

PROCUREMENT INNOVATION LAB

YEARBOOK 2020



Charting the Course for
Procurement Innovation



Homeland
Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Chief Procurement Officer
Procurement Innovation Lab
dhs.gov/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 successful DHS acquisition professionals serve as innovative and flexible business advisors, delivering the right solutions to enable the DHS mission in a demanding and ever-changing threat environment. Fostering this success is the idea behind the DHS Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL), launched by the DHS Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) in March 2015. This Yearbook highlights our stories from Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. These stories exemplify how our acquisition community charted the course for procurement innovation to support mission outcomes, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Charting the Course for Procurement Innovation

REFLECTIONS FROM DHS CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER SORAYA CORREA

When I established the PIL in 2015, I envisioned a safe space for procurement teams to explore innovative strategies that would provide faster delivery, better solutions, and greater value to the DHS mission. Five years later, 89 procurement teams from across all of the Department's Components have entered the PIL and tested their innovative ideas to solve mission challenges. The PIL's framework of testing and sharing, backed by senior leadership support, fosters a collaborative learning culture in which teams feel empowered to take smart risks that improve mission outcomes.



FY 2020 was a year when, against all odds, we saw the currents of change produced in the PIL's first five years swell with new challenges and opportunities. Recognizing the value of innovation, more DHS procurement teams caught the wave and explored new techniques. As a result, the number of PIL projects increased by 117 percent compared to FY 2019. Additionally, the resiliency of the acquisition workforce was tested by a global health crisis. Our acquisition professionals demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability to ensure that the mission was met, while continuing to innovate how we buy through the virtualization of the procurement process.

This PIL Yearbook highlights how procurement teams across DHS—supported by their leadership, Acquisition Innovation Advocates, and PIL coaches—forged ahead with procurement innovations during FY 2020. It features the techniques they leveraged during the process and the outcomes they realized as a result. It also illustrates how these professionals are making procurement innovation an unstoppable force of cultural change across our Department. As these procurement teams share their stories with and learn from their peers across the Federal Government, their efforts have the ability to produce systemic change.

As members of our acquisition community continue to learn from one another and apply their creativity and new ideas to our procurement process and acquisition system, I hope you will consider piloting your own innovation journey. The PIL's leadership and coaches, along with a growing number of trained coaches across the DHS Components, are ready to help you navigate the unknown by mapping an effective, creative strategy to deliver the best solutions possible to our frontline mission at the time of need.

I am tremendously proud of our acquisition community, and know that with innovation comes great opportunity to support solutions for our Department's priorities and challenges. I look forward to your ideas yet to come!

A blue ink signature of Soraya Correa, written in a cursive style.

Soraya Correa
DHS Chief Procurement Officer

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A Beacon in Uncharted Waters



A new voyage begins each time a DHS procurement team makes a departure from business as usual and decides to explore procurement innovation techniques.

The Procurement Innovation Lab (PIL) was established in 2015 as an environment to safely test new techniques and ideas. When a procurement team steps into the lab, a small core of PIL coaches act as business advisors to support the team as they use the PIL process to apply creative ideas and problem-solving to their procurement challenges.

Planning the Voyage

Understanding that no two procurements are the same, the PIL helps teams chart their own course. Effective acquisition strategies consider all conditions—a customer’s unique needs, relevant marketplace trends, and potential challenges—before charting the way forward. That’s why PIL coaches never hand procurement teams a predetermined solution or template. Instead, the PIL places teams at the helm of their own procurements and works with them on strategies to reach their desired mission outcomes while exploring opportunities for innovation along the way.

Setting Sail

When procurement teams are ready to begin their innovation journey, the PIL shines light on innovative techniques to help teams find their way. PIL coaches consistently evaluate the techniques’ impact on procurement projects to ensure those techniques help the Department reach its identified procurement innovation objectives:

- Lower entry barriers for small and non-traditional businesses
- Encourage competition
- Shorten the time to award
- Increase the likelihood of successful outcomes under contract performance

This Yearbook highlights the significant progress made toward those objectives in FY 2020 by the PIL and the DHS acquisition community it supports. The story begins with our resilient response to the year’s challenges and then maps our progress since the PIL’s creation. It moves on to the testing of techniques through featured FY 2020 projects, followed by ways that knowledge was transferred to others. After brief stops to view the PIL’s government-wide impact and the formal recognition of our DHS acquisition peers, we conclude with a look ahead.

THE PIL’S NAVIGATION SYSTEM



The PIL fosters cultural change, promoting innovation and managed risk-taking through a continuous loop of testing and sharing new procurement ideas.

Staying the Course



From the moment it was launched in 2015, the PIL focused on building resilience, supporting teams in adopting agile procurement processes and overcoming obstacles. In FY 2020, this focus on resilience met a moment of opportunity: flexibility became the watchword as the PIL, and the DHS acquisition community as a whole, adapted to an unprecedented crisis and forged ahead to meet DHS's urgent resource needs.

Adjusting to Shifting Currents

Rather than using a global crisis as an excuse to abandon ship, a resilient DHS acquisition community continued to explore procurement innovations. In FY 2020, the PIL coached 37 procurement teams to contract award, more than doubling the number of requirements awarded with PIL support in FY 2019.

Rising to the Moment

The DHS acquisition community was not intimidated by the high seas of FY 2020. It not only steered around the year's challenges, but continued to ride the swelling waves of change by increasing its use of innovation techniques.

As the world shifted to a virtual business environment, DHS acquisition professionals adapted to keep pace. Procurement teams planning to use oral presentations as a procurement innovation quickly revised their solicitations to reflect the possible use of virtual presentations.

The PIL ensured that its coaching and events were available virtually as well. With the onset of remote work caused by the pandemic, in spring 2020 the PIL Open Lab was launched to provide the DHS acquisition community an informal space to convene and share stories and lessons with peers. The PIL also transitioned PIL Boot Camps and PIL Coaching Clinics to virtual formats, maintaining the fun and interactive approach previously offered in the physical training room.

Tracking the Value of Innovation

The PIL does not endorse change for change's sake. Innovation is promoted because it works. In FY 2020, PIL data was analyzed to ensure that the use of innovation techniques was backed by proven results. The measure of impact and scaling across the Department found that acquisition processes that include innovative techniques produce strong results, save time and money, and decrease protests. Innovation has proven to be far less risky than it is perceived. Results demonstrate that compliance and innovation go hand-in-hand to improve mission outcomes.

PIL Projects' FY 2020 Impact

Total Projects Awarded:
37

Cumulative Value:
\$2.9 Billion

Collective Cost Savings*:
\$267 Million

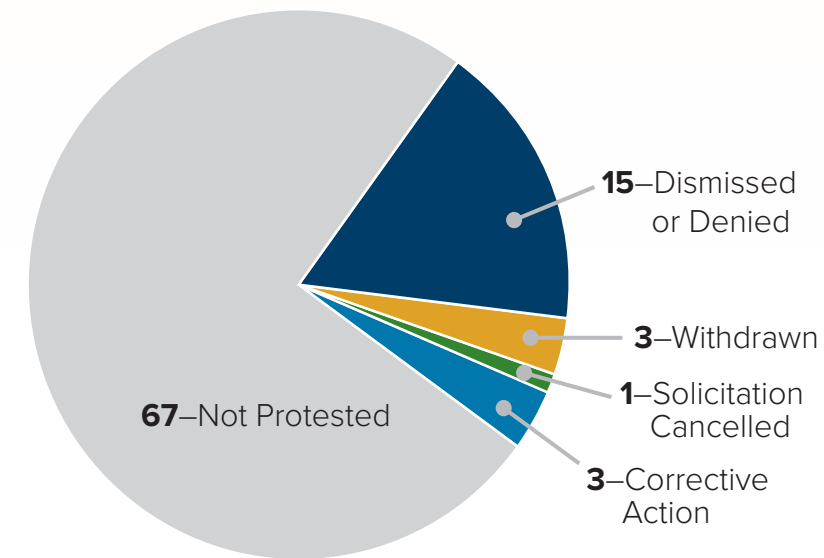
Average Time to Award:
4 Months

*Cost savings is calculated as the difference between the government cost estimate and the awarded contract value or awarded estimated contract value.

Safe Waters—Innovation's Strong Protest Results

The fear of a protest makes many acquisition professionals hesitant to try procurement innovation techniques. However, in analyzing the data from every PIL procurement project since FY 2015, the results tell a different story. Protests of PIL procurement projects are uncommon—and when they do happen, the innovation techniques often hold up in court.

PIL Procurements Protested, FY15–20



*This chart represents the bid protest status of the 89 PIL procurement projects awarded through FY 2020. These bid protests were filed at either the Government Accountability Office or the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

With zero sustained protests to date, DHS PIL procurement projects demonstrate strong protest results which, combined with the reduced time to award, cost savings, and mission outcomes evidenced, support the benefits of smart risk-taking and application of creativity and innovation in the procurement process.

The Quest to Innovate



Since the PIL was established, procurement innovation at DHS has steadily increased. In FY 2020, interest surged as the PIL guided more teams than ever to new horizons.

Tides of Change

In FY 2015, the Chief Procurement Officer launched the PIL to move DHS toward an innovative acquisition environment. In its first year, the PIL helped teams from two contracting activities navigate procurement innovation and hosted three training events.

Each year, the PIL guided increasingly more teams from across the Department; by FY 2019, every Component had completed a PIL procurement project. To support the growing interest, the PIL offered more webinars, introduced boot camps, and created digi-badge certifications.

In FY 2020, the currents of innovation met a moment of opportunity, leading to a 117 percent increase in projects. With more DHS teams than ever using innovation techniques—and multiple federal partners doing the same—the PIL is contributing to a wave of procurement innovation!

FY15

- » 2 PIL Projects
- » **PIL established** (March 2015)
- » **First webinar held** (May 2015)
- » **First procurement project awarded** (September 2015)
- » **Catch the Wave!** OPO and OSA test procurement innovation techniques.

FY16

- » 4 PIL Projects
- » **OMB announces initiatives to create federal “acquisition innovation labs”** (March 2016)
- » **15th webinar held** (April 2016)
- » **DHS AIA Council created** (May 2016)
- » **Catch the Wave!** TSA and OPO test procurement innovation techniques.

FY17

- » 12 PIL Projects
- » **First digi-badge issued** (October 2016)
- » **30th digi-badge issued** (June 2017)
- » **30th webinar held** (June 2017)
- » **Catch the Wave!** CBP tests procurement innovation techniques.

FY18

- » 17 PIL Projects
- » 9 PIL Boot Camps
- » **35th webinar held** (December 2017)
- » **Boot camps launched** (May 2018)
- » **100th digi-badge issued** (May 2018)
- » **Catch the Wave!** ICE, FLETC, FEMA, and USSS test procurement innovation techniques.

FY19

- » 17 PIL Projects
 - » 22 PIL Boot Camps
 - » **40th webinar held** (November 2018)
 - » **1,000th digi-badge issued** (May 2019)
 - » **Catch the Wave!** USCG tests procurement innovation techniques.
- (all DHS Components have completed a PIL Project)*

FY20

- » 37 PIL Projects
- » 14 PIL Boot Camps
- » **PIL celebrates 5 years** (March 2020)
- » **Boot camps go virtual** (July 2020)
- » **1,300th digi-badge issued** (July 2020)
- » **49th webinar held** (July 2020)

Journey with Us!

Ready to test the waters of innovation? There are several ways to support a more innovative procurement environment:



Shadow the PIL
Step into our lab to see innovation in action.



Get a PIL Coach
Let the PIL coach your next procurement through planning, implementation, and post-award learning.



Leverage the AIAs
Ask your Acquisition Innovation Advocate how your Component is innovating.



Build Your Own Lab
Create an acquisition innovation team within your organization.

The PIL is ready to guide you through this innovation journey! Email pil@hq.dhs.gov to get started.

KEY: **AIA:** Acquisition Innovation Advocate • **CBP:** Customs and Border Protection • **FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency • **FLETC:** Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers • **ICE:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement • **OMB:** Office of Management and Budget • **OPO:** Office of Procurement Operations • **OSA:** Office of Selective Acquisitions • **TSA:** Transportation Security Administration • **USCG:** U.S. Coast Guard • **USCIS:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services • **USSS:** U.S. Secret Service

All Hands On Deck



The PIL's quest to institutionalize innovation cannot be achieved by PIL coaches alone. The willingness of DHS procurement teams to test new innovation techniques has produced waves of innovation across the Department.

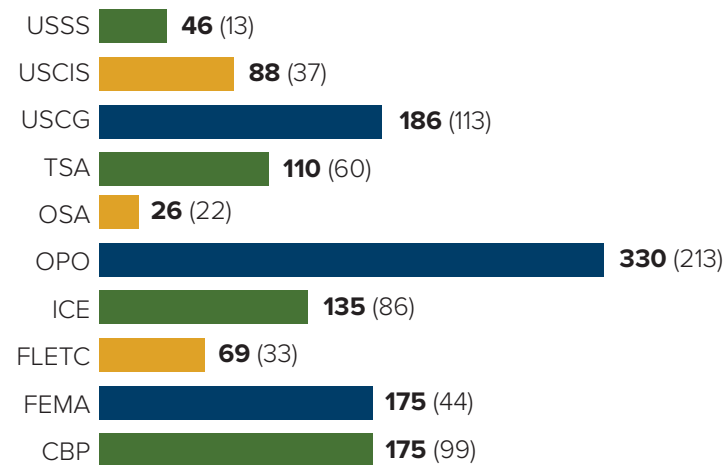
Procurement innovation at DHS is buoyed by Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs), an influential group committed to expanding use of procurement innovation techniques across the Department. In addition, increasingly more DHS acquisition professionals are participating in PIL trainings, reaching out to the PIL for shadowing opportunities, and even developing their own innovation teams.

Building Community with PIL Digi-Badge Micro-Credentials

PIL Digi-Badge micro-credentials recognize members of our DHS acquisition workforce for their innovative achievements. These credentials allow DHS procurement innovators to show off their innovation skills, incentivize knowledge sharing, and demonstrate the organizational value of individual achievements. The PIL Digi-Badge program helps bring together a community of innovators across the DHS acquisition workforce, supporting the cultural change that the PIL promotes.

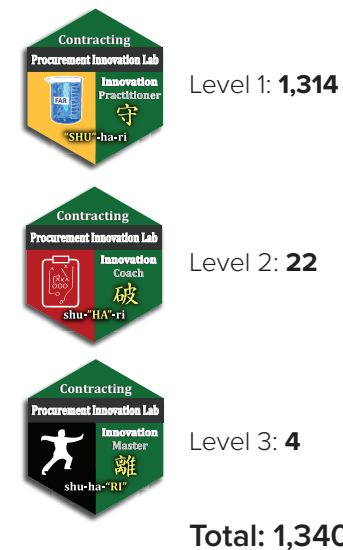
In FY 2020, 187 acquisition professionals—49 percent of whom were GS-1102 Contract Specialists—earned their first PIL Digi-Badge. These change agents at the operational level are steering improvements across the procurement process.

Digi-Badges by Component Through FY 2020 (1,340 total)



The number in parentheses indicates the subset of PIL Digi-Badges within that Component awarded to GS-1102 Contract Specialists.

Digi-Badges by Level Through FY 2020



DHS Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs)

These 10 AIAs help the PIL expand use of procurement innovation techniques across DHS:



Peter Giambone
Customs and Border Protection



Ryan D. Murray
Federal Emergency Management Agency



James Frye
Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers



James E. Abyad
Immigration and Customs Enforcement



Brenda Peterson
Office of Procurement Operations



Cathy Smith
Office of Selective Acquisitions



Evelyn Tyndell
Transportation Security Administration



Chad Parker
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



Maria L. Kersey
U.S. Coast Guard



Miriam Harris
U.S. Secret Service

CBP'S PROCUREMENT INNOVATION TEAM

A growing number of DHS Components and other federal agencies are embracing procurement techniques and standing up their own innovation teams. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which awarded its first PIL procurement in FY 2017 and has consistently increased its use of innovation techniques since then, is a prime example.

A few dedicated acquisition professionals have been instrumental in institutionalizing innovation at CBP. One is Contracting Officer and Deputy AIA David Seay. After experiencing the benefits of the PIL's procurement innovation techniques firsthand, Seay attended a PIL Coaching Clinic in 2019. He finished the course with the tools needed to coach other CBP procurement teams, scaling up the agency's capacity for acquisition innovation.

Another champion is Peter Giambone, an Acquisition Innovation Advocate who received the FY 2020 CPO Excellence Award for AIA of the Year. In May 2019, Giambone established a Procurement Innovation Team (PIT) to expand innovation across CBP. CBP's PIT borrows from the PIL's model of testing and sharing. CBP procurement teams that try innovation techniques share their results in the CBP Office of Acquisition's monthly newsletter, and an innovation champion in every CBP procurement division acts as a project sponsor for that division. Under the direction of Giambone and Seay, and with the support of CBP Office of Acquisition senior leadership, the PIT has formally coached four CBP teams in addition to providing informal support to several others.



To support the growing interest in innovation within its acquisition community, CBP stood up its own Procurement Innovation Team. Team members include, pictured from left to right, Josh Bedregal, Peter Giambone, Anna Nichols, Bartek Chwalek, and David Seay.

Successfully Tested Techniques

→ LOWERING ENTRY BARRIERS

Follow-on Production Authority Clause—If you use competitive procedures to award a contract under Other Transaction Authority, consider a clause that provides notice of a possible follow-on production contract that may be awarded without further competition.

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

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.

Multi-Phased Evaluations—Narrow down the number of offerors to evaluate. The PIL suggests 2–3 offers for every anticipated award in order to maximize each offeror’s Probability of Win (pWin).

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 non-competitive offerors self-select out of the competition, they have no standing to file a protest.

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

NEW Leveraging Procurement Flexibilities—In addition to the flexibilities in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, DHS has other procurement flexibilities to ensure we can access the right companies in order to meet mission needs. These include Other Transaction Authority, Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program Authority, and Prizes and Challenges Authority.

🕒 SHORTENING TIME TO AWARD

Phased Prototyping—Use modular contracts or options to prototype and test a solution. If the solution proves successful, exercise an option for a low rate of initial production, and even one for the full rate of production items. User feedback during prototyping and testing with awardees is crucial to this innovation.

Video Proposals—Have the offeror use a smartphone or laptop to record a 10-minute video of themselves talking about one technical factor and then have them upload it to YouTube for the government to evaluate. It saves time and is great for down-selects!

Comparative Evaluation—Stay in the correct FAR lane and document accordingly. Where appropriate, skip adjectival ratings, and document the comparative evaluation.

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

Confidence Ratings—Substitute the traditional adjectival ratings with

confidence ratings to make your evaluation more than a counting exercise and to provide technical evaluators more flexibility.

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

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

Brief Proposal Submission—Minimize the burden on industry and government by requesting proposals for only the most important aspects of the requirement that differentiate offerors from one another and support the contract file.

NEW Interviews—Use video-conferencing platforms or conference bridges to schedule an interview with the offeror. During the interview, ask questions related to your evaluation factor such as the company’s prior experience or an overview of its proposed concept or solution.

🏆 ENCOURAGING COMPETITION

Evaluate Innovation—Incentivize industry to incorporate innovation into its proposed product or service by asking questions relevant to innovation during proposal submission, and ensuring innovation is included in the evaluation factors so industry knows they will receive credit for their ideas.

Qualified Bidders List/Qualified Products List—Tired of receiving unqualified proposals? Use this FAR subpart 9.2 technique.

Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry—Release draft requests for proposal with Sections B, C, L, and M to get early feedback, communicate desired objectives, and maintain communication throughout your acquisition!

Group Oral Debriefing(s)—Too many offerors to give oral debriefings? Don’t give up. Consider group oral debriefings in addition to individual written debriefings. OMB’s “Myth-busting 3” memo highlights this DHS approach.

Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria—Make sure your evaluation criteria focus on specific mission outcomes and challenging areas of performance, such as “usability” or

“mission alignment” —this really differentiates among the offerors.

Interview-Style Questions—Make “experience as a technical evaluation factor” more meaningful by simply asking questions! Use your mission to provide context and ask targeted questions about the offeror’s related experience. For example: “Describe your experience working with large quantities of data from a variety of sources.”

Affordability—Consider giving vendors a target price or a narrow price range to reduce gamesmanship in the bid and proposal process. For example, if the Independent Government Cost Estimate is \$75M, consider posting a range of \$70M–\$80M in the solicitation. The government can select a vendor with a price under, in between, or over the target or range like any best value tradeoff.

NEW Rates Only Pricing—In contrast to the typical price submission model, the government only asks vendors to submit their best hourly rates. The government applies rates to an estimated number of hours for each labor category to arrive at a total evaluated price.

🎯 INCREASING SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

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 should not constitute discussions.

Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate—After evaluations are complete, consider negotiating 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 conducted under FAR 15.3.)

Technical Demonstrations—“Show Me, Don’t Tell Me”—let an offeror prove its product by having evaluators actually see and test the product.

Technical Challenges—Evaluate how an offeror powers through a real-world exercise. How does the team interact?

Enhanced Contract Type Conversion—Build flexibility into your solicitation to allow for future

conversion from one contract type to another, such as from time-and-materials to firm-fixed-price.

Oral Presentations—Substitute all or portions of a written proposal for less to read. Try it with on-the-spot questions. Oral presentations can be performed in person, by video conference, or by phone.

Involve End-Users—To get the best results, structure your solicitation and evaluation factors based on what is most important to end-users. Include end-users throughout the process to ensure the results of the procurement work for their needs.

Betterment—A betterment is any instance where the proposed solution exceeds the government’s requirement in a meaningful way. The offeror should provide information explaining the promise of the betterment and its value to the government.

NEW Sample Products—Assess offerors’ true capabilities by including a project-related deliverable as an evaluated element of the proposal submission process.



At the Helm

Testing Innovation

Serving as a compass for acquisition professionals testing the waters of innovation, the PIL actively shares the successes and challenges of the procurement teams it coaches. A continuous cycle of testing and sharing ensures that lessons learned from previous teams' journeys are used to help other members of the acquisition community map their own procurement strategies.



This section features stories from nine procurement teams coached by the PIL that made awards in FY 2020. It highlights how each team used creative acquisition solutions to solve their unique mission problems and what the teams learned from the procurement innovations used. It also illustrates adjustments the teams made to adapt to challenges created by the pandemic; notably, the PIL coached several teams through DHS's first-ever use of virtual oral presentations.

This section also summarizes three PIL Process Improvements launched in FY 2020. The PIL partners with colleagues across the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer to support procurement teams by removing barriers and improving processes.

The nine PIL Procurement Projects featured are:

- USCG Information Systems Division (ISD) Professional Services
- OPO Desktop Support Services (DSS) 2.0
- CBP Investment Analysis Office (IAO) Integrated Consulting and Business Program Support Services
- OSA National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services (NCATS)
- TSA Information System Security Officer (ISSO) Support Services
- ICE Training Management Support System (TMSS)
- USSS External Parking Garage Services
- FEMA Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) Doctrine Support
- FEMA Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Communications

The three PIL Process Improvements featured are:

- Maximizing Regulatory Flexibilities Through Practice-Focused Policy
- Creating An Innovation-Friendly Culture: Using Trends to Inform the PIL Framework Across DHS
- Implementing Supportive Oversight

PIL Procurement Projects Awarded in FY 2020

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

- Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS)
- Leadership Institute
- Linear Ground Detection System (LGDS) Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program Awards
- Cost Estimation and Analysis Support Services
- Investment Analysis Office (IAO) Integrated Consulting and Business Program Support Services
- Targeting and Analysis Systems Program Directorate (TASPD – Small Business Set-Aside)
- Targeting and Analysis Systems Program Directorate (TASPD – Unrestricted)

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- Motor Coach Evacuation
- Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) Doctrine Support
- Deployment Tracking System (DTS)
- Recovery Technology Programs Division (RTPD) Blanket Purchase Agreement
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) PIVOT Operations & Maintenance
- Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Program (HMTAP)
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) PIVOT Direct Services
- Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Standard Operations
- Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Communications

Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC)

- Role Players Support Services

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

- Training Management Support System (TMSS)
- Tri-Merged Credit Reports
- Law Enforcement Systems and Analysis (LESA)
- Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Transportation Guard Services for San Antonio, Texas

Office of Procurement Operations (OPO)

- PRISM Support Services
- Desktop Support Services (DSS) 2.0
- Science & Technology Coordination and Access Portal for Standards (CAPS)
- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) CommCube3 Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program Award for COVID-19
- Artificial Intelligence for Past Performance Phase 2 Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program Awards

Office of Selective Acquisitions (OSA)

- Technical Investigative Surveillance Equipment II (TechOps II)
- National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services (NCATS)
- Intelligence Information Assurance and Cybersecurity Services (I2ACS)

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

- Big Credentialing
- Information System Security Officer (ISSO) Support Services

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

- Information Systems Division (ISD) Professional Services
- Environmental Data Server (EDS) for Search and Rescue Optimal Planning System (SAROPS)

United States Secret Service (USSS)

- Dignitary Protection Division (DPD) Perimeter Services
- James J. Rowley Training Center (JJRTC) Facilities Operations and Maintenance Services
- External Parking Garage Services
- James J. Rowley Training Center (JJRTC) Tactical Tower

Information Systems Division (ISD) Professional Services UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG)

USCG Gives Vendors Behind-the-Scenes Look at Operating Environment

CHALLENGE

The Aviation Logistics Center (ALC) enables the USCG mission execution with its depot maintenance, engineering, procurement, supply, and information services. The ALC directly supports 200 aircraft around the globe with 100,000 annual flight hours. ALC's Information Systems Division (ISD) was challenged to find a qualified vendor capable of providing information systems and information technology (IT) services for the three enterprise systems that power the ALC's many moving parts. In addition to finding qualified vendors, the team hoped to save time and reduce documentation during the evaluation.

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 16.505 procedures, the team structured a two-phase, advisory down-select process. For Phase 1, five vendors provided a six-page written submission of relevant experience. After Phase 1 evaluations, the team advised three vendors to continue, and all vendors took the government's advice. For those vendors advancing to Phase 2, the government utilized a new technique called Discovery, which provided each vendor an individual, two-hour session with the government to review the ISD's complex operational environment first-hand and to ask questions of the requirement owners. Next came oral presentations with on-the-spot questions and interactive dialogue in a question-and-answer format. For the evaluations,

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Advisory Down-Select
- Discovery
- Oral Presentations
- Interactive Dialogue
- Interview-Style Questions
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation
- Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate



the team used confidence ratings and on-the-spot consensus. The team also streamlined its evaluation documentation using brief bullet points. Finally, the team used the 'select best-suited, then negotiate' technique to negotiate staffing levels and price with only the best-suited vendor.

RESULT

In less than six months, the team made a \$57 million award—significantly lower than the \$79 million it estimated. The procurement was protested to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on several grounds, most notably a claim that the best-suited negotiations were "unequal discussions." The GAO denied the protest.

"The use of PIL techniques saved time by streamlining the evaluation processes and award documentation. Though there was a GAO protest against the award decision, only one issue raised in the protest related to the use of a PIL technique. The favorable resolution of that protest emphasized the substantial flexibility agencies have to determine and apply innovative and streamlined evaluation and award procedures in FAR 16.5 'fair opportunity' task order competitions."

—ALLEN LOTZ, ESQ., Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard



Desktop Support Services (DSS) 2.0 OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT OPERATIONS (OPO)

More Than a Product: OPO Searches for a Strategic Partner to Support IT Transformation

CHALLENGE

The DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) develops and maintains a DHS Management/Headquarters (HQ) IT infrastructure environment for approximately 12,000 users. When OCIO decided to change its IT support services model after nearly two decades, it wanted to catch up and keep up with the rapidly changing IT industry. For Desktop Support Services (DSS) 2.0, OCIO desired a company that could not only upgrade its current help desk, end-user, and ancillary support, but also strategically partner with the office to transform the end-user experience through ongoing improvements that keep pace with industry standards.

INNOVATION

The procurement team used Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 procedures to issue a single-award blanket purchase agreement (BPA), using a two-phase, written proposal process with an advisory down-select. For Phase 1, 22 vendors provided written proposals in response to interview-style questions about corporate experience. Six vendors were advised to proceed to Phase 2, which consisted of non-traditional written submissions describing management and technical approaches. Vendors responded to a new set of interview-style questions and

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Involve End-Users
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Interview-Style Questions
- Advisory Down-Select
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings



challenge scenarios, which allowed the government to assess each vendor's ability to meet the requirements. The team also used confidence ratings and on-the-spot consensus in its evaluation.

RESULT

The team issued a \$450 million, single-award BPA in less than four months—six months faster than the original DSS BPA awarded in 2014. The advisory down-select process contributed to a significant time savings by inviting only the highest-rated vendors to Phase 2. Additionally, the two-phase written proposal process using interview-style questions kept the vendor responses focused on the most important capabilities and approaches.

"The DSS 2.0 solicitation culminated in a successful award of a strong mission-support vehicle and valuable tool for the OPO and Information Technology Acquisition Center to use while providing customer-focused, mission-support acquisition services."

—GREGORY RUDERMAN, Associate Director & Contracting Officer, Office of Procurement Operations



Investment Analysis Office (IAO) Integrated Consulting and Business Program Support Services

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION (CBP)

Starting Over: CBP Office Uses Innovation to Overcome Repeat Protests

CHALLENGE

In 2018, CBP’s Investment Analysis Office (IAO) battled multiple rounds of protests when trying to purchase consultant support services for financial modeling, business transformation, data analytics, strategy, and training. The protested solicitation utilized a traditional, single-phase, written proposal process, with individual evaluations and traditional adjectival ratings. After canceling the solicitation, the procurement team developed a new acquisition strategy that reduced the risk of protest and resulted in a better mission outcome.

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 procedures to issue a single-award blanket purchase agreement (BPA), the team used a two-phase, paperless proposal process with an advisory down-select. For Phase 1, two vendors completed a 60-minute phone call on experience. Both vendors were advised to proceed to Phase 2, which consisted of a virtual oral presentation on technical and management approaches. The team also used a revolutionary approach to price submissions: vendors submitted their best hourly rates, which CBP applied to an estimated number of hours per labor category to arrive at a total

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Advisory Down-Select
- Oral Presentations
- Interactive Dialogue
- Rates Only Pricing
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation
- Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate



evaluated price. The team used confidence ratings and on-the-spot consensus to evaluate, along with streamlined documentation to support its selection.

RESULT

The team awarded an \$84 million BPA in just over three months. To manage the risk of protest, the Contracting Officer provided the unsuccessful vendor its evaluation report and scheduled a teleconference to answer questions. The team was able to make an award to support the IAO mission without a bridge contract or protest.



“A thorough evaluation, fulsome documentation, and transparency in the procurement process are not only helpful in winning a protest—they can also prevent a protest from happening at all, allowing the contract to proceed without delay.”

—ROSS BOONE, Attorney, U.S. Customs and Border Protection

“The IAO procurement exemplifies how being open to innovation, while closely collaborating to manage risk along the way, can help a team efficiently accomplish the ultimate goal of arriving at a defensible award decision.”

—JODI L. SILCOX, Senior Attorney, U.S. Customs and Border Protection



National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services (NCATS)

OFFICE OF SELECTIVE ACQUISITIONS (OSA)

NCATS Uses Simulated Lab to Test Skills of Cybersecurity Vendors

CHALLENGE

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s (CISA) National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services (NCATS) division provides four types of cybersecurity assessments: Risk and Vulnerability Assessments, High Value Asset Assessments, Remote Penetration Tests, and Red Team Assessments. To ensure long-term competition and broaden skill sets, CISA wanted to shift support for these assessments from federally funded research and development centers to industry. The team needed a procurement strategy that allowed vendors to demonstrate their ability to perform the work.

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 procedures to issue multiple blanket purchase agreements (BPAs), the team used a two-phase, paperless proposal process to see the vendors’ expertise in action. For Phase 1, six vendors submitted a 15-minute YouTube video describing staffing and experience related to NCATS’ four assessment types. All six vendors were advised to proceed to Phase 2, during which they participated in a live skills test simulating the NCATS mission at a custom-built Skills Lab. In a 30-minute briefing, vendors explained their methodology and highlighted critical vulnerabilities. The team used on-the-spot consensus, confidence ratings, and streamlined documentation for both phases.

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Involve End-Users
- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Video Proposals
- Advisory Down-Select
- Oral Presentations
- Interactive Dialogue
- Technical Challenges
- Interview-Style Questions
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation



RESULT

While intending to award only three BPAs to the most highly rated vendors, the government awarded five \$145 million BPAs after grasping the different concepts in which each vendor excelled. Each BPA included on- and off-ramp procedures to allow the flexibility to add additional vendors during the life of the BPAs and remove non-competing or unsatisfactorily performing vendors. The BPAs help CISA protect DHS’s systems and allow other government agencies access to this critical mission support.

“I’d honestly become pretty frustrated with the entire procurement process at DHS. It had become inefficient, cumbersome, and lacked any operational focus. I mean, how does locking a team of people in a room for months reviewing proposals really tell me if a company can do the work? Then I met the PIL. We built out a Skills Lab where we could evaluate vendors in real time performing the same tasks they would perform on the contract. We saw firsthand who could do the highly technical work and who couldn’t.”

—KIRK LAWRENCE, Program Manager, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency



Information System Security Officer (ISSO) Support Services TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA)

Buying Once for All: TSA Consolidates System Security Contracts

CHALLENGE

Just as the TSA screens airline passengers prior to travel, the agency takes similar security precautions with its information technology. All agency IT systems must be regularly screened and managed by an Information System Security Officer (ISSO) to remain operational. Over the years, as various offices purchased ISSO services for their individual systems, TSA accumulated multiple contracts for nearly 40 ISSOs managing approximately 80 systems. When the agency had a requirement for ISSO support in FY 2020, it originally planned to continue in this tradition by making up to five awards to support eight offices. However, the procurement team chose to leverage procurement innovation to develop a consolidation strategy that would save time, money, and resources. TSA consolidated all five awards into a single small business set-aside under the Chief Information Officer—Solutions and Partners 3 (CIO-SP3) Government-Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 16.505 procedures, the team used a two-phase advisory down-select process with written submissions for both phases. For Phase 1, seven vendors submitted a five-page template including both broad overall experience and specific experience related to the solicitation. Three of the seven vendors were advised to proceed to Phase 2. Only two vendors proceeded to Phase 2 due to the third vendor's delayed response to the advisory down-select notification. Phase 2 consisted of a 19-page technical approach and price proposal.

"Partnering with the PIL gave me confidence and support in applying two separate and distinct innovative techniques to one acquisition. The advisory down-select drastically shortened the timeframe required to evaluate proposals, and using comparative evaluation allowed our team to focus on noteworthy observations without having to categorize them by predefined adjectival ratings."

—STACEY SANTHUFF, Contracting Officer, Transportation Security Administration

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Interview-Style Questions
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Advisory Down-Select
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Comparative Evaluation
- Select Best-Suited, Then Negotiate
- Streamlined Documentation



Because there were so many highly qualified vendors on the GWAC, the government did not feel traditional adjectival ratings or confidence ratings would be effective. By comparing proposals to each other in both phases and documenting noteworthy observations, the team was able to determine which vendor was the most advantageous. For both phases, the team used on-the-spot consensus and documented noteworthy observations.

RESULT

The team made an award just 49 days after the solicitation's release. The overall value of the task order was \$30.4 million, which was less than the independent government cost estimate for the total potential performance period of 57 months. The nine-month base period allowed the government to accommodate the various end dates of the five legacy contracts.



Training Management Support System (TMSS) IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE)

Functionality and Security: A Package Deal for ICE Training System

CHALLENGE

The ICE Office of Leadership and Career Development (OLCD) was required to replace its outdated Training Management Support System (TMSS) with a secure, cloud-hosted, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), enterprise TMSS. The new TMSS would enable ICE to administer and manage instructor-led training and other career development training activities for more than 25,000 ICE employees and contractors. The system needed to maintain a high level of security to ensure the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation information of ICE officers would be legally defensible in court.

INNOVATION

OLCD's procurement team wanted more than just words on paper as proof that a TMSS could meet its functionality and security criteria. They needed to see technical solutions in action. Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 procedures, the team conducted a two-phase advisory down-select process. For Phase 1, four vendors submitted three-page written proposals of their prior relevant experience, which the team evaluated in only one day. Using the advisory down-select process, the evaluation team recommended that two of the four vendors advance to the next phase, and all vendors took the government's advice. In Phase 2, vendors gave in-person technical demonstrations of their proposed SaaS solutions based on minimum functionalities

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Advisory Down-Select
- Technical Demonstrations
- Oral Presentations
- Interactive Dialogue
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation



provided in the solicitation. Vendors also presented their technical methodologies and management and staffing approaches. Interactive dialogue during both the 'Show Me, Don't Tell Me' technical demonstrations and oral presentations deepened the team's insights into the proposed solutions. Finally, the team used on-the-spot consensus in both phases and used confidence ratings and streamlined documentation to reach an award decision.

RESULT

Only 79 days after the solicitation was released, ICE awarded a firm-fixed-price, \$12.4 million order for a TMSS with demonstrated ability to meet its functionality and security requirements. The evaluation team took a total of four days to complete the technical evaluation and documentation.

"I was sold after using the PIL innovative techniques for TMSS. The on-the-spot evaluations were especially a time-saver. An added bonus was that the PIL coach was available every step of the way. The various techniques have become standard practice for many of my acquisitions."

—PHYLLIS BROKENBOROUGH, Contracting Officer, Immigration and Customs Enforcement



External Parking Garage Services

U.S. SECRET SERVICE (USSS)

USSS Uses Procurement Innovation to Solve Its Parking Problems

CHALLENGE

Anyone who has driven in the Washington, D.C., area knows the frustration of searching for a parking space—imagine the challenge of finding 399! That’s exactly how many spaces the USSS needed for its fleet of sedans, minivans, full-size cars, and sport utility vehicles, as it sought various garage locations in the region. The USSS also had several specific requirements: indoor garages with an attendant, adequate lighting, 24/7 access, and the ability to accommodate various turn types and vehicle functions. While a 2019 contract had option periods remaining, it did not meet the USSS’s full mission requirements, since it was awarded using a lowest-price technically acceptable (LPTA) approach with only written proposals to capture the vendor’s technical acceptability. Additionally, every time the USSS needed to add or remove parking spaces, it had to do so via a contract modification. With the new procurement, the USSS wanted to ensure it made the award to a vendor who could actually meet the mission requirements while also offering flexibility to accommodate occasional shifts in the number of parking spaces.

INNOVATION

Using streamlined and flexible acquisition procedures from Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 13.5, the team awarded multiple blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) in a single phase. This new approach was selected as a best-value tradeoff instead of LPTA, with proposals consisting of one technical factor and price. Vendors provided a 10-page qualifications paper and hosted a site visit with driving demonstrations to enable evaluators to assess garage layout, parking

“The Secret Service’s revised parking contract benefits both the parking managers and the employees. We expect the BPA to provide us with a more efficient process for procuring parking in support of our dual mission.”

—APRIL SKINKER-FLEET, Lead Vehicle Fleet Specialist, United States Secret Service

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Involve End-Users
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Technical Demonstrations
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation



capacity, safe entry/exit, and adequate three-point-turn performance. The team’s approach also allowed for a partial solution, meaning a vendor could focus on a single location instead of each vendor having to always maintain 399 parking spaces.

Since many parking garage operators do not monitor opportunities posted to beta.SAM.gov (now SAM.gov), the team contacted all the possible garages in the area. For the five submitted quotes, the team visited and drove around each site; the visits revealed that not all the garages met the requirements as indicated in writing. For its evaluation, the team used confidence ratings instead of traditional adjectival ratings, leveraged on-the-spot consensus, and, in the spirit of simplified acquisitions, kept its documentation brief!

RESULT

Less than seven weeks from the solicitation’s release date, the team awarded three BPAs with an estimated value of just under \$7.5 million. Establishing these BPAs in lieu of a single contract gave the USSS flexibility and greater confidence that there would be no mission disruptions during performance.



Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) Doctrine Support

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

FEMA Awards Competitive Recompete 285 Days Faster Than Prior Contract

CHALLENGE

Responsible for developing FEMA’s doctrine and guidance, the Office of Response and Recovery (ORR) Doctrine program relies on both contractor and federal employee support to ensure continued production during disaster-related urgencies. ORR needed to recompetete its five-year, open-market, small business set-aside, single-award indefinite-delivery indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contract for a range of services such as research and analysis, process facilitation, document development, graphics, and technical writing and editing. The previous procurement attracted 22 vendors, but because several vendors had since graduated to large business status, the team wanted to ensure continued competition. The team also wanted to streamline the procurement process for a faster award as well as ensure mission success by infusing appropriate discriminators into the evaluation factors.

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.3 procedures, the team used a two-phase advisory down-select process. Phase 1 required a brief written submission of two factors (prior experience and a concept paper), each only five pages to manage the volume of submissions and help ensure only the most qualified vendors submitted a full proposal. The team received 18 proposals, but with shorter submissions and on-the-spot consensus, it completed Phase 1 reports in just one week! In the advisory down-select, the team recommended that only three of the 18 vendors proceed, and all vendors took the government’s

“The ORR Doctrine Support is the FEMA library for all directives, policies, guides, procedures, etc. It gives FEMA the foundation for completing mission-critical requirements. By utilizing the PIL approach, I was able to complete a requirement that normally takes over 250 days in only 52. This helped FEMA to continue its mission of ‘helping people before, during, and after disasters.’”

—ISAAC L. CHAPPLE, Contracting Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Interview-Style Questions
- Mission-Focused Evaluation Criteria
- Advisory Down-Select
- Oral Presentations
- Interactive Dialogue
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation



advice. Upon arrival for oral presentations in Phase 2, vendors were provided 60 minutes to prepare answers to six scenario-based questions and then 90 minutes to present their responses. An additional 60 minutes was allowed for interactive dialogue. This phase allowed vendors to demonstrate their understanding of the technical requirements, resulting in one vendor separating itself from the others. The team used on-the-spot consensus, confidence ratings, and brief documentation to support its decision.

RESULT

Strategically shaving time from each stage of the process, the team made an award just 52 days from the release of the solicitation—down significantly from 337 days on the prior procurement. Additionally, the contract award was 13 percent lower than the \$21 million independent government cost estimate.



Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Communications

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

Show Me the Messaging: FIMA's Vendors Create Flood Insurance Marketing Plans

CHALLENGE

In the past several years, many communities have experienced above-average flooding, creating costly damage not covered by most homeowners insurance. FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA), which is tasked with helping people find flood insurance, needed communications services to increase insurance sales, increase policyholders' understanding of their policies, and drive mitigation behavior. FIMA sought communications/outreach, marketing, and consulting services and support that demonstrated innovation, flexibility, subject matter expertise, and increased efficiency and effectiveness. Envisioning a procurement process beyond the traditional written proposal, FEMA wanted to evaluate actual marketing and communications materials.

INNOVATION

Using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 procedures, the team conducted a two-phase advisory down-select, 'Show Me, Don't Tell Me' process. For Phase 1, four vendors submitted a 10-page marketing plan with social media posts, a press release, and a radio transcript. Vendors also provided a five-minute video with their demonstrated prior experience, applying data analytics and behavioral science as stated in their marketing plans. Three vendors were advised to proceed to Phase 2, and all vendors took the government's advice.

PIL TECHNIQUES USED

- Draft Solicitation Shared with Industry
- Multi-Phased Evaluations
- Video Proposals
- Interview-Style Questions
- Sample Products
- Brief Proposal Submission
- Advisory Down-Select
- Oral Presentations
- Technical Challenges
- Interactive Dialogue
- On-the-Spot Consensus
- Confidence Ratings
- Streamlined Documentation



Phase 2 vendors provided a written performance work statement and an oral presentation. Upon arrival to the oral presentations, vendors were allowed three hours to prepare answers to a set of scenario-based questions and then presented their responses. The team concluded that one vendor's in-depth responses distinguished it from the competition.

RESULT

In just 57 days, the FIMA team awarded a \$112 million blanket purchase agreement (BPA) to a vendor with demonstrated ability to perform the work. The team's nine months of planning prior to the solicitation release was instrumental in developing an effective procurement strategy and moving efficiently through the process.

"The PIL should not be viewed as just a buzzword or a one-off hot take. The PIL has emerged as an essential part of the acquisition process and with coaches such as Trevor Wagner and FEMA advocates such as Denise Morales, the PIL is here to stay. I look forward to seeing how the PIL process continues to evolve."

—CHANCE CAIONE, Contracting Officer, Federal Emergency Management Agency



Maximizing Regulatory Flexibilities Through Practice-Focused Policy

DESCRIPTION

The DHS acquisition workforce is encouraged to improve mission outcomes by applying creativity and innovation to the procurement process. To do so requires a policy framework that maximizes flexibilities inherent in our regulatory structure. That's where the DHS Acquisition Policy and Legislation (APL) team comes in. In addition to ensuring that Office of the Chief Procurement Officer's (OCPO) policies and guidance comply with existing federal regulations, the practice-focused APL team goes a step further to ensure Departmental policies and guidance provide acquisition professionals with the full power of discretion, authorities, and latitude to creatively deliver customers' mission needs.

INNOVATION

In FY 2020, the APL team collaborated with DHS Component acquisition policy leads and the PIL to align several policy guides with the Chief Procurement Officer's vision for procurement innovation by eliminating any restrictions beyond what is required under existing federal policy, regulations, and law. The team sought to provide DHS acquisition professionals with information on the varied options and flexibilities of the Federal Acquisition Regulation. Through updated and expanded guidance, acquisition professionals can thoughtfully apply innovations within the context of existing regulatory guidance.

OUTCOME

The collaborative efforts of the APL team, led by senior procurement analysts Catherine Benavides and Kenneth Hill, resulted in FY 2020 updates to two guides that shape important aspects of the procurement process.

First, the *DHS Source Selection Guide* incorporates changes to source selection techniques and terminology, including examples of innovation techniques such as confidence ratings and consensus evaluation procedures.

Additionally, updates to the *DHS Debriefing Guide* improve the consistency, communication, and quality of DHS award notifications through debriefings and brief explanations of the basis of award decisions. The guide empowers Contracting Officers to plan and execute vendor communications through all stages of the acquisition process, with information on innovative best practices such as: informal feedback sessions even when a debriefing or brief explanation of award decision is not required; oral or virtual engagement; group oral debriefings; and obtaining vendor feedback on the solicitation and overall procurement process.

The APL team's focus on continual improvements to DHS acquisition policy supports the professional discretion of our acquisition workforce and encourages smart business practices. The team's work ensures that OCPO supports our DHS acquisition community by delivering value-added customer service and enabling an innovative procurement culture.

"While the approach may vary, APL and the PIL share the same focus of providing flexible support to Contracting Officers to meet mission needs."

—CATHERINE BENAVIDES, Senior Procurement Analyst, Acquisition Policy and Legislation



Creating an Innovation-Friendly Culture: Using Trends to Inform the PIL Framework Across DHS

DESCRIPTION

In FY 2020, the PIL conducted its third annual Competing Values Framework (CVF) assessment. It leveraged its partnership with the DHS Science and Technology Directorate Academic programs through the Center for Accelerating Operational Efficiency (CAOE), a DHS Center of Excellence managed by Arizona State University (ASU). ASU adapted the CVF assessment from Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983). The CVF measures how well DHS culture is changing to become more innovation-friendly and supportive of efficient, effective processes that enable the DHS mission.

INNOVATION

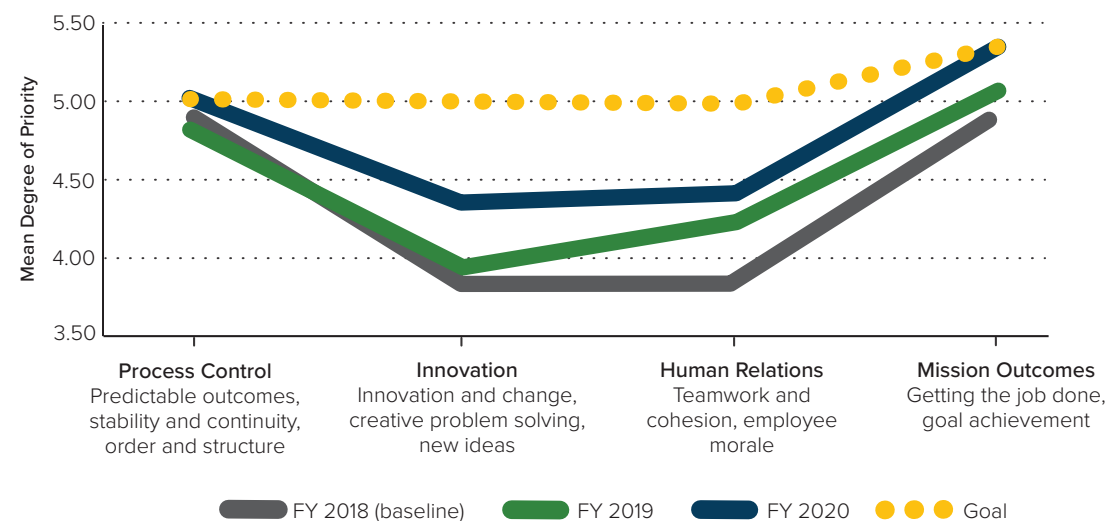
Armed with three years of initial trend data, in FY 2020 the PIL was able to assess cultural changes over time and begin to predict paths to cultural change. With this more robust data, it was time to incorporate the assessment findings into DHS contracting activities' goals. The PIL and CAOE researchers presented in-depth CVF findings to the Heads of Contracting Activities (HCA) Council and discussed the implications for procurement

processes and customer perceptions. This presentation was followed by individual meetings with the HCAs, upon request, which offered more detailed findings relevant to that contracting activity or Component. The HCAs that learned more about their organizational culture were able to use this additional insight in the development of their FY 2021 Procurement Innovation Action Plans. Further, the PIL utilized the findings to inform FY 2021 goals and engagement models with the HCAs and DHS Acquisition Innovation Advocates.

OUTCOME

By understanding Department-wide organizational traits and the values prevalent in each Component and contracting activity, OCPO and the HCAs can better support desired cultural change. The CVF data shows a shift towards OCPO's goal of a culture that places more equal significance on the values of process control, innovation, human relations, and mission outcomes. As demonstrated in the chart below, trends indicate that the DHS acquisition community has the ability to achieve this goal by FY 2024.

COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK (CVF) ASSESSMENT OF THE DHS ACQUISITION WORKFORCE



The FY 2020 Competing Values Framework assessment revealed that the DHS acquisition community is on track to meet the Chief Procurement Officer's goal of balancing four primary cultural values: process control, innovation, human relations, and mission outcomes.

Implementing Supportive Oversight

DESCRIPTION

The Office of the Chief Procurement Officer's (OCPO) Oversight and Pricing Branch (OPB) provides internal oversight of DHS contract actions to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and sound business practices. Historically, these reviews included little interaction with Contracting Officers and the DHS Contracting Activities faced challenges in correcting systemic problems that staff did not fully understand.

INNOVATION

Starting in FY 2020, OPB initiated a more supportive oversight process. The most important change is that OPB now engages in immediate interactive dialogue with Contracting Officers during the reviews. For each contract file assessed, the reviewer asks the Contracting Officer about the challenges

encountered during the procurement and explains any noted areas of noncompliance. As a result of the discussions, OPB is able to uncover policy issues and process bottlenecks while Contracting Officers receive immediate, targeted feedback on errors and best practices.

OUTCOME

The new approach to oversight reviews creates a learning mindset. Contracting Officers now know exactly what issues are identified and feel as though the reviewers hear their concerns. Although it will take several years to measure improvements in compliance with laws and regulations, the Heads of Contracting Activities and Contracting Officers report that the new process is more valuable than the non-interactive reviews.

"Oversight reviews are inevitable, as they should be. The collaborative approach the CPO team took to the most recent review showed they don't have to be painful."

—JOHN WHIPPLE, Contracting Officer, Office of Procurement Operations



Leveraging Employee Solutions to Procurement Challenges

Finding actionable solutions that contribute to the efficiency, economy, or improvement of DHS procurement processes and outcomes is difficult! We understand that members of our workforce, for a variety of reasons, may be hesitant to suggest potential solutions to procurement operations challenges. Perhaps they don't want to rock the boat by upsetting management. Maybe their solution needs to be tested before being implemented. Maybe they don't think their solution will be taken seriously by someone in a position to enact change.

The PIL is pursuing a creative way to remove these barriers: Idea Challenges. By crowdsourcing actionable solutions, the PIL and OCPO will be able to test ideas from the DHS acquisition community. In FY 2021, be on the lookout for the release of Idea Challenges and the prizes and incentives offered for implemented solutions!

Learning the Ropes

Sharing Innovation



When DHS teams share the results of PIL procurement projects, they give others in the federal acquisition community the tools and inspiration to try new ways of doing business. In FY 2020, the PIL's sharing framework supported a surge in innovation.

The PIL uses four primary methods to share its procurement innovation experiences: webinars, boot camps, coaching clinics, and open labs. In FY 2020, the PIL scaled sharing to meet the crisis moment and increased demand. PIL Boot Camps and PIL Coaching Clinics transitioned to virtual formats that maintained the interaction previously offered in person. Also, with the onset of remote work due to the pandemic, the PIL Open Lab was launched to offer the DHS acquisition community an informal space to share lessons with peers and obtain guidance from PIL coaches.

This section explores the impact of the PIL's sharing methods and highlights five FY 2020 webinars:

- How to Evaluate an Offeror's Technical Capability—Ask the Right Questions!
- Phone Interviews and the PIL's First Court of Federal Claims Decision
- GAO Perspectives on Innovation
- ABCs of CSOP—Innovative Product Buys
- Five Years of Procurement Innovation

Aids to Navigation

After evaluating the lessons learned from teams' procurement journeys, the PIL quickly shares the information to aid other acquisition professionals navigating procurement innovations. In FY 2020, the PIL provided several sharing events to the acquisition community.

PIL Webinars

- Provides the opportunity for DHS procurement teams to share their innovation experiences with their peers
- FY 2020 PIL Webinars: 8
- FY 2020 attendance: 3,132 (average of 392)
- Participants since FY 2015: 10,000+
- FY 2020 average customer satisfaction rating: 4.5 out of 5.0

PIL Boot Camps

- First offered in FY 2018
- Interactive introduction to the PIL and nine of the most frequently tested procurement innovation techniques
- Converted to a virtual format in FY 2020 to meet continued demand
- FY 2020 PIL Boot Camps: 14
- FY 2020 attendance: 772
- FY 2020 average customer satisfaction rating: 4.8 out of 5.0

How to Evaluate an Offeror's Technical Capability—Ask the Right Questions!

WEBINAR #44, PRODUCED 11/21/2019

DESCRIPTION

What's the best way to evaluate a company's prior experience? Do you allow them three prior experience submissions that focus on the size, scope, and complexity of each project? Does this provide enough insight into the company as it pertains to your effort? For a joint Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and Office of Selective Acquisitions (OSA) contracting team using prior experience as the only Phase 1 factor, a different approach was in order. Forgoing the traditional size, scope, and complexity questions, the team utilized targeted questions specific to its requirement to assess its confidence in the demonstrated prior experience submissions. Phase 2 continued this approach. The team used advance questions, on-the-spot questions, a case study, and questions via

interactive dialogue to evaluate oral presentations as the only Phase 2 factor. The team also applied a suite of other innovative procurement techniques. This unique and tailored approach was used to successfully award a \$60 million task order for CISA's National Risk Management Center (NRMCC) in under 60 days with only two factors and six pages of written technical submissions.

PRESENTERS: Deborah McFadden-Lane (OSA Contracting Officer), Lindsey Miles (CISA Physical Scientist and Technical Evaluator), Trevor Wagner (PIL), Polly Hall (PIL)

STONE FROM THE TOP: Darryl Anderson, Division Director, OSA

ATTENDEES: 412

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATING: 4.5 out of 5.0

PIL Coaching Clinics

- Formally launched in FY 2020
- Supports PIL Digi-Badge Level 2 micro-credential: Procurement Innovation Coach
- Builds on PIL Boot Camps by providing Acquisition Innovation Advocates and Contracting Officers hands-on experience coaching procurement innovation
- Scales support available to DHS teams by preparing innovators to coach others
- FY 2020 PIL Coaching Clinics: 2
- FY 2020 attendance: 30
- FY 2020 average customer satisfaction rating: 4.8 out of 5.0

PIL Open Lab

- Launched third quarter of FY 2020 with onset of the pandemic
- Provides an "office hours" space for the DHS procurement innovation community to informally gather and learn together
- Offered as quarterly 60-minute sessions with PIL coaches
- FY 2020 PIL Open Labs: 2
- FY 2020 average session attendance: 50

Phone Interviews and the PIL's First Court of Federal Claims Decision

WEBINAR #46, PRODUCED 2/13/2020

DESCRIPTION

When beginning a follow-on procurement for a project with a long-standing incumbent, you want to ensure there is meaningful competition. You want to look at prior experience in Phase 1, because you know experience is often an excellent down-select factor—but you don't want to just read about a vendor's experience, you also want to ask questions! This was the case for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and its approximately \$300 million transportation blanket purchase agreement (BPA). CBP structured a two-phase advisory down-select procurement. Phase 1 was a 30-minute oral presentation phone interview on prior experience while Phase 2 was an in-person oral presentation with robust interactive dialogue. The team also used confidence ratings, streamlined documentation, and on-the-spot

consensus evaluations to round out their approach. The apparent conclusion was an award in just 52 days to a new awardee—but then came the incumbent's protest to the United States Court of Federal Claims! In the end, the judge denied all of the protestor's complaints and ruled in favor of the government.

PRESENTERS: LaChaun Holloway (CBP Technical Evaluation Team Chair), Shaun Saad (CBP Contracting Officer), Terrius Greene (CBP Procurement Attorney), Trevor Wagner (PIL), Polly Hall (PIL)

tone from the top: Nina Ferraro, Senior Advisor to the DHS Chief Procurement Officer

ATTENDEES: 382

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATING: 4.5 out of 5.0

GAO Perspectives on Innovation

WEBINAR #47, PRODUCED 3/18/2020

DESCRIPTION

The PIL has encouraged testing and sharing from its inception. Some PIL techniques, such as dialogue in oral presentations and brief documentation, have been directly challenged in bid protests at the Government Accountability Office (GAO)—and the government has won every time! Other techniques, such as confidence ratings and advisory down-selects, have not been directly challenged, but the GAO has seen them as background in bid protests and has noted use of the techniques without formal objection. So, we feel we are on safe ground with prudent use of PIL innovation techniques. We know that some in our community still have concerns about innovation, and often they point to the GAO bid protest process as the basis of those concerns. This webinar was

conducted to help alleviate those concerns. A senior GAO attorney who decides bid protest cases discussed the bid protest process generally, PIL innovation techniques that the GAO has seen protested, and whether the GAO really is the bad guy in the story.

PRESENTERS: John Sorrenti (GAO Senior Attorney), Trevor Wagner (PIL), John Inman (PIL)

tone from the top: Dr. Michael Wooten, Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget

ATTENDEES: 497

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATING: 4.4 out of 5.0

ABCs of CSOP—Innovative Product Buys

WEBINAR #48, PRODUCED 4/30/2020

DESCRIPTION

DHS currently has a special, non-FAR-based procurement authority which allows procurement teams to start with **zero** terms and conditions to build a contract specifically to purchase an innovative commercial product that might benefit the DHS mission. This webinar provided guidance on how to use the Commercial Solutions Opening Pilot Program (CSOP) authority to purchase innovative commercial products valued at \$10 million or less. DHS procurement teams from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Office of Procurement Operations (OPO) shared how they used the authority to purchase innovative commercial products such as advanced surveillance capabilities along the border and artificial intelligence prototypes to improve how contracting professionals obtain data from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS).

PRESENTERS: Nancy Harvey (OCPO Senior Procurement Analyst), Peter Giambone (CBP Contract Specialist), Joshua Bedregal (CBP Contracting Officer), Jessica Phillips (OPO Contract Specialist), Scott Simpson (PIL), Sandra Oliver Schmidt (PIL)

tone from the top: Soraya Correa, DHS Chief Procurement Officer

ATTENDEES: 453

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATING: 4.5 out of 5.0

Five Years of Procurement Innovation

WEBINAR #49, PRODUCED 7/23/2020

DESCRIPTION

As the PIL celebrated its five-year anniversary, the DHS Chief Procurement Officer, Soraya Correa, used this webinar to share the PIL's origin story. She and several guests also explored how her cultural vision has become an operationalized model of procurement innovation that empowers the DHS acquisition community and ingrains innovation in its philosophy. The PIL's framework of testing and sharing encourages organizational culture change by providing voluntary teams at the grassroots level a safe space to apply their creative and innovative ideas to improve the acquisition process and then quickly share those outcomes with their colleagues. The webinar also detailed how the PIL iterates to improve its practices, the full suite of resources available to any

member of the DHS acquisition community, customer stories and lessons learned, the importance of growing procurement innovation coaches throughout DHS, and provided a preview of the future of procurement innovation at DHS and beyond.

PRESENTERS: Eric Cho (Founder of the PIL), Soraya Correa (DHS Chief Procurement Officer), Paul Courtney (DHS Deputy Chief Procurement Officer), Brian Wilson (OCPO Electronic Contract Filing System Program Manager), Robert Brown (CBP Tethered Aerostat Radar System Director), Sarah West (ICE Contracting Officer and PIL Detailee), Trevor Wagner (PIL), Polly Hall (PIL)

ATTENDEES: 373

AVERAGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATING: 4.5 out of 5.0

The Ripple Effect of Innovation



Though it reserves formal project coaching for DHS procurement teams, the ripple effects of the PIL's innovation techniques are reaching agencies across the Federal Government.

Procurement innovation is rooted in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). The PIL supports the development of a learning organization that recognizes that compliance and innovation can, and should, coexist! Within DHS and across the federal acquisition community, there are significant indications that cultural change is taking deep root. The intensive collaboration among federal Acquisition Innovation Advocates, the supportive leadership of the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Procurement Policy, and the government's work with industry to co-create resources like the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations are all evidence of government-wide cultural change.

FY 2020 was a year in which innovation surged not only within DHS, but across the federal acquisition community. By advising and sharing our work with others, the PIL has helped turn the tides of procurement across the Federal Government. In FY 2020, the PIL invited agency Acquisition Innovation Advocates and procurement innovation lab leads to shadow PIL coaches as those agencies prepared to stand up acquisition innovation labs of their own. These labs now join a growing community of acquisition innovation labs supporting more and more federal acquisition professionals who feel empowered and encouraged to apply their innovative ideas to federal procurement. Also, as our partner agencies began developing their innovation frameworks, the PIL provided informal coaching to those agencies' procurement teams to support the applied understanding of the PIL's testing and sharing framework.

The PIL will continue to stand by our acquisition community as it tests the new ideas of tomorrow! As evidenced in FY 2020, by remaining flexible and adaptive, we can and will be ready to support new challenges and opportunities as our acquisition ecosystem and operational mission environments continue to evolve.



"The PIL Boot Camps were a tremendous catalyst to my workforce in FY 2020. Over 200 folks attended two sessions at the National Institute of Standards and Technology campus in Gaithersburg, Maryland, and at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia. We are currently applying these techniques and working to stand up our own innovation lab at Commerce!"

— **BARRY BERKOWITZ**, Senior Procurement Executive, Director of Acquisition Management, U.S. Department of Commerce

Supporting Other Federal Innovators

Innovation is taking off in the federal procurement community. In FY 2020, the PIL shared innovation techniques with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Department of Health and Human Services Puts PIL Techniques to the Test

On July 29, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) became the first non-DHS agency to award a procurement project with the PIL's informal assistance. The project supports the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP), which provides medical monitoring, screening, and treatment for responders and survivors of the 9/11 terror attacks. The contract—a non-commercial, open-market procurement conducted under FAR 15.3—is for WTCHP's Comprehensive Cost Avoidance,

Coordination of Benefits, and Recovery Program. The CDC team used several innovative procurement techniques for the first time, such as a two-phase advisory down-select process, brief written submissions, prior experience distinct from past performance, oral presentations, interactive dialogue during oral presentations, on-the-spot consensus evaluation, streamlined documentation, and a twist on the agency's traditional adjectival rating definitions.

"The PIL's innovative approaches to oral proposals and evaluation techniques resulted in a more flexible approach to solicitation and a faster award of a highly complex requirement. The PIL is a shining example of why the government needs fresh ideas and how interagency partnerships help us all succeed."

— **LAUREN PEEL, J.D.**, Contracting Officer, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Department of Commerce Uses PIL Techniques to Innovate

On August 3, 2020, a U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) team awarded an order against an internal multiple-award blanket purchase agreement (13 vendors) to provide software enhancements that would improve public access and search capabilities for its Patent Examination Data System (PEDS). The team used a two-phase advisory down-select process to down-select from nine vendors in Phase 1 to four vendors in Phase 2. The procurement also included virtual oral presentations in the second

phase, on-the-spot consensus evaluation, confidence ratings, and streamlined documentation. The team was particularly innovative with its robust use of the 'select best-suited, then negotiate' technique; after asking the best-suited vendor to submit a performance work statement and quality assurance surveillance plan for negotiation, the team negotiated a 15 percent discount on an order of nearly \$3 million. The time from solicitation to award was only 42 days.



"My experience working on the acquisition strategy for PEDS has helped pave the way for streamlined and efficient solutions at the USPTO. The reduced procurement action lead time of 42 days has been deemed by a customer 'one of the most efficient during my time at the USPTO!'"

— **EMALEE GAWRELSKI**, Contract Specialist, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

"I could not be happier with the way the PEDS requirement went. After taking the PIL Boot Camp, I was excited and anxious to use the new techniques; PEDS gave me that opportunity. I have continued to use these techniques in other procurements and my customers rave about how much more streamlined it is."

— **DAVID SHEPPARD**, Contracting Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office



On the Horizon



To ride DHS's wave of procurement innovation, the PIL is increasing its support to the growing number of acquisition professionals interested in innovation techniques.

The PIL's journey will continue in FY 2021 with a focus on:

- **Right-Sizing the PIL** – scaling up the PIL team to meet coaching demand and introduce new ideas
- **PIL Knowledge Management System** – developing a system that supports our workflow, automates appropriate work, and analyzes DHS procurement data
- **Artificial Intelligence for Past Performance Initiative, Phase 2** – continuing this DHS-led federal acquisition modernization initiative by building the prototypes into production-ready, commercial Software-as-a-Service solutions while creatively adapting federal policy and obtaining authority-to-operate certifications
- **Government-Industry PIL Boot Camps** – bringing government and industry together for shared learning

TRACKING OUR ROUTE

To institutionalize the knowledge, practices, and lessons of its first five years, in FY 2020 the PIL embarked on an effort to find a scalable Knowledge Management System (KMS). The solution will allow the PIL to track projects, visualize trends and metrics, and easily share the findings.

The PIL began market research in April 2020 with a Request for Information posted to beta.SAM.gov (now SAM.gov), followed by phone calls and product demonstrations with vendors. The industry analysis revealed that a KMS solution could benefit not only the PIL, but the entire Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) through improved management and reporting of DHS-wide procurement-related data, documents, policies, and metrics. OCPO and the PIL leveraged an existing DHS contract vehicle for the creation of a KMS and the purchase of user licenses.

In September 2020, the PIL began developing the KMS using an agile approach consisting of 12 sprints. It expects delivery of a Minimum Viable Product in April 2021. The team plans to eventually expand KMS access to DHS Acquisition Innovation Advocates and recipients of the Level 2 digi-badge, providing DHS innovators easy access to PIL data.

- **PIL Digi-Digests** – producing targeted, consistent, and practical communications for DHS acquisition professionals
- **PILCasts** – short, on-demand discussions providing innovative ideas and advice for acquisition professionals
- **Coach-the-Coach Program** – developing procurement innovation coaches within DHS Components and across the Federal Government
- **Idea Challenges** – offering incentivized competitions to crowd-source actionable ideas that will improve DHS procurement processes

Catch the innovation wave! If you want to steer faster, creative acquisitions that meet mission demands, consider shadowing a PIL coach, partnering with the PIL for a procurement project, consulting with the PIL, or attending a PIL training. All hands on deck!

Innovation Captains

The PIL celebrates members of the DHS acquisition community who were recognized in FY 2020 for embarking on procurement innovation journeys.



Homeland Security Today Acquisition Excellence Award

CISA National Cybersecurity Assessments and Technical Services (NCATS) Acquisition Team:

- Hannah Mousa, Contracting Officer
- Kirk Lawrence, Program Manager
- Harry Mourtos, Program Manager



DHS Management Directorate Award



CPO Excellence Award for Excellence in Innovation

United States Coast Guard AUXDATA Procurement Team:

- Brenda Oberholzer, Contracting Officer
- Shandra Kotzun, Procurement Law Attorney
- Carl Stokes, Program Manager
- Nicholas Fredericksen, Contracting Officer's Representative
- Sandra Oliver Schmidt, PIL Coach



Acquisition Innovation Advocate (AIA) of the Year

Peter Giambone, AIA
Customs and Border Protection



Excellence in Innovation Award

CBP Southwest Border Transportation, Medical Escort, and Guard Services Acquisition Team

- LaChaun M. Holloway, Management and Program Analyst
- Matthew J. Russell, Contract Specialist
- Shaun G. Saad, Contracting Officer
- Terrius Greene, Procurement Attorney



Teamwork Award

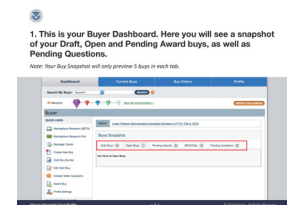
Trevor Wagner, Testing and Sharing Lead, Procurement Innovation Lab



Excellence in Strategic Sourcing and Category Management Award
DHS Reverse Auction Tool Integrated Product Team

- Paul Oman, Procurement Attorney
- Catherine Baskin, Associate Director
- Dana Long, Pricing Specialist
- Janeen Guest, Contracting Officer
- Leila Hemenway, Primary Contract Specialist

- Paula MacLeod, Contract Specialist
- Woodrow Bell, Contract Specialist
- Ellen Murray, Procurement Analyst
- Wendy Core, Procurement Analyst



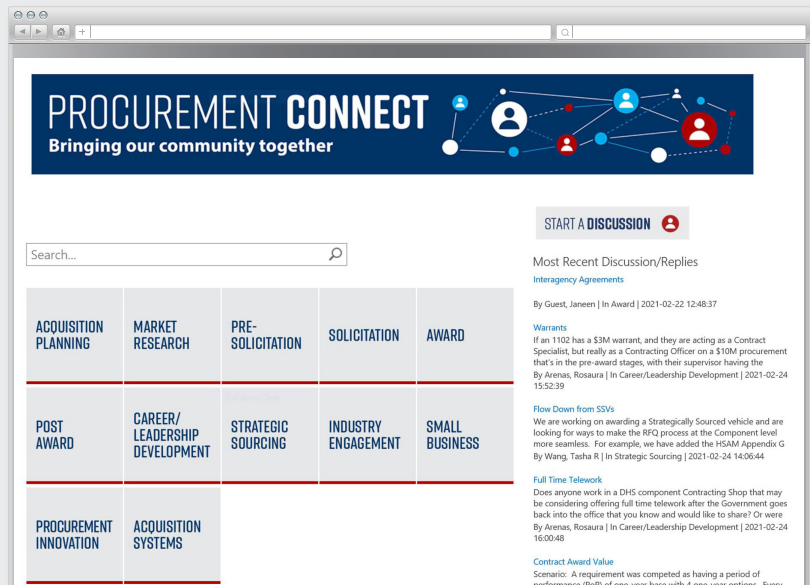
Introducing Procurement Connect for DHS's GS-1102s

Are you a DHS GS-1102 looking for a collaborative, non-judgmental space to try new ideas and share what you have learned? Procurement Connect is a safe space where innovation can flourish.

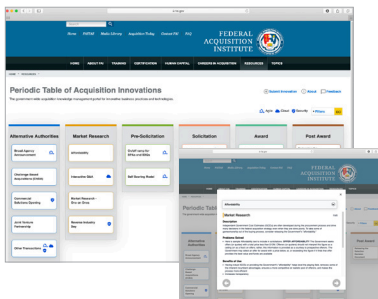
As an easy-to-use discussion platform, Procurement Connect builds on the PIL framework by bringing DHS's GS-1102s together for learning and sharing. Users can search categorized discussion threads, hear live discussions on hot procurement topics, and set alerts on topics of interest!

Join the discussion today:

Visit <http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/Resources/Acquisition> and click the Procurement Connect button!



Additional Resources for All Federal Acquisition Professionals



The **Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations** launched in FY 2020 after positive feedback and widespread use during beta testing. The website is a quick and easy reference on proven techniques across all phases of an acquisition; you can access it at www.fai.gov/periodic-table.

The **Acquisition Innovation Hub** on the Acquisition Gateway is a place for everyone in the federal acquisition community to access resources and interact with one another. Visit <https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/app/#/gateway/acquisition-innovation>.



The **PIL Primer** serves as a quick refresher for those who have previously attended the PIL Boot Camp; this one-hour video is available for anytime viewing at www.fai.gov within the Media Library.