

## Abstract

- SPEAR is U.S. Special Operations Command’s program for outfitting Special Operations Forces with advanced clothing and equipment. However, a 2021 survey of Navy sea, air, and land (SEAL) operators indicated that much SPEAR gear goes unused and a majority of SEALs personally procure commercial gear to supplement their loadout. This study examines two of the ten functional areas of Naval Special Warfare’s next generation SPEAR loadout, the Load Carriage System (LCS) and Body Armor Vest (BAV), to determine user adherence (gear utilization), amount of commercial gear SEALs personally procure, and if the new SPEAR loadout is reducing SEALs’ out-of-pocket expenses.

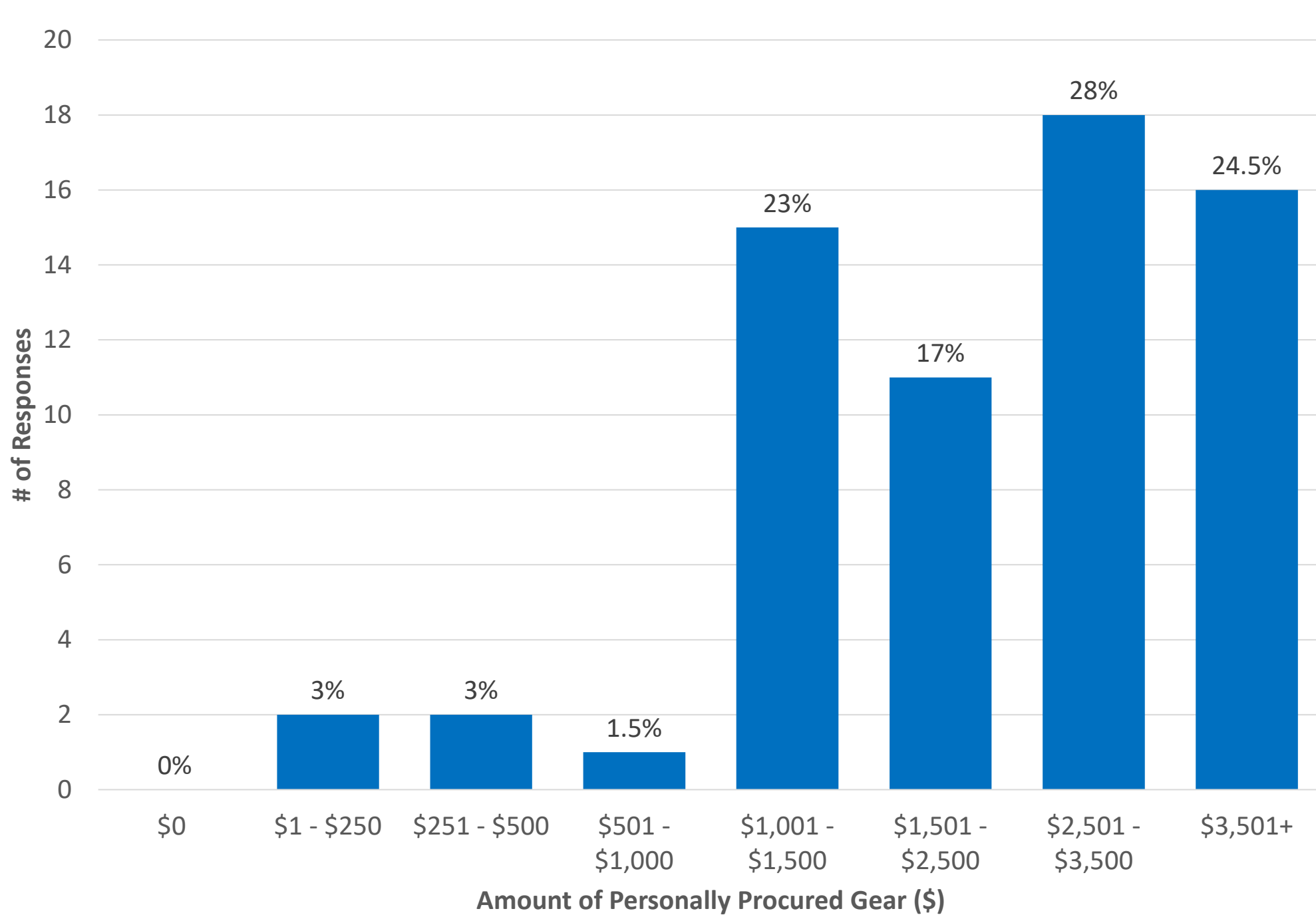
## Methods

- Electronic fielding questionnaire sent to four SEAL Teams
- Self-selection sampling, voluntary and anonymous
- Statistical inference
- Translating user adherence into cost efficiency and amount of wasted funds



SPEAR BAV/LCS Items	User Adherence % of SEALs who will use item
MMAC 2019 Body Armor Vest	37%
M4 Single Mag Pouch	85%
M4 Single Double Mag Pouch	71%
Pistol Double Mag Pouch	45%
Smoke Grenade Pouch	60%
Frag Grenade Pouch	68%
Strip Charge Pouch	84%
Utility/SSE Pouch	90%
Dump Pouch	85%
Beaver Tail Assault Pack	62%

*Projected SPEAR BAV/LCS User Adherence for SEALs*



*Over 90% of SEALs spend over \$1,000 on personally procured gear (not adjusted for inflation)*



## Results & Their Impact

- Next-gen SPEAR BAV & LCS have a 58% cost efficiency, equating to \$1.6M in waste
- The average SEAL spends almost \$3,000 on average in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars. This indicates historic deficiencies across the SPEAR family of programs.
- 34% of SEALs believe SPEAR is improving. However, only 31% of SEALs believe SPEAR meets minimum operational requirements.
- This methodology can be used to determine relatively precise amounts of funding to transfer from SPEAR sustainment to an advanced equipment allowance entitlement for SEALs to supplement their SPEAR loadout, reducing waste and saving SEALs from high out-of-pocket expenses