PROCUREMENT INPROVEMENT COUNCIL (PIC)
December 9, 2025

Start Time: 1:00pm   **End Time: 2:04pm**   **Location: Virtual**

Members Present:

Chair, CPO, Designee	Wallace Sermons	**Senate Member Representative**	
State Treasurer, Designee, Deputy Treasurer	Cissy Blasi	**House of Delegates Member**	Delegate Ken Kerr
Chancellor USM, Designee	Tom Hickey	**Comptroller or Designee**	Ben Seigel
Sec. DoIT, Designee	Melissa Leaman	**Attorney General or Designee**	Zenita Wickham Hurley
Sec. MDOT, Designee, CPO	Valerie Radomsky/Joy Abrams	**Local Govt Member**	
BPW Procurement Advisor	Gabe Gnall	**Social Services**	Barbara Ashe
Special Sec. GOSBA, & Designee		**Social Services**	Sheryl Chapman
Sec. of Juvenile Serv., Designee, Procurement Director		**Veteran Owned Business**	
Sec. Human Serv., Designee, Procurement Director	Cynthia Washington	**General Public (w/State Proc. Exp.)**	Robert Dashiell
Sec. of Health, Designee, Procurement Director	Calvin Johnson	**Minority Owned Business**	Lisa Ellis
Superintendent of Schools, Designee	Jenna Meinl	**Minority Owned Business**	

Guests/Attendees:
Harris Floyd, Nish Thakker, Lauri McGuire (DGS Counsel), Juanita Gray, Alison Barry, Tom Brennan, Jasmin Clemons

DGS Office of State Procurement (OSP) Staff Present:
Jamie Tomaszewski, Judy Urban, Leslie Wodday, Shae Cronin, Yasin Mohammed, Corbett Webb, Chantal Kai-Lewis, YLan Nguyen, Linda Dangerfield, Natalie Grasso, Amit Khardori, Joan Plater, Lyudmila Bond, Stella Alexander-Sergeeff

PIC Statutory Responsibilities -- The Council shall:

(1) Ensure that the State's procurement system is utilizing the most advanced procurement methods and management techniques, including policies, procedures, and forms for all procurement activity and contract management;

(2) Effect and enhance communication between State units on procurement matters, with an emphasis on disseminating information on current developments and advances in procurement methods and management;

(3) Provide a forum for the discussion of specific procurement issues and problems that arise, including:
  - *i. Procurement officer training;*
  - *ii. Risk analysis and insurance requirements;*
  - *iii. Management of eMaryland Marketplace and other Internet procurement resources;*
  - *iv. Use of eMaryland Marketplace and compliance with State Finance and Procurement Article (SFP) §17–502;*
  - *v. Use of intergovernmental cooperative purchasing agreements; and*
  - *vi. Any other issues or problems identified by the Council;*

(4) Advise the Board on problems in the procurement process and make recommendations for improvement of the process;

(5) Review existing procurement regulations to:
  - *i. determine whether they fulfill the intent and purpose of the law, especially as it relates to fostering broad–based competition; and*
  - *ii. make recommendations on the regulations, if revising and restructuring them will result in easier understanding and use; and*

(6) Advise the General Assembly on proposed legislation in order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of State procurement

ITEM	AGENDA
1	Welcome & Introductions
2	Updates from the Previous Meeting
3	Updates from the PIC Workgroups
4	Open Discussion
5	Closing Remarks

Welcome and Introductions

Wallace Sermons opened the meeting, thanking members for their continued support of the Governor's Executive Order on procurement modernization and the Procurement Reform Act of 2025, which became effective October 1st. He noted that implementation of the Executive Order is approximately 48% complete.

Updates from Last Meeting

Wallace reported significant progress in reducing procurement timelines. Routine procurements initiated after December 2024 now follow a 120-day timeline, a reduction of more than 43% from the previous 274-day average. Tools supporting this progress include a statewide milestone chart and a portfolio tool that tailors milestones by procurement type. Current average timelines are 85 days for commodities and facilities maintenance, 73 days for IT and professional services, and 122 days for construction.

He highlighted updated tools, including the Contract Monitoring Tracker and the Maryland Contract Monitoring Basics training. He emphasized the need for comprehensive contract management resources and noted ongoing work to modernize and consolidate guidance into a new manual for procurement officers and program staff.

MBE Opportunities and Outreach – Presented by Chantal Kai-Lewis, OSP

Wallace reported enhanced enforcement efforts for MBE and VSBE compliance. Of 27 contracts closed between July 2023 and June 2025, nine were non-compliant, reflecting $33 million in prime contract payments and $2.1 million in unmet MBE payments. The State has used the Central Collection Unit to establish debts and collect liquidated damages from non-compliant vendors.

Chantal provided updates on the MBE Work Group's multi-pronged strategy to reduce barriers, ensure equitable opportunity, and strengthen statewide compliance monitoring. The group is focusing on consistent processes, ROI tracking, and addressing challenges with monitoring across multiple financial systems.

She announced the development of streamlined MBE and VSBE forms incorporating vendor feedback and clearer guidance. The Work Group also drafted an internal MBE goals and compliance enforcement policy requiring contract kickoff meetings, prime contractor work summaries, and withholding final payment pending verification of goal achievement or good-faith effort.

Chantal confirmed the creation of a cure notice and escalation policy directing unresolved deficiencies to the Central Collection Unit. She also reported that 90% of procurements over $250,000 now include

documented market research through direct vendor outreach or RFIs, resulting in more realistic and robust MBE participation goals.

In response to member questions, Wallace noted that incentives for exceeding MBE goals do not currently exist but may warrant consideration. He also encouraged members to raise concerns about low MBE goals during Q&A periods so that amendments can be issued when appropriate.

Members raised concerns regarding procurement exemptions and their impact on MBE access to opportunities, particularly in IT and cybersecurity. Wallace explained that exemptions are statutory and referred the matter to Work Group discussions. Questions regarding impacts of the paused DBE program were deferred to MDOT; MDOT confirmed ongoing coordination with federal partners and the Governor's Office.

Risk Management – Presented by Judy Urban, OSP
Wallace tasked the Risk Management Work Group, chaired by Judy Urban, with examining risk assessment tools used in other states and evaluating relevant laws and contract terms. Judy reported that the group is now shifting from risk analysis to risk mitigation strategies in contract drafting.

Non Profit Organizations – Presented by Jamie Tomaszewski, OSP
Wallace requested an assessment of the viability of the Nonprofit Organizations Work Group. Jamie Tomaszewski noted challenges tied to grant-related processes but reported ongoing progress in reviewing grant practices across agencies. The group is considering adding a nonprofit checkbox in eMMA vendor profiles to improve outreach and expects to present recommendations by the end of the fiscal year.

Contract Management – Presented by Natalie Grasso, OSP
Wallace reported that the Maryland Contract Monitoring Basics e-learning module has surpassed 235 participants, with 90% noting increased confidence and a 26% average confidence gain. Natalie Grasso shared that the Contract Management Work Group revised and will soon redeploy a statewide contracting survey aimed at identifying agency challenges.

Natalie reported continued demand for training on the Contract Monitoring Tracker deployed in October. A structured curriculum is being developed, and the Work Group is drafting improved processes for contract modifications to increase efficiency statewide.

Competitive Proof of Concept – Presented by Corbett Webb, OSP
Corbett Webb reported that the CPC Work Group is on hold due to structural limitations in the CPC statute. Amendments may be proposed in the upcoming legislative session. The group may be folded into a broader IT and AI Work Group due to the increasing relevance of emerging technologies.

Moving Forward – Presented by Amit Khardori, OSP
Corbett and Amit discussed reassessing Work Group alignment, emphasizing technology-focused needs, particularly AI and IT procurement. OSP will deploy a survey next quarter to gather member input on priority areas. Amit also highlighted the goal of creating a standing committee on IT procurement and AI use.

Amit discussed enhancing public engagement by establishing ongoing, two-way communication channels, similar to federal advisory models. He also confirmed that the CPO participates on the Maryland Division Grant Application Council, with Jamie representing the procurement perspective.

Open Discussion
There was no discussion

Adjournment:
The meeting ended at 2:04 pm

Next meeting is scheduled for **March 10** from 1:00 – 2:00 PM

NOTE:
Please refer to the PowerPoint Agenda for detailed information on all topics covered in the meeting. The agenda provides a comprehensive outline to ensure all discussion points are addressed.