

# Advancing Gender Parity in National Security With Splunk Pledge

## Challenge:

The lean team at LCWINS was relying on Google Sheets to manage its data, which resulted in a platform that was not user friendly and hindered the organization's growth.

## Result:

Through Splunk Pledge, LCWINS gained necessary expertise and custom-built technology to increase efficiency, broaden its community of women and further its mission of gender parity in national security.



**Industry:** Nonprofit

**Solutions:** IT

Diverse teams — specifically those that include women — have higher performance and more success.

It's a fact, as evidenced by research from organizations ranging from McKinsey to Harvard Business Review. So when the stakes are national security, gender parity isn't just a nice-to-have. It's imperative. Founded in 2019, the Leadership Council for Women in National Security (LCWINS) seeks to advance gender parity in America's national security leadership. That's no small ask, particularly when a team of two is tasked with keeping the entire organization going — and growing.

Already managing a database of 900 well-qualified women ready to serve in an array of national security leadership roles, LCWINS needed a way to scale their organization and impact, but was limited by a data architecture that relied on Google Sheets. In 2021, Splunk selected LCWINS as a recipient of the Splunk Pledge, an initiative that provides a minimum of \$100 million over a 10-year period in software licenses, training, support and education to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions around the world.

Now with Splunk, LCWINS team members have the tools and expert support they need to grow and empower their community of women committed to serving their country in national security. "This is a really neat, microcosmic example of how the private sector tech industry can help advance public good," says LCWINS Executive Director Emily Perkins.

## The right partnership for a big mission

Before Splunk, the team at LCWINS securely shared portions of the database with both Democratic and Republican transition teams. To this day, the team continues to share information with the current administration. But managing a database of over 900 well-qualified women became increasingly untenable on Google Sheets. A search for a single request was a gargantuan task, explained Director of Programs Simone Williams. "A request for a list of candidates could take me all day," Williams explains. "This meant I was unable to tackle the other critical tasks on my to-do list." And with an org-wide team of only two, spending that much time on a single (albeit mission-critical) task was simply a no-go.

## Data-Driven Outcomes

- Faster, tailored candidate search — from an entire day to about 15 minutes
- Small team empowered to use data to achieve strategic goals
- More opportunities for women in national security

Splunk partnered with Splunk Pledge recipient LCWINS to understand their unique goals and challenges, creating a tailored database that would increase efficiency while ensuring sensitive data stays secure. Now, a list that once took Williams up to a day to create takes all of 10-15 minutes, helping the organization further its mission. “Splunk is truly a partner to us,” Williams says. “They understood our mission and were there from start to finish, making sure we had a solution that would help us — and that we knew how to use it.”

Splunk support didn’t end at delivery. “Splunk is still there for us,” Williams continues. “I know if I have an issue — even as simple as I’m locked out of my account — I get a rapid response. Receiving the same resources as somebody who would pay for them is fundamental to our ability to deliver on our mission while honoring our tight budget.”

## Democratizing data to amplify women’s voices

With Splunk, Williams and Perkins have increased LCWINS’ responsiveness as a whole, helping the organization be ready for anything that may be happening in the political arena. “Our impact relies on our relevance to both major parties,” explains Perkins. “Knowing how our community can serve within and across party lines helps us prepare for changes in administration and congressional leadership, all while helping place highly qualified women in leadership positions.”

Helping the White House and presidential transition teams place the right woman in the right job demands significant time and attention, especially when candidate resumes can be 15-20 pages long. Before Splunk, the LCWINS team didn’t have the capacity or technology to review and manage resumes for candidates and instead relied on user-submitted data through Google Forms to build their database. Now with Splunk, the team can process lengthy resumes, eliminating the need to fill out exhaustive forms — helping improve the user data submission experience.



What I’ve learned through our partnership with Splunk is that you may not know the answer right away. But when you have really good partners who are there to listen to your goals and provide solutions, the world’s your oyster.”

**Simone Williams**, Director of Programs, LCWINS

LCWINS is now able to uplift a larger group of women to a variety of roles and opportunities in national security. With Splunk, the team can collect more data that illustrates a candidate’s lived experiences and qualifications. This helps the team prioritize inclusivity, making sure highly qualified candidates aren’t inadvertently excluded because of how they define past experience.

## A more equitable future

LCWINS has some lofty goals — and now with Splunk, it has even more power to achieve them. These objectives include growing the community to reach and connect more women, widening recruitment to positions outside the D.C. area, and removing barriers that prevent more women from participating in key national security debates and decisions.

As LCWINS scales, Splunk will be with the team every step of the way, helping it advance gender parity in national security leadership. “What I’ve learned through our partnership with Splunk is that you may not know the answer right away,” Williams says. “But when you have really good partners who are there to listen to your goals and provide solutions, the world’s your oyster.”

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