



What We Learned from a GFOA Award of Excellence: Practical Procurement Innovations You Can Use Today



Presenter

Sarah Araya serves as the Procurement Program Manager for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, where she helps teams navigate procurement with clarity, fairness, and partnership. With 16 years of experience, including more than a decade supporting fast-growing tech companies like Tanium, DocuSign, Meta, and Genentech, she has seen firsthand how strong procurement practices can transform how organizations work. Throughout her career, Sarah has focused on elevating procurement from a transactional function to a trusted strategic partner. She believes procurement is at its best when it is collaborative, transparent, and rooted in doing the right thing, values that guide her work at Midpen as she helps shape processes that strengthen accountability and enable teams to deliver meaningful impact.

Summary:

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District earned its first-ever GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) Award of Excellence last year for a procurement-driven initiative. This session takes you behind the scenes of our submission, focusing on how strategic procurement practices, rooted in cross-department collaboration, education, process redesign, and data transparency, can strengthen compliance, improve operational efficiency, and elevate procurement's role in agencywide decision-making.