

# Survey Results:

## Public Procurement Priorities and Strategies for 2021

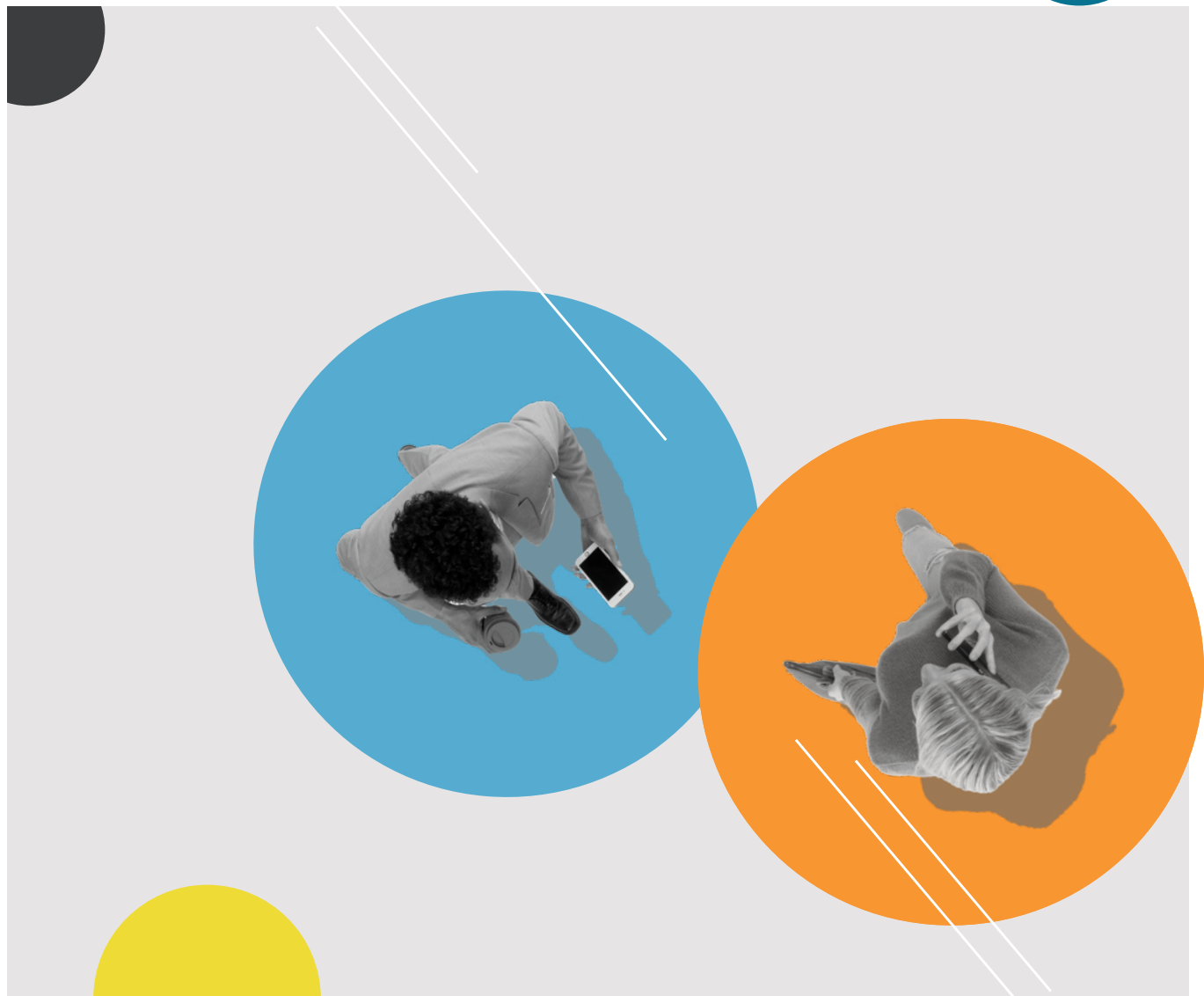
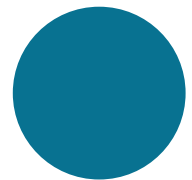


Table of Contents:

3 Overview

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4 Section 1: **Reaction to Pandemic**

7 Section 2: **Reevaluation of Operations**

10 Section 3: **Future-Proofing  
with Realigned Priorities**

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13 Conclusion



# Survey Overview

After experiencing the effects of COVID-19, we know business will not continue as it once had. Therefore, we must explore next-steps that public procurement teams are taking to navigate the outset of a turbulent year. The following survey results explore procurement priorities for local governments in 2021, while also highlighting key actions taken during the year of the pandemic. Insights will empower public procurement peers to plan accordingly and rest assured that they are exploring advantageous strategies to move forward.

The survey was published by Bonfire, a leader in strategic sourcing and procurement software, and was issued to 32,000 American public sector procurement professionals. Survey responses were accepted between December 4, 2020 and January 31, 2021. Survey questions related to three categories:

- 1) Reaction to pandemic,
- 2) Reevaluation of operations, and
- 3) Future-proofing with realigned priorities.

## SECTION 1:

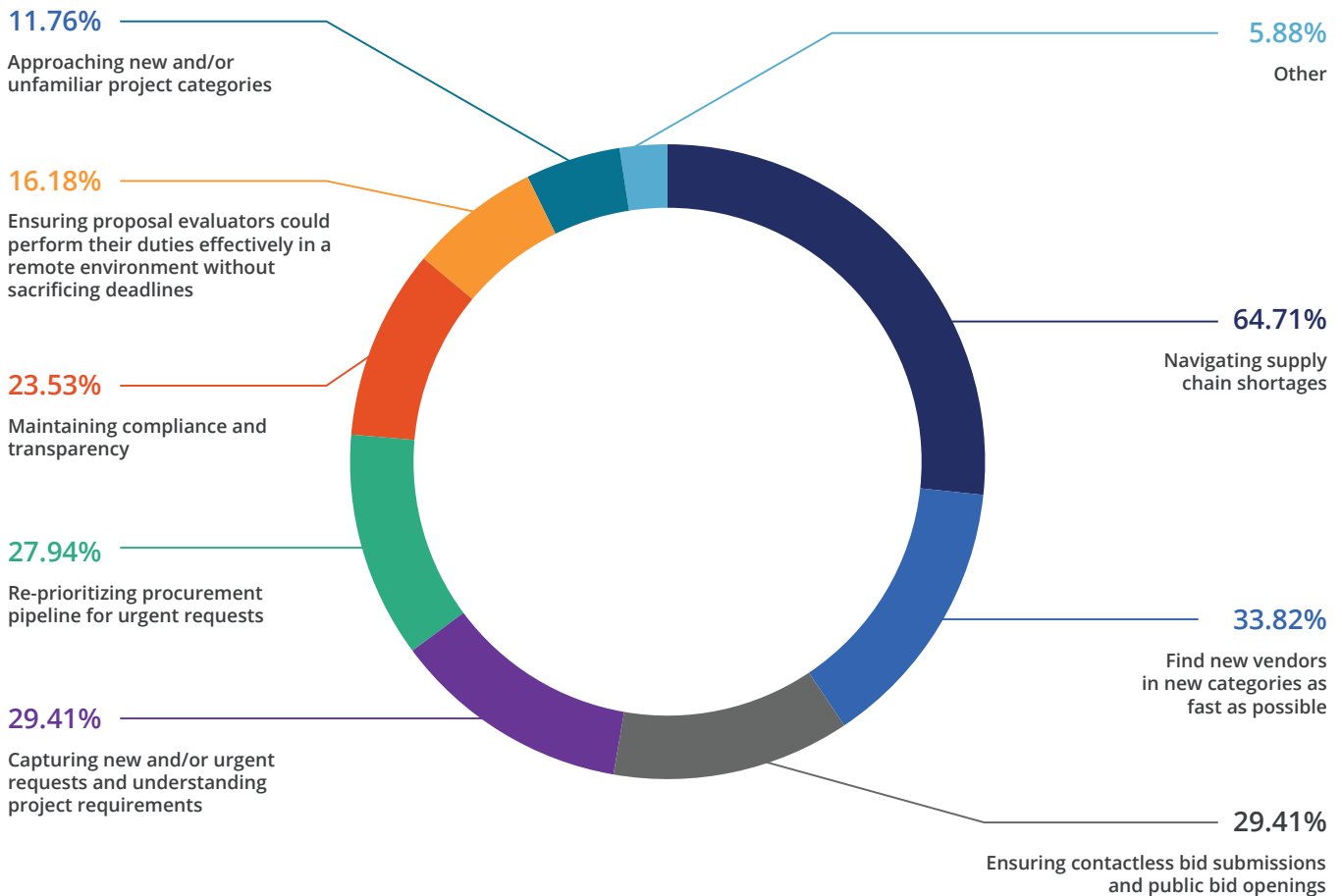
# Reaction to Pandemic

This section of the survey calls on public procurement teams to provide insight into key challenges that were experienced throughout the pandemic and how teams responded in the early days of the crisis.





# Q1: Which of the following proved to be points of strain in your procurement process during the pandemic?

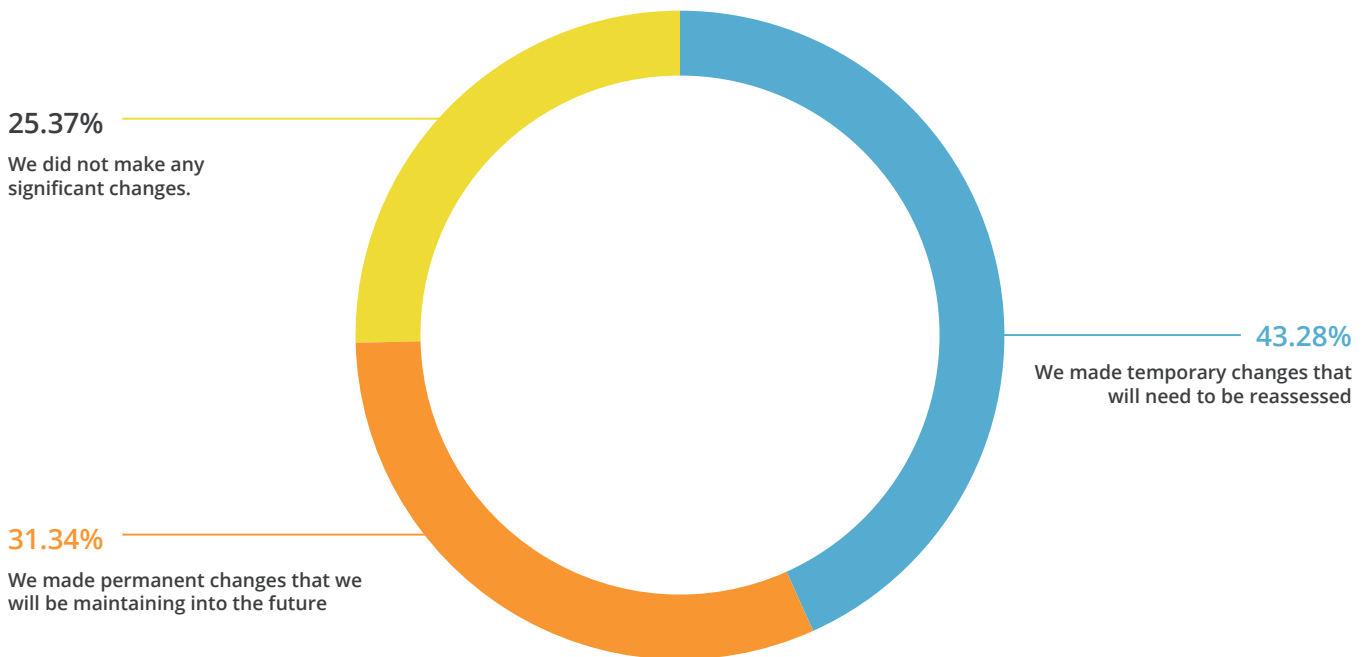


Navigating supply chain shortages was by far the most common challenge experienced by public procurement teams when the COVID-19 pandemic struck as **65% selected this option** on the survey.

Navigating supply chain shortages was by far the most common challenge experienced by public procurement teams when the COVID-19 pandemic struck as 64.71% selected this option on the survey. It is not surprising as teams entered crisis mode experiencing supply chain shortages that they moved to searching for new vendors. "Finding new vendors in new categories as fast as possible" was the second most common point of strain identified in the survey. Both of these pain points would have been incredibly difficult to maneuver for procurement teams that remained on paper-based processes, rather than digital tools. Digital, online e-procurement solutions can support these challenges by utilizing commodity codes and leveraging vendor communities and lists to facilitate invite lists quickly, finding new vendors and potentially new sources of goods/services within the supply chain.



## Q2: How did your procurement team approach digital transformation during COVID-19?



Respondent answers were relatively split across all three options for this question. **It can be expected that procurement professionals who responded that they made temporary changes (43.28%) or those who did not make any significant changes (25.37%) will need to reassess their processes to ensure their department withstands stakeholder expectations.**

For example, with virtual meetings and **telecommuting taking precedence** over the last year, evaluators may expect procurement departments to implement virtual meetings or adopt digital scorecards rather than continue with paper-based evaluation methods.

## SECTION 2:

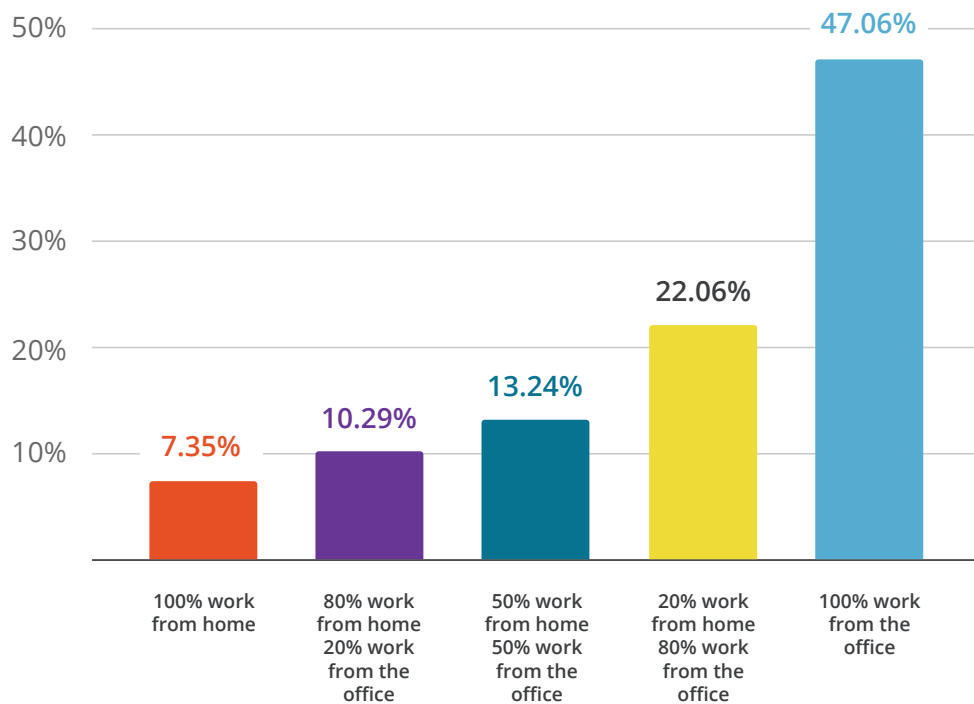
# Reevaluation of Operations

This section of the survey provides insight into the impacts of actions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on these reflections, public procurement teams can understand how operations may need to change permanently in order to satisfy new expectations of their team and customers.





## Q3: How often do you expect to be working from home in 2021?



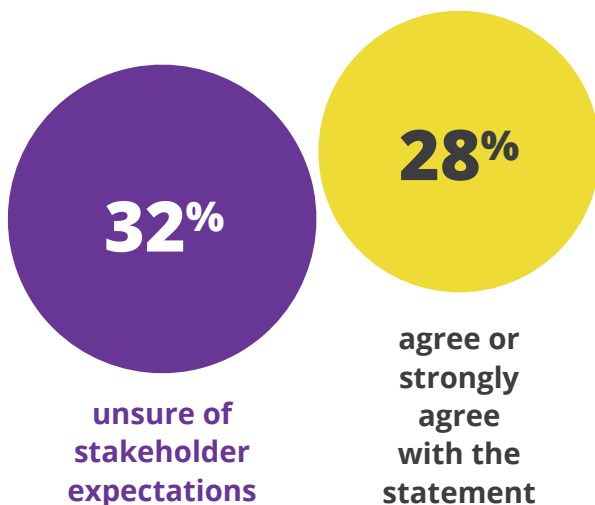
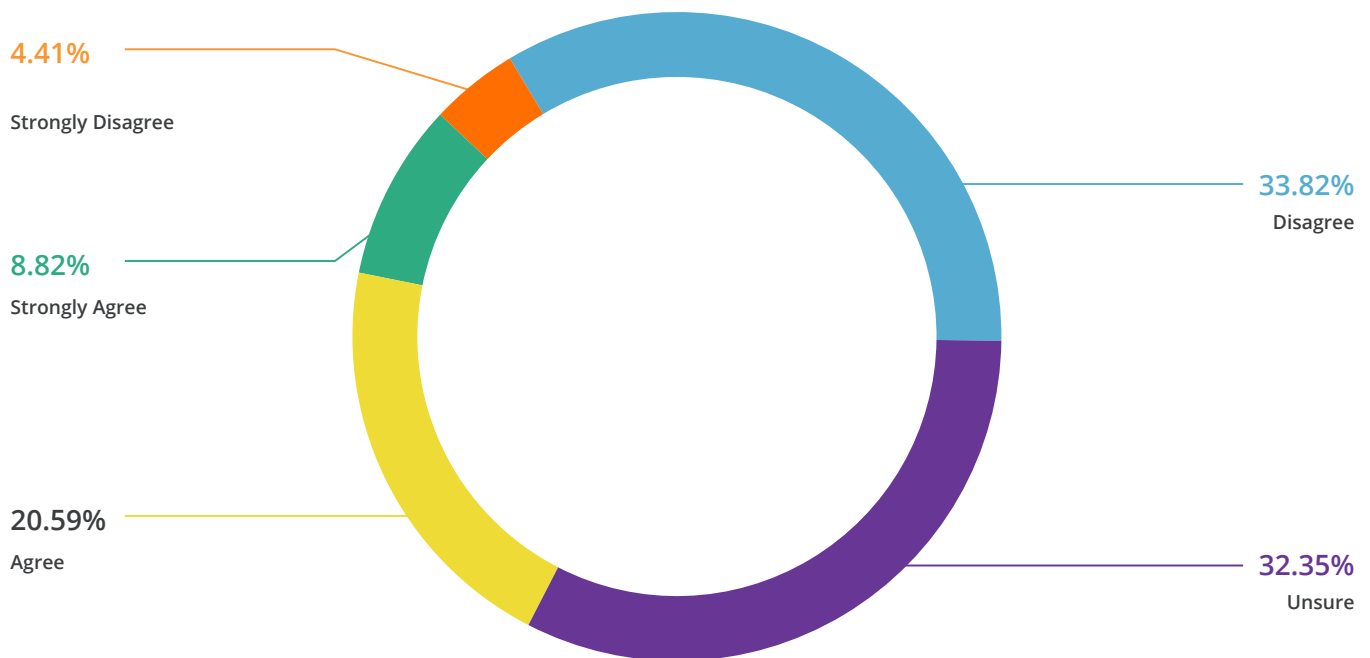
**Almost 50% of respondents expect to be working in the office full time in 2021, post-pandemic**

Almost 50% of respondents expect to be working in the office full time in 2021, post-pandemic. That said, stakeholders such as evaluators or vendors may not. Therefore, it may be important to review current processes to determine if they allow for digital, telecommuting capabilities. Vendors may have also adjusted to telecommuting processes during the last year; they may expect a digital experience upon submitting bid responses, renewing contracts, or communicating with procurement teams.





**Q4** Select your level of agreement with the following statement: **Our stakeholders and/or constituents expect faster results now than they did before COVID-19.**

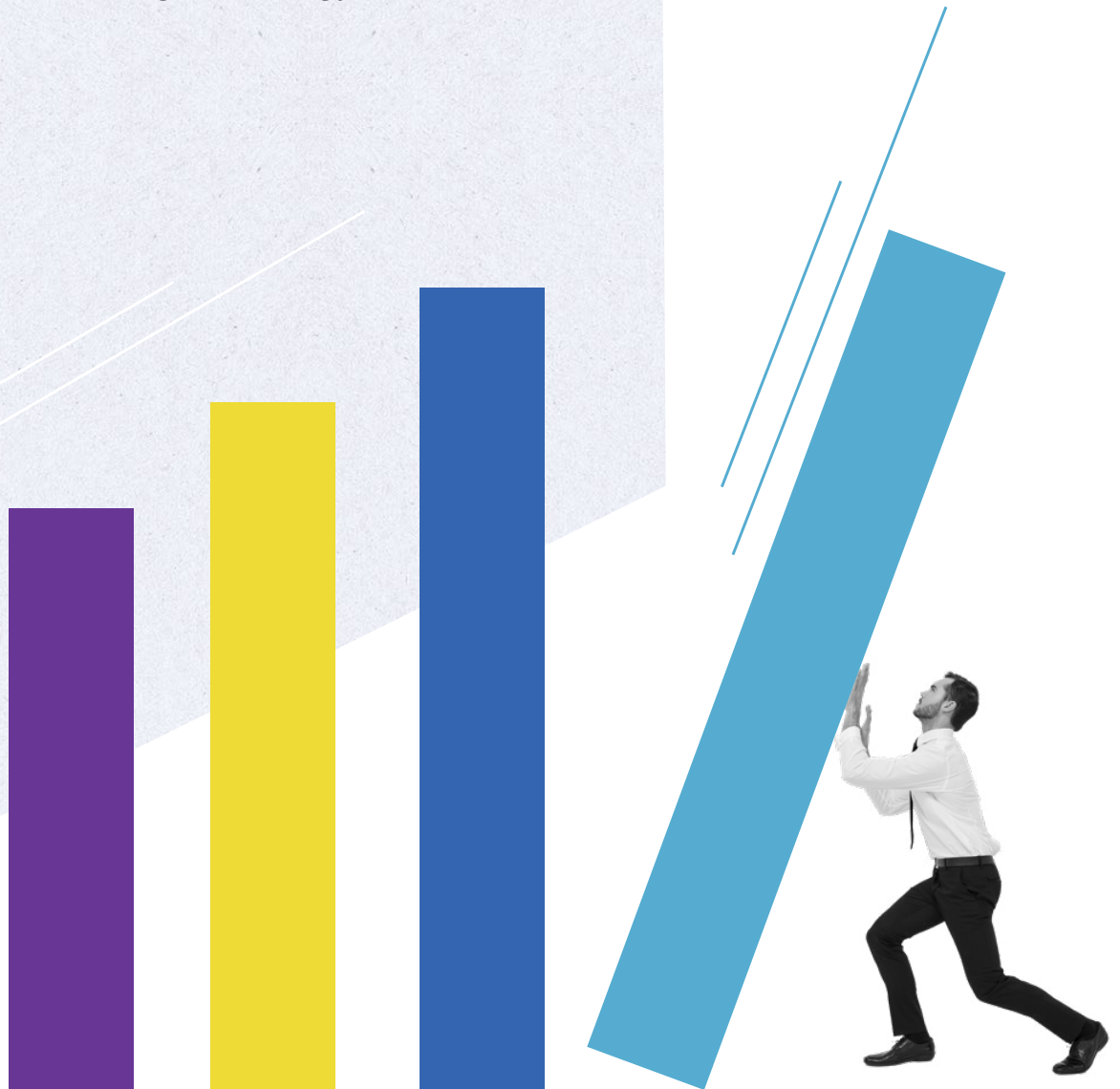


It is notable that **32.35% of survey respondents are unsure of stakeholder expectations** at this time, while over **28% agree or strongly agree with the statement that stakeholders expect faster results** now than they did prior to COVID-19. An assumption can be made that expectations shifted when many public offices were forced to move operations online in order to keep business moving as usual; thus, response times and overall communications relating to the bid process likely increased in efficiency.

## SECTION 3:

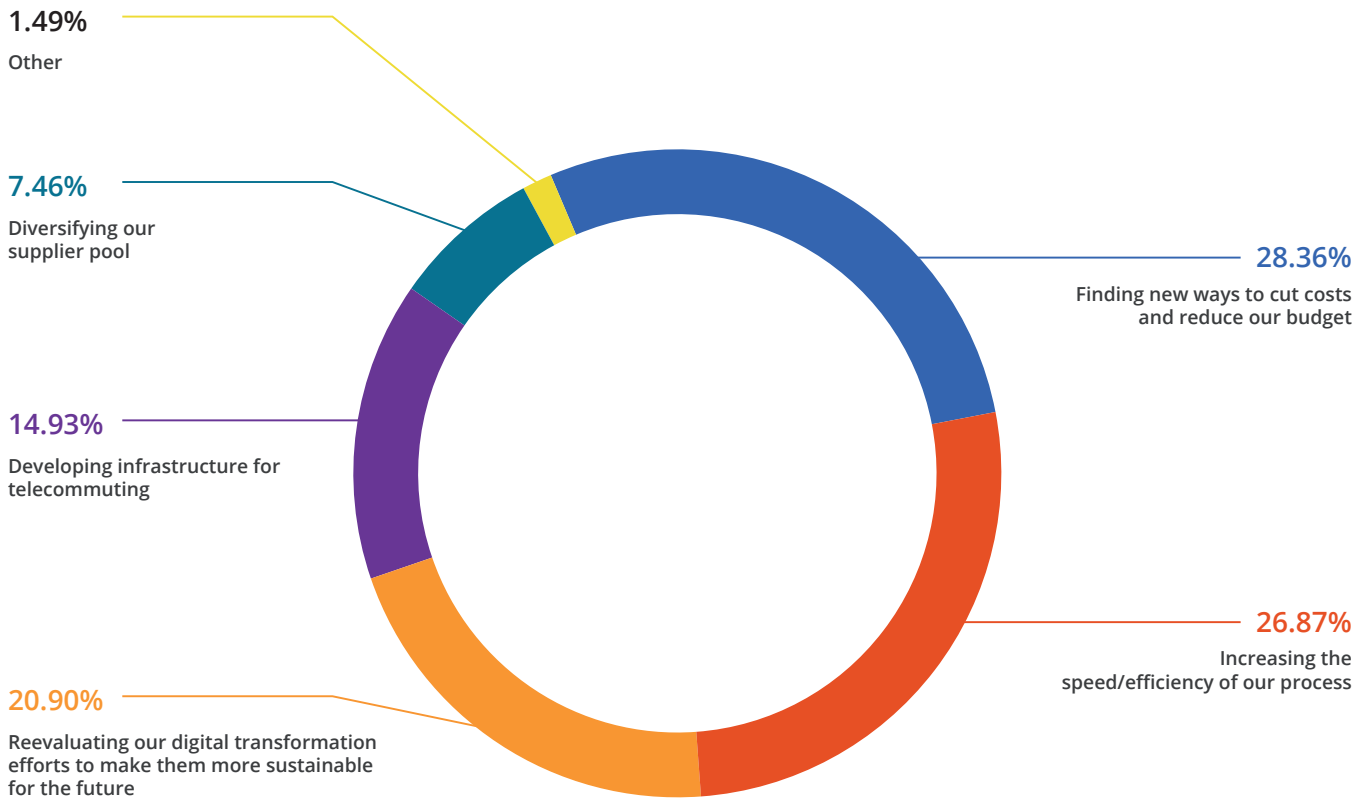
# Future-Proofing with Realigned Priorities

This section of the survey explores key priorities for 2021 by government procurement teams and which strategies they plan to use to drive savings in the coming year.





## Q5: What is your team's biggest priority in 2021?



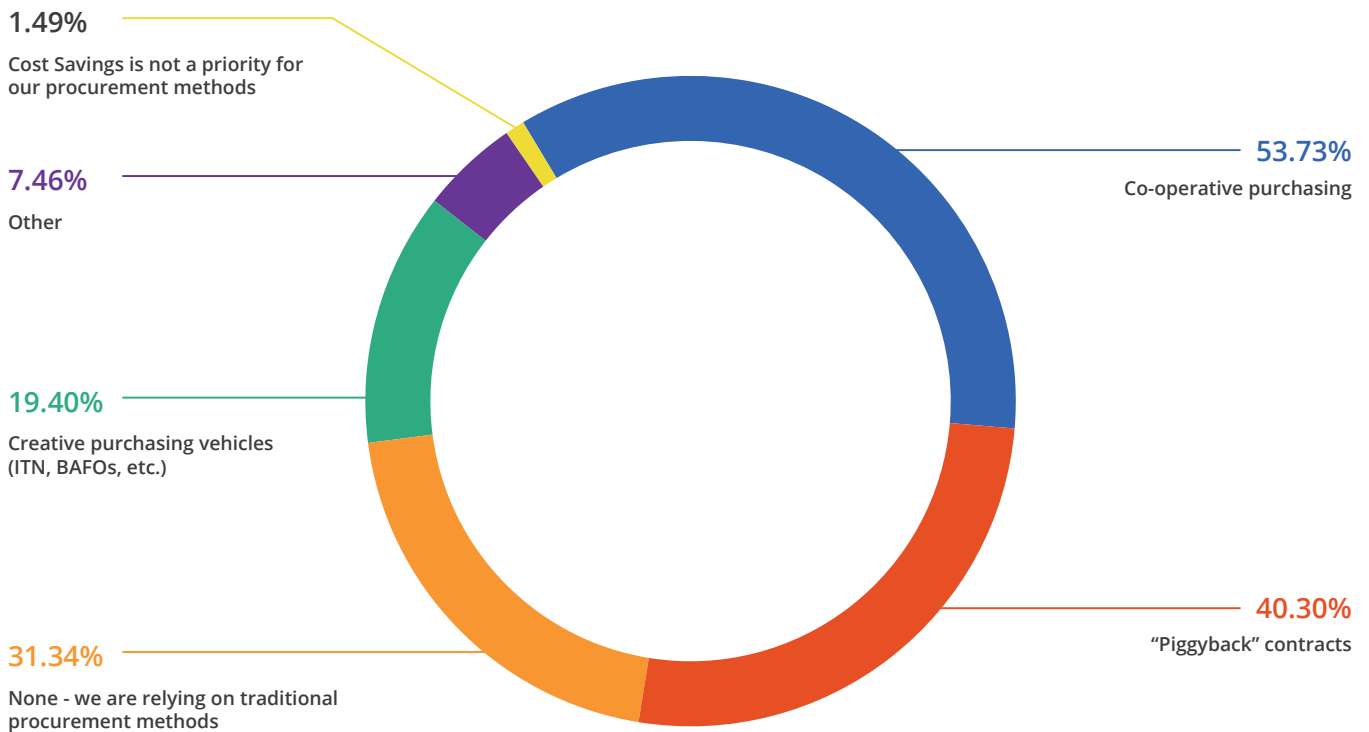
With 55.23% of survey respondents wanting to cut costs and reduce budget while also increasing speed and efficiency of processes, it is an optimal time for public procurement teams to explore digital, centralized e-procurement solutions, like the [Bonfire Strategic Sourcing Solution](#), as they support these objectives.

**55.23%**

want to cut costs and reduce budget while also increasing speed and efficiency



## Q6: What innovative strategies are you planning to use to drive savings in 2021?



**54%**

of survey respondents plan to drive savings through cooperative contracts

53.73% of survey respondents plan to drive savings through cooperative contracts. This strategy allows public procurement teams to avoid running a solicitation and, in turn, provide a faster solution for their customers, supporting the above noted priority for 2021. The other benefit of using a cooperative contract is that the procurement software or process has already been vetted and approved by the contracting agent. Bonfire is an approved e-procurement software vendor on five cooperative contracts across North America: Texas DIR, PCA, SHI, PEPPM, and NASPO.

Bonfire is an approved e-procurement software vendor on five cooperative contracts across North America to support public procurement teams get faster results:

- Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)
- Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA)
- SHI (reseller on NASPO value point)
- PEPPM Cooperative Purchasing
- National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO)



# In Conclusion

Change management looked significantly different in 2020 as teams transitioned to new processes to accommodate supply chain challenges, lockdown requirements, and safety procedures faster than they ever thought possible.

Since COVID-19 began seriously impacting North American governments in spring 2020, procurement teams have gone through several phases of digitization to adapt. While many procurement teams took reactionary measures to ensure operations like proposal submissions, public bid openings, and evaluations could continue to function in the midst of COVID-19, it's imperative that procurement continues to innovate and embrace digital solutions through reevaluation and future-proofing of processes.

Looking for more government procurement trends? Check out this ebook: [The Rise of Procurement's Next Normal](#).

