



Customer Success Story

Ridding the 'busy work' to streamline workflow

Bonfire & Pinal County

Facing growing demands on their time and limited staff resources, Pinal County's procurement team knew that managing their competitive bids and RFPs with paper and Excel was no longer sustainable. They streamlined the process online with Bonfire, gaining more visibility over their spend and saving hours of time per project. With greater team capacity and a 360-degree view of the County's sourcing activities, they have been able to consolidate spend and drive significant cost-savings for the County.



ORGANIZATION PROFILE



Pinal County is a county in central Arizona, with a population of approximately 375,770.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Labour-intensive paper and Excel process
- Limited visibility into project progress during solicitation and evaluation stages
- Increasing pressure to 'do more with less'

RESULTS

- Increased team capacity for strategic activities
- Clear visibility into project status and vendor pool
- Greater ability to drive cost-savings countywide



Procurement at Pinal County before **Bonfire**

The Pinal County procurement team supports county departments' purchasing needs—from aviation supplies to software to jail services—while ensuring best value for taxpayers. Like many counties, their staffing resources are limited, even while project volumes increase.

Before Bonfire, the competitive bidding process was managed using paper and Excel. For their small team, the administrative demands of this process were becoming unsustainable. With boxes and binders of paper coming through their office, it was difficult to track the status and progress of each project.

They sought an online solution that would streamline the process and provide more visibility into the County's spending decisions.

"We knew we needed to move faster and be more efficient with our time," explains Lorina Gillette, Senior Procurement Officer at Pinal County.

"Trying to get these procurements done with all that paper was completely unrealistic. So we thought, if we can do this online, that will not only save us the busy-work of making copies, sending letters, and those types of tasks, but it will also help us track everything better. It's really easy to miss things when it's all on paper."

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Lorina Gillette, Senior Procurement Officer, Pinal County

Choosing **Bonfire**

The Pinal County team chose Bonfire for their eSourcing platform because it delivered:



A more efficient workflow from posting to evaluation to award;



Enhanced visibility into vendor and evaluator activity; and



Seamless implementation and quick time-to-value.

Stakeholder satisfaction was another key factor. They needed a tool that was easy for stakeholders to use, to ensure strong user adoption and allow them to sell the value of the changes as an improvement to their process.

“Evaluation committee members that I’ve spoken with have found it very easy to use, even the first time,” notes Lori Pruitt, Procurement Officer at Pinal County.

The Pinal County team begins each evaluation process with a kick-off meeting with evaluators, and at this stage, they show the Bonfire explainer video and the platform’s Help Menu. Between these two resources, evaluators rarely need further training or support.

“I even had one evaluator come back after the evaluation and say, ‘That was so easy, I enjoyed that. If you ever need a committee person, just call me,’” recalls Gillette. “That has never happened before.”

Impact of **Bonfire**

After streamlining their RFP process on Bonfire, the Pinal County team saw an immediate increase in their efficiency. By eliminating paper, they freed up hours of time that were previously monopolized by photocopying, data entry, and distributing physical documents.

Bonfire's powerful evaluation tools have eliminated the need for Excel and cut down on further manual steps. When comparing line-item bids using Bonfire's BidTables tool, it takes a click of a button to automatically display bid information for side-by-side comparison, a process that could take hours to days when done manually.

The online platform takes the guesswork out of several stages of the process into which the team previously had no visibility. During the submission stage, the team has been able to see how many vendors have viewed solicitation documents through Bonfire's online portal, giving them peace of mind that their opportunities are reaching interested vendors. During the evaluation stage, buyers can monitor evaluators' scoring progress to ensure scoring is completed before the deadline. By requiring mandatory comments in Bonfire, the procurement team has a clear understanding of how the final decision was made.

The result of greater efficiency and visibility in the process?

"We're spending less time on tactical busywork, and more time on the thought process behind each project," explains Pruitt. "We're talking a lot more about the best way to evaluate projects, what kind of different results you might get by using a BidTable versus a Questionnaire, and what criteria should be included."

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*Lori Pruitt,
Procurement Officer
at Pinal County*

The procurement team is able to take on a greater volume of formal solicitations, and have started to conduct informal solicitations on Bonfire as well for efficiency's sake. They also have greater capacity to analyze their organization-wide spend and identify opportunities for time and cost savings for the County.

"Bonfire is freeing us up to have the time to look countywide. Somebody in Public Works has no idea what the County Attorney's office is doing, but as a purchasing department, we see everything," explains Gillette. "Now that we're not having to be so reactive, we're able to say, 'hey, they're right across the parking lot, and they're having the same issue. Let's fix this for both of them.'"

In one particular example, they received a requisition for a new printer. With more time in her day, Pruitt was able to invest time in analyzing the printing spend for the whole County, conducting research with vendors, and developing a scope of work. The result was a managed print services RFP that covered the whole County, saving approximately \$200,000 a year — about 40% of their previous maintenance costs for printers.

"Before Bonfire, we were so pressed for time that when you got a requisition in, you processed it—that's all you had time to do. Now we have that time to analyze and add more value," says Pruitt.

The team has leveraged the efficiency gains of bringing their process online to maximize the County's buying power and ensure best value for taxpayers. Their proven success has helped them show the value of adding Bonfire's Contracts and Vendor Performance modules in order to manage the whole contract lifecycle on one platform for further efficiency.

For other small teams trying to make the case for funding for an eSourcing solution, Pruitt advises highlighting the strategic value the team can bring if they're not bogged down by tactical work.

"You have to put a value to your time. Think of the activities that you could be doing that would bring more value to the organization than being administratively tasked. That's what you have to sell to the people that hold the budget."

See **Bonfire** for yourself

Learn how our intuitive, powerful,
and easy-to-use platform can help you
make better, faster sourcing decisions.

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