

## AGENCY CIO BRIEFING

# Independent **pre-award** AI software readiness assessment for federal procurement.

A 30-minute briefing for agency Chief Information Officers, Chief AI Officers, and senior acquisition leadership on the role of independent third-party readiness assessment in federal AI software procurement.

REFERENCE	ISSUED	VERSION	LENGTH
<b>EFAIRA-CIO-BRIEF-V1</b>	<b>May 2026</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>10 slides</b>

## SLIDE 02 • THE PROBLEM

# The federal AI procurement **assessment gap.**

Federal agencies are buying AI software faster than the assessment infrastructure that supports it. Agencies lack a defensible pre-award signal that the software they are buying meets the federal AI risk management baseline at the point of contract award.

**8**

EVALUATION DOMAINS EVERY  
FEDERAL AI PROCUREMENT  
SHOULD COVER BEFORE AWARD

**30**

SPECIFIC EVALUATION POINTS  
BEHIND A DEFENSIBLE READINESS  
DETERMINATION

**0**

CROSS-AGENCY INDEPENDENT  
ASSESSMENT STANDARDS IN  
WIDESPREAD FEDERAL USE TODAY

**The result.** Each agency builds its own assessment workflow. Lessons learned do not cross agency lines. Identical risk evaluations are repeated. Source selections proceed without an independent third-party signal of contractor AI readiness.

## SLIDE 03 • WHY A THIRD PARTY

# The case for **independent** pre-award assessment.

Federal agencies own the source selection decision. An independent third-party assessment does not replace agency authority. It strengthens the agency record by adding a defensible, repeatable, hash-verifiable signal of contractor AI readiness at a defined point in time.

## WHAT THE AGENCY KEEPS

- Full source selection authority
- Final award decision
- Mission requirements ownership
- FAR evaluation factor weighting
- All agency-specific evaluation criteria

## WHAT THE ASSESSMENT ADDS

- Independent third-party readiness signal
- Pre-award rather than post-award discovery
- Defensible repeatable methodology
- Hash-verifiable receipt
- Cross-agency comparable evidence

## SLIDE 04 • THE METHODOLOGY

# EFAIRA: 30 points across 8 domains.

The Encore Federal AI Readiness Audit, EFAIRA, evaluates an AI software offering against thirty specific points organized into eight domains. Each domain maps to published federal guidance.

- 1 Technical Architecture and AI Model Integrity.** Whether the AI components are real, documented, and tested at federal scale.
- 2 Security and Federal Compliance Posture.** FedRAMP status, data sovereignty, identity standards, vulnerability management.
- 3 NIST AI Risk Management Framework Alignment.** Govern, Map, Measure, Manage function coverage.
- 4 Bias, Fairness, and Disparate Impact.** Bias testing methodology, disparate impact analysis, human oversight path.
- 5 Transparency, Explainability, and Auditability.** Explainability features, decision log capture, model update disclosure.
- 6 Procurement Vehicle and Acquisition Fit.** Vehicle availability, set-aside eligibility, pricing defensibility.
- 7 Operational Sustainment and Support.** Vendor viability, support coverage, source-code and continuity protections.
- 8 Independent Verification and Citation Readiness.** Evidence completeness, scope boundary, hash verification, citation language.

## SLIDE 05 • FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT

# Aligned to published federal AI guidance.

EFAIRA is not a competing framework. It is a structured assessment methodology that maps to and operationalizes the federal AI guidance agencies are already required to consider.

FRAMEWORK	AUTHORITY	WHERE EFAIRA MAPS
<b>GAO-26-107859</b>	Government Accountability Office	Cross-agency lessons-learned gap addressed by Domains 3, 5, and 8
<b>OMB M-25-22</b>	Office of Management and Budget	Minimum risk management practices implemented across all 8 domains
<b>OMB M-24-10</b>	Office of Management and Budget	Governance, innovation, and risk management responsibilities reflected in Domains 3 and 7
<b>NIST AI RMF</b>	NIST Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework v1.0	Domain 3 directly implements Govern, Map, Measure, Manage function coverage
<b>FedRAMP</b>	Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program	Domain 2 incorporates current authorization status and continuous monitoring posture
<b>FAR / DFARS</b>	Federal and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations	Domains 6 and 7 evaluate procurement vehicle fit and sustainment

## SLIDE 06 • AGENCY USE

## How a CIO office can use this material.

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The methodology is published as a public reference. There are several agency-side activities a CIO office can pursue without commercial engagement with Encore.

- 1 **Cite the methodology** in agency AI acquisition guidance, training, and internal RFI / RFP scoping language.
- 2 **Reference the alignment matrix** when mapping technical evaluation requirements to GAO, OMB, NIST, and FedRAMP authorities.
- 3 **Integrate the eight domains** into agency AI acquisition workforce training curricula.
- 4 **Recognize a contractor-submitted readiness receipt** as an independent third-party readiness signal during source selection, consistent with FAR evaluation discretion.
- 5 **Request a free Encore Methodology Briefing** for the CIO office, Chief AI Officer team, or acquisition workforce educators.

## SLIDE 07 • CONTRACTOR VIEW

# What the contractor brings to the table.

Contractors engaging Encore commercially under the EFAIRA service tiers receive a citable readiness receipt they may include in a federal technical proposal volume. The receipt is the independent third-party signal the agency may consider.

## WHAT THE RECEIPT CONTAINS

- Single readiness score (0 to 100)
- Domain-level score breakdown across 8 domains
- Scope of evaluation and system version assessed
- Explicit limitations of the assessment
- Cryptographic hash for verification
- Pre-approved citation language

## WHAT THE AGENCY MAY RELY ON

- The methodology is published and documented
- The receipt is hash-verifiable at a public URL
- Encore stands behind the score and the scope
- The receipt does not waive any agency evaluation duty
- The receipt is not a federal certification or ATO

## SLIDE 08 • SCOPE BOUNDARY

# What an EFAIRA receipt is **not**.

Scope discipline is the difference between a defensible third-party signal and a marketing artifact. Every EFAIRA receipt carries explicit limitations baked into the document itself.

- 1 **Not a federal certification** or any form of government endorsement.
- 2 **Not an Authority to Operate.** An ATO is the agency's decision and remains the agency's decision.
- 3 **Not a source-selection determination.** Source selection authority and the award decision belong to the agency.
- 4 **Not a substitute** for the agency's own evaluation under the source selection criteria of the procurement.
- 5 **Not a guarantee of contract award.** The receipt is an independent readiness signal, nothing more.

**Why this matters.** Scope discipline protects the agency from over-relying on a third-party signal and protects the assessment from being misrepresented in the proposal.

## SLIDE 09 • ACQUISITION LIFECYCLE

# Where the receipt fits in the acquisition lifecycle.

The receipt is designed to sit upstream of source selection, where the agency is making go-or-no-go decisions on AI software risk and the contractor is preparing the technical proposal.

- 1 Pre-RFP planning.** Agency CIO office may cite the methodology when scoping AI evaluation requirements.
- 2 RFI phase.** Agency may request whether respondents have completed independent third-party AI readiness assessment.
- 3 Contractor proposal preparation.** Contractor engages Encore commercially for a Snapshot or Standard assessment.
- 4 Proposal submission.** Contractor includes the pre-approved citation language in the technical volume with hash and verification URL.
- 5 Source evaluation.** Agency evaluator verifies the receipt at the public URL and considers it alongside the agency's own assessment.
- 6 Post-award.** Receipt becomes part of the contract record and supports continuous monitoring under NIST AI RMF Manage function.

## SLIDE 10 • CLOSING

# Thank you. **Encore Services LLC.**

This briefing is published by Encore Services LLC as a public reference for the federal acquisition workforce. The methodology, the briefing materials, and the supporting library artifacts are free to reference, cite, and integrate into agency training without commercial engagement with Encore.

## ABOUT ENCORE SERVICES LLC

Encore Services LLC is a federal contracting firm focused on AI software readiness assessment for federal agencies and the contractors serving them.

The EFAIRA methodology is the published framework Encore applies to assessment engagements. The methodology itself is free. Encore charges only for the application of the methodology to specific contractor or software offerings.

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Material reflects the federal AI landscape as of the date on the cover. Federal AI policy changes continuously. Verify cited authorities against current authoritative text and confirm no superseding guidance has been issued before application.

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