

Strategic Spend Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Strategic Spend Assessment (SSA)?

E&I's Strategic Spend Assessment is a data-driven analysis service that takes a critical look at your institution's spend, leveraging the principles of strategic sourcing to find opportunities for cost savings, revenue generation, and increased diversity spend.

How long does a Strategic Spend Assessment take?

Normally, we allow up to 10 business days to complete the process. Depending on our current workload, we have been able to turn them around slightly faster.

How much does an SSA cost?

There is absolutely no cost to our members. E&I's SSA is a consultative process that aims to help members rationalize and streamline their sourcing and spend activities.

Who do I speak to about conducting an SSA for my school?

We recommend contacting your [E&I Member Representative](#), as they will lead the engagement. If you're not sure who that is, you can check [here](#).

What should I expect back from E&I? What do I get out of it?

E&I will provide you with a formal written report with our findings and recommendations. Additionally, your [E&I Member Representative](#) will present these findings and recommendations to you in a consultative meeting, then help you implement any solutions you are interested in pursuing.

What do I need to provide to participate?

You will need to provide your full spend history by supplier for a 12-month period, including AP and card transactions. While we typically ask for a full year of your institution's spend data, that can be calendar year, fiscal year, or any meaningful period that provides a 12-month snapshot in time. We do not need transaction-level detail; total spend by supplier is all that's required.

The pandemic has made 2020 a very different and very challenging year. How will this be addressed in my SSA?

That's a great question and a genuine concern. Some members are going back to 2019 for 12-month spend data as they feel COVID has skewed things so much. We believe that's a reasonable approach in these less than normal times.

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Where do I need to pull my data from?

Typically, members pull data from their accounts payable system and card program.

Do you need transaction-level data?

No – E&I only needs summary spend by supplier. Transaction-level data is not required.

The SSA has a number of components and some of them offer more benefits than others for my school. Can I just do those?

Absolutely. We will always plan to conduct all pillars or components of the Strategic Spend Assessment, as we think it gives our members a great baseline and starting point. If, once you've reviewed the report, you prefer to focus on one or two pillars – for example Contract Portfolio Alignments and Supplier Consolidation – then that's where we'll focus. Most of our engaged members are committing to the full range of components.

My school has significant privacy concerns. How will you address those concerns?

E&I takes member privacy concerns very seriously and all data shared is 100% confidential. No one outside of E&I will ever see your data, and even within E&I, access is restricted to a select group comprising our Data Analysts, Sourcing Consultants, and related leaders. We are also more than happy to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) if that is something that is required by your institution.

My IT Department has our data locked down and is unsure what I am asking for. Can you help?

If you need help with internal communications regarding data requirements or security, we can help! Please let your [E&I Member Representative](#) know; he or she can help schedule a call with the manager of our analytics team to provide assistance.

Who will I be working with at E&I?

Your [Member Representative](#) will be your primary point of contact. He or she will engage other E&I team members as needed to deliver the SSA.

Am I making any obligations by participating?

No – we are providing this as a service. Members can choose to take action, or not, based on our findings and recommendations. We certainly hope that some of the opportunities will be too good not to pursue. As your member-owned cooperative, the SSA is just one example of how we are continuously looking for opportunities to bring additional value to your institution.

Is this a one-time opportunity?

Not at all. The SSA has been designed as a very repeatable process. If E&I conducts an SSA for you and you realize tangible benefits for your institution, we recommend repeating the SSA on a regular cadence. This could be annually or at any cadence you are comfortable with.

Learn More: Strategic Spend Assessments