



**PUBLIC  
PROCUREMENT  
BENCHMARK**

**2019**

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**SURVEY  
REPORT**

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## **Background**

**Purpose:** NIGP's Public Procurement Benchmarking Survey is a standardized process for gathering key public sector procurement data so that individual entities have a structured way to compare their operations to those of other public procurement entities. Survey results focus on specific operating practices and processes, which allow individual entities to compare and identify potential opportunities to improve operating practices within their organization.

**Conducted by:** The Institute for Public Procurement (NIGP) in collaboration with Professors Mohamad Alkadry at the University of Connecticut and Alexandru Roman at California State University San Bernardino.

NIGP – Developing, supporting and promoting public procurement practitioners through premier educational and research programs, technical services and advocacy initiatives since 1944. With over 2,600 member entities representing over 16,000 professionals across the United States, Canada and countries outside of North America, the Institute is international in its reach. Our goal is simple: recognition and esteem for the government procurement profession and its dedicated practitioners.

**Survey Funded by:** NIGP.

## Executive Summary

Over the last several years, the role of public procurement as a profession and a pillar for good governance has been steadily growing. The same goes for the recognition that the function is increasingly receiving in academia as well as within the broader practitioner circles. Indeed, most leaders currently realize that organizational operational efficiency cannot be achieved without a strong and “healthy” procurement function. At a time when governmental entities are expected to be “hyper-efficient,” procurement provides the avenue and tools for achieving that efficiency. Indeed, the administrative future of public entities is intimately linked with that of the procurement function.

The road towards operational efficiency, however, is not without challenges. Procurement functions within governmental entities are often understaffed, undertrained and underfunded. The most significant challenge that procurement professionals have to face is that related to an unrepresentative image of the procurement function. On daily basis, professionals operating in the field have to struggle with the myths that others carry regarding public procurement. Procurement is often criticized for being bureaucratic, convoluted and lacking innovation. Yet, with the same breath, the very same critiques suggest that procurement needs to be more transparent, more precise and more predictable. Dealing with these conflicting demands is not easy, and that is why learning within and outside the procurement professional boundaries (seeking innovative ways of reaching a balance between conflicting demands) becomes so critical.

Since 1944, NIGP has been a leader in advocating and supporting specialists in public procurement. Due to the complexity of the tasks our members face on daily basis, NIGP strives to provide practical and useful research findings that can assist everyday decision making. Benchmarks and benchmarking, due to increasing budgetary constraints, represent two dimensions that our members find particularly important for their daily work.

This report is part of our successful *Benchmark Reports Series* and it identifies the condition and patterns of key organizational variables within public procurement practices in public sector entities. This report emphasizes operating practices and processes that can be used by our members to evaluate potential opportunities for improvement. It is critical that the findings and the recommendations presented in this report be interpreted only within the context of the surveyed sample and with a clear understanding of the methodological constraints.

Unfortunately, this year’s report included only about 98 respondents due to less than optimal response rate. Not all respondents answered all questions, which means that the tables in this report will reflect totals that may be smaller than 98. This prevented the research team from creating benchmarks for peer groups (type of agency, size of procurement volume, region, etc. . .). However, the team was able to generate a report to include a general idea about certain benchmarks. Future benchmarking studies will follow different strategies to improve response rate, and will hopefully generate more responses.

Of the 79 respondents that completed the question on the type of agency, 23 worked in a municipality, 13 worked in a county or regional government, 12 worked in a special district and 9 worked in state entities. The study includes data on general characteristics, cycle times, process complexity, and thresholds, in addition to three key tables to present the cycle times, the number of steps and the thresholds. Each table includes the number of responses, the average of responses and the median response. The median means the middle point in each distribution, half of the respondents are above the median and half are below it.

Table i. Cycle Times Summary Table

	N	Average	Median
Sole Source - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	78	12	5
Sole Source - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	72	20	5
Small purchases - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	76	7	2
Small purchases - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	71	12	2
Emergency Procurement - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	73	3	1
Emergency Procurement - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	64	10	1
Invitations for Bids (IFB) - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	78	48	31
Invitations for Bids (IFB) - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	67	60	38
Requests for Proposals (RFP) - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	81	74	60
Requests for Proposals (RFP) - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	73	90	70
Construction/Capital Improvements (IFB) - Cycle Time in Business Days	67	58	45
Construction/Capital Improvements (IFB) - Cycle Time in Business Days	54	69	58
Construction/Capital Improvements (RFP) - Cycle Time in Business Days	61	82	70
Construction/Capital Improvements (RFP) - Cycle Time in Business Days	50	138	85
RFP Draft - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	75	13	10
RFP Draft - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	67	13	10
RFP Circulation (for stakeholder input) - Cycle Time in Business Days	74	10	5
RFP Circulation (for stakeholder input) - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	66	9	5
Proposal Receipts (RFP "open"/in the field) - Cycle Time in Business Days	76	21	21
Proposal Receipts (RFP "open"/in the field) - Cycle Time in Business Days	68	22	21
Proposals Review - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	75	12	10
Proposals Review - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	67	13	10
Negotiation/Award - Cycle Time in Business Days (NON IT)	75	15	14
Negotiation/Award - Cycle Time in Business Days (IT)	67	16	14

*Table ii. Procedural Steps Summary Table*

	N	Average	Median
Sole Source - Number of Steps (NON IT)	75	4	3
Sole Source - Number of Steps (IT)	68	4	3
Small purchases - Number of Steps (NON IT)	73	3	3
Small purchases - Number of Steps (IT)	66	3	3
Emergency Procurement - Number of Steps (NON IT)	70	3	2
Emergency Procurement - Number of Steps (IT)	63	3	2
Invitations for Bids (IFB) - Number of Steps (NON IT)	71	10	6
Invitations for Bids (IFB) - Number of Steps (IT)	62	10	6
Requests for Proposals (RFP) - Number of Steps (NON IT)	75	13	8
Requests for Proposals (RFP) - Number of Steps (IT)	66	12	8
Construction/Capital Improvements (IFB) – No. of Steps (NON IT)	62	12	8
Construction/Capital Improvements (IFB) - No. of Steps (IT)	51	11	8
Construction/Capital Improvements (RFP) - No. of Steps (NON IT)	60	14	9
Construction/Capital Improvements (RFP) – No. of Steps (IT)	50	13	9

*Table iii. Thresholds Summary Table*

	N	Average	Median
Thresholds:- Small purchases - non-IT	59	13,364	5,000
Thresholds:- Small purchases - IT	53	13,129	5,000
Thresholds:- Requiring formal competition for non-IT	60	54,033	26,450
Thresholds:- Requiring formal competition for IT	54	57,611	35,000
Thresholds:- Requiring written quotes for non-IT	58	28,183	10,000
Thresholds:- Requiring written quotes for IT	52	32,569	10,000
Thresholds:- Requiring at least three quotes for non-IT	58	23,609	10,000
Thresholds:- Requiring at least three quotes for IT	52	24,790	10,000

**Table 1. Type of Participating Entities**

Type of Organization	Number
City/municipality	23
County/region/province	13
Special district/special authority	12
State agency (non-national/non-federal)	9
Nonprofit agency	3
School district	8
College/university	3
Other	6
College/university system	2
Total	79

**Table 2. General Spending Characteristics of Participating Entities**

	Mean	Median
Total annual number of emergency contracts	2	2
Total annual number of invitations for bids	3	2
Total annual number of purchase orders	11	4
Total annual number of request for proposals	11	6
Total annual number of sole source contracts	22	10
Total construction/capital improvements spend	39	15
Total number of change orders	41	24
Total number of competitive negotiations	66	10
Total number of letters of interest	68	15
Total number of letters or proposals of qualification	84	10
Total number of protests	263	50
Total number of protests determined in agency's favor	497	25
Total number of purchase orders issued under delegated auth.	1,467	400
Total number of requests for quotes	9,502	1,983
Total number of sole source contracts over formal threshold	435,000	63,000
Total procurement spending	5,420,000	559,000
Total value of emergency procurement	6,570,000	2,670,000
Total value of purchase orders	7,890,000	750,000
Total value of purchase orders issued under delegated auth.	47,700,000	26,500,000
Total value of purchasing undertaken through a p-card program	128,000,000	18,900,000
Total value of sole-source contracts	151,000,000	29,000,000

**Table 3. General Characteristics Regarding Use of Cooperative Procurement**

Percentage of entities using cooperative procurement	96%
Average percentage of overall procurement completed through cooperative procurement	17%

**Table 4. General Characteristics Regarding Use of E-Procurement Platforms**

Percentage of entities using e-procurement platforms	72%
Mean percentage of vendor registration completed via e-procurement platforms	79%
Mean percentage of quotes completed via e-procurement platforms	55%
Mean percentage of sealed bids completed via e-procurement platforms	59%
Mean percentage of proposals completed via e-procurement platforms	75%
Mean percentage of auctions completed via e-procurement platforms	36%
Mean percentage of total procurement spending completed via e-procurement platforms	68%

Mean percentage of purchase orders completed via e-procurement platforms	86%
Mean percentage of contract administration completed via e-procurement platforms	61%
Mean percentage of requisitions completed via e-procurement platforms	87%
Mean percentage of e-commerce completed via e-procurement platforms	46%

**Table 5. General Characteristics Regarding Contract Lengths**

Median length of initial contract in months general procurement	36
Median length of initial contract in months for IT	30
Median length for initial contract in months for construction	12
Median length of the extension in months for procurement contracts	12
Median length of the extension in months for IT contracts	12
Median length of the extension in months for construction contracts	12
Median number of extension allowed for general procurement contracts	3
Median number of extension allowed for IT contracts	3
Median number of extension allowed for construction contracts	2

**Table 6. General Characteristics Regarding the Procurement Structures**

Percentage of entities that have a vendor emergency list	37%
Percentage of entities requiring pre-bid/submission meeting for IFBs	23%
Percentage of entities requiring pre-bid/submission meeting for RFPs	24%
Percentage of entities that have a warehouse or receiving area	62%
Percentage of entities that have a p-card program	81%
Percentage of entities that conduct an internal customer satisfaction survey	27%

**Table 7. General Characteristics Regarding Procurement Savings**

Mean "hard-cash" savings	50,800,000
Mean "soft-cash" savings	3,787,159
Mean generated revenue	1,022,107

**Cycle Times Tables**

*Sole Sourcing for Non-IT*

Days	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	***
5	*****
6	*
7	****
10	*****
14	*
15	*****
20	*
25	*
30	***
45	*
60	****
120	*

Mean: 12 days

*Sole Source for IT*

Days	Frequency
1	****
2	*****
2.5	*
3	*****
4	**
5	*****
6	*
7	***
9	*
10	*****
12	*
14	**
15	*
20	***
21	*
30	****
45	*
54	*
60	****
180	*

Mean: 15 days

*Small Purchases for Non-IT*

Days	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
5	*****
7	*
10	*****
14	*
15	*
20	*
21	**

Mean: 4 days

*Small Purchases for IT*

Days	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*
5	*****
7	*
10	*****
14	*
15	*
20	*
21	**
25	*
30	*

Mean: 5 days

*Emergency Procurement for Non IT*

Days	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
4	*
5	*****
7	*
10	*
15	**
20	*
30	*
45	*

Mean: 3 days

*Emergency Procurement for IT*

---

Days	Frequency
1	***** *****
2	****
3	*
4	**
5	****
8	*
10	*
15	**
21	*
30	**
45	*

---

Mean: 4 days

*Invitations for Bids for Non IT*

---

Days	Frequency
3	**
6	*
10	*****
14	***
15	*****
18	*
20	*****
25	*****
28	*
30	*****
32	**
35	*
38	*
45	*****
60	*****
65	*
80	**
90	*****
120	*
124	**
136	***
160	*
180	*

---

Mean: 48 days

*Invitation for Bids for IT*

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Days	Frequency
7	*
10	***
14	*
15	***
18	*
20	****
24	*
25	***
28	**
30	*****
32	*
38	*
45	*****
55	*
60	*****
65	*
90	*****
100	*
120	*
124	**
136	***
180	***
365	*

---

Mean: 61 days

*Requests for Proposals for Non IT*

Days	Frequency
3	*
7	*
10	*
15	***
17	*
20	**
21	*
22	*
25	**
28	*
30	*****
34	*
35	**
40	**
45	*****
50	*
55	*
60	*****
70	*
75	**
76	*
80	*
85	*
88	*
90	*****
120	****
130	*
150	*
160	*
172	***
180	****
192	**
220	*

Mean: 74 days

*Requests for Proposals for IT*

Days	Frequency
10	*
15	**
18	**
24	*
25	**
28	*
30	*****
34	*
35	*
40	**
45	*****
55	*
60	*****
65	*
70	*
78.6	*
85	*
88	*
90	*****
100	*
120	***
150	**
160	*
172	***
180	*****
192	**
210	*
240	*
365	*

Mean: 91 days

*Capital Improvements IFBs for Non IT*

Days	Frequency
5	*
7	*
8	*
10	*
14	*
15	****
20	***
25	**
28	**
30	*****
32	*
35	*
38	*
40	*
45	*****
50	**
55	**
60	*****
70	**
75	*
90	*****
100	*
120	**
124	**
180	*
260	*

Mean: 58 days

*Capital Improvements IFBs for IT*

Days	Frequency
10	*
14	*
15	*
18	*
20	*
25	*
28	*
30	*****
32	*
35	**
38	*
45	***
50	**
55	**
60	*****
70	**
75	*
90	*****
120	***
124	**
180	*
280	*
365	*

Mean: 69 days

*Capital Improvements RFPs for Non IT*

Days	Frequency
5	*
10	**
14	*
15	*
17	*
18	*
20	*
25	*
28	**
30	***
40	*
45	****
60	*****
70	*
80	**
90	*****
120	*****
124	**
130	*
160	*
172	**
180	**
200	*
320	*

Mean: 84 days

*Capital Improvements RFPs for IT*

Days	Frequency
10	*
14	*
15	*
18	*
19	*
20	*
25	*
28	*
30	**
35	*
45	**
60	*****
80	*
90	*****
120	****
124	**
150	*
160	*
172	***
180	**
200	*
350	*
365	*

Mean: 96 days

**Process Complexity (Procedural Steps) Tables**

*Sole Source Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	*****
7	***
9	***
10	***
20	*

Mean: 4 steps

*Sole Source Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	****
6	*****
7	*****
9	***
10	***
20	*

Mean: 4 steps

*Small Purchases Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	****
6	*****
7	**
9	*
20	*

Mean: 3 steps

*Small Purchases Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	**
7	**
9	*
20	*

Mean: 3 steps

*Emergency Procurement Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	****
7	**
15	*
20	*

Mean: 3 steps

*Emergency Procurement Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
1	*****
2	*****
3	*****
4	*****
5	***
6	**
7	*****
8	*
20	*

Mean: 3 steps

*Invitations for Bids (IFB) Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
2	***
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	***
7	****
8	*****
9	*
10	*****
13	*
15	*
20	**
22	*
26	*
30	*
35	**
40	*
60	*

Mean: 10 steps

*Requests for Proposals (RFPs) Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	****
7	****
8	*****
9	**
10	****
12	*****
13	**
14	*
15	****
16	*
20	****
26	*
27	*
40	***
46	***
90	*

Mean: 13 steps

*Invitations for Bids (IFB) Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
2	***
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	***
7	***
8	***
9	***
10	*****
14	*
17	*
18	*
20	*
22	*
26	*
35	**
40	*
45	*

Mean: 10 steps

*Requests for Proposals (RFPs) Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	*****
4	*****
5	*****
6	*****
7	****
8	*****
9	**
10	****
12	***
14	****
15	**
16	**
19	*
20	**
24	*
26	*
27	*
40	**
46	***
50	*

Mean: 12 steps

*Capital Improvements IFB Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	***
4	*****
5	*****
6	****
7	*****
8	*
9	*
10	*****
12	****
13	*
16	*
20	***
22	*
35	***
40	**
90	*

Mean: 12 steps

*Capital Improvements IFB Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	***
4	****
5	*****
6	****
7	*****
8	*
10	*****
12	****
14	*
16	*
20	**
22	*
25	*
35	***
40	**

Mean: 12 steps

*Capital Improvements RFP Steps for Non IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	*
4	****
5	*****
6	*****
7	****
8	***
9	***
10	****
12	*****
13	*
14	*
15	***
16	*
18	*
20	***
25	*
29	*
40	**
46	***
90	*

Mean: 14 steps

*Capital Improvements RFP Steps for IT*

Steps	Frequency
3	1
4	2
5	7
6	6
7	4
8	3
9	2
10	3
12	5
14	1
15	3
16	1
20	3
29	1
30	1
40	2
46	3

Mean: 14 steps

**Thresholds Tables**

*Small Purchases Non-IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
<=250	**
1000	****
1500	*
2000	**
2500	****
3000	****
3500	**
4000	*
4500	*
5000	*****
7500	**
10000	*****
11100	*
15000	***
20000	*
25000	**
40000	*
50000	**
100000	*
150000	*

Mean: 13,363

*Small Purchases IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
250	*
1000	****
1500	*
2000	**
2500	****
3000	***
3500	**
4000	*
5000	*****
7500	**
10000	*****
11100	*
15000	**
20000	*
25000	**
40000	*
50000	**
75000	*
100000	*

Mean: 13,129

*Requiring Formal Competition for Non IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
1000	*
1500	*
2000	*
2500	**
3000	***
5000	***
10000	*****
20000	**
20600	*
25000	*****
27900	*
35000	**
50000	*****
65000	*
75000	***
100000	*****
150000	*
250000	**
300000	*

Mean: 54,033

*Requiring Formal Competition for IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
1000	*
1500	*
2000	*
2500	**
3000	*
5000	**
10000	****
20000	**
20600	*
25000	*****
27900	*
35000	**
50000	*****
65000	*
75000	***
100000	*****
150000	*
250000	**
300000	*

Mean: 57,611

*Requiring Written Quotes for Non-IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
1000	**
1500	*
2000	*
2500	**
3000	*
4000	*
5000	*****
7500	**
10000	*****
11000	*
11100	*
15000	**
20000	**
25000	*****
30000	*
35000	*
40000	*
50000	*****
75000	*
150000	**
175000	*
300000	*

Mean: 28,128

*Requiring Written Quotes for IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
1000	*
1500	*
2000	*
2500	**
3000	*
4000	*
5000	*****
7500	**
10000	*****
11000	*
11100	*
15000	**
20000	**
25000	*****
30000	*
35000	*
40000	*

50000	*****
75000	*
100000	*
150000	**
175000	*
300000	*

Mean: 32,569

*Requiring at Least Three Quotes for Non IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
100	*
1000	**
2000	*
2500	****
3000	****
4000	*
5000	*****
7000	*
7500	**
10000	*****
11100	**
15000	**
20000	**
25000	*****
30000	*
35000	*
40000	*
50000	*****
60000	*
150000	**
175000	*

Mean: 23,608

*Requiring at Least Three Quotes for IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
1000	**
2000	*
2500	****
3000	***
4000	*
5000	*****
7500	**
10000	*****
11000	*
11100	*
15000	**
20000	**
25000	*****
30000	*
35000	*
40000	*
50000	*****
60000	*
100000	*
150000	*
175000	*

Mean: 24,790

*Requiring Special Approval for IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
5000	*
10000	**
20000	****
20600	*
25000	*****
27900	*
35000	*
50000	*****
100000	*****
200000	**
250000	**
300000	*
500000	**
1000000	**

Mean: 165,385

*Requiring Special Approval for Non IT*

Dollar Threshold	Frequency
5000	*
10000	***
15000	*
20000	****
20600	*
25000	*****
27900	*
35000	*
50000	*****
75000	*
100000	*****
150000	*
200000	**
250000	****
300000	*
500000	**
1000000	**

Mean: 155,805