



## **Continued Pursuit of Excellence AEP Criteria 18 (cyber security and procurement)**

### **Presenter**



Candida Kelcourse serves as the Chief Purchasing Officer for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, a role she has held for the past three years. With over a decade of experience in local government, she has been dedicated to procurement since 2014, building a career focused on transparency, efficiency, and strong community partnerships. Candida earned her bachelor's degree in Business and Accounting from the University of New Mexico and a master's degree in Finance from Colorado State University. She is passionate about public service and takes pride in helping ensure responsible stewardship of public resources.

### **Summary:**

This session focuses on how procurement can play a critical role in strengthening organizational cybersecurity and managing vendor-related risks. Using the Water Authority's 2025 initiative as a case study, the session highlights practical tools and process improvements that embed cybersecurity controls directly into the procurement lifecycle.



Participants will learn how the Purchasing Department identified gaps in vendor cybersecurity oversight, particularly related to incident notification and risk visibility. In response, a cross-functional effort with the Cyber Security Team led to two key innovations: the implementation of a mandatory cybersecurity incident notification clause in all purchase orders, and the deployment of a standardized vendor cybersecurity survey issued at the time of procurement.

Attendees will learn how these tools work together to ensure vendors are contractually required to report security incidents promptly, while also enabling the organization to proactively assess vendor cybersecurity maturity. Attendees will explore how survey responses are used to evaluate vendor risk, guide decision-making, and determine appropriate mitigation strategies before issues arise.

By the end of the session, participants will understand how procurement-driven cybersecurity practices can improve compliance, enhance interdepartmental collaboration, and reduce organizational risk. The session also demonstrates how integrating risk management into procurement processes supports long-term cost avoidance and positions procurement as a strategic partner in protecting public resources.