



2023 NIGP Workforce Competency Study

At A Glance

BACKGROUND

In January 2023, NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement initiated a project aimed at identifying and mapping the continuing education needs of its members. Two primary questions guided the research.

1 | *What are the current skills and knowledge 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?*

1,544 respondents completed the survey, providing self-assessment of their competencies in seven focus areas. Researchers also conducted an analysis of 1,688 job descriptions in order to determine the competencies required of the procurement field. The complete results are published in the 2023 NIGP Workforce Competency Study.

Diving into the Results

The bar graph and the competency map above show the same data visualized in two different ways.

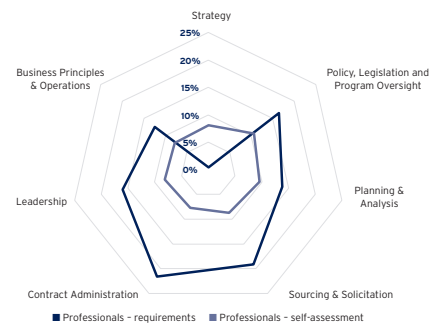
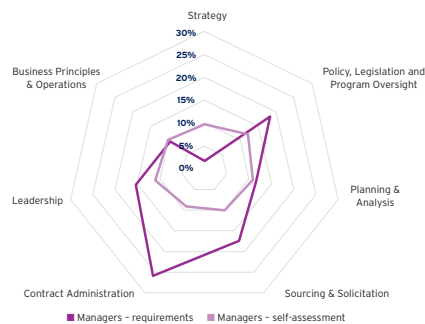
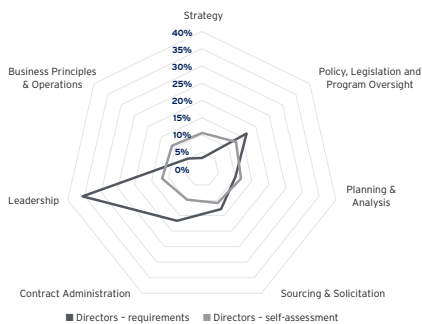
Competency Scores by Position Level



In general, Directors self-reported the highest overall competency (80%) with Managers reporting competence slightly lower than Directors (76%) but significantly higher than Professionals, who reported the lowest overall competency (66%). The gap between Professionals and Managers is more apparent in the competency map (on the right), especially in the Leadership focus area.

Policy, Legislation, and Program Oversight is the focus area with the highest overall reported competency across all career levels. Strategy is the focus area with the lowest reported competence across all career levels, and the only focus area with less than fifty percent reported competence.

Importance of procurement skills in job postings vs. distribution based on self-assessment: Directors, Managers, and Professionals



The Answer to our Research Questions

Comparing the results of the job description analysis, which articulate the skills and competencies required of procurement professionals, with the self-assessment results, which express the skills and competencies currently held by the field, yields the three visualizations above. The familiar heptagonal shape from the skills assessment laid over the more varied heptagons from the job description analysis reveal both gaps and surplus in skills and competencies for each of the career levels.

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.
- Certification:** Nearly 60% of respondents hold procurement-related certifications, with the Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) certification being the most common. Certified respondents reported more than 10% higher overall competency than respondents without certification.
- 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.
- Organizational Support and Future Development Needs:** While 14% of respondents reported that their organizations did not invest 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.