Public Dollars at Work: Sharing Stories of Procurement's Impact

We are glad you are here!

Please share your name, role, and government in the chat!

PROCUREMENT EXCELLENCE NETWORK

Partners for **Public Good**

PEN Training & Workshop

Fri, October 23, 2026

Meet your *Facilitators*



Damonique Sonnier
Project Leader | PPG
Procurement Excellence Network



Christina Crawley
Assistant Director | PPG
Strategic Communications

We are glad you are here!

Please share in the chat your name, role, and government or organization.

How can you engage in this session?



Please turn on your camera to create a more inviting experience!



Share your thoughts… raise your hand or comment in the chat!



Get involved in interactive activities… Join the fun!

We Asked, You Answered

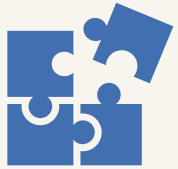
During registration, we wanted to explore…

How confident are you in your ability to tell a compelling story about your work in public service?



[33%] Just getting started

Storytelling about my work is new to me - not sure where to start!



[55%] Putting the pieces together

I have some ideas but need help shaping them into a story.



[12%] Ready to tell it

I can confidently craft and share a compelling story.

agenda

DISCOVER | The Power of Storytelling

Understand what storytelling is and why it matters in public procurement.

BUILD | The structure of "good" story

Explore frameworks to turn project wins into meaningful stories.

SHARE | Crafting YOUR story of impact

Apply and frameworks time to craft and share stories with peers.

ACT | Making storytelling a practice

strategies to make storytelling part of your everyday work.

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Procurement… is for the public good.

As soon as we step out on the street, the impact of public procurement is everywhere!

Procurement is the engine that powers communities daily, building the infrastructure…









…and depends on **dedicated public service servants** who believe in its transformative power!





…and **delivering critical services and supports** that help communities thrive…







EVERY PUBLIC DOLLAR *tells a* **STORY**

The Big Idea: "Storytelling" is an unofficial part of every role in public service. How your team communicates your impact helps build understanding, appreciation, respect and buy-in for your work —inside government and beyond.

How **PEN** defines “Storytelling” in Public Procurement



“

The intentional and proactive practice of **translating “everyday work” in government and its impact into memorable and relatable meaning**, inspiring curiosity and new ways of working.

We want to hear from you! In the chat, share: **What word(s) in this definition resonate most with the way you think of storytelling?**

Why Storytelling Matters in Public Procurement

A story gives your work a “voice”, demonstrating procurement’s power to turn public funds into goods and services that help communities thrive.



Builds Trust

Shows how "responsive“ and intentional government can be!



Inspires Action

Helps good ideas or innovations to gain buy-in by sparking curiosity.



Catalyzes Change

Encourages others to adopt new ways of working, reimagining what’s possible!

Behind each investment is the work of procurement teams transforming public resources into outcomes.

What's the story behind your work that deserves to be told?

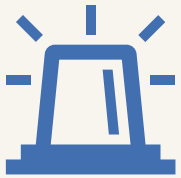
Discover

The Power of Storytelling in Public Procurement

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Why Storytelling is Challenging in Government



Reactive

Tendency to react to and manage the narrative *after the fact*, rather than proactively shaping it and giving people a peek behind the curtain.



Infrequent

Amid myriad competing commitments, governments have **not prioritized sharing stories through the lens of back-office functions**.



Hesitant

Governments may opt to share stories when work is "finished", **missing opportunities to show progress in action**, which can be just as powerful.

We want to hear from you! In the chat, share: **What are some additional barriers that impact more storytelling from happening in government?**

We Asked, You Answered

During registration, your peers shared feedback on the following prompt:



Think about the stories of impact you could share about your work in government but don't.

What holds you back?

"Procurement is often behind the scenes function so we are comfortable in the shadows - and I want to change that."

"I don't see myself as a transformative or influential piece of the big picture."

"I have trouble coming up with stories."

"...I'm often much more comfortable doing the work than talking about it."

"The fear that I think it's a good story or important, but others won't think so."

"Not having the right platform to share and hesitance due to political climate."

Storytelling Moments in “Everyday” Work



You're already making the case for your work. A story helps it land.

Moment	How a Story Helps
Leadership & council briefings	Before a major solicitation moves forward, show what's at stake
Budget requests	Pair the numbers with a real example of what would change *(e.g., with added funding, staff capacity or tools)*
Department buy-in	Use a peer's before-and-after to win support for new ways of working
Vendor outreach	Show prospective bidders what changed and that your door is open
Public updates & award announcements	Explain in plain language what a purchase means for the community
Team wins & onboarding	Celebrate progress and connect new staff to the people they serves

"But how do I know if I have a potential story to tell?"

Storytelling Opportunity Checklist: Use these questions to uncover the next theme of your team's procurement impact story!

- Did your team **change a process or policy** that makes work easier for other departments?
- Did you try something **new, unexpected, or innovative**?
- Did you **resolve a long-standing challenge**?
- Do you have a **goal, initiative, or progress update** stakeholders would want to hear about?
- Did a contract you supported **deliver a meaningful result** for the public or a user department?
- Is there a chance to **explain how procurement works** to people to don't know?

What if “everyday” work in procurement made headlines?



Activity: *Your* Dream Headline

If something you accomplished recently made tomorrow's newspaper, what would the headline say?



Instructions

1. **Open the Zoom Whiteboard link** in the chat.

2. **Choose a sticky note (any color)** and add your government's name.

3. **Write a one-sentence headline** about a "win" that you are proud of that you believe made a difference!

City of Cloudlandia

Rewrites RFP templates in Plain Language. First-time bidders double within one year.

Build

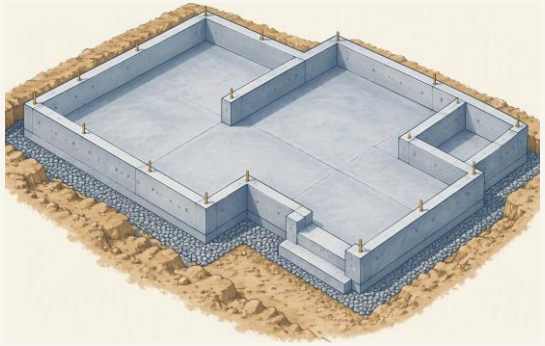
Building the Structure of a "Good" Story

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The Infrastructure of a Good Story

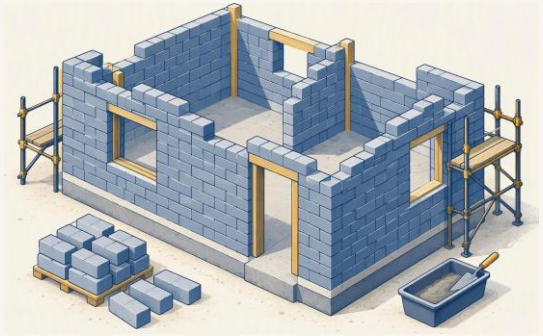
Let's explore the components of storytelling, through the lens of building a house



FOUNDATION

Narrative

The **big idea** you want to convey.



BLOCKS

Information

The **facts or data** that provides meaning.



INTERIOR

Story

The strategic sequencing of facts to share the big idea!



FINISHES

Storytelling

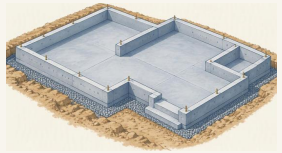
The **delivery that brings the story to life.**

Storytelling Frameworks to Shape “Good” Stories

Storyboard Builder

What is it?

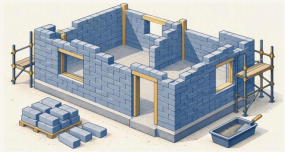
A planning tool that helps organize preliminary ideas, developing a blueprint to map out what could be valuable or important to communicate before building a robust story!



FOUNDATION

Narrative

The **big idea** you want to convey.



BLOCKS

Information

The **facts or data t**hat provides meaning.

CHAIRS Story Blueprint

What is it?

A practical framework for weaving narrative and information into a cohesive outline that sparks curiosity and memorable and relatable meaning with your audience!



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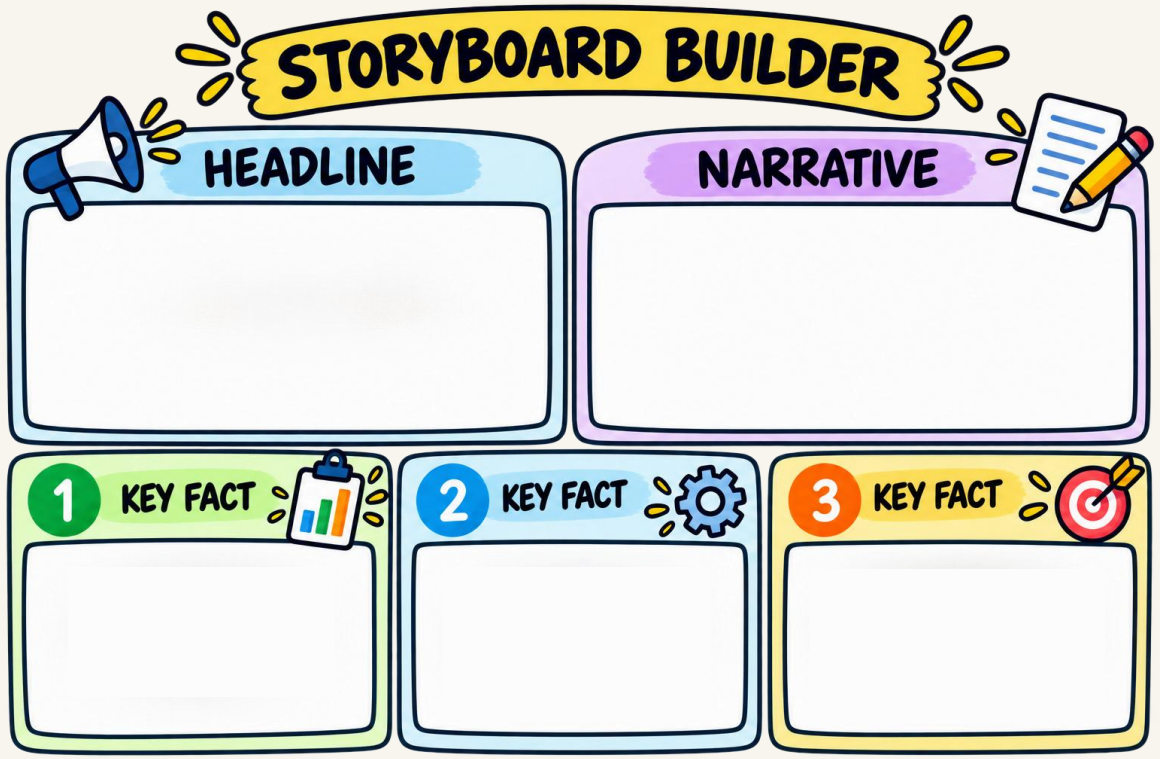
FINISHES

Storytelling

The **delivery that brings the story to life.**

🎉 Tool 🎉
Storyboard Builder

Introducing the Storyboard Builder



What it is

A planning tool that helps organize preliminary ideas, developing a blueprint to map out what could be valuable or important to communicate before building robust story!

This tool helps:

- Clarify your "Big Idea" narrative - the most important takeaway you want your audience to remember.
- Begins to compile the "blocks" to build your story, the information that is important to share

Using the Storyboard Builder

Headline: *What short, memorable hook/tagline summarizes your story and makes people want to hear more?*

Narrative: *What is the **big idea or message** that you hope people listening to your future story will take away, learn or do?*

Information: Which facts, details or data points provide more insights on what occurred?

Fact #1	Fact #2	Fact #3

Example: Using the Storyboard Builder

Headline → *From Redtape to Results: How City of Cloudlandia Simplified Bidding for Local Businesses in 6 months*

Narrative → *Procurement wants to bring awareness to community members and Council about responsiveness demonstrating how the local government listens, reacts and makes changes to benefit the public good!*

Information: Which facts, details or data points provide more insights on what occurred?

Fact #1

2024 vendor survey revealed 42% of respondents don't bid because the registration process is "complicated"

Fact #2

Taskforce formed from 3 user departments to assess processes and gaps

Fact #3

Council set a goal for 10% increase in new bids by local businesses by 2025

🎉 Tool 🎉
CHAIRS Story Blueprint

Introducing the CHAIRS Story Blueprint



What it is

A practical framework for weaving narrative and information into a cohesive outline that sparks curiosity and memorable and relatable meaning with your audience!

This framework helps:

- Structure stories in a scaffolded approach
- Clarifies the “what for” and “so that”
- Invites audiences to become collaborators, not just listeners

CHAIRS Story Blueprint

Challenge

Set the Scene

- ✓Is there a **problem to be solved or an opportunity** to make a lasting impact?
- ✓What happens if not addressed?

Headline

Reel them in!

- ✓What could you say in **one sentence** that would make someone want to know what happened next?

Audience/Character

Who is Who?

- ✓**Who will be listening** to the story you share?
- ✓**Who are the central character(s)** in the story?

Remember: *Delivery matters!* How you say something shapes how people receive information.

CHAIRS Story Blueprint

Innovation:
What Did You Do?

- ✓What was **the vision?**
- ✓How did you **adapt, build, or pioneer "new ways of working"** in government?

Result:
Proof in Action!

- ✓What was the **outcome of the innovation**?
- ✓What **evidence** do you have to share?

So, What?
Make it Personal!

- ✓**Why should your audience care** about this story?
- ✓How can your **audience continue the momentum**?

Remember: *Delivery matters!* How you say something shapes how people receive information.

Village of Peck, MI

Sanilac County, Michigan

570	Entity Type
Population	Rural Municipality



Background

The Village of Peck, Michigan had a $762,000 EPA grant to replace aging water mains and extend sewer service. But Peck could rarely attract more than one or two bids on any project, and was already facing a second $20/month utility rate increase per household just to cover costs.

Village Manager Tim Heiden reached out to PPG for help. PPG built Peck's first contractor database, surveyed nearly 50 firms on why they weren't bidding, and followed up with personalized outreach.

The result: four competitive bids, three from contractors new to Peck. The winning bid came in at 60% of budget, savings large enough to avoid that second rate increase entirely, about $240 a year saved per household, plus new sewer service for 10 homes and more reliable water for a dozen more.

Example: Village of Peck, MI

Challenge	Peck had a $762,000 EPA grant to fix aging water and sewer lines, but historically struggled to attract more than one or two bids per project. Facing a second rate hike just to cover costs, the village needed a different approach before soliciting bids this time.
Headline	A village of 570 people just solved a bidding problem most cities ten times its size haven't managed to crack
Audience + Character	Audience: Procurement staff in other municipalities. Character: The Village of Peck, Tim Heiden
Innovation	Working with PPG, Peck built its first contractor database, surveyed nearly 50 firms on why they weren't bidding, and followed up with personal outreach when the bid opened.
Result	Four competitive bids came in, three new to Peck. The winning bid hit 60% of budget, avoiding the rate hike, saving about $240/year per household, plus new or improved service for a dozen homes.
So What?	A procurement fix doesn't necessarily take new funding or policy, just outreach. If a village of 570 can pull this off, your procurement team in your municipality can too.

Reflection: Worst Story, Ever!

What's one thing guaranteed to make you STOP listening to a story?

Example: Story too long, confusing…

Post in the chat or come off mute!



After pulling up CHAIRS, remember to take a “SEAT”!

Remember: Delivery matters!

How you say something shapes how people receive information.

S	E	A	T
Speak Clearly	Emphasize Key Points	Animate Delivery	Take Your Time!



WELCOME / WE WILL BEGIN SHORTLY!

5-minute Break

Take a moment to grab some water, stretch, send an email…
But, please stay around! ☺

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⭐ Reflection: How are you feeling?

Complete the sentence:

“What is one thing you learned so far in this session that resonated with you…”

Post your word or phrase in the chat!



Share

Crafting YOUR Story of Impact

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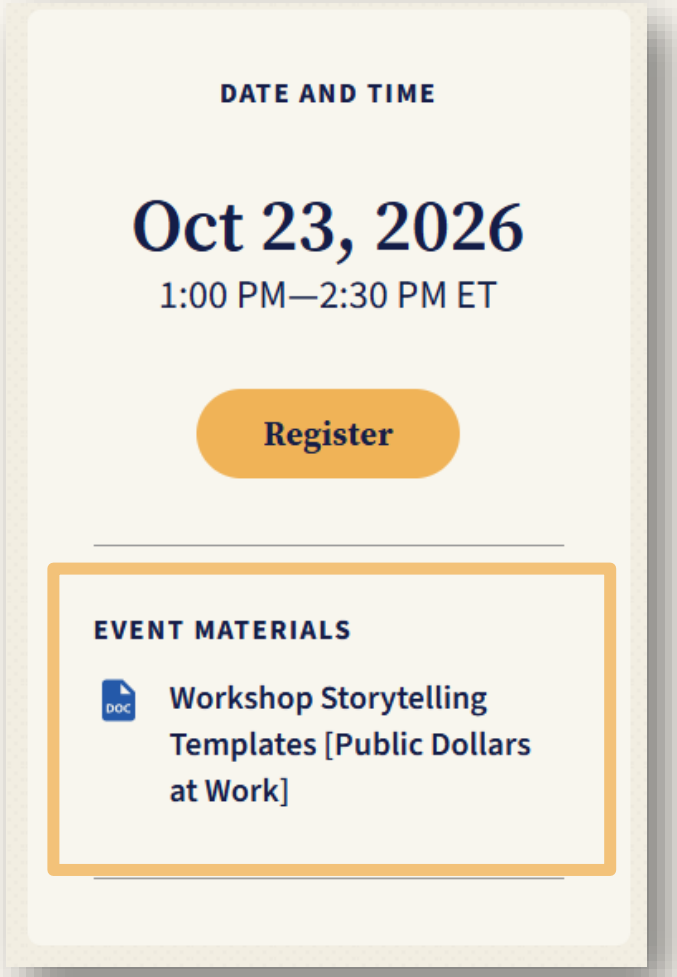
⭐ Ready to Workshop? *There's a story to tell!*

For the next 30 minutes, we will have a guided, hands-on workshop. We'll help you build your story in real time.



Step 1:
Download the session worksheet from PEN's website!

Step 2:
We'll work through the templates step by step!



Completing Your Storyboard Builder [5 min]

Headline: *What short, memorable hook/tagline summarizes your story and makes people want to hear more?*

Narrative: What is the *big idea or message* that you hope people listening to your future story will take away, learn or do?

Information: Which facts or data points provide more insight into what occurred?

Fact #1	**Fact #2**	**Fact #3**

Example: Using the Storyboard Builder

Headline → *From Redtape to Results: How City of Cloudlandia Simplified Bidding for Local Businesses in 6 months*

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Fact #2

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Fact #3

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Crafting Your Story: Challenge [3 min]

Challenge

Set the Scene

- ✓Is there a **problem to be solved or an opportunity** to make a lasting impact?
- ✓What happens if not addressed?

Village of Peck [Example]

Peck had a $762,000 EPA grant to repair aging water and sewer lines, but projects historically attracted only one or two bids. Facing a second rate hike to cover costs, the village needed a different approach before seeking bids.

Your challenge statement

Take a few minutes to write the challenge at the heart of your story and write 2-3 sentences.

Consider: Add a clear motivation or "why" but use accessible language and avoiding jargon where you can.

Crafting Your Story: Headline [2 min]

Headline

Reel them in!

What could you say in one sentence that would make someone want to know what happened next?

Village of Peck [Example]

A village of 570 people just solved a bidding problem most cities ten times its size haven't managed to crack.

Your headline

Take a few minutes to write a **one-sentence headline** for your story.

- **Consider:** What would spark your audience's interest? Can you inject humor, a quote, a statistic?

Crafting Your Story: Audience & Character(s) [2 min]

Audience & Character(s)

Who is Who?

Who will be listening to the story you share?

Who are the central character(s) in the story?

Village of Peck [Example]

Audience: Procurement staff in other municipalities.
Characters: The Village of Peck and Village Manager Tim Heiden.

Your audience and characters

Take a few minutes to identify who will hear your story and who is at its center.

- **Consider:** Who was involved in the story that should be highlighted? Whose experience will bring the story to life?

Crafting Your Story: Innovation [3 min]

Innovation
What Did You Do?

What was the vision?

How did you adapt, build, or pioneer "new ways of working" in government?

Village of Peck [Example]

Working with PPG, Peck built its first contractor database, surveyed nearly 50 firms about why they weren't bidding, and followed up with personal outreach when the bid opened.

Your innovation

Take a few minutes to describe the actions your team took to achieve the ideal vision/end state.

Crafting Your Story: Result [3 min]

Result

Proof in Action!

What was the outcome of the innovation?

What evidence do you have to share?

Village of Peck [Example]

Peck received four competitive bids, three from contractors new to the village. The winning bid came in at 60% of budget, avoiding a second rate hike and saving about $240 a year per household.

Your result

Take a few minutes to describe the outcome of your innovation.

- **Consider:** Are there statistics to name? a quote to highlight? Changes in behavior or processes?

Crafting Your Story: So, What? [2 min]

So, What?

Make it Personal!

Why should your audience care about this story?

How can your audience continue the momentum?

Village of Peck [Example]

Peck's story shows how a procurement fix doesn't necessarily take new funding or policy, just outreach. If a village of 570 can pull this off, your procurement team in your municipality can too.

Your "so what"

Take a few minutes to describe your "so what" – what makes this story meaningful to the audience!

- **Consider:** what was your narrative in your **Storyboard Builder** ? How can you incorporate that into this section?

🎤 Let’s share YOUR stories

Lights, camera, storytelling!

Who is willing to share their first draft?

Raise your hand to come off mute. We’d love to hear from you!

⭐ Volunteers will be sent PEN swag! ⭐



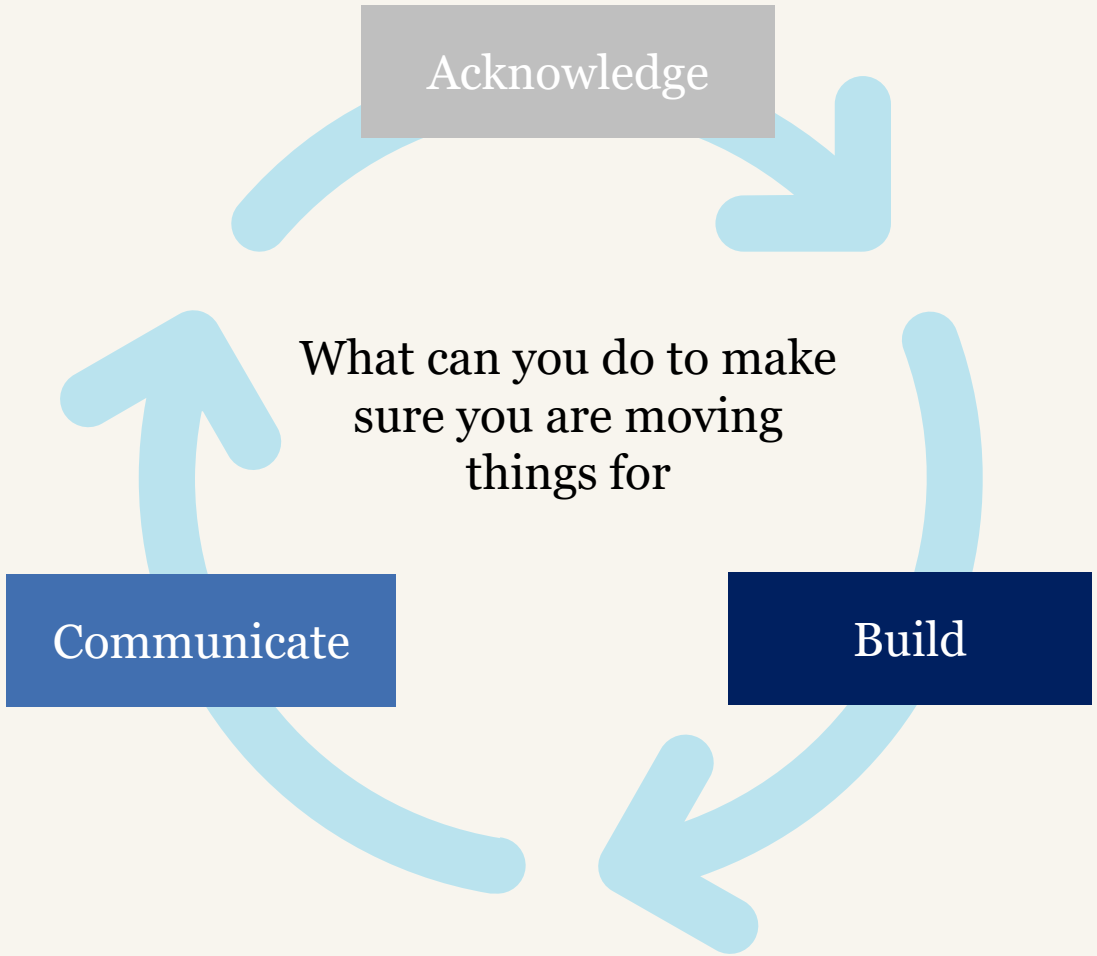
Act

Making Storytelling a Practice

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How can you keep building momentum in your storytelling journey? Adopt these **ABCs!**



Acknowledge Wins

Identify opportunities to regularly collect and track "wins" in everyday work, individually as a department!

Build Together

Create opportunities within your team to develop, refine and share stories – quarterly "BRAG" sessions or internal newsletters!

Communicate Often

Proactively reach out to share wins with peers, leadership or communication team!

⭐ Reflection: How are you feeling?

Complete the following sentence:

“At the end of this workshop, when I think about sharing stories about my work, I feel _____…”

Post your word or phrase in the chat!



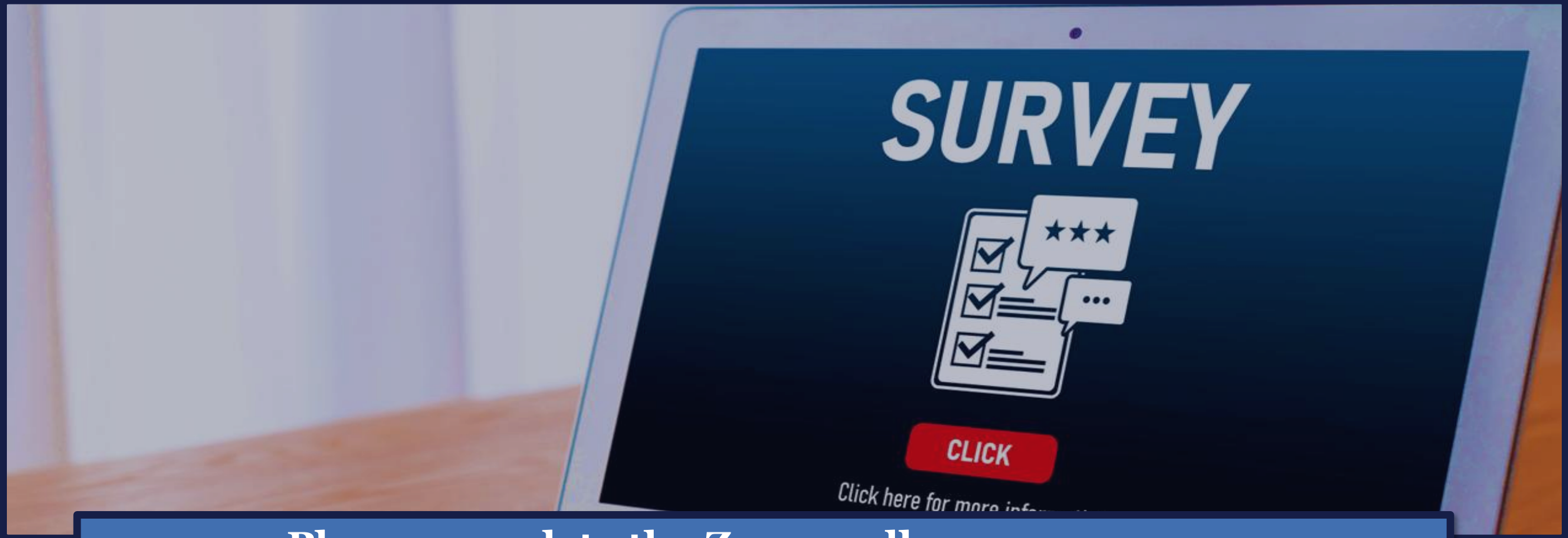
Wrap-up & Key Takeaways

What's Next at PEN

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Your Feedback Matters: Event Experience Survey



Please complete the Zoom poll on your screen.
Your feedback is anonymous!

🎤 *Join us for our final event of 2026!*

From Policy to Execution:
Responsible AI Usage in Public Procurement Workflows

Procurement teams are being asked to deliver greater public value-often with limited resources. How can AI reimagine how procurement work gets done in government?



Register Today!

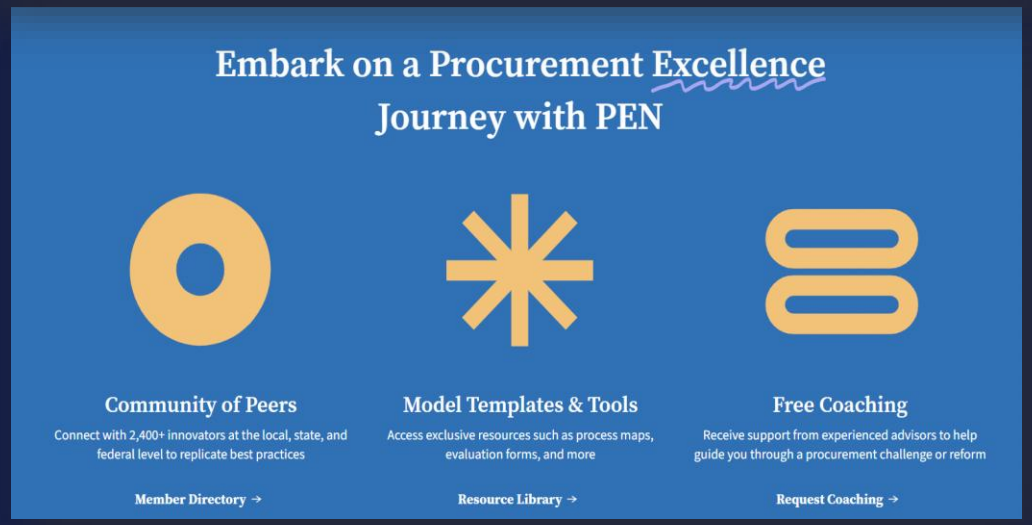
🗓️ **Nov 17, 2026 | 🕰️ 1:00-2:00pm ET**

Join us to explore real-world case studies of how 3 peer governments are adopting AI in procurement operations from the **City of Chattanooga, City of San Francisco & State of Tennessee!**

🕰️ **Speaker Panel Q&A: 2:00-2:30pm ET**

Procurement Excellence Network: Become a Member!





The Procurement Excellence Network has connected **3,000+ government staff from 1000 unique jurisdictions** to procurement resources, best practices, and community support.

- Attend monthly **virtual webinars**
- Access over **80+ resources**
- Connect with peers in our **Member Directory!**
- **Community Conversations** Dashboard



Map of U.S. PEN Members

Appendix

PROCUREMENT EXCELLENCE NETWORK

Partners for Public Good

Town of Cloudlandia

Breezewood County

18,000
Population

Entity Type
Small Town

45 → 28
days from purchase request to award
(average)

Illustrative example

Background

The Town of Cloudlandia's purchase requests moved by email and paper, from department to procurement to finance to legal, one step at a time. No one could see where a request was sitting, and routine purchases averaged 45 days from request to award.

Procurement brought Finance, Legal and two departments together to build one shared intake form and tracker, using tools the town already owned. Reviews now run at the same time, with a 15-minute weekly check-in.

The result: average time to award fell from 45 to 28 days in six months, "where's my request?" emails dropped by about half, and staff gained back roughly six hours a week.

Example: Town of Cloudlandia	
Challenge	Purchase requests moved by email and paper from department to procurement, finance and legal, one step at a time. No one could see where a request was sitting, so routine purchases averaged 45 days and staff spent hours chasing status updates
Headline	**Shared Tracker Ends "Where's My Request?" Emails** *Approval Time Cut by Nearly 40%*
Audience + Character	Audience: Procurement, finance and department staff in other municipalities Character: Cloudlandia's procurement team and its finance, legal and dept team colleagues
Innovation	Procurement brought Finance, Legal and two departments together to design one shared intake form and tracker, build with tools the town already owned. Reviews now run at the same time instead of one after another, supported by a 15-min weekly check-in.
Result	Average time from request to award fell from 45 to 28 days in six months. Status-check emails dropped by about half, and staff gained back roughly six hours a week.
So What?	Hours spent chasing status updates are hours not spent on strategic sourcing. Making the internal process visible gives your team time back for work that moves the mission, and gives you numbers to show leadership.