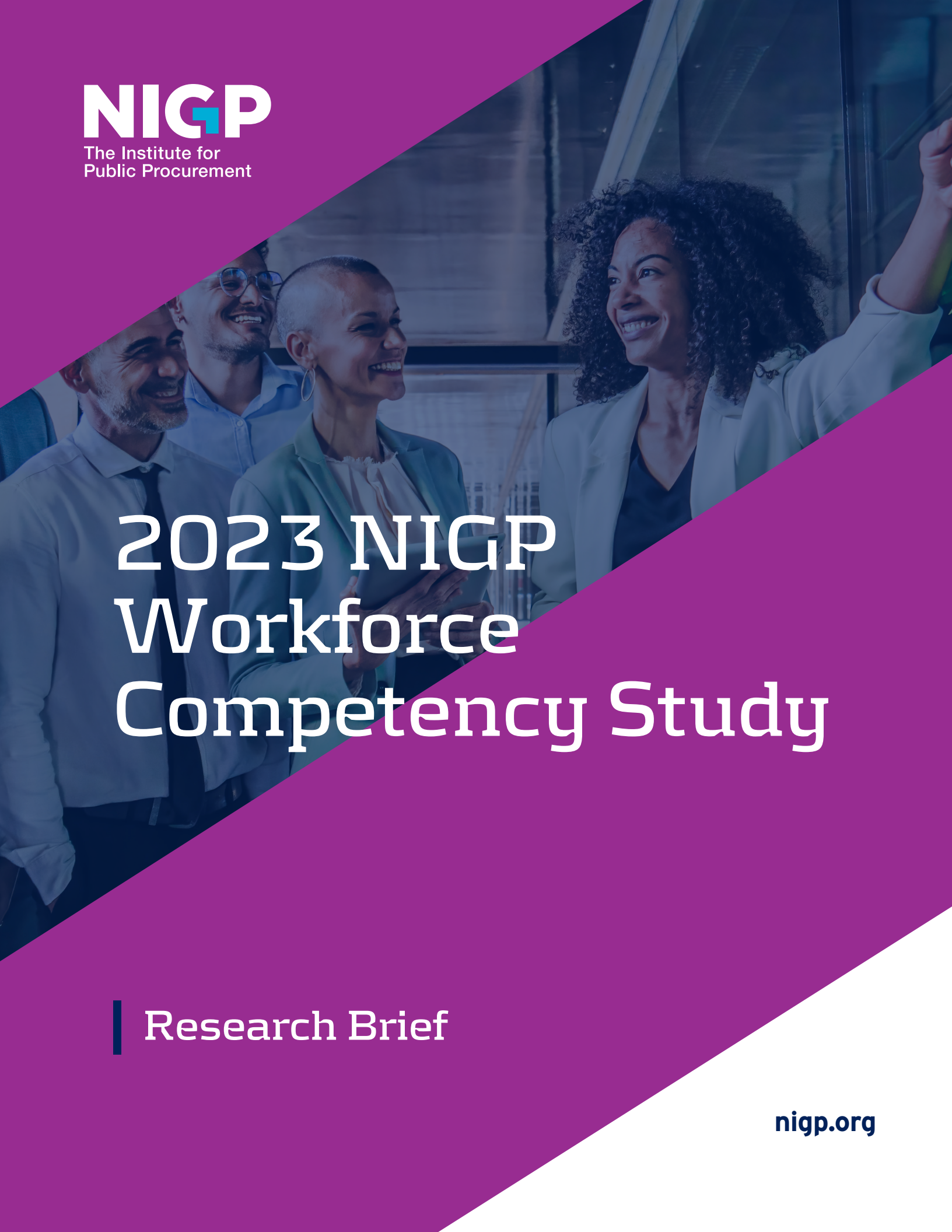




The Institute for  
Public Procurement

A photograph of four diverse business professionals (three men and one woman) smiling and looking at a tablet. The image is overlaid with a large, diagonal magenta shape that covers the top-left and bottom-right portions of the cover.

# 2023 NIGP Workforce Competency Study

Research Brief

[nigp.org](https://nigp.org)

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In January 2023, NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement initiated a project aimed at identifying and mapping the continuing education needs of its members. Driven by the critical need to comprehend the current workforce competency levels and the competences required for success in the procurement field, two primary questions guided the research.

**1** | *What are the skills and knowledge currently held by procurement professionals in the field?*

**2** | *What are the skills and knowledge that employers look for when recruiting professionals for procurement positions at various career stages?*

The objective of this research is twofold. Firstly, we aim to shed light on the skills and knowledge that employers highly value in procurement professionals. This insight can assist organizations in their efforts to recruit and retain qualified procurement professionals. Secondly, we aspire to contribute to professional development and support the enhancement of procurement practices by identifying growth opportunities and developing benchmarks for ideal learning investment—both in time and money spent—in order for procurement professionals to develop relevant skills.

The 2023 NIGP Workforce Development Study is designed to serve a dual audience. On one hand, it aims to empower procurement professionals by providing them with insights into the skills and knowledge that are highly valued in their field,

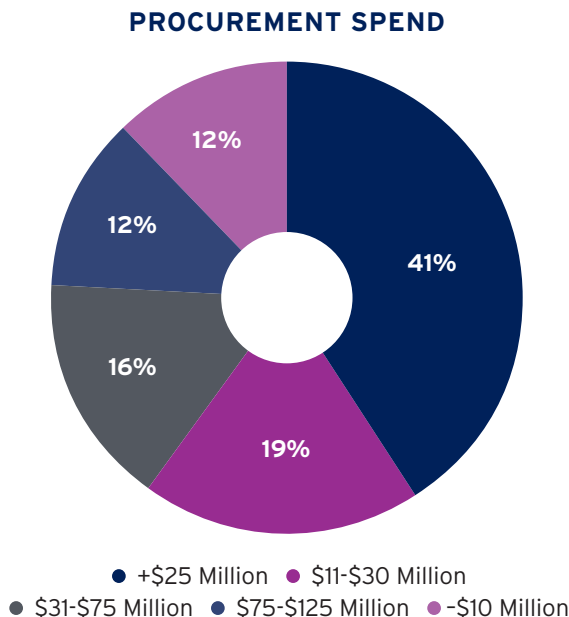
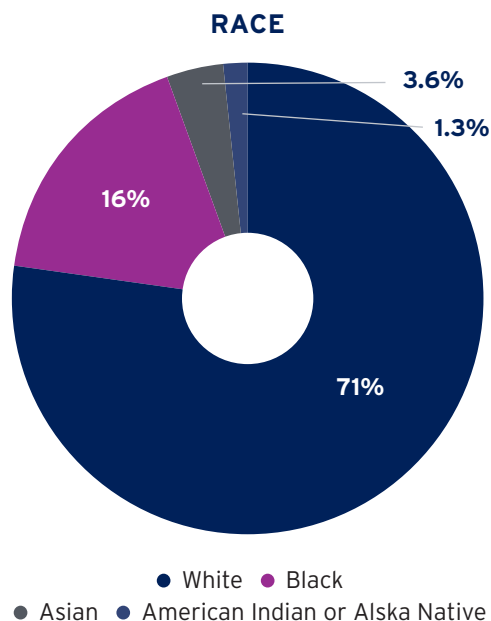
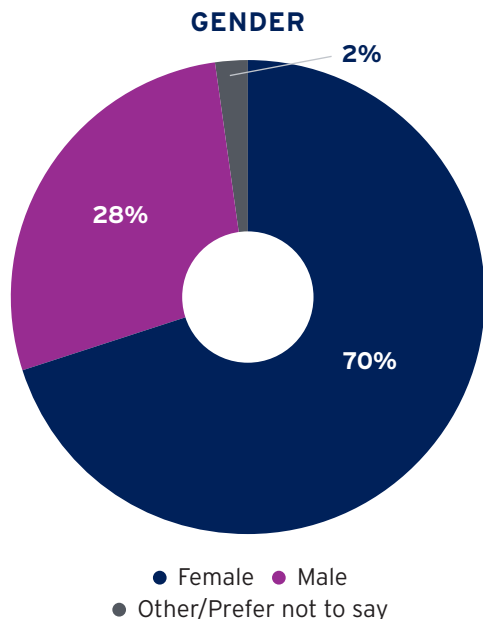
thereby guiding their professional development efforts. On the other hand, it seeks to inform and encourage entities to invest time and resources in the professional development of their procurement workforce. By doing so, it underscores the importance of nurturing a competent and well-equipped procurement team for the overall success of the organization. Therefore, while the insights contained within this report are particularly relevant to procurement professionals and the organizations they serve, they also hold value for a broader audience interested in understanding and enhancing public procurement practices.

In this research brief we will outline our research methodology, present our findings, and provide recommendations based on our results.

# DATA SOURCES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

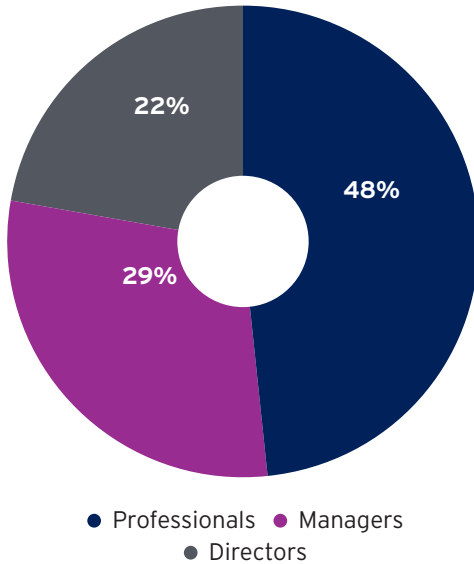
This brief presents high-level findings summarized from the 2023 NIGP Workforce Development Study in the areas of training engagement, delivery method preferences, and proficiency strengths and challenges within the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF)<sup>1</sup>. This brief also includes analysis based on an aggregation of job descriptions and the competencies required therein, the research for which was also conducted in spring 2023.

The NIGP Workforce Development Survey was the first of its kind, so only current data can be provided. In total, 1,544 total respondents completed the survey. Of these, 1,461 were United States members and fifty-six members were from Canada.

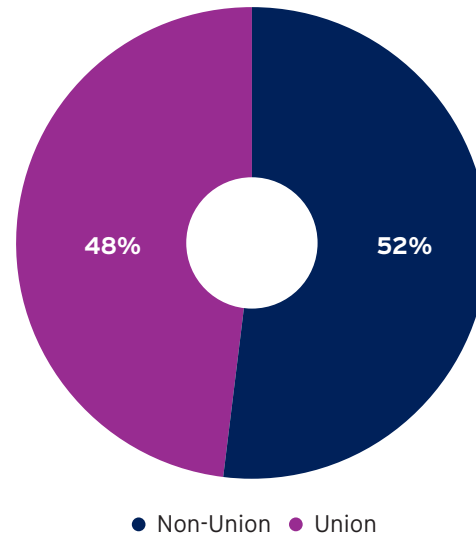


<sup>1</sup> The Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF) is a comprehensive guide designed to develop the core competencies for public procurement professionals. It is made up of seven focus areas which contain 33 individual competencies that are critical for success in public procurement.

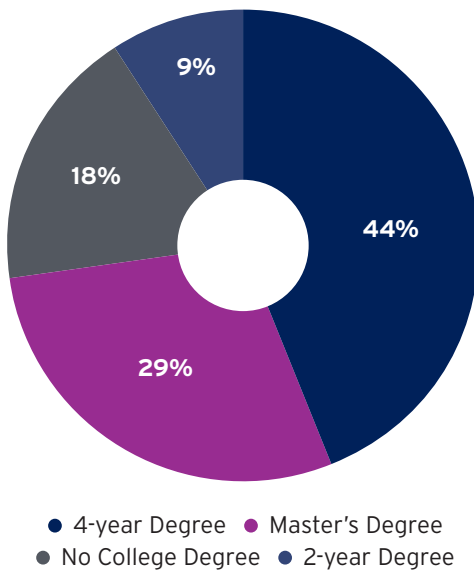
### POSITION LEVEL



### WORKPLACE



### EDUCATION



### Key Takeaways:

- Seventy percent of the respondents to this survey were women.
- The vast majority (71%) of respondents to this survey were white. Less than 4% of the respondents were Asian.
- A majority of respondents (53%) are from entities with \$75 million procurement spend or higher. Only 12% of respondents hailed from entities with less than \$10 million procurement spend.
- Professionals comprise almost half (48%) of the respondents to this survey.
- Twenty-seven percent of respondents do not hold a four-year degree.
- There is a slight majority in non-unionized respondents (52%).

<sup>2</sup> The CPM certification stands for certified purchasing manager and is one of several supply management certifications procurement professionals can pursue as part of their professional development. This certificate shows that they have completed training to become an expert in their field. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) originally offered the CPM designation, course, exam and certification. With new technologies and global customers, the purchasing manager role has changed, and the ISM now offers the Certified Professional in Supply Management (CPSM) in place of the older CPM certification.

## TRAINING ENGAGEMENT

Employees expect access to learning from their organizations, as engagement in professional development is a critical factor in staying current in today's ever-changing environment.

### Certifications

There are several certifications available within the procurement profession, and almost 60% of respondents to this survey reported holding procurement-related certification. Most respondents (32%) reported holding the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification, 19% reported holding the NIGP-Certified Procurement Professional (NIGP-CPP) certification, 13% reported holding the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO) certification, and 5% reported holding the Certified Purchasing Manager (CPM) certification<sup>2</sup>.

### Amount of Training

To determine how much time individuals were engaged in learning activities, we asked respondents to indicate how many training workshops and hours they engaged in over the past twelve months. Sixty percent of respondents across Director, Manager, and Professional roles reported attending one to four workshops per year, while 29% of respondents reported attending between five and eight workshops per year.

Data collected regarding the number of hours spent in workshops over the past twelve months reinforces the importance of time spent learning. Of all respondents, 37% reported spending less than twenty-one hours in training. Nearly a third of respondents reported spending between twenty-one and forty hours in training in the last year, while 24% reported spending between forty-one and eighty hours annually.

*Employees who spent more hours in training consistently reported higher levels of competence.*

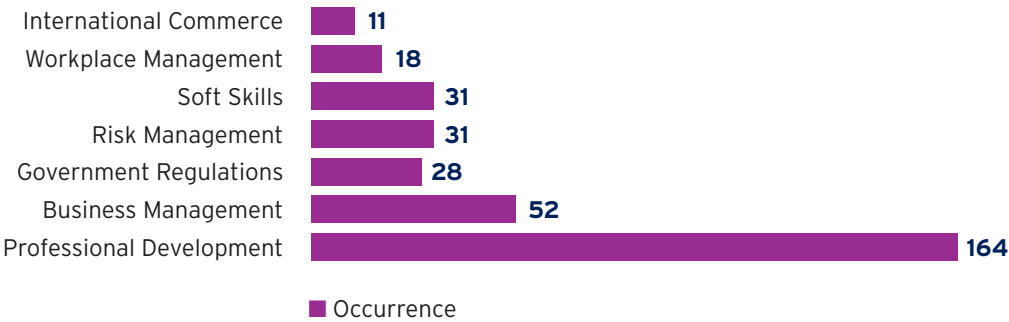
### Cost of Training

When asked about employer spending on training, 14% of respondents indicated that their organization spent \$0 on their training in the last twelve months. Four hundred and twenty-three respondents, or about 28%, indicated their entities spent between \$10-500 on their professional development annually. Respondents who reported spending \$500 or less on training reported a 68% competency proficiency, while those who reported spending up to \$2,500 reported a competency proficiency of up to 73%.

### Type of Training

Respondents had the opportunity to provide open-ended answers for the type of training they sought over the past year. *Figure 2* illustrates the key themes and example topics identified regarding the training employees are seeking.

**Figure 2.** Training Sought by Employees in 2022.



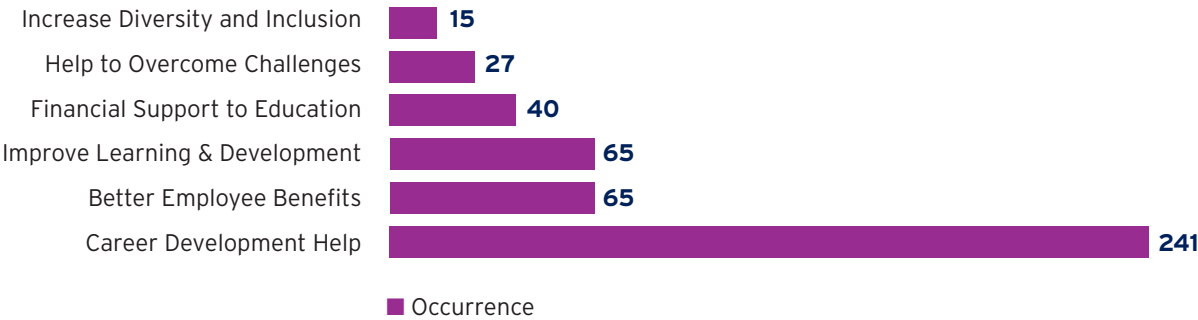
While International Commerce, Workplace Management, and Government Relations appeared thirty times or fewer in this data set, 164 respondents sought Professional Development in 2022.

*Employees desire Career Development Support from their employers more than any other form of organizational assistance.*

### Employer Support

When asked how employers can best support professional growth, 241 respondents named Career Development Support, almost four times the number of the next highest topic, Better Employee Benefits. *Figure 3* summarizes the overall results.

**Figure 3.** Organizational Assistance Requested.



### Skill Development

To determine future developmental needs, we asked respondents about the skills they would like to focus on in the future. Fifty-three percent of respondents chose skills related to leadership tasks, while only 29% of respondents indicated an interest in focusing on program oversight skills. Respondents were encouraged to select all that apply, therefore the total percentage exceeds 100 (*Table 2*).

**Table 2.** Respondents’ priorities regarding skills to focus on in the near future.

Skills to Focus on:	Number of Respondents	Percent of All Respondents
Leadership tasks	822	53%
Contract administration tasks	708	46%
Sourcing and solicitation tasks	680	44%
Business operations tasks	630	41%
Managerial tasks	614	40%
Planning and analysis tasks	692	45%
Program oversight tasks	446	29%

### Key Takeaways:

- **Professional Development and Certification:** Nearly 60% of respondents hold procurement-related certifications, with the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification being the most common. This underscores the value professionals place on continuous learning and certification in staying current in the procurement field.
- **Learning Engagement and Competency Proficiency:** Most respondents reported attending four or fewer workshops annually, with the majority spending less than twenty-one hours on training. However, those investing eighty-one hours or more in training reported a nearly 10% higher competency proficiency. This highlights the direct correlation between time invested in learning and competency proficiency.
- **Organizational Support and Future Development Needs:** While 14% of respondents reported that their organizations did not invest financially in their training, the majority of spending was in the \$10-\$500 range. Those reporting more time spent and money invested in training also reported higher competency. When asked about future developmental needs, over half of the respondents expressed a desire to focus on leadership skills, indicating a clear direction for future professional development efforts.





# COMPETENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

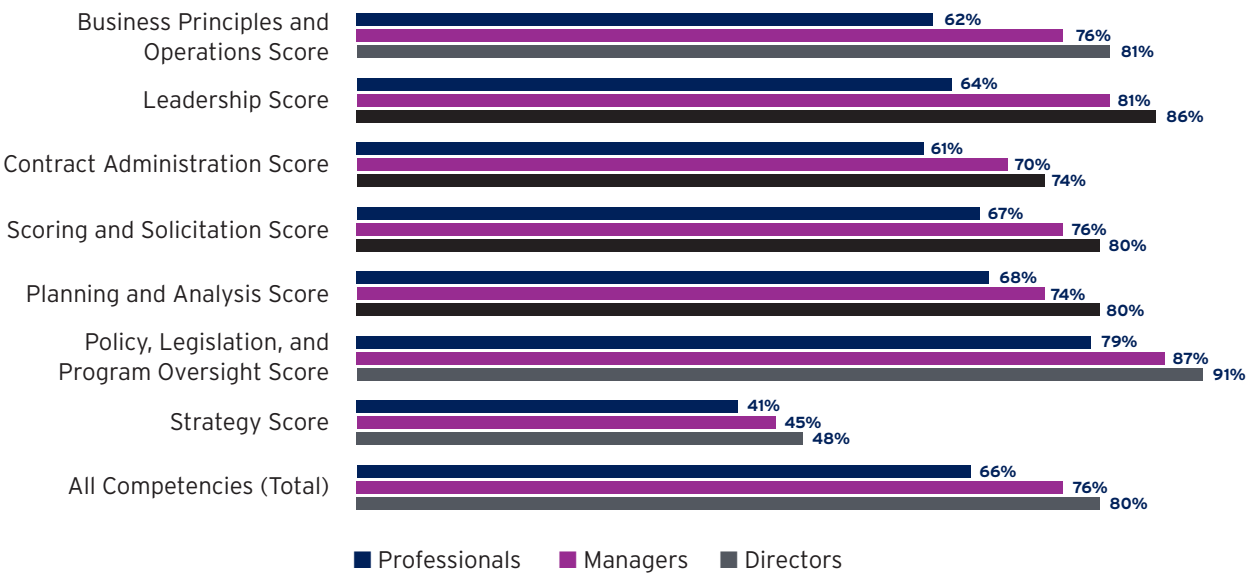
This section presents competencies in seven different focus areas: Strategy; Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight; Planning and Analysis; Sourcing and Solicitation; Contract Administration; Leadership; and Business Principles and Operations. Each of the focus areas has three to seven competencies. The survey asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they are skilled in each competency, ranging from “Not Skilled” (1) to “Very Skilled” (5). Respondents had the option to indicate whether a particular competency is not part of their job.

The data is broken down first by Directors, Managers, and Professionals. The Director (Chief Procurement Officer) category includes Directors of purchasing as well as Directors of material management and warehouses. The Manager (supervisor) category includes managers of purchasing, managers of contracts, and purchasing managers. The Professionals category includes senior buyers, contracting officers, buyers, specification specialists, contract specialists, and assistant buyers. The support category was eliminated because we only received seventeen responses from support personnel.

## COMPETENCY RESULTS BY POSITION LEVEL

Figure 5 illustrates the competency scores broken down across three position levels, presented in the roles of Professional, Manager, and Director. This is a composite score of all the competencies under each focus area.

Figure 5. Competency Scores by Position Level.



While Directors consistently scored 74% and above across most competencies, Strategy remains a serious area for development for Directors (48%) alongside their Manager (45%) and Professional (41%) peers. Outside of Strategy, Managers consistently score at or above 70% across all competency areas, their main strength displayed in Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight (87%). Professionals scored lowest in all competency areas, and have the most room to grow in Leadership, with a 22% gap between Professional and Director competency in this area, and a 17% gap between Professionals and Managers. This is the largest gap in competencies between career levels illuminated by this report.

### Overall Competencies Results

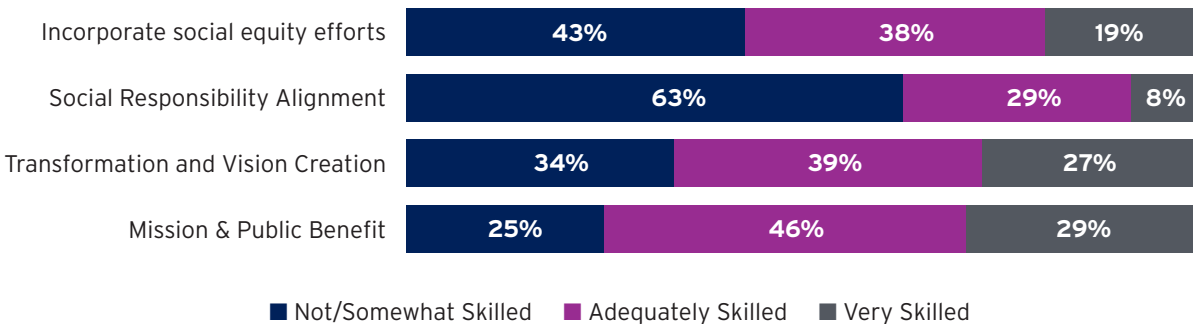
This section presents the findings for each competency focus area, each of which consists of three to seven individual competencies. Results combine the Director, Manager, and Professional roles' competency scores to provide a picture of overall competency strengths and gaps in greater detail.

#### Strategy

For public procurement to function as a valuable, contributing asset to the entity, it must think, plan, and act strategically, aligning entity mission and public benefit alongside social responsibility. The public procurement professional must actively contribute their expertise to benefit the public by helping create the entity's strategic vision.

The Strategy focus area consists of four competencies: Social Equity; Social Responsibility; Transformation and Vision; Mission and Public Benefit (*Figure 6*). While 75% of respondents scored adequately or very skilled in Mission & Public Benefit, 63% scored not skilled or somewhat skilled in Social Responsibility Alignment; only eight percent scored very skilled. Similarly, a mere 19% of respondents scored very skilled in Incorporating Social Equity Efforts.

**Figure 6.** Competency Scores: Strategy.

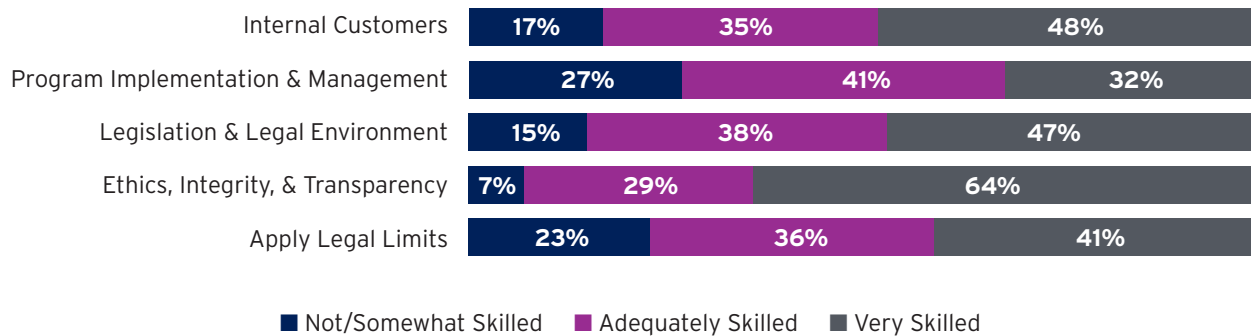


#### Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight

As stewards of the public trust, procurement professionals are held to a higher standard of ethics than most public employees, acting with confidence to wisely spend taxpayer dollars. It is vital that they not only understand and follow applicable laws, but also that they act in accordance with the intent of laws created to guard against favoritism, unfairness, and unnecessary spending, meeting the needs of their entity without bowing to either internal or external political pressures. Knowledge of the political environment and entity management are necessary tools in order to do so.

The Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight focus area consists of five competencies: Internal Customers; Program Implementation and Management; Legislation and Legal Environment; Ethics, Integrity, and Transparency; Legal Limits (*Figure 7*). The sector scored generally strong in this competency area, with Program Implementation and Management and Legal Limits representing the greatest developmental needs. Sixty-four percent of respondents scored very skilled in Ethics, Integrity, and Transparency, and 29% scored adequately skilled; this 93% large majority reflects the highest competency proficiency overall.

**Figure 7.** Competency Scores: Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight.

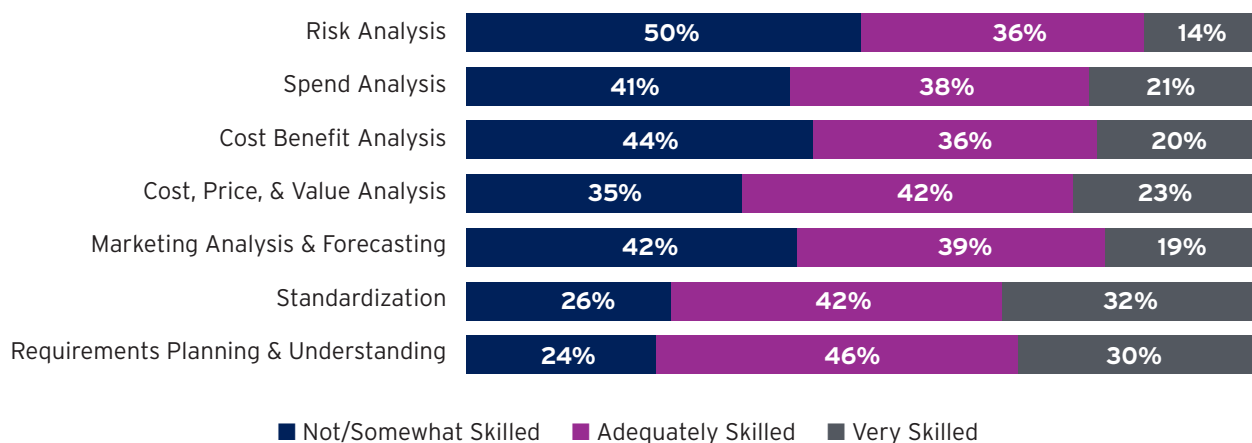


### Planning and Analysis

The role of the public sector entity requires strategic procurement planning and participation by procurement professionals in the implementation of many projects – particularly standardization, out-sourcing, and public-private partnerships. Risk is a critical consideration in the contracting and procurement process, and a thoughtful and proactive approach toward risk, as it relates to specific procurement actions, and contributes to the success of contract performance.

Planning and Analysis consists of seven competencies: Risk Analysis; Spend Analysis; Cost Benefit Analysis; Cost, Price, and Value Analysis; Marketing Analysis and Forecasting; Standardization; Requirements Planning and Understanding (*Figure 8*). While Standardization and Requirements Planning and Understanding boast the highest competencies, with 74% and 76% of respondents adequately or very skilled, respectively, between 35% and 50% of respondents scored not skilled or somewhat skilled across the remainder of the analytical and forecasting competencies.

**Figure 8.** Competency Scores: Planning and Analysis.

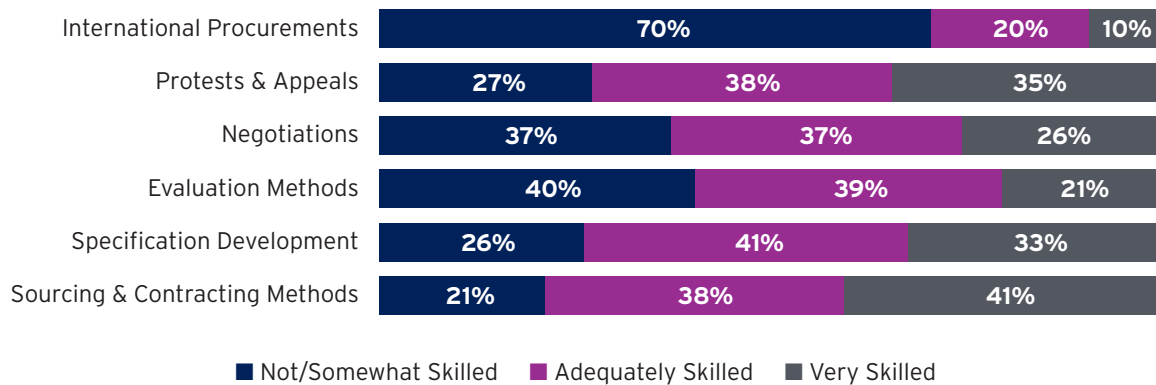


### Sourcing and Solicitation

Competencies within Sourcing and Contracting are core to the procurement profession; mastery of these competencies is essential to success in procurement.

The Sourcing and Contracting focus area consists of six competencies: International Procurements; Protests and Appeals; Negotiations; Evaluation Methods; Specification Development; Sourcing and Contracting Methods (*Figure 9*). Specifically, Protests and Appeals, Negotiations, and Evaluation Methods are important areas for development. The gap within international procurement is large, however, this may be based on the limited use / need of this competency within organizations.

**Figure 9.** Competency Scores: Sourcing and Solicitation.

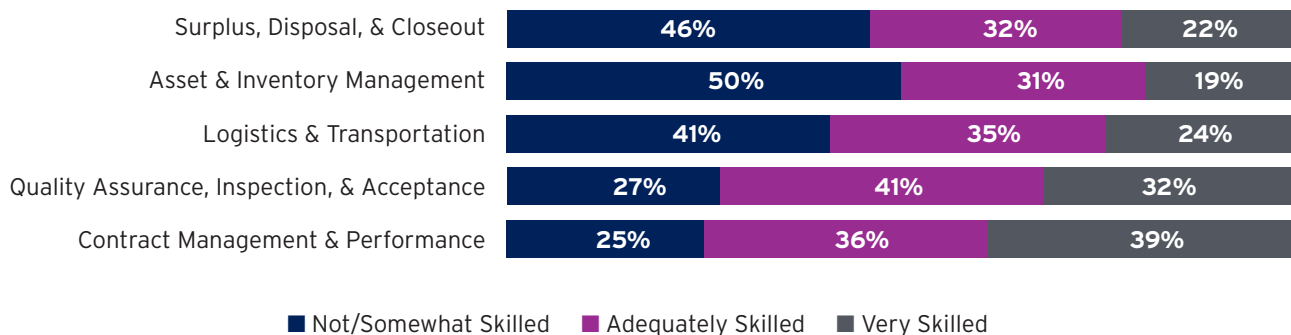


### Contract Administration

Public procurement professionals must be prepared to demonstrate good contract writing and management skills when pursuing procurement engagement and supporting uninterrupted public service delivery of commodities for their entity. For the procurement professional, this includes all aspects from the time the need is recognized until the commodity is used or disposed of, including, but not limited to receipt, inspection, logistics, inventory management, and contract/supplier management.

Contract Administration consists of five competencies: Surplus, Disposal, and Closeout; Asset and Inventory Management; Logistics and Transportation; Quality Assurance, Inspection, and Acceptance; and Contract Management and Performance (*Figure 10*). Between 50-59% of respondents scored not skilled or somewhat skilled in the three following competencies, indicating the greatest need for development within the areas of: Surplus, Disposal, and Closeout, and Asset and Inventory Management, and Logistics and Transportation.

**Figure 10.** Competency Scores: Contract Administration.

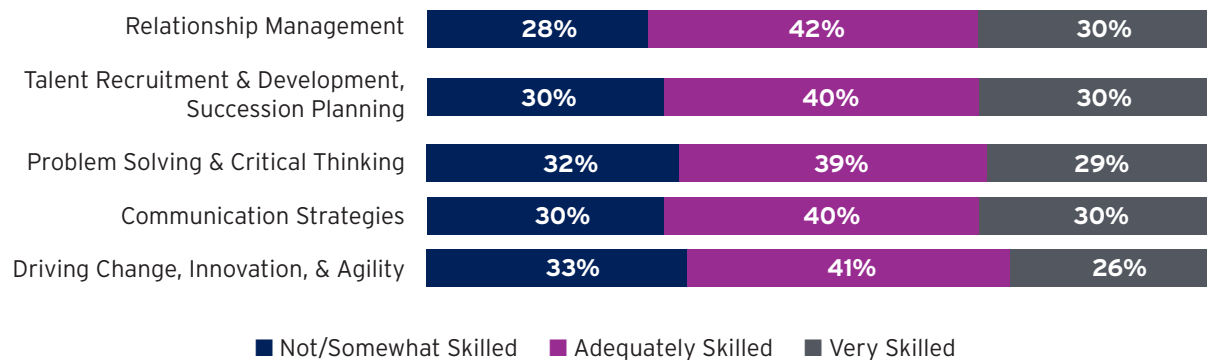


## Leadership

Public procurement professionals must be prepared to demonstrate good leadership skills when faced with everyday challenges, striving to ensure that both employees and leaders have the necessary agility, innovation, and drive to proactively transform their procurement cultures in strategic, practical ways.

The Leadership focus area consists of four competencies: Relationship Management; Talent Recruitment and Development, Succession Planning; Problem Solving and Critical Thinking; Communication Strategies (*Figure 11*). The competencies are fairly evenly disbursed overall; the greatest disparity in Leadership competencies lies between the Professional and Manager career levels, not in overall skill mastery.

**Figure 11.** Competency Scores: Leadership.

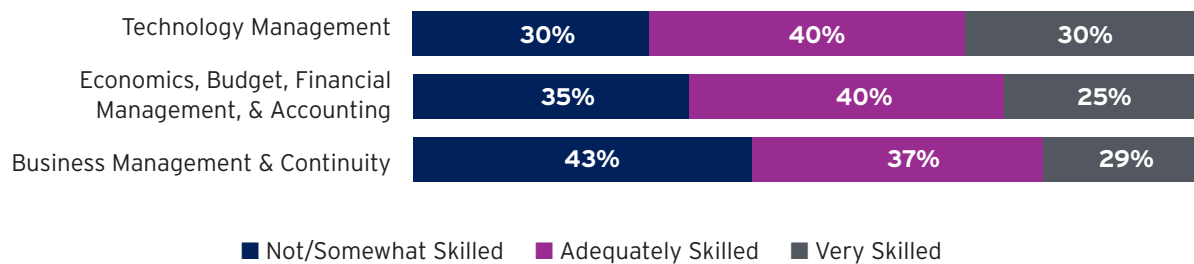


## Business Principles and Operations

In our ever-changing and increasingly complex world, the ability for procurement professionals to perform their professional responsibilities alongside common business principles and operations is critical to the success of an entity's procurement function.

The Business Principles focus area consists of three competencies: Technology Management; Economics, Budget, Financial Management, and Accounting; Business Management and Continuity (*Figure 12*). Business Management and Continuity shows the greatest need for improvement, with 43% of respondents scoring not skilled or somewhat skilled; only 20% of respondents scored very skilled in the same area, the lowest percentage of skill mastery in this focus area.

**Figure 12.** Competency Scores: Business Principles and Operations.



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## Key Takeaways:

- **Strategy:** While 75% of respondents scored adequately or very skilled in Mission & Public Benefit, there are significant gaps in Social Responsibility Alignment and Incorporating Social Equity Efforts, with only 8% and 19% of respondents scoring very skilled, respectively. This suggests a need for increased focus on these areas in professional development initiatives.
- **Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight:** A large majority of respondents (93%) scored adequately or very skilled in Ethics, Integrity, and Transparency, reflecting the highest competency proficiency overall. However, there are developmental needs in Program Implementation and Management and Legal Limits.
- **Planning and Analysis:** While there is high competency in Standardization and Requirements Planning and Understanding (74% and 76% of respondents adequately or very skilled, respectively), there are notable gaps in other analytical and forecasting competencies, with between 35% and 50% of respondents scoring not skilled or somewhat skilled.
- **Sourcing and Contracting:** There are specific needs for development in Protests and Appeals, Negotiations, and Evaluation Methods. There is also a large gap in International Procurements, which could be due to the limited need or use of this competency within organizations.
- **Contract Administration:** Between 50-59% of respondents scored not skilled or somewhat skilled in Surplus, Disposal, and Closeout; Asset and Inventory Management; and Logistics and Transportation, indicating a significant need for development in these areas to ensure effective contract administration.
- **Leadership:** The competencies within the Leadership focus area are fairly evenly distributed overall. However, the greatest disparity lies between the Professional and Manager career levels, not in overall skill mastery. This suggests that different career levels may require different leadership skills or that there are opportunities for further leadership development at the Manager level.
- **Business Principles and Operations:** In this focus area, Business Management and Continuity shows the greatest need for improvement, with 43% of respondents scoring not skilled or somewhat skilled. This competency also has the lowest percentage of respondents scoring very skilled (20%), indicating a significant area for skill development to ensure the success of an entity's procurement function.

# JOB ANALYSIS

In its current state, the sector suffers from a lack of consistency in job titles and definitions. Job postings serve as an externally defined and communicated understanding of the profession, therefore the skills required within job postings represent the skills required of procurement professionals by government entities.

## Methodology

In an effort to narrow and standardize the wide breadth of diversity amongst submitted job titles and definitions, researchers compiled a database of almost 1,700 government procurement-related job posting from the archive available on the NIGP website. The job postings referred to nine different positions: Chief/Director, Manager, Senior Buyer, Entry-level Buyer, Coordinator, Analyst, Specialist, Administrator, Technician. To maintain homogeneity with the survey data, researchers maintained the categories of “Chief/Director” and “Manager” and grouped under “Professionals” all the remaining ones.

**Table 3.** Type of job postings included in the sample.

<b>Director</b> Examples: Chief Procurement Officer, Deputy Chief of Procurement, Director of Procurement, Associate Director of Purchasing	<b>157</b>
<b>Manager</b> Examples: Purchasing manager, Commodity Manager, Contract Manager, Proposal Manager, Strategic Sourcing Manager	<b>319</b>
<b>Professionals</b> <i>(includes Senior Buyer, Entry level Buyer, Coordinator, Analyst, Specialist, Administrator)</i> Examples: Senior Buyer, Senior Contracting Officer, Senior Procurement Agent, Buyer, Procurement Officer, Purchasing Agent, Purchaser, Procurement Coordinator, Contract Coordinator, Supplier Relationship Coordinator, Purchasing Budget Analyst, Procurement Analyst, Contract Analyst, Vendor Performance Analyst, Purchasing Specialist, Contract Specialist, Bid Specialist, Regulatory/Legal Specialist, Procurement Administrator, Contract Administrator, Purchasing Administrative Clerk	<b>1,212</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,688</b>

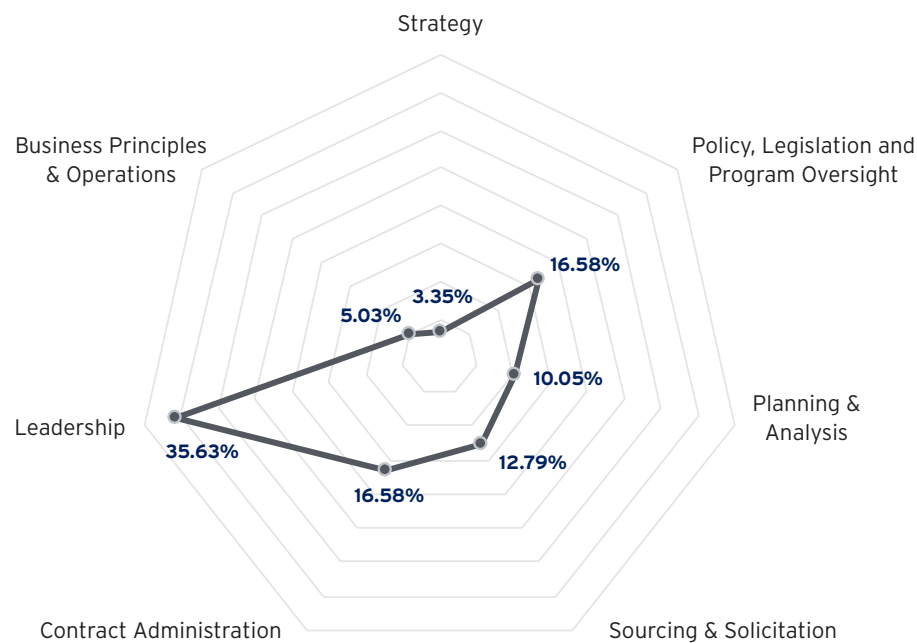
## Job Analysis Results

Following a text analysis of the job postings, researchers realized a competence requirement profile for each of the positions.

Most of the competence requirements for Directors (*Figure 13*) are in the Leadership area, followed by Policy, Legislation and Program Oversight. A more detailed text analysis of the job posting content shows that it is also important to obtain professional certifications, as almost 70% of the job postings list this aspect as required or desired.

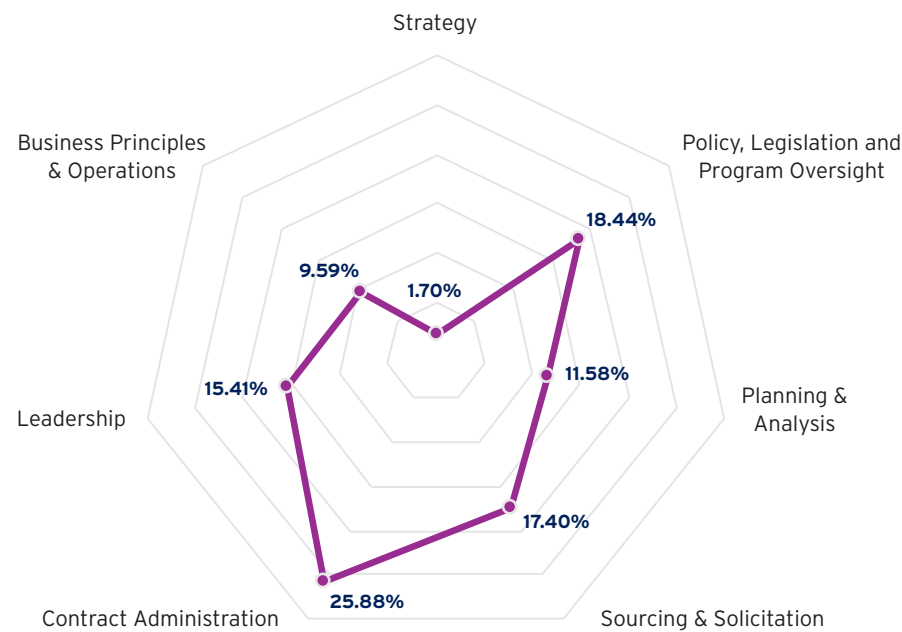


**Figure 13.** Competence requirements profile – Director and Chief.



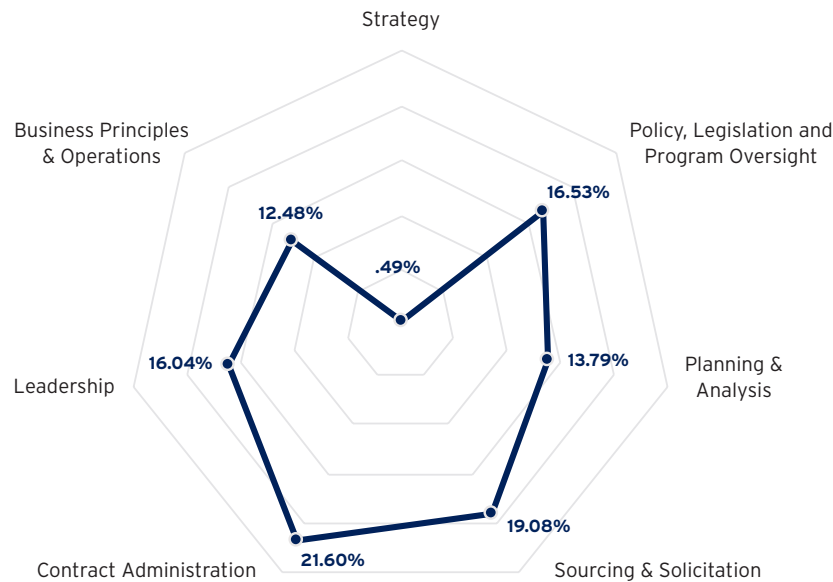
Most of the competence requirements for Managers (*Figure 14*) are in the Contract Administration area, followed by Policy, Legislation and Program Oversight. Although not as important as in the case of Director and Chief jobs, Leadership skills also are a significant component (15.4%). Over 50% of the job postings list professional certifications as required or desired.

**Figure 14.** Competence requirements profile – Manager.



Most of the competence requirements for Professionals (Figure 15) are in the Contract Administration and Sourcing and Solicitation areas. Policy, Legislation and Program Oversight also becomes a relevant component. Interestingly, Leadership skills still have a high importance; however, looking at the content, we can see that, compared to other positions, this high importance is due in large part because of the importance of communication skills and problem-solving abilities. Almost 40% of the job postings list professional certifications as required or desired.

**Figure 15.** Competence requirements profile - Professional positions.



### Key Takeaways:

- **Directors:** The majority of competence requirements for Director positions are in the Leadership area, followed by Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight. Professional certifications are highly valued, with almost 70% of job postings listing this as a requirement or preference.
- **Managers:** For Manager positions, the majority of competence requirements are in the Contract Administration area, followed by Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight. Leadership skills are also significant, but less so than for Director positions. Over 50% of job postings list professional certifications as a requirement or preference.
- **Professionals:** For Professional positions, the majority of competence requirements are in the Contract Administration and Sourcing and Solicitation areas. Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight is also a relevant component. Interestingly, while Leadership skills are still important, the emphasis is more on communication skills and problem-solving abilities rather than leadership skills per se. Almost 40% of job postings list professional certifications as a requirement or preference.

*Employers are looking for certification-holding procurement professionals at every career level.*

# CONCLUSION

Based on the information presented in the previous sections, we can discuss the skills and knowledge that procurement professionals need at various stages of their careers and what employers look for when recruiting for procurement positions - thus answering our initial research questions.

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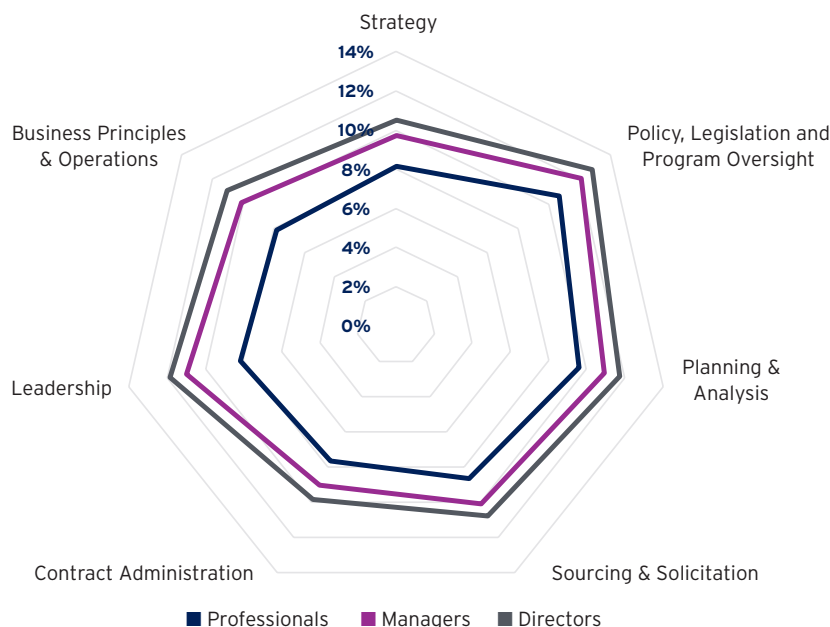
What are the skills and knowledge currently held by procurement professionals in the field?

Figure 16 provides an overview of the extent to which procurement professionals self-assess their procurement skills in different competence areas. Our data shows the following for each position:

- **Professionals:** At this level, the focus is primarily on Contract Administration and Sourcing and Solicitation. Professionals need to be adept at managing contracts, understanding sourcing procedures, and soliciting bids. Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight also play a significant role, indicating the need for a solid understanding of relevant laws and regulations. Leadership skills at this level are more about communication skills and problem-solving abilities.
- **Managers:** For managers, Contract Administration remains a key competency, but there's also a shift towards Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight. This suggests that as procurement professionals move into managerial roles, they need a broader understanding of the legal and policy context in which they operate. Leadership skills also become more important, but the emphasis is still on practical aspects like contract administration.
- **Directors:** At the director level, Leadership skills become paramount, indicating the need for strategic thinking and the ability to guide and inspire teams. Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight also remain crucial, reflecting the director's role in ensuring compliance and guiding the organization's procurement strategy.

We can conclude that across all these career stages, professional certifications are highly valued, indicating the importance of continuous professional development in the procurement field.

**Figure 16.** Distribution of procurement skills based on self-assessment: overview.

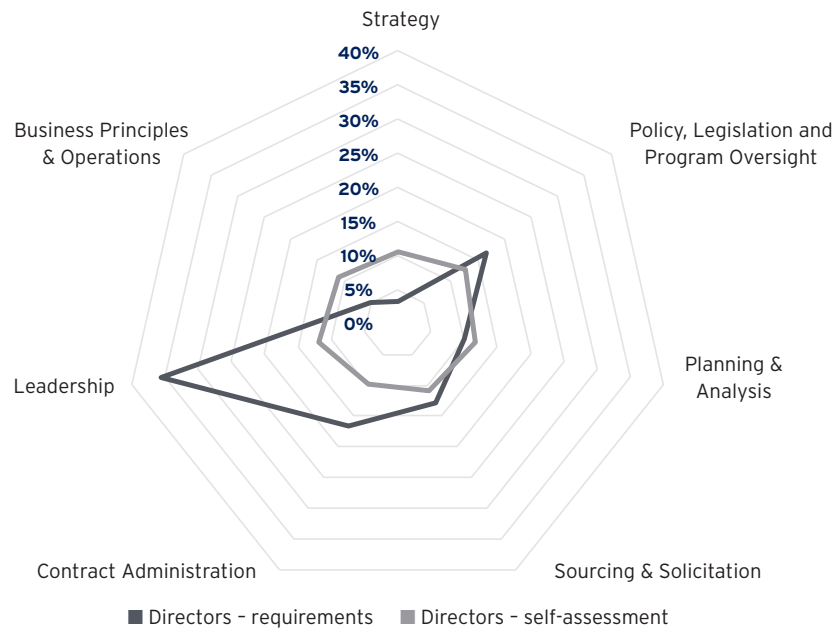


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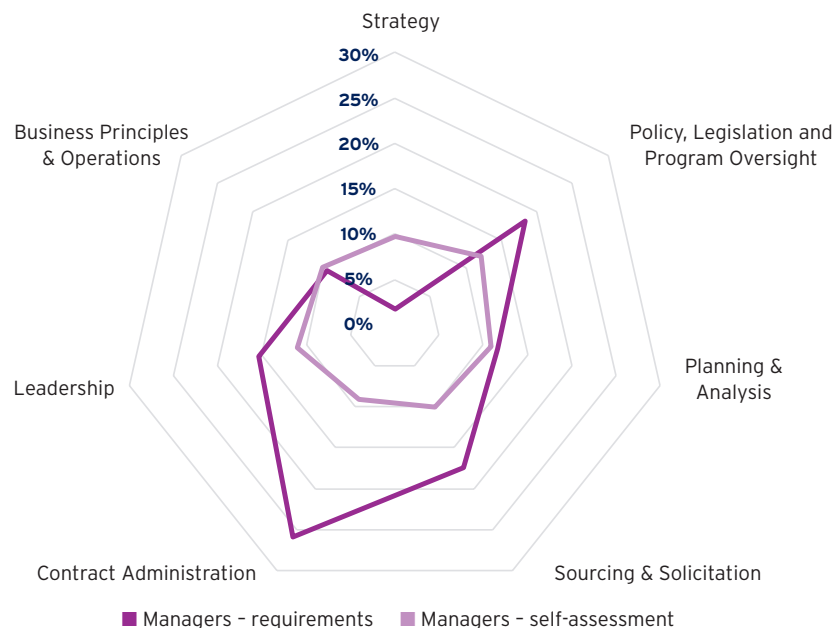
*What are the skills and knowledge that employers look for when recruiting professionals for procurement positions at various career stages?*

Figures 17, 18 and 19 provide an overview of the relative importance of procurement skills for each position based on the job analysis compared to the distribution based on self-assessment for each job position.

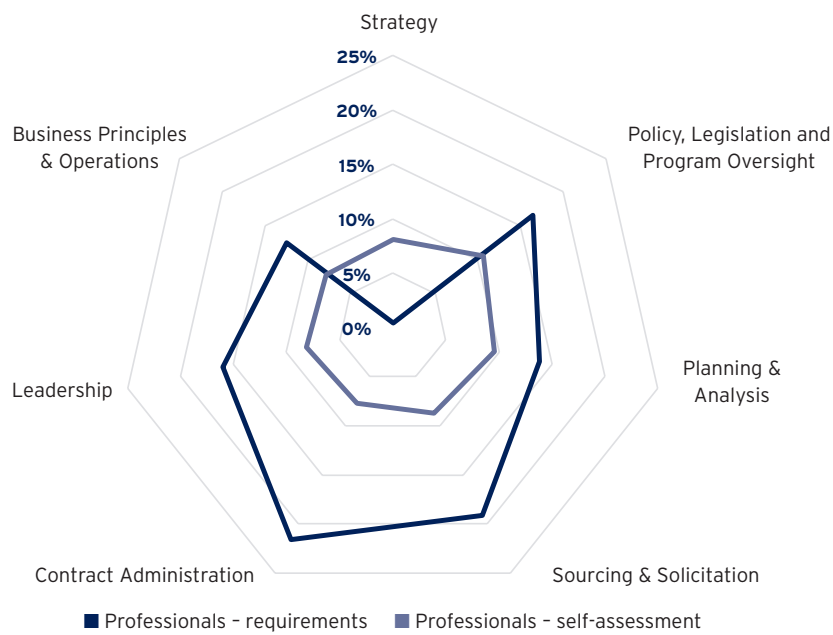
**Figure 17.** Importance of procurement skills in job postings vs. distribution based on self-assessment: Directors.



**Figure 18.** Importance of procurement skills in job postings vs. distribution based on self-assessment: Managers.



**Figure 19.** Importance of procurement skills in job postings vs. distribution based on self-assessment: Professionals.



Based on our data, there seems to be a misalignment between the skills employers look for in each position and the distribution of such competencies as self-assessed by the respondents. Each position seems, in fact, to require more specialization in a specific area.

For Director positions, employers prioritize Leadership skills and knowledge of Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight. For Manager roles, employers look for skills in Contract Administration and Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight, with Leadership skills also being important. For Professional roles, employers focus on Contract Administration and Sourcing and Solicitation skills, with Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight also being relevant.

Instead, based on the responses we obtained, it seems that the profile of the distribution of competences is similar across the different job positions and overall homogenously distributed across the six areas. What differentiate the job positions is the magnitude of the competences possessed in each area, which is higher for Directors compared to Managers and Professionals, and higher for Managers compared to Professionals (Figure 16).

While this perceived balance of competences means that procurement professionals have good coverage of skills in each area independently from their position, this also opens the door for specialization opportunities. Based on the competence required for each position, individuals at different levels in their career need to pursue further training opportunities to specialize in the competences required by the employers for their positions (or for future positions to pursue).

Comparing the required skills with the self-assessed competencies, we can finally conclude with four important observations:

- **Alignment of Skills and Requirements:** There is a clear alignment between the skills that procurement professionals self-report and the requirements that employers list in job postings. This suggests that procurement professionals are generally aware of and prepared for the key competencies needed in their roles. However, the degree of alignment varies across different competency areas and career stages, indicating areas for further professional development.
- **Areas for Improvement:** Despite the overall alignment, there are certain areas where self-assessed competencies do not fully meet the requirements of employers. For instance, in the area of Strategy, there are significant gaps in Social Responsibility Alignment and Incorporating Social Equity Efforts. Similarly, in the area of Business Principles and Operations, there is a significant need for improvement in Business Management and Continuity. These areas represent opportunities for targeted training and professional development initiatives.
- **Value of Professional Certifications:** Both self-assessed competencies and job posting requirements highlight the high value placed on professional certifications in the procurement field. However, the percentage of professionals holding these certifications varies, suggesting that encouraging and facilitating certification could be a valuable strategy for enhancing competency levels.
- **Leadership Skills:** While Leadership skills are highly valued at all career stages, the specific aspects of leadership that are emphasized vary. For instance, at the Professional level, the emphasis is more on communication skills and problem-solving abilities, while at the Director level, strategic thinking and the ability to guide and inspire teams become paramount. This suggests that leadership development initiatives should be tailored to the specific needs and challenges of different career stages.

These represent interesting findings if we consider that, across all these roles, a significant percentage of job postings list professional certifications as a requirement or preference (70% for Director roles, over 50% for Manager roles, and almost 40% for Professional roles). This suggests that employers value the specialized knowledge and skills that these certifications represent, which is in line with the expectations and desires of the respondents, who indicated certifications among the most important and valuable training initiatives.

In conclusion, while there is a strong alignment between self-assessed competencies and job requirements in the procurement field, there are also clear opportunities for further development, particularly in areas like Social Responsibility, Business Management, and Leadership. Encouraging professional certifications and providing targeted training in these areas will help to close these gaps and enhance the overall competency of the procurement workforce.





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