



2023

PIL YEARBOOK

Building a Community of Procurement Innovation



Homeland
Security

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

Office of the Chief
Procurement Officer

Procurement Innovation Lab

PIL





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 acquisition community.

This Yearbook highlights stories from projects that the PIL supported during Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. These stories share how teams from DHS and across the Federal Government have innovated the procurement process to more effectively accomplish the mission. We hope these stories inspire others to use innovations and grow the innovation community.

Message from the Chief Procurement Officer



Paul Courtney, DHS Chief Procurement Officer and **Nina Ferraro**, Deputy Chief Procurement Officer

Over the last fiscal year, collaboration remained a key strategic priority for our important work. The procurement innovation community continued to grow and expand as we welcomed new collaborators from DHS and the Federal Government, including two innovation labs: the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Procurement Innovation Council (ICE PIC) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Innovation Incubator (iSquared). Throughout this Yearbook you will read stories of teams that partnered effectively to meet their mission.

Recent trends indicate that acquisition innovation occurs at the local level, often with formal support from a procurement innovation lab. However, many processes haven't evolved to keep pace with innovation. This presents an opportunity for the acquisition community to identify business process challenges and work together to find solutions that allow the mission to be met most effectively. This Yearbook highlights how DHS is crowdsourcing solutions to these business process challenges through PIL Idea Competitions as a way to illicit solutions directly from our acquisition community.

Two of our OCPO Strategic Plan priorities are to prepare and empower our people to excel and to inspire innovation to enhance mission capability. The space the PIL provides the DHS acquisition workforce is linked to these priorities, and Nina and I remain deeply committed to ensuring the DHS acquisition community has the resources necessary to make the best business decisions to support the important mission of DHS.

Every year we send out the Competing Values Framework (CVF) assessment which allows all acquisition workforce members to provide comments on current procurement processes. In FY 2023, we learned from this assessment that there is a strong correlation between an innovation mindset and human relations. Innovation relies on our relationships, which is why collaboration is critical to providing better mission outcomes.

Also in FY 2023, our team welcomed a new Director to the Procurement Innovation Lab, Katherine E. Crompton. Katie brings a wealth of resources and experience to the team, which will allow us to build strengthened relationships across our acquisition community while encouraging new ideas to flourish and grow.

Finally, and most of all, we are so very proud of the important work you execute daily. We support you and will work diligently alongside you as we continue to meaningfully enhance the DHS procurement experience to deliver the important mission of the Department.



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Component Acronyms

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| USCIS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services | FLETC: Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers | OPO: Office of Procurement Operations |
| USCG: United States Coast Guard | ICE: Immigration and Customs Enforcement | OSA: Office of Selective Acquisitions |
| CBP: Customs and Border Protection | MGMT: Management Directorate | USSS: United States Secret Service |
| FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency | | TSA: Transportation Security Administration |



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

Building an Innovation Community

Collaboration with all members of the procurement team — as well as across the federal community as a whole — fosters innovation and adoption of new innovative procurement techniques through the testing and sharing framework to improve the quality, timeliness, and mission outcomes of procurements. This FY 2023 Yearbook showcases how DHS found new ways to work together to optimize the use of these practices and highlights stories from agencies that are new to the procurement innovation community. Because procurement innovation is not a one-way street, in FY 2023, the PIL continued to learn from our industry partners how to improve the way DHS does business. This feedback is essential so that the testing and sharing framework can adapt to enhance outcomes for the DHS mission and for the taxpayer, as envisioned in FAR 1.102.

Big Innovations Helping Small Businesses

In FY 2023, the PIL continued to engage with industry, including small businesses, to determine the impact of innovations on the vendor community. The PIL began asking a post-award interview question specifically of small businesses to determine if the innovations used

were effective or ineffective at helping them compete, regardless of whether the procurement was a set-aside or not. The following are excerpts from the feedback that was received for projects completed in FY 2022 and FY 2023:

SMALL BUSINESS FEEDBACK ON PIL TECHNIQUES

- “Phased approaches have huge value regardless of the outcome.”
- “Loved the down-select. It definitely saves us a lot of time.”
- “The coding challenge was effective and allowed us, as a small business, to demonstrate our capability.”
- “The one stretch was the sheer volume of solicitation information requested—a technical challenge, oral presentation, and written components. All of these things together is a problem for all vendors, not just small businesses.”

Succeeding in Tandem

While the testing and sharing framework has contributed to a learning culture across DHS, this yearbook reflects the growing importance person-to-person interactions are playing in the continuous improvement of how innovations are being used to maximize mission outcomes.



Encouraging Community

Transforming Local Culture

DHS Component Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs) provide frontline procurement innovation support at each of the DHS contracting activities. These AIAs are critical innovators by coaching procurement teams, creating new learning opportunities, streamlining procurement processes, and promoting other procurement authorities to their respective workforces.

See how our DHS Component AIAs were active in their innovation communities in FY 2023:



Vilma Hanson, USSS

- Appointed as the new USSS AIA in June 2023.
- Conducted AIA outreach to new contracting supervisors and employees.



James Frye, FLETC

- Sponsored a PIL Idea Competition to improve the Procurement Request (PR) package process and quality.



James Abyad, ICE

- Established the ICE Procurement Innovation Council (PIC).
- Improved leadership coordination with the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA) to right-size legal sufficiency reviews.



Spenser Sams, FEMA

- Became the first non-1102 to earn a Level 2 Innovation Coach Digi-Badge.
- Established weekly brown bag trainings to share procurement innovation best practices and case studies.



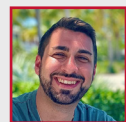
Stacey Huther, TSA

- Hosted three procurement innovation trainings.



Cathy Smith, OSA

- Ensured innovations in Acquisition Plans are considered early in the procurement planning process.



Peter Giambone, CBP

- Sponsored a PIL Idea Competition to improve the Congressional Notification process.
- Cultivated partnership between the CBP Procurement Innovation Team (PIT) and the CBP Innovation Team (INVNT) to promote Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program (CSOP) and Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) authorities.



Nettie Straub, USCG

- Updated internal intranet site with procurement innovation resource links.
- Submitted a market research innovation to the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations (PTAI).



Chad Parker, USCIS

- Became the first DHS AIA to earn a Level 3 Innovation Master Digi-Badge.
- Established monthly training for contracting professionals to hone critical thinking and problem-solving skills.



The ICE PIC Chips Away at Challenges



In FY 2023, the ICE PIC became the second procurement innovation team to be formed at a DHS Component and now stands alongside the CBP PIT. Led by the ICE AIA, James Abyad, the ICE PIC is a cadre of ICE contracting professionals who regularly use innovative procurement techniques and provide advice and support to teammates and program customers as they innovate the procurement process. The team meets monthly to review protest decisions and to problem-solve challenges experienced by procurement teams. Along with James, the FY 2023 ICE PIC members are Roberta O. Onuma, Tasha Wang, Shayla Kelley, Tracey Harriot, Genna Braden, Demetress Thomas, and Gabriel Kennon, attorney advisor member.



The PRICE Act of 2021



The PIL appreciates that lawmakers recognize the value procurement innovation provides to our mission partners. The DHS Undersecretary for Management is pleased to publish the FY 2023 PIL Yearbook to meet the annual reporting requirement of the Promoting Rigorous and Innovative Cost Efficiencies for Federal Procurement and Acquisitions (PRICE) Act of 2021. This Yearbook includes information on procurement teams who have

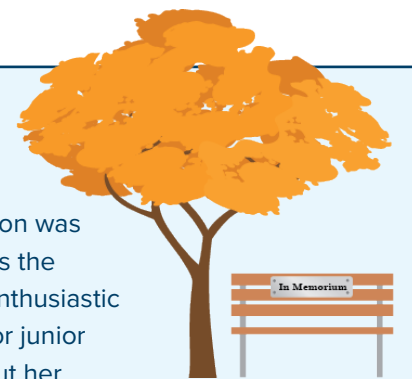
engaged with the PIL to use innovative procurement techniques that have:

- Improved or encouraged better competition
- Reduced time to award
- Provided cost savings
- Provided better mission outcomes
- Met the goals for contracts awarded to small business concerns

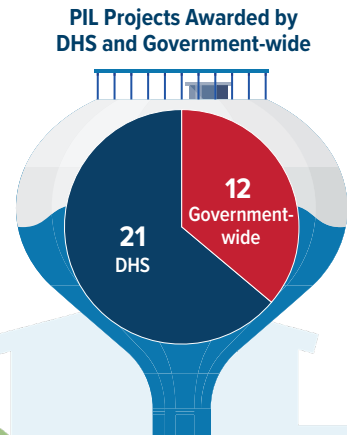
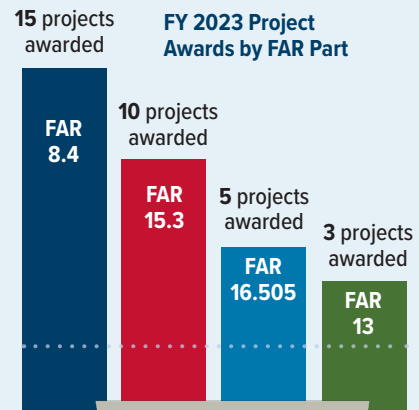
In Memory of Brenda Peterson



In the summer of 2023, the DHS innovation community lost one of our most cherished members. Brenda Peterson was a dedicated OPO civil servant for 40 years and served as the AIA since the PIL was first established. Brenda was an enthusiastic champion of innovation, always taking the time to mentor junior acquisition workforce members and sharing stories about her innovation experience with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard. Everywhere Brenda went, she formed friendships. She is dearly missed.



The Growing Community



FY 2023 PIL Project Information

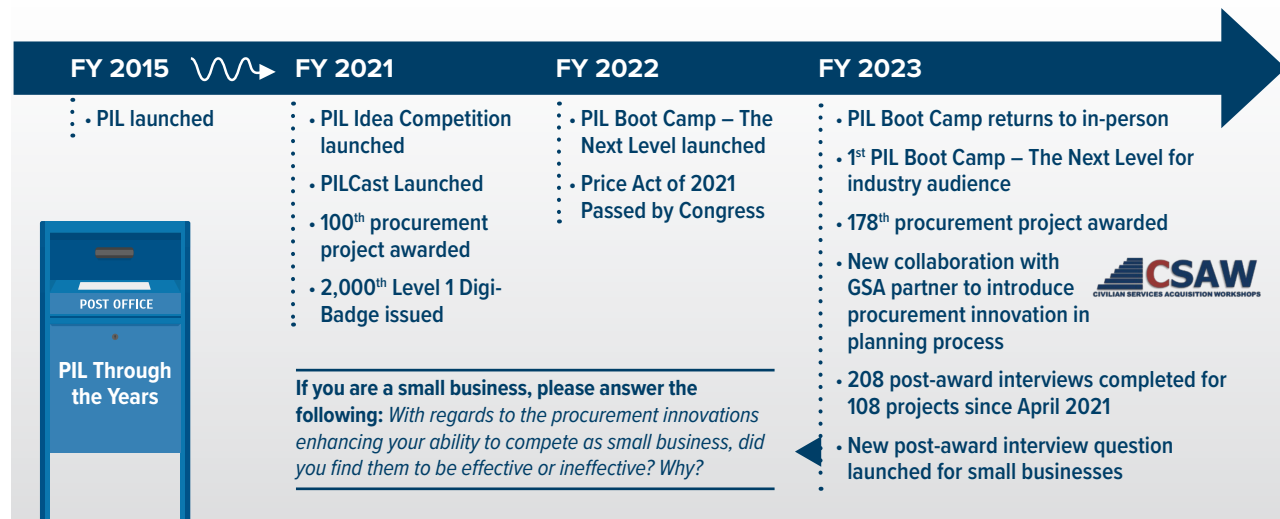
| | |
|--|--------------|
| Projects Coached | 33 |
| Cumulative Value | \$38 billion |
| Cost Savings | \$42 million |
| Average PALT | 231 days |
| Average PALT for Small Business Set-Asides | 133 days |
| Average Proposals Received Per Project | 11.8 |

PIL Projects Coached in FY 2023

- 12 Small Business Set-Asides
- 6 Unrestricted & Small Business Set-Aside
- 15 Unrestricted

| TRAINING | FY23 | Cumulative |
|--|-------|--------------|
| Boot Camps Conducted | 12 | 93 |
| Boot Camp Attendees | 1,888 | 7,340 |
| Average Boot Camp Satisfaction | 4.8 | 4.7 out of 5 |
| Boot Camps – The Next Level Conducted | 7 | 11 |
| Boot Camps – The Next Level Attendees | 1,115 | 1,359 |
| Boot Camps – The Next Level Satisfaction | 4.9 | 4.8 out of 5 |

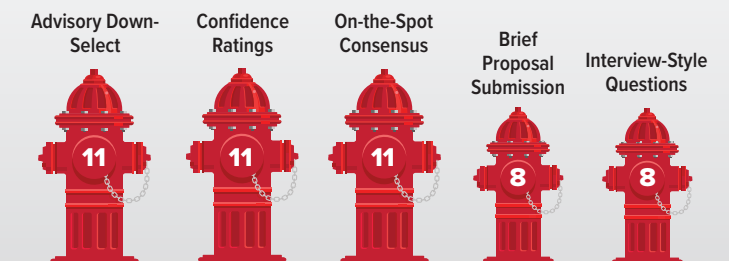
| TRAINING | FY23 | Cumulative |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------|
| PILCast Episodes | 22 | 42 |
| PILCast Views | 5,408 | 8,736 |
| Coaching Clinics | 2 | 9 |
| Coaching Clinic Attendees | 158 | 383 |
| Average Coaching Clinic Satisfaction | 4.7 | 4.8 out of 5 |
| Webinars Conducted | 7 | 73 |
| Webinar Attendees | 1,933 | 21,647 |
| Average No. of Webinar Attendees | 276 | 296 |
| Average Webinar Satisfaction | 4.7 | 4.5 out of 5 |




Top 3 Innovations Most Used of All Time and an Effectiveness Rating of Each Technique Since 2021



Top 5 Most-Used Innovations for Small Business Set-Asides in FY 2023 and No. of Projects Using Each Technique



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.

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.

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.

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.

ENCOURAGING COMPETITION

Affordability — Give vendors a target price or range to increase understanding. The Government can select a vendor under, in between, or over the price amount.

Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry — Release draft solicitations with requirements and evaluation criteria 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.

Highest Technically Rated Offeror with a 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/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.

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

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 (JAM Sessions) — Involve end-users to create evaluation factors using short and focused (1-2 hours max) Joint Application Modeling (JAM) Sessions.


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. (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.

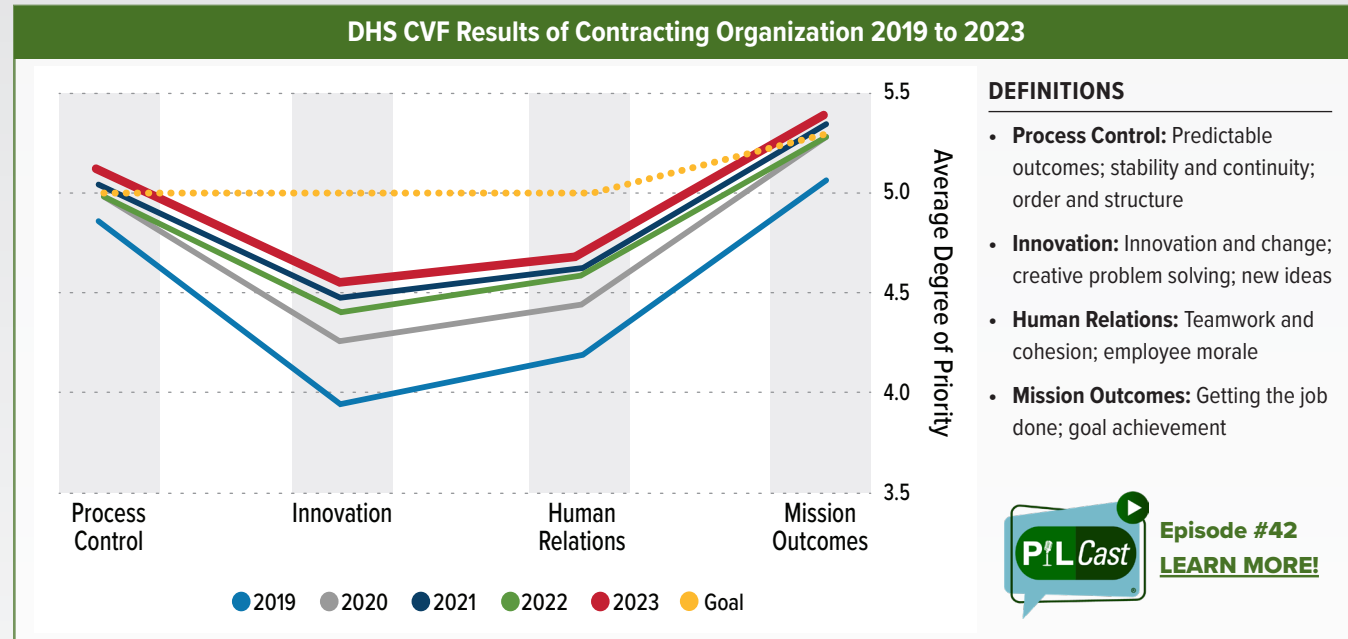
 **Share Price with Technical Evaluators** — Sharing the vendors’ price submissions with the technical evaluation team chairperson can assist in aligning the technical approach with price.

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

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

Canvassing the Community

In FY 2023, the PIL continued to collect feedback about DHS procurement culture through the annual Competing Values Framework (CVF) Assessment. Now in its sixth year, this assessment allows all members of the acquisition community, such as Program Managers, Contracting Officer's Representatives, and Contracting Officers/Specialists to name a few, to provide their perspective on the importance their procurement organization places on four key values (shown below).



The results show a marked improvement toward the CPO's goal of bringing the four values closer in balance with each other! Through our research partnership with the DHS Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE), managed by Arizona State University, we now have enough data to support a direct correlation between the values of innovation and human relations, meaning these traits are demonstrated to increase or decrease together. With the results of the FY 2023 CVF Assessment, we can better enable leaders to deliver targeted initiatives to support desired cultural change.

In addition, the procurement innovation community expanded in FY 2023 with the launch of the PIL Innovation Passport micro-credential, which recognizes cultural change agents across the Government-wide acquisition workforce. The PIL Innovation Passport is an extension of the PIL Digi-Badge micro-credential learning program launched in FY 2016 to the DHS acquisition workforce.

| Component | Total | FY23 |
|-----------|-------|------|
| CBP | 306 | 31 |
| FEMA | 489 | 65 |
| FLETC | 98 | 6 |
| ICE | 279 | 26 |
| MGMT | 58 | 33 |
| OPO | 553 | 17 |
| OSA | 33 | 0 |
| TSA | 252 | 84 |
| USCG | 370 | 42 |
| USCIS | 216 | 33 |
| USSS | 105 | 13 |

Digi-Badges awarded in FY23 may include employees who have since left DHS.

Cumulative Digi-Badges

- Level 1: 2,731
- Level 2: 19
- Level 3: 9
- Total: 2,759**

2,907
Innovation
Passports were
issued in FY23

At the Fairgrounds: The Community Showcase

PIL Procurement Teams

While the learning culture of testing and sharing at DHS has led to the normalization of many innovative procurement techniques, teams continue to embrace this learning culture by finding new ways to enhance collaboration with industry and within their own teams to right-size the use of the innovations, strengthen collaboration, and improve business processes to improve mission outcomes.

In FY 2023, the PIL formally engaged with 33 procurement teams, 21 from DHS and 12 from the growing Government-wide community of innovators. For the projects below with a hot air balloon symbol (🎈), take a stroll through the fair on pages 12–17 to read their stories.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

- Consolidated Tower and Surveillance Equipment
- Tethered Aerostat Radar System II
- X-Ray Strategic Sourcing Vehicle
- Office of Finance – Budget Support
- Medical Supplies

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- National Responder Support Camp and Temporary Facilities Support
- National Exercise Division, National Exercise Program Capability Validation and Exercise Delivery Support Services
- National Flood Insurance Program Training Support
- Crisis Management System
- Program Support and Workforce Development
- Digital Workflow Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA)

Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)

- Transportation Services

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

- Programmatic Support Services
- Medical Staffing

Office of Selective Acquisitions (OSA)

- Watch Information Sharing Evolution

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

- Operations, Technology, Innovation, and Management Support

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

- Information Technology Infrastructure Managed Services
- Program Management and Analytical Support Services
- National Multiple Award Construction Contract III

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

- Engineering Support for Identity Services (ESIS)
- Enterprise Platform for Integrated Citizen Development

External Agencies

- AmeriCorps: Member and Volunteer Management System
- Millennium Challenge Corporation: Staff Recruitment Planning and Implementation Services
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service (USFS): Region 5 Environmental Site Investigation and Cleanup
- U.S. Department of Education: Procurement of Research Evaluation and Statistics Task Orders
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration: Data Management Services for Adverse Event Reporting System Data Management Program
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Cancer Institute: Information Technology Services
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health: Operations and Maintenance Support for the Office of Research Infrastructure Programs Dashboard System
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: Automated Fee Machines
- U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service: Enterprise Development Operations Services (EDOS)
- U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service: Treasury Cloud (TCloud)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Medical/Surgical Prime Vendor Generation Z
- U.S. Small Business Administration: Cloud-Hosting, Cloud Services and Support, and Ancillary Services

PIL Process Improvements

- Artificial Intelligence for Market Research
 - PIL Idea Competitions: HSAM Appendix G—Checklist for Sensitive Information Process, Streamlining Procurement with Technology
- FY 2023 Process Improvements are highlighted on pages 18 and 19.





Anthony Suarez
Contracting Officer

"The Coding Challenge for ESIS was such a benefit to our evaluators because it provided a real-time sampling of how our industry partners work together on real-world challenges within their teams."

Objective

USCIS required Agile DevSecOps to support the Identity Directorate and wanted to ensure vendors could meet or exceed the technical requirements and would proactively address requirements during performance.

Innovation

A coding challenge took place across two phases in this advisory down-select process. Phase 1 involved vendors writing the code in a Git repository, while Phase 2 involved deploying the code into the Government's Amazon Web Services environment, then addressing scenario questions from the Government.

Outcome

The ESIS team found that this approach ensured that a highly capable vendor received

an award and saved \$6.2 million when compared to the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE). Post-award feedback from vendors revealed that this coding challenge was effective but too big for the requirement; it was almost identical to a coding challenge from a previous USCIS procurement. During post-award vendor interviews, vendors recommended developing a unique coding criterion to improve the effectiveness of the Government coding challenges. The team appreciated the vendor feedback and will continue to right-size the use of coding challenges on future procurements.



Sheila Henley
Contracting Officer



Eric Sizemore
Technical Evaluator



James Frye
FLETC AIA

Objective

After the procurement team successfully used a two-phased advisory down-select process to streamline and complete their technical evaluation documentation, they had a unique opportunity to innovate the price evaluation. With so many different types of tasks being priced for this requirement, the contracting officer needed clarity from a subject matter expert to properly assess the proposed level of effort.

Innovation

Using a new technique called Share Price with Technical Evaluators, the contracting officer shared the price proposals with the technical evaluation team to better understand the proposed level of effort for the multitude of tasks being priced and to ensure they aligned with the technical proposals.

Outcome

By consulting with the technical evaluation team after completion of their technical evaluation and conducting a crosswalk between the technical level of effort required and the price proposals, the contracting officer better understood the level of effort required and could effectively complete the price evaluations without engaging in discussions with vendors. This new technique also enhanced the quality of the best value tradeoff decision. The \$31 million contract was awarded in approximately 6 months from solicitation release to award with a cost savings of \$2.3 million when compared to the IGCE.



TECHNIQUES USED

- Advisory Down-Select
- Confidence Ratings
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Oral Presentations w/ Interactive Dialogue
- Share Evaluation Documentation
- Technical Demonstrations

84 Days from Solicitation Release to Award

TECHNIQUES USED

- Advisory Down-Select
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Confidence Ratings
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Interview-Style Questions
- Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions)
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Share Price with Technical Evaluators
- Streamlined Evaluation Documentation

168 Days from Solicitation Release to Award



PIL PROCUREMENT PROJECT

ICE
Programmatic Support Services

SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE

\$35 Million
FAR 16.505

2 Phases
Phase 1:
11 proposals
Phase 2:
5 proposals



Tracy Riley
Contracting Officer



Javier Farfan
Attorney Lead



Angella Cruz
Program Lead

PIL PROCUREMENT PROJECT

FEMA
Program Support and Workforce Development

\$21 Million
FAR 8.405-3

2 Phases
Phase 1:
14 proposals
Phase 2:
3 proposals



Armetia Cato
Contracting Officer



Cecelia Paulding
Contracting Officer's Representative



Patrice French
Secondary Contracting Officer

Objective

The ICE procurement team noted that in past procurements, vendor proposals would generally repeat the Performance Work Statement in response to the solicitation. The team wanted to receive more robust insight into vendor capabilities and solutions in support of the ICE Homeland Security Investigations requirement.

Innovation

ICE held two JAM sessions with end-users to create mission-focused evaluation criteria. They developed a two-phased advisory down-select approach where vendor submissions in each phase consisted of written responses to a concise set of mission-focused questions. This approach ensured the Government received improved information to evaluate vendors'

capabilities, and vendors were able to clearly showcase their relevant experiences, approaches to real scenarios, and hiring and retention strategies.

Outcome

Because relevant evaluation criteria were established in the JAM sessions, the Government received higher-quality proposals that clearly demonstrated each vendor's relevant capabilities and approaches to the requirements. This approach also saved the Government \$17.7 million when compared to the Government's IGCE.



★ ★ ★
TECHNIQUES USED

- ★ Advisory Down-Select
- ★ Brief Proposal Submission
- ★ Confidence Ratings
- ★ Interview-Style Questions
- ★ Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions)
- ★ Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- ★ Share Evaluation Documentation
- ★ Streamlined Evaluation Documentation

★ **141 Days from Solicitation Release to Award**

★ ★ ★
TECHNIQUES USED

- ★ Advisory Down-Select
- ★ Brief Proposal Submission
- ★ Confidence Ratings
- ★ Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- ★ Interview-Style Questions
- ★ Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions)
- ★ Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- ★ On-the-Spot Consensus
- ★ Oral Presentations w/ Interactive Dialogue
- ★ Rates Only Pricing
- ★ Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate
- ★ Streamlined Evaluation Documentation

★ **61 Days from Solicitation Release to Award**

Objective

FEMA needed to make an award within 3 months to avoid a bridge contract. During the planning phase, the team knew that techniques like advisory down-selects, oral presentations, and confidence ratings would streamline the time between solicitation release to award. However, before they could release a solicitation, they needed to complete their market research and IGCE and formulate both the evaluation criteria and procurement strategy quickly.

Innovation

Rather than communicating back and forth over email to prepare those documents, which often took months, the team held three JAM sessions and created them in just 6 days. In between sessions, the program lead contacted vendors to ensure the evaluation strategy aligned with industry's capabilities and

to quickly update the market research report. The team then immediately released a draft solicitation to vendors to obtain their feedback on the revised evaluation criteria and strategy.

Outcome

The final solicitation was released 38 days after the first JAM session, with 61 days between solicitation release and award. By using the JAM sessions, the team was able to release the solicitation two months earlier than if they had drafted the documents solely via email.



Welcome to the Neighborhood

For the third year in a row, teams outside DHS engaged with the PIL to find new ways to streamline their procurements to better support the mission needs of their agencies. Newcomers in FY 2023 include AmeriCorps, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

**AmeriCorps
Member and Volunteer
Management System**

\$18 Million
FAR 8.405-2

2 Phases
Phase 1: 4 quotes
Phase 2: 3 quotes



SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE



AmeriCorps' member and volunteer intake system was not user-friendly and resulted in a high number of incomplete applications. The team wanted a vendor that would use an agile methodology to develop a modernized, cloud-ready management system. Their use of 1-hour oral presentations, which included one mission-focused scenario question and one on-the-spot question, led to a high-performing vendor receiving the award.

Contracting Office Lead: Stephen Lade (pictured top)
Program Lead: Linda Southcott (pictured bottom)

TECHNIQUES USED

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Advisory Down-Select | Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate |
| Confidence Ratings | Technical Demonstrations |
| On-the-Spot Consensus | |
| Oral Presentations w/ Interactive Dialogue | |



**USDA
USFS Region 5
Environmental Site
Investigation & Cleanup**

\$30 Million
FAR 12 & 15.3

2 Phases
Phase 1: 6 proposals
Phase 2: 4 proposals



SMALL BUSINESS SET-ASIDE

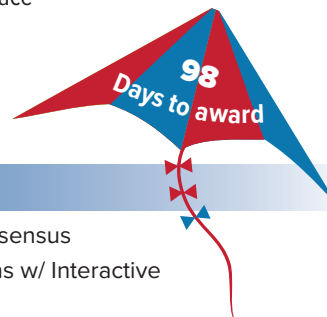


To ensure the most highly capable vendors received an award for this environmental services contract, the USDA Forest Service team replaced long written proposals with oral presentations where vendors responded to real scenarios they may encounter when performing work on the contract.

Contracting Office Lead: Klenise Wallace (pictured top)
Contract Specialist: Kelly Ollivant (pictured bottom)

TECHNIQUES USED

| | |
|---|--|
| Advisory Down-Select | On-the-Spot Consensus |
| Confidence Ratings | Oral Presentations w/ Interactive Dialogue |
| Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry | Share Evaluation Documentation |
| Interview-Style Questions | |
| Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions) | |



**MCC
Staff Recruitment Planning
and Implementation
Services**

\$5 Million
FAR 13.303

2 Phases
Phase 1: 7 quotes
Phase 2: 5 quotes



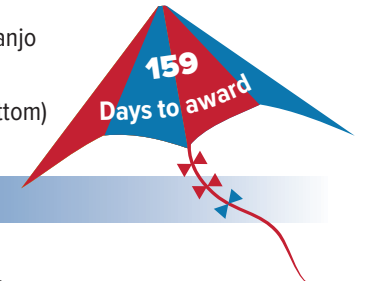

MCC planned to issue a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for staff recruitment planning and implementation services but in the past, they had difficulty obtaining sufficient competition for similar requirements. The MCC team increased vendor interest in this requirement by sharing the draft solicitation and holding industry days with vendors.



Contracting Office Lead: Jacqueline Naranjo (pictured top)
Program Lead: John Hanley (pictured bottom)

TECHNIQUES USED

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Advisory Down-Select | On-the-Spot Consensus |
| Brief Proposal Submission | Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate |
| Confidence Ratings | |
| Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions) | |



**VA
Medical/Surgical Prime
Vendor Generation Z**

\$15 Billion
FAR 12 & 15.3

2 Phases
Phase 1: 6 proposals
Phase 2: 6 proposals



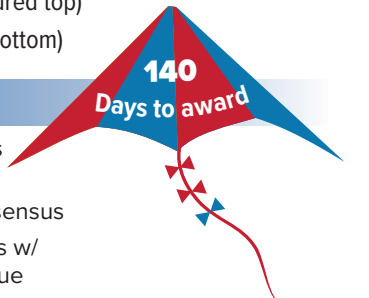

To avoid a fourth bridge contract and to manage protest risk, the VA team used the Highest Technically Rated with a Fair and Reasonable Price (HTRRP) technique to streamline the evaluation of a mission-critical, \$15 billion medical supplies contract. Because multiple vendors would be selected, the PIL advised using the HTRRP technique, which is recommended only for multiple-award contracts.



Contracting Office Lead: Ashley Nguyen
Program Lead: David Eubanks
Contract Specialist: Justin Lumpkin (pictured top)
Legal Advisor: Jason Fragoso (pictured bottom)

TECHNIQUES USED

| | |
|--|--|
| Advisory Down-Select | Involve End-Users (JAM Sessions) |
| Brief Proposal Submission | On-the-Spot Consensus |
| Confidence Ratings | Oral Presentations w/ Interactive Dialogue |
| Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry | Streamlined Evaluation Documentation |
| Highest Technically Rated Offeror with a Fair and Reasonable Price | |



"As USDA's Procurement Innovation Effort (PIE) Innovation Lead, I learned how to conduct coaching sprints as an effective way to support the team with set check-ins to up the innovation momentum. I will be incorporating this practice into my coaching." —Mandie Lee, USDA



PIL Process Improvements

PIL Idea Competition Selects First Winners

Launched in FY 2021, the PIL Idea Competition is a crowdsourcing platform that empowers the frontline DHS acquisition workforce to solve process challenges that prevent procurements from moving at the speed of innovation. In FY 2023, PIL Idea Competition judges and executive sponsors chose winners for two competitions.



HSAM Appendix G—Checklist for Sensitive Information Process

Congratulations to Faith Berry, FEMA; Nelson Claridge, FEMA; Madeline Ward, ICE; and Phillip Smith, TSA! Faith, Nelson, and Madeline proposed an IT solution to improve the routing and approvals process of which implementation is ongoing. Phillip proposed the creation of a “class” Appendix G for similar requirements across multiple contracts which resulted in a 2023 policy update.



Madeline Ward
ICE



Faith Berry
FEMA

“I am thrilled to play an integral role in streamlining the DHS HSAM Appendix G—Safeguarding of Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Checklist required reviews. The efforts will allow for streamlined point of entry, status tracking of Components’ reviews, regulatory and policies compliance, as well as query reporting needs.” —Madeline Ward, ICE



Streamlining Procurement with Technology

Congratulations to Kathy Ekstrom, USCG; Brynn Sheehan, TSA; and Jordana Covrigaru, USCIS! To improve the current disjointed routing and approvals process for procurement documents, Kathy, Brynn, and Jordana proposed an IT solution of which implementation is ongoing.



Jordana Covrigaru
USCIS



Kathy Ekstrom
USCG



Brynn Sheehan
TSA

“I’m emboldened by the PIL Idea Competition’s commitment to leveraging technology to streamline acquisition solutions. A central platform for performing reviews, capturing approvals, and collecting signatures will ease enterprise-wide administrative burdens and provide needed consistency to the DHS acquisition workforce.” —Jordana Covrigaru, USCIS

“I am grateful for the opportunity to provide an innovative idea that will reduce the administrative barriers we face in procurement. Alleviating repetitive tasks and improving document approval processes will have a major impact on the future of all contracting professionals.” —Kathy (Kate) Ekstrom, USCG

PIL Idea Competitions in Prototype



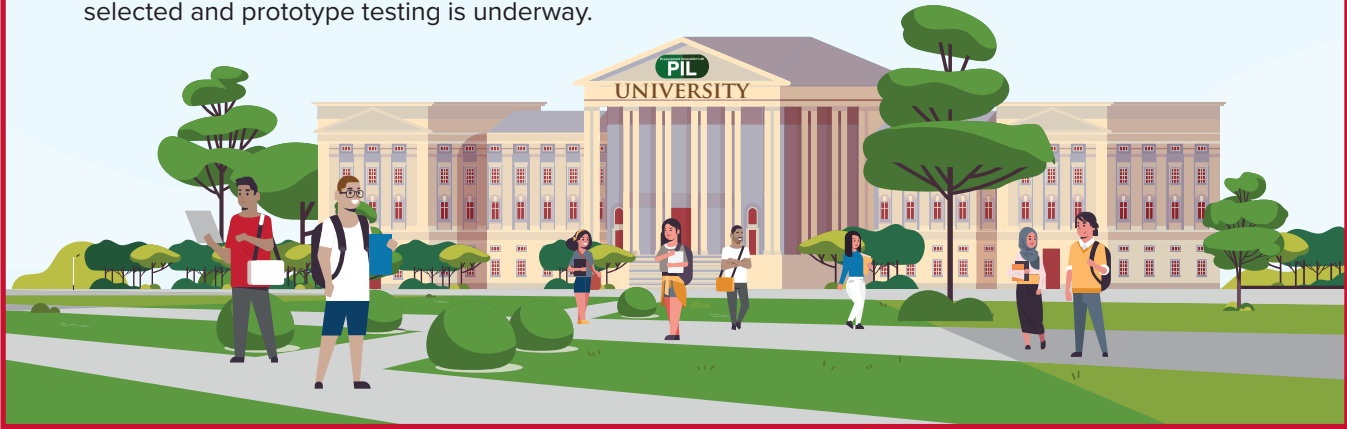
FLETC Improving PR Packages

Launched exclusively to the FLETC workforce, this competition seeks to improve the quality and timeliness of procurement request packages submitted by FLETC program office customers to the FLETC Procurement Division. In FY 2023, finalists were selected and prototype testing is underway.



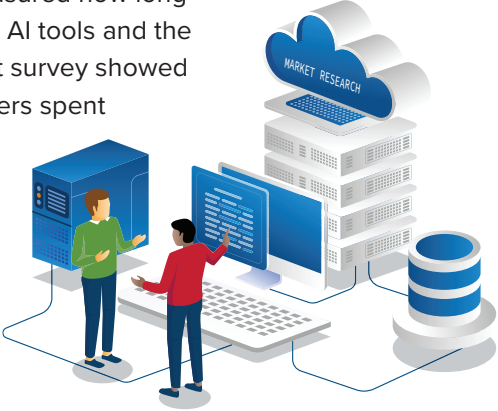
CBP Congressional Notification Process

Launched exclusively to the CBP workforce, this competition seeks to improve the internal congressional notification review process. In FY 2023, prototype testing of a BOT solution has been ongoing.



AI for Market Research

In FY 2023, DHS conducted a pilot program to determine the impact of the newly launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Market Research commercial solutions, which were awarded as a result of the multi-year, phased development of Government-wide commercial AI solutions led by the PIL. Under this pilot, over 200 acquisition workforce members from five DHS Components used the three different AI for Market Research tools for 6 to 9 months. A pre-pilot survey measured how long market research took without the use of these AI tools and the quality of this research. Results of the pre-pilot survey showed that, on average, acquisition workforce members spent more than 10 hours of manual work identifying vendors capable of performing a requirement. The post-pilot survey found that by using one of the AI for Market Research tools, the time spent finding capable vendors was reduced to a mere 2.5 hours!



“The tool is very user friendly and efficient in providing numerous resources to review in order to narrow down a number of vendors that could potentially provide the requirements and resources needed. It’s a great tool!”

— Deborah Norton, CBP Senior Business Operations Specialist

The Drive for Innovation

Since FY 2016, the PIL has shared lessons learned from procurement teams that have innovated across the federal acquisition community. Initial sharing platforms were PIL Webinars and PIL Boot Camps, both designed to more widely share the experiences of teams that tested innovative procurement techniques. Next, PIL Coaching Clinic was developed to teach others in the procurement community the necessary skills and best practices to coach teams in the use of innovative procurement approaches. Then, based on feedback from the procurement innovation community about their desire to learn more advanced innovative techniques, the PIL launched PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level. Most recently, PILCasts were added as a bite-sized option for the federal acquisition community, available on the PIL’s YouTube channel. This section highlights our training stories from FY 2023.



Third-year DHS Acquisition Professional Career Program (APCP) detailee, Davis Hayman, teaching at a PIL Boot Camp class at TSA.

How We Teach

The PIL teaches practical, real-world solutions, not theory. People, especially adults, learn best by hearing stories, so PIL trainings incorporate experiences from actual teams who used innovative procurement techniques, feedback provided by vendors and customers after award, project data, and protest decisions. The trainings are conducted by PIL coaches, the experienced procurement professionals and innovation experts who directly supported the procurement teams whose stories are being shared.

How Training Evolves

In FY 2023, the PIL collaborated with the Homeland Security Acquisition Institute (HSAI) to refresh its course offerings by including more practical, hands-on activities, shortening sections to allow for more group exercises, and rotating speakers to provide a variety of voices to encourage student engagement. These enhancements resulted in an increase to the average customer satisfaction score for most of the PIL’s offerings in FY 2023. The data speaks to PIL’s training evolution. PIL Boot Camp average satisfaction rating* increased from 4.6 (FY22) to 4.8 (FY23). PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level average satisfaction rating* increased from 4.8 (FY22) to 4.9 (FY23). Also, PIL Webinars average satisfaction rating* increased from 4.6 (FY22) to 4.7 (FY23).

* Satisfaction ratings are reported using a 5-point Likert scale.



“After more than 13 years of experience in Federal acquisitions, it is exciting to see procurement through a new lens. We are now applying this out of the box thinking when we assess our acquisitions. The procurement innovations enable us to provide better service to our customers by allowing us to tailor requirements to target ideal vendors for their needs.”

Jolomi Omatete, FY 2023 PIL Coaching Clinic Attendee and Contracting Officer at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health

PILCasts

The PIL team has broadcast PILCasts across the airwaves since FY 2021. The goal of the PILCast series is to provide the federal acquisition workforce with bite-sized trainings on procurement innovation topics in just 10 minutes or less! In FY 2023, the PIL team recorded 22 new episodes showcasing not only Government contracting officers, but industry partners as well. These episodes highlight that no single community member can meet the mission by using procurement innovation techniques alone — it takes collaboration between the procurement team and industry to create successful procurement outcomes.



Find us on YouTube to subscribe

Most Visited



Episode #39, The Impact of Delays on Industry (and Government) – A small business shares how delays can impact their costs and provides feedback for ways to improve solicitation outcomes.



Episode #32, A Procurement Innovation Case Study with the U.S. Coast Guard – A USCG Contracting Officer shares how his team used procurement innovation techniques to push boundaries to streamline the evaluation process.



Episode #31, Commercial Solutions Opening Program (CSOP) – The CBP AIA provides an overview of the CSOP program and shares a story where CBP used an optional evaluation factor during Phase 1.



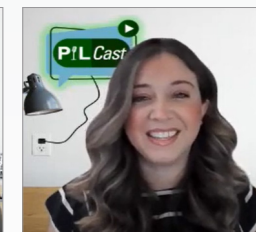
Episode #26, Discovery Sessions for Services – An ICE Contracting Officer shares how her team used a technique called Discovery to level the playing field among vendors and receive better proposals.



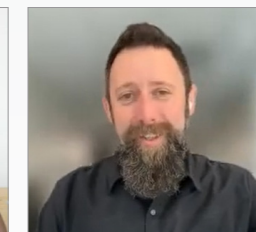
Episode #25, Procurement Innovations from a Small Business Set-Aside and a Protest – A team from DHS shares how they used procurement innovation techniques to engage with small businesses to award a \$111 million BPA and how they overcame a post-award protest.



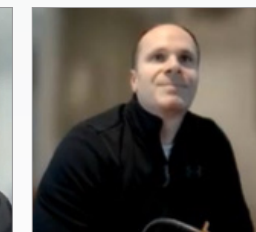
Peter Giambone, CBP



Brittany Tobias, ICE



Jason Stoner, Industry



Mark Hohmann, USCG



Carolyn Lethert, OPO

Now Showing: PIL Webinars

PIL WEBINAR #67

Cutting Through the Turkey – An S&T Protest Tutorial



C. Lethert G. White

A team from the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) shared their recipe for efficiently evaluating over 30 quotes for a \$111 million BPA set-aside for small business. They also shared the flexible language they used in their solicitation, which helped to overcome two Government Accountability Office (GAO) protests.

Presenters: Carolyn Lethert (OPO), Garth White (S&T), Scott Simpson (PIL), David Jablonski (PIL)

Tone from the Top: David Ritter, Deputy Executive Director, OPO

Attendees: 452

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating: 4.8 out of 5.0

PIL WEBINAR #72

Spring into Action: A GAO Decision on Streamlined Documentation



D. Geary A. Culko

How brief is too brief when using streamlined documentation with confidence ratings? A team from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) found out when they received a GAO protest decision. The team shared the limitations of streamlined documentation and how they quickly took corrective action to make the same award, without another protest.

Presenters: David Geary (ED), Andrew Culko (ED), Scott Simpson (PIL), David Jablonski (PIL)

Tone from the Top: Ann Van Houten, Executive Director, Acquisition Policy & Oversight, OCPO

Attendees: 282

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating: 4.8 out of 5.0

PIL WEBINAR #68

Innovating in a “Small” Small Business World



S. Sams C. Sepesy

Teams from FEMA, the U.S. Health and Human Services, and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) shared how they right-sized the use of innovative procurement techniques to streamline their small business set-aside procurements. Additionally, a small business vendor from the FDA procurement shared industry’s perspectives on the techniques.

Presenters: Spenser Sams (FEMA), Carolyn Sepesy (FDA), Tim Hanes (Industry), Trevor Wagner (PIL), Monica Taylor (PIL)

Tone from the Top: Bibi Hidalgo, Associate Administrator for Government Contracting and Business Development, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Attendees: 285

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating: 4.7 out of 5.0

PIL WEBINAR #73

The Search for Innovative Procurement Authorities



M. Oh D. Lang

A one-stop shop of experts from five non-traditional acquisition authorities provided an overview of each authority along with real stories and resources currently available to the DHS acquisition workforce: Prize Competitions, the CSOP Program, Partnership Intermediary Agreements (PIA), Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, and Other Transactions (OT).

Presenters: Kathleen Kenyon (S&T), Charmaine Richman (S&T), Dusty Lang (S&T), Melissa Oh (S&T), Sarah Todd (OCPO), Peter Giambone (CBP), Erick Reese (CBP), Katherine Crompton (PIL), David Jablonski (PIL), Sandra Oliver Schmidt (PIL)

Tone from the Top: Nina Ferraro, DHS Deputy Chief Procurement Officer

Attendees: 301

Average Customer Satisfaction Rating: 4.6 out of 5.0

WEBINAR ALL-STARS

Attended the most webinars in FY 2023



Avoiding the Potholes

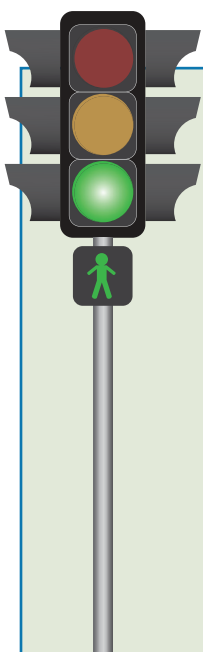
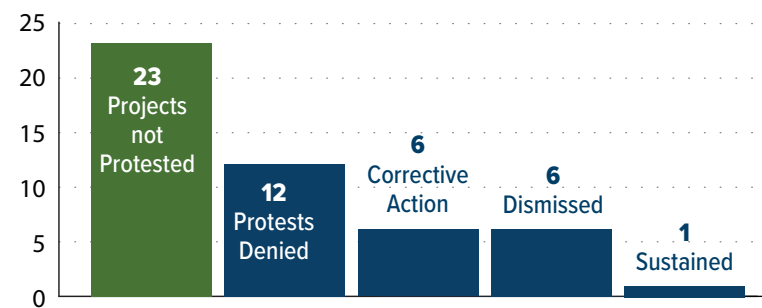
Every community has its potholes, and the acquisition community is no exception. There is no “protest proofing” a procurement. However, acquisition professionals can reduce the number of potholes by following their solicitation’s evaluation procedures.



The PIL views protests, when they do occur, as an opportunity to learn. In FY 2023, the procurement innovation community continued to learn lessons from protests at both the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the U.S. Court of Federal Claims (COFC). Below are examples of protests from two PIL projects this past year and what was learned from them.

- **The U.S. Department of Education Acquisition Management System** (GAO Case #: B-421196) demonstrated that a checklist may be too short to effectively discriminate between two offerors during the best-value tradeoff decision when using confidence ratings. However, the Government can still streamline documentation with bullets and/or short narratives. GAO Outcome: Sustained—corrective action taken
- **ICE Medical Services** (COFC Case #: 23-47C) demonstrated that a Phase 1 submission is not a legally binding offer, and therefore a vendor need not be registered on SAM.gov until the final phase response is submitted. COFC Outcome: Denied

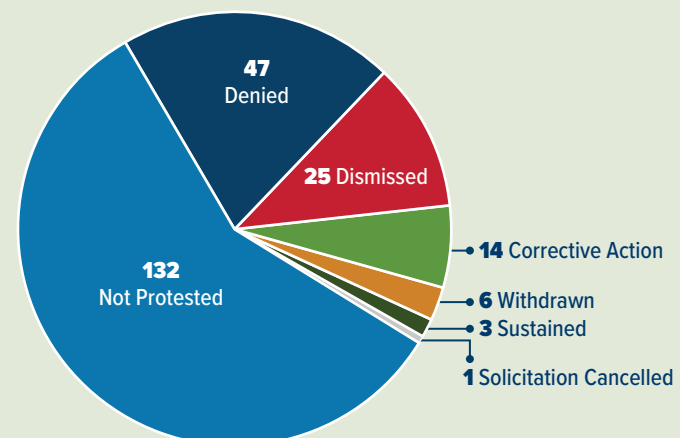
FY 2023 Protest Outcomes



FY 2023 Key Protests and Other Notable Protests

- **TSA – B-421134.2**, Accenture Federal Services, LLC, April 12, 2023
- **DCSA – B-420908**, Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services, Inc., October 26, 2022
- **FEMA – B-421325**, Spectrum Healthcare Resources, Inc., March 21, 2023
- **DOJ – B-419737.3**, International Center for Language Services, Inc., December 20, 2021

Resolution of PIL Project Protests (totals since FY 2015)



NEIGHBORS OF THE YEAR

Recognizing Success

We celebrate the FY 2023 procurement innovation neighbors who were recognized for their contributions to strengthen their agencies’ mission delivery through the procurement process.

- **FY 2023 Government Technology & Services Coalition’s (GTSC) Homeland Security Today Acquisition Excellence Award:** Chad Parker, USCIS, for Fusion Procurements
- **FY 2023 Information Technology Industry Council’s (ITI’s) Outstanding Acquisition Professionals of the Year:** U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ServiceNow Team
- **2023 Gov Forum’s Disruptive Tech Program Award Winner:** PIL and the CORMAC Envisioning and Prediction Enhancing System (CREPES), for the AI for Market Research initiative and tool.
- **2023 DHS Secretary’s Award for Innovation:** Brenda Peterson (OPO AIA), who was part of the Management Directorate’s HACK DHS Crowdsourced Vulnerability Assessment Services (CVAS) Integrated Program Team.
- **2023 National Contract Management (NCMA) World Congress Acquisition Hackathon Winners:** TSA team members Joseph R. Furtek, Kyra J. Froemke, and Tommy Zamfino. The Hackathon Challenge was to create a 2-page template using any procurement authority to enable a current open program in the Department of Defense (DOD) Tradewinds Solutions Marketplace to make an on-the-spot award to a vendor. The winning solution was used by a DOD procurement office.

Community Events

- In December 2022, the PIL team presented a one-hour overview of PIL Boot Camp – The Next Level at the NCMA Government Contracting Management Symposium (GCMS) in Bethesda, MD.
- In May 2023, the PIL team presented at the GSA Federal Acquisition Service Training (FAST) virtual conference, which focused on “Building a Future-Ready Government.” The PIL team shared procurement innovations for buying IT and cybersecurity services.
- In July 2023, TSA Contracting Officer Joseph R. Furtek presented his Fusion Procurements story at NCMA World Congress in Nashville, TN.



Chad Parker, GTSC Homeland Security Today award winner



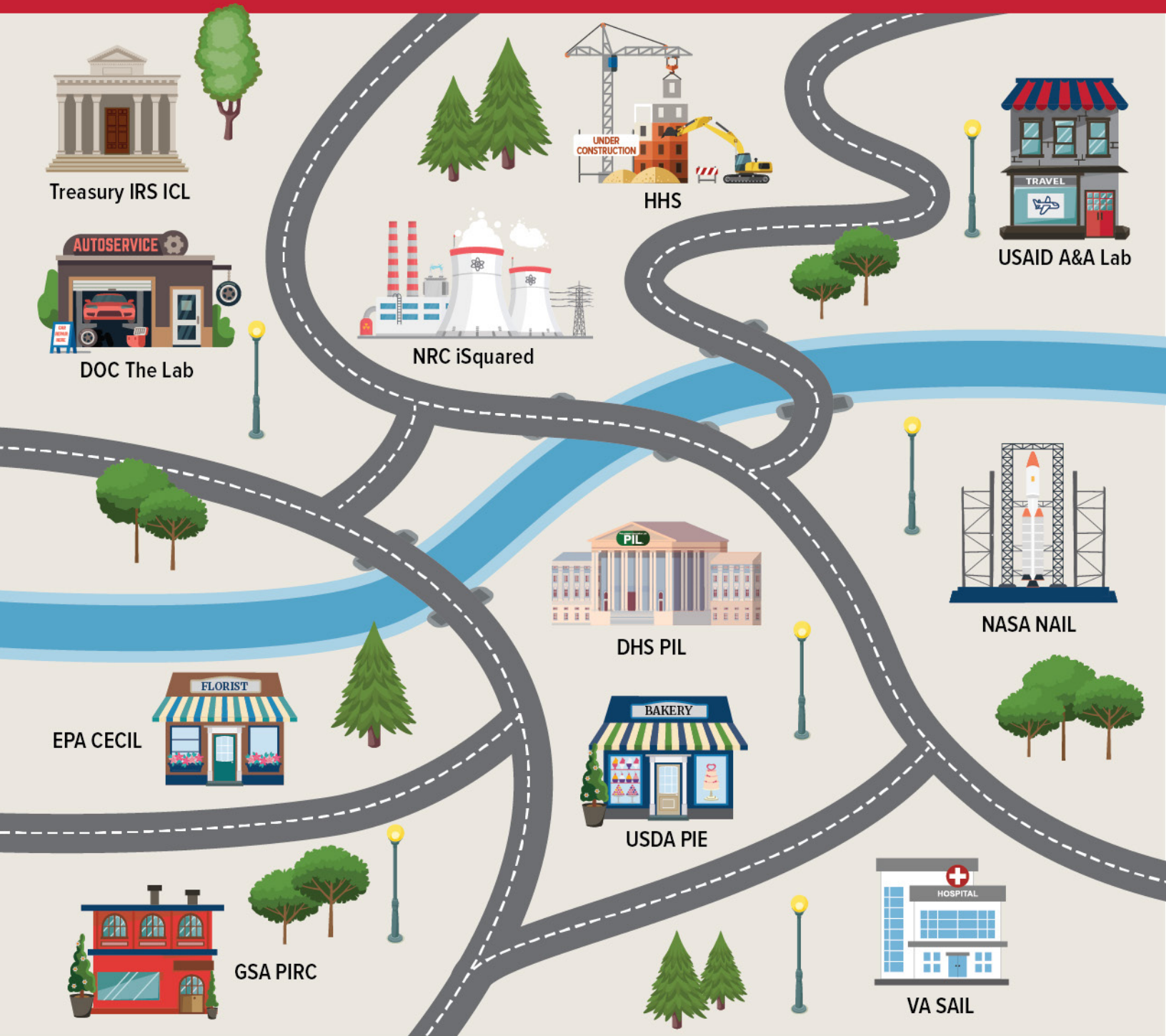
FDA Winners at ITI Awards



TSA Winners at NCMA World Congress

Your Map to the Federal Procurement Innovation Community

The federal procurement innovation community continues to grow, and this map shows some of the organizations established in recent fiscal years. The PIL is excited to partner with these organizations and continue to test and share across the federal procurement innovation community. Click on the available links at the bottom of the page to be redirected to that community member's public webpage.



[Department of Commerce \(DOC\) The Lab](#)

[Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)—Coming Soon](#)

[Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Procurement Innovation Lab \(PIL\)](#)

[EPA Cutting-Edge Contracting Innovation Lab \(CECIL\)](#)

[GSA Procurement Innovation Resource Center \(PIRC\)](#)

[NASA Acquisition Innovation Launchpad \(NAIL\)](#)

[Nuclear Regulatory Commission \(NRC\) iSquared Innovation Incubator](#)

[Treasury's IRS Innovative Contracting Lab \(ICL\)](#)

[USAID Global Acquisition & Assistance \(A&A\) Lab](#)

[USDA Procurement Innovation Effort \(PIE\)](#)

[VA Strategic Acquisition Innovation Lab \(SAIL\)](#)



Homeland Security