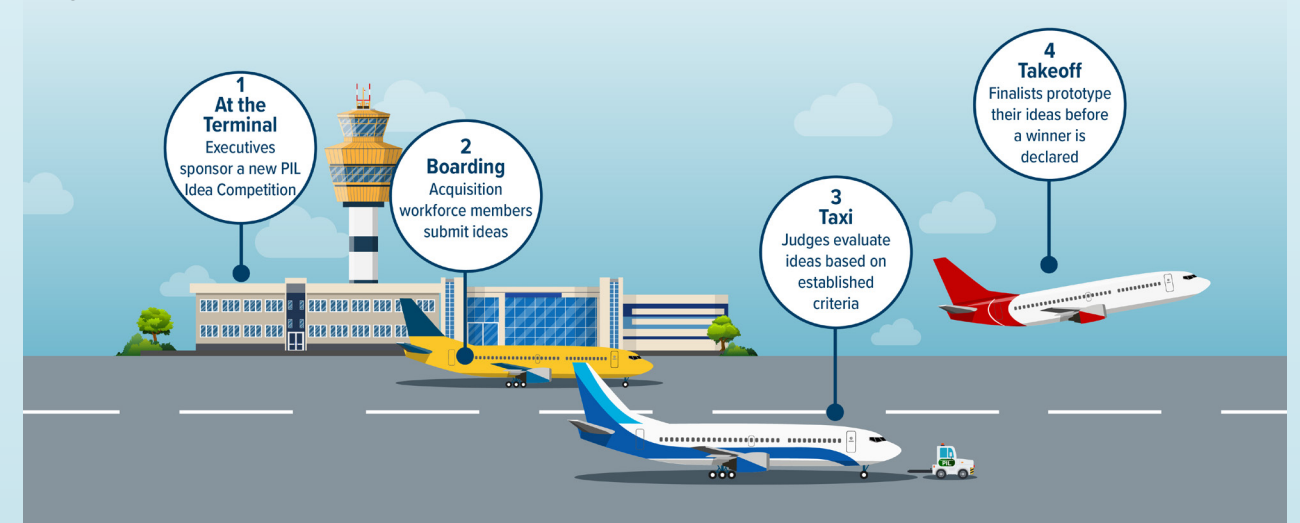
Seeks to improve the security posture of DHS contracts by reducing the administrative burden — and improving the quality — of reviews for a pre-solicitation requirement called the “Checklist for Sensitive Information” found in Homeland Security Acquisition Manual (HSAM) Appendix G. **Status: Prototyping phase.**

Streamlining Procurement with Technology

Seeks ideas to replace mundane, repetitive tasks performed by contracting professionals through the use of emerging technology solutions like robotic process automation and other tools. **Status: Prototyping phase.**

CBP Congressional Notification Process

Launched exclusively to the CBP workforce, this currently open competition seeks to improve the internal congressional notification review process. **Status: Open for ideas.**



Sharing the Road

For many years, the PIL has offered regular training to the acquisition workforce in the form of PIL Boot Camp and monthly webinars. In recent years, the PIL realized that the acquisition workforce has many different training needs and included new trainings to offer more variety and build upon earlier trainings. The following pages highlight some of the PIL trainings from FY 2022, including overall metrics.

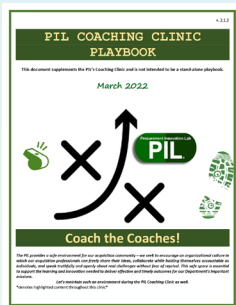
PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level

FY 2022 saw the launch of a new training course called PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level. After four years of delivering the original PIL Boot Camp across the country to over 5,000 members of the DHS and government-wide acquisition workforce, as well as members of industry associations, it became clear that the audience was ready for more! PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level presents nine new innovative procurement techniques and teaches acquisition professionals how to think critically to apply the appropriate ones in their next procurement. It also dives into the application of several techniques from PIL Boot Camp, using scenario-based exercises that allow students to practice evaluating and documenting an oral presentation and to roleplay as members of industry responding to a solicitation.



This six-hour, virtual class was first piloted with a small group of DHS innovators on February 2, 2022, before being offered three times to a DHS-wide audience in 2022. PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level will be launched government-wide in FY 2023.

PIL Coaching Clinic



Playing a game and coaching the game require different skillsets. PIL Coaching Clinic, created in FY 2020, went through various iterations until FY 2022, when the winning formula became clear: a one-day virtual class, with a government-wide audience and a sole prerequisite, PIL Boot Camp. This course teaches acquisition workforce members how to coach teams to use innovative procurement techniques, and it helps them earn the PIL Digi-Badge Level 2 (Innovation Coach). The course includes a hard skills refresher before teaching the PIL framework, the role of the coach, and foundational coaching skills such as storytelling. Most importantly, it provides multiple opportunities for participants to practice coaching a procurement team using real-world scenarios, with live feedback.

PILCasts

PILCast, launched in FY 2021, offers the federal acquisition workforce micro-trainings on narrow procurement innovation topics in just 10 minutes or less! These bite-sized videos, posted on the PIL's YouTube channel, are available on-demand to both Government and industry. In FY 2022, the PIL posted 18 new episodes that were watched almost 3,000 times. Click on any of the titles below to view episodes and be sure to subscribe.



Innovation Conversations for Acquisition Professionals

Find us on YouTube to subscribe

Most Visited

- Episode #3, Brief Explanation on Brief Explanations**, highlights lessons learned from a contracting officer at Customs and Border Protection (CBP) regarding the right kind of information to include in a brief explanation under FAR subpart 8.4 and how to make any brief explanations with vendors a success.
- Episode #5, Enhanced Contract Type Conversion**, introduces a new procurement innovation technique and discusses the benefits of awarding a contract or task order with the flexibility to change the contract type from time-and-materials/labor hours to firm-fixed price during the performance of the contract.
- Episode #8, Monday Morning Court-erback (MMCB)**, answers the question, “Can You Protest an Advisory Down-Select Letter?” This episode continues a format the PIL has been using for several years, in which a recent GAO decision about a procurement innovation is dissected and reviewed. Watch other PILCast MMCB episodes that focus on different GAO cases.
- Episode #9, Innovative Techniques for Market Research**, features a conversation with a team from FLETC about how they used innovative techniques to conduct market research.
- Episode #11, Streamlining the Evaluation of Key Personnel**, features a discussion with ICE Acquisition Innovation Advocate (AIA) on streamlining the evaluation of key personnel during solicitations.

Training	FY22	Cumulative
Boot Camp Conducted	13	81
Boot Camp Attendees	1,375	5,452
Average Boot Camp Satisfaction	4.6	4.7 out of 5
Boot Camp–The Next Level Conducted	4	4
Boot Camp–The Next Level Attendees	244	244
Boot Camp–The Next Level Satisfaction	4.8	4.8
PILCast Episodes	18	20
PILCast Views	2,858	3,328

Training	FY22	Cumulative
Coaching Clinic	2	7
Coaching Clinic Attendees	122	225
Average Coaching Clinic Satisfaciton	4.8	4.8 out of 5
Webinars Conducted	8	66
Webinar Attendees	1,800	18,803
Average No. of Webinar Attendees	339	290
Average Webinar Satisfaction	4.6	4.4 out of 5

Webinars

My Colleague Is a Robot: Emerging Technology and the Procurement Process



Emerging technology is all around us. This webinar shared artificial intelligence (AI), robotic process automation (RPA/bots), and machine learning (ML) tools that can support the acquisition community. Experts discussed how technology can increase accuracy and efficiency and process a lot of data quickly, reducing time and administrative burdens on staff. The DHS Chief Technology Officer also stopped by and gave some tips on where to start, which technology to look for, and how to know if it's the right fit for your organization. The CBP Bot Team talked about how they use RPA to deobligate funds from expired contracts, upload contracts to the Enterprise Contract File System (ECFS), and much more!

Presenters:
Ronie Namata (CBP)
Joe Millard (CBP)
Sarah Haut (DHS OCPO)
Barbara Brough (DHS OCIO)
Scott Simpson (PIL)
Monica Taylor (PIL)

Tone from the Top:
Nina Ferraro, DHS Deputy Chief Procurement Officer, and David Larrimore, DHS Chief Technology Officer

Attendees: 410

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating:
4.4 out of 5.0

One Solicitation to Rule Them All



This webinar detailed a new innovative procurement technique called Fusion Procurements. Imagine the need to award two or maybe even three interrelated contracts at the same time. Instead of issuing three solicitations, release just one! In this webinar, teams from TSA and ICE shared how they used the Fusion Procurements technique on their innovation quest. Instead of releasing multiple solicitations, the teams innovated and streamlined the review and award time for their respective FAR subpart 8.4 and FAR subpart 15.3 requirements.

Presenters:
Joe Furtek (TSA)
Tracy Riley (ICE)
Scott Simpson (PIL)
Monica Taylor (PIL)

Tone from the Top:
Polly Hall, Senior Adviser to the DHS Chief Procurement Officer

Attendees: 368

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating:
4.8 out of 5.0

Coach the Coach – Calling the Right Plays!



Put me in coach! In this webinar, PIL used a “talk show” format with the ICE AIA to learn about his experience coaching an ICE team as they innovated the procurement process to purchase cybersecurity support. The ICE AIA shared what it was like being shadowed by the PIL as he provided support to colleagues in his own office. His teammates also discussed the value of having a coach who intimately understood their procurement culture and mission and was able to help them navigate it effectively. Discover why Component-level coaches are critical to both mission success and to growing the community of innovators across DHS.

Presenters:
James Abyad (ICE)
Jennifer Casden (ICE)
Stephanie Creasy (ICE)
Sandra Oliver Schmidt (PIL)
David Jablonski (PIL)

Tone from the Top:
Al Dainton, ICE Head of Contracting Activity

Attendees: 211

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating:
4.9 out of 5.0

Evaluating and Documenting with Confidence Ratings: A Deep Dive



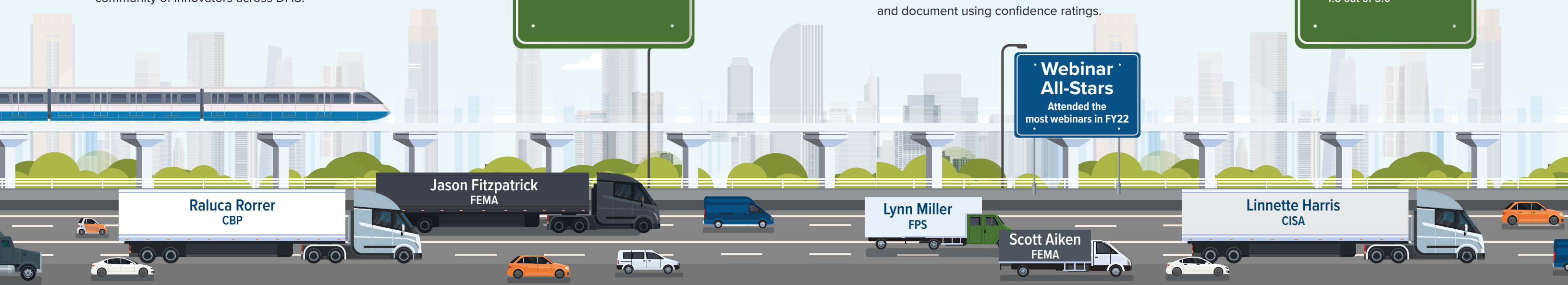
This webinar provided a deep dive into confidence ratings — a more flexible, intuitive way to evaluate quotes and proposals. The hosts explained what confidence ratings are, how they streamline procurements, and reviewed GAO protest decisions that support the use of confidence ratings. Teams from TSA and ICE shared how they used confidence ratings to streamline their procurements. As a bonus, this webinar included an exercise in which viewers learned firsthand how to conduct an on-the-spot consensus and document using confidence ratings.

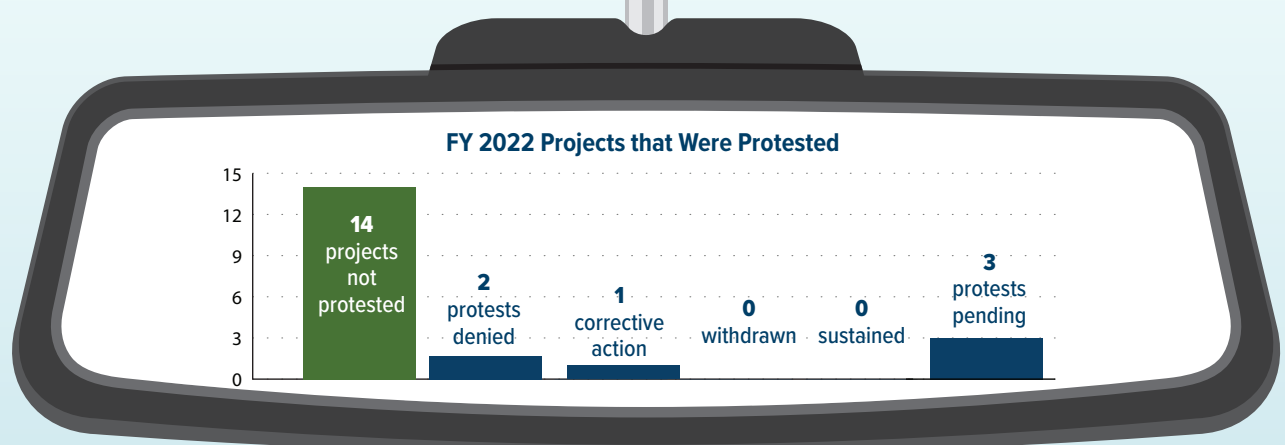
Presenters:
Andrew Michel (CBP)
Tasha Wang (ICE)
Elizabeth Kobilansky (TSA)
Melissa French (TSA)
David Jablonski (PIL)
Scott Simpson (PIL)

Tone from the Top:
Diane Sahakian, CBP Head of Contracting Activity

Attendees: 497

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating:
4.8 out of 5.0





Protests in the Rear View

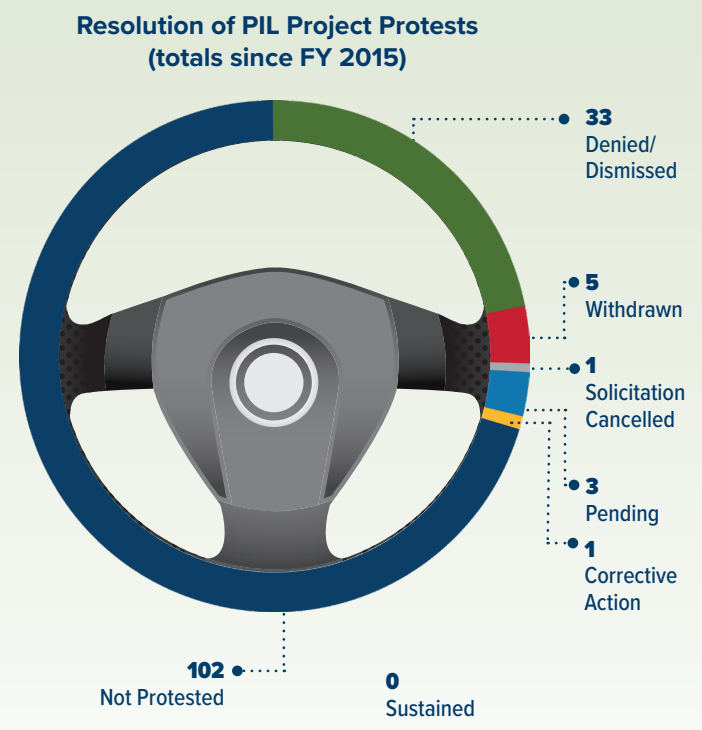
One of the most common hazards on the road to innovation for acquisition professionals is the risk of a protest. Yet, success goes to the intrepid: the majority of the techniques documented in this Yearbook have been protested and were either denied or dismissed.

Since FY 2015, PIL procurement projects have steered clear of trouble when innovating. FY 2022 marked the first time a PIL procurement project received a sustainment although after corrective action, the subsequent re-protest was denied. Even so, the protest did not involve a challenge to any procurement innovations used in that project.

With over 30 protests denied or dismissed on PIL procurement projects in the last seven years, many models and stories of how to avoid potholes on the journey have been established. These “how to” roadmaps — incorporating creativity, innovation, and smart risk-taking — reduce time to award, encourage competition, lower entry barriers, and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Snapshot of Protest Decision Outcomes Released in FY 2022

- [FEMA RTPD: COFC No. 22-152C](#)
- [OPO EFIMS: COFC No. 21-1910](#)
- [S&T ITSS: GAO B-420660](#)
- [OPO DCCO: GAO B-420282](#)
- [ICE Medical: GAO B-420759](#)



Travelers' Choice Awards

As procurement innovation continues to travel across the Federal Government, the PIL celebrates members of the DHS acquisition community who were recognized for their procurement actions in FY 2022. The PIL is proud of their accomplishments and their dedication to improving mission delivery.



Monique Park, Scott Simpson, and Jessica Quinones attended the Service to the Citizen awards gala on behalf of the FEMA COVID-19 Vaccination Support Team.

FY 2022 Service to the Citizen Award: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) COVID-19 Vaccination Support Team

FY 2022 American Council for Technology and Industry Advisory Council's (ACT-IAC) Innovation Champion Award: U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) High Level Automated Robots Team

FY 2022 Inaugural Public Sector Government Acquisition Recognition Program Award — Outstanding IT Acquisition Program of the Year: Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Team

FY 2022 Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) Acquisition Excellence Team Award: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) COVID-19 Vaccination Support Team

CPO Excellence Awards — Unsung Heroes: Scott Simpson and Nicolette Viering

G2Xchange Leading for Impact, Women in Leadership: Sandra Oliver Schmidt, Acting PIL Director

TRAVEL PARTNERS

Throughout FY 2022, fellow innovation travelers have connected on the journey to make federal procurements more efficient and improve mission outcomes.

- * In December 2021, a team from FEMA shared their experience procuring COVID-19 vaccination support at NCMA's Government Contract Management Symposium (GCMS).
- * In April 2022, the Partnership for Public Service co-hosted a roundtable on “Building Holistic Acquisition Partnerships,” which featured acquisition executives and attorneys from DHS, Department of Transportation (DOT), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) discussing the importance of building relationships to manage risk in the procurement process.
- * In June 2022, the PIL presented at GSA's Federal Acquisition Service Training (FAST) on innovative procurement techniques that can be used by program offices early in the acquisition process, and provided a demonstration of the Artificial Intelligence for Past Performance's newest market research capabilities.



Innovation Partners

The innovation community continues to grow, and DHS is no longer the sole agency with an innovation lab to support the acquisition workforce. In FY 2022, the U.S. Department of Commerce launched The Lab to support innovation within their acquisition community. The Lab recently created a public [webpage of GAO cases](#) showcasing decisions related to procurement innovation to promote smart risk-taking in their procurements. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Procurement Innovation Effort (PIE) published a [recipe book of acquisition innovations](#) to help its acquisition workforce save time and seek better outcomes. The Senior Procurement Executive at the Department of Justice recently collaborated with their Office of General Counsel to develop an Acquisition Innovation Guide to help their acquisition workforce drive innovative capabilities and adopt new practices through all stages of the acquisition lifecycle.



Other agencies are also in the process of launching their own innovation labs, including NASA, Veterans Affairs, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The PIL welcomes these additional teams to the procurement innovation family.



Join the Community of Innovators!

Countless individuals and teams across the Federal Government are employing innovations independently. In FY 2023, the PIL plans to create an innovation passport that can be proudly displayed in email signatures by those who have attended PIL trainings. Stay tuned!



Homeland
Security