



FAI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 SPRING FY 2013 | FAI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

From the Director



**Donna Jenkins,
Director, FAI**

The FAI Team delivers the second edition of our Newsletter - providing you with insight, reminders and updates. We received many positive comments and feedback from our first edition - a special "Thanks" to you who took the time to share your comments. Your comments let us know that we are on the right track and have found an additional forum to keep you apprised and up to date on acquisition workforce news.

As we continue to move forward through fiscal year 2013, it's easy to get caught up in the fray of fiscal uncertainty and focus on all of the work we can never seem to get to. It's all too easy to lose sight of all the great accomplishments and forward momentum that we, as an acquisition workforce have achieved. I'd like to dedicate the contents of this issue to reminding everyone that as a team we have achieved a great deal and we'll continue to work together for the betterment of our community. Throughout this edition there is one continuous theme - "COLLABORATION".

In this edition you'll read about: the unveiling of DHS's new Acquisition Institute; the selection of the Chancellor for the VA Acquisition Academy; and get the opportunity to get to know the Acquisition Career Manager from Department of Treasury a little better, a first in a series. You'll discover what the Functional Advisory Boards (FAB's) have been working on, as well as important information on training and a recent successful training event, which is positive proof that we remain committed and focused on developing a competent acquisition workforce.

FAI is devoted to working alongside our agency partners for the benefit of all. To this end, I am pleased to announce that FAI, DAU, GSA, and DHS worked to launch 14 new continuous learning modules this last quarter. Topics include use of the schedules, small business, Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), and the Federal Procurement Data System - Next Generation (FPDS-NG). For a full listing of all continuous learning available to you on-line and at no cost, visit the icatalog at:

<http://icatalog.dau.mil/onlinecatalog/tabnavcl.aspx?tab=FAC>

A great way to learn and earn continuous learning points without ever leaving your desk!

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FAI's 12 Statutory Requirements

Pursuant to the 2012 NDAA, P.L. 112-81 (Section 864), FAI is established in order to perform the 12 statutory responsibilities (shown right).

In the past, FAI has focused on and has been recognized for providing acquisition workforce training in support of the civilian agencies. Over the past two years, FAI has matured and gained the expertise to facilitate the planning and execution of our total and diverse list of statutory responsibilities. Based on the complexities, specific enterprise-wide requirements, and agency implementation impacts, the need for collaboration across government is paramount. Acquisition workforce initiatives that are applicable to all civilian agencies are championed by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and executed by FAI. To ensure successful accomplishment, the need for support and engagement of agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and senior acquisition official stewardship is critical.

Collaboration across agency boundaries and the building of relationships are essential elements for successfully executing the FAI mission. FAI's strategic focus on improving the workforce through shared use of resources and technology, positions FAI to lead the civilian workforce in meeting its challenges in this time of budgetary constraint. To ensure FAI stays abreast of agency acquisition workforce

challenges and developments, the FAI team has made collaboration and communication top priorities in the performance of all activities. FAI's goal is to establish better and more efficient ways of collaborating with agency partners and sharing cross-cutting agency developments to eliminate duplication of efforts. In this fiscally

constrained environment and with projected furloughs pending, it is even more vital that the acquisition workforce community pull together as a single team to enable, leverage and share resources and capabilities to develop a qualified and capable federal acquisition workforce.

1. Foster and promote the development of a professional acquisition workforce Government-wide
2. Promote and coordinate Government-wide research and studies to improve the procurement process and the laws, policies, methods, regulations, procedures, and forms relating to acquisition by the executive agencies
3. Collect data and analyze acquisition workforce data from the OPM, the heads of executive agencies, and, through periodic surveys, from individual employees
4. Periodically analyze acquisition career fields to identify critical competencies, duties, tasks, and related academic prerequisites, skills, and knowledge
5. Coordinate and assist agencies in identifying and recruiting highly qualified candidates for acquisition fields
6. Develop instructional materials for acquisition personnel in coordination with private and public acquisition colleges and training facilities
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of training and career development programs for acquisition personnel
8. Promote the establishment and utilization of academic programs by colleges and universities in acquisition fields
9. Facilitate, to the extent requested by agencies, interagency intern and training programs
10. Collaborate with other civilian agency acquisition training programs to leverage training supporting all members of the civilian agency acquisition workforce
11. Assist civilian agencies with their acquisition and capital planning efforts
12. Perform other career management or research functions as directed by the Administrator

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FAI's 12 Statutory Requirements

Three types of collaborative interagency working groups have been established to foster open communication and ensure the team remains stakeholder focused:

- 1. Interagency Acquisition Career Managers Committee (IACMC)** - fosters the sharing of leading practices in human capital planning and management across the civilian agencies. It also provides a forum for networking and increases awareness of specific agency challenges or development efforts
- 2. Functional Advisory Boards (FABs)** - the federal-wide working groups composed of agency subject matter experts. The FABs are charged with shaping the management, certification, and training policies and practices relative to a specific career field (FAC-C, FAC-COR, FAC-P/PM)
- 3. Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT)** - the forum for collecting, analyzing and strategically sourcing civilian agency acquisition training delivery and curriculum development requirements

Collaboration enables us to accomplish jointly something that one agency may not be able to successfully execute on their own. Through collaboration, the development effort could possibly be enhanced or become an enterprise-wide resource. Many agencies have recognized the power that collaboration can bring and are now more receptive to partnership development efforts. A few benefits of collaboration are listed below, but the value of collaboration is endless.

- » Cost and development efforts are not duplicated
- » Expanded use and applicability across the enterprise
- » Higher-quality and more integrated outcomes for the end users
- » Better use of scarce resources - conserves limited capital
- » Shared development cost
- » Fragmentation among services, programs and initiatives are reduced

- » Agency can create something in collaboration that it could not create on its own
- » Increased trust and understanding among individuals and organizations
- » Improved communication among agencies and their constituents
- » Expands experience base
- » Better ability to achieve strategic outcomes
- » Potentials for organizational and individual learning

Simply by its nature, collaboration brings together different and varying ideas. The benefit of having diversity where the talent pool is larger creates a valuable resource in groups that is not available in individual development efforts. People have various strengths, different personal experiences and academic backgrounds which promote synergy and create a diverse environment for knowledge sharing and enhanced idea generation.

"Collaboration is a way of thinking and relating, a philosophy, a paradigm shift, an attitude change. It requires a set of behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The result is a sense of shared ownership, shared responsibility, and shared success."

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2013 GSA and ACT-IAC Acquisition Excellence: Key Note Speakers

On Thursday, March 21, more than 400 acquisition professionals from government and industry emphatically validated that the partnership in support of better government for the American public is still thriving. Evenly split between the public and private sector, the GSA and ACT-IAC Acquisition Excellence education and training event demonstrated the need and desire for government and industry to collaborate in face-to-face discussion, and also proved the value of continuing collaborative meetings.



Dan Tangherlini,
GSA Acting Administrator

The power of collaboration and the success of the training event was reinforced by Dan Tangherlini, GSA Acting Administrator, in his keynote address: "I thank the Acquisition Excellence Planning Committee, both industry and federal employees, and that is the important value add of ACT-IAC, bringing industry and federal employees together to look at our common problems and to come up with solutions."

Joe Jordan, OFPP Administrator, also spoke of the need for collaboration between government and industry and the value it brings to both sides. Additionally, he went on to say that agencies need to base procurement decisions on data, not hearsay. That's why we need 100% compliance on past performance reports, but we also need to improve the quality of those reports in order for them to be valuable.

The event was highlighted by many interactive sessions. The breakout sessions focused on exploring how agencies can best move forward with their effective acquisitions to better enable the government to function. This year's tracks focused on Innovation in Acquisition and Workforce Transformation.



Joe Jordan,
OFPP Administrator

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2013 GSA and ACT-IAC Acquisition Excellence: Select Sessions

Innovative by Making the Right Moves When Protesting

This panel discussion resulted in several key takeaways. The panelist noted that there are three paths for filing a protest: Through the Government Accountability; the government agency; or court proceedings. They went on to explain that filing with a government agency is your best option, as it presents lower costs all around – from the plaintiff to the defendant. Finally, that the best way to minimize the risk of having your procurement actions protested is by embracing transparency, especially during the debrief process.

Bringing the “A” Team

This session, hosted by the Workforce Transformation track, was designed to focus on the organizational and individual acquisition level, and how leadership and the team assembled are critical to success. It also highlighted how collaboration from the right people in the right places with the right mindset can/will drive success for an organization. Similarly, to develop a successful acquisition, the right

team members must collaborate through the right process in developing, awarding and managing the acquisition.

The panel discussed the need for collaboration between the acquisition and contract team early in the procurement process. Also, in order to enable a better acquisition workforce, government agencies will need to recruit and develop new talent.

Better Outcomes at Lower Cost

GSA Assistant Commissioner Mary Davie solicited her audience for suggestions. More than 20 “innovative ideas” were posted by participants in a shared space poll, ranging from suggestions on consolidating acquisition channels for efficiency, to expanding centers of excellence for effectiveness.

One suggestion was to solicit industry comments on service contracts after award “like using a restaurant review to influence quality.” Another suggested that purchase card data be consolidated into a portal to allow comparison and tracking of prices paid by the government for similar or identical items and services.

Event Closing and Report

The event closed with an informal report-out moderated by the event chairs, Kathleen Turco, GSA Associate Administrator and Jim Beaupre of JB Federal Consulting. Members from ACT-IAC’s Shared Interest Group shared the highlights from each of the sessions and discussed the important topics and issues raised by both the speakers and the attendees.

GSA and ACT-IAC have re-confirmed the importance of face-to-face collaboration between government and industry. The joint Acquisition



Kathleen Turco and Jim Beaupre

Excellence event was successful in furthering the conversation and keeping the lines of communication open in these changing economic times.

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2013 Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC)/Small Business Procurement Advisory Council Small Business Excellence Award Winners

2013 CAOC Acquisition Excellence Award Winner for Innovation

VA Acquisition Academy Acquisition Internship School, Department of Veterans Affairs

The VA Acquisition Academy Acquisition Internship School launched a Warriors to Workforce Program designed to prepare wounded, post-9/11 Veterans with little or no college education, for a successful transition into careers as contract specialists. The program is a 3-year holistic program that focuses on business education, acquisition training, activities to understand the VA mission, peak performance training, "skillbuilding" courses to practice the skills learned in the contracting courses, and leadership and business competency development. This program empowers wounded Veterans and allows them to continue service their country, plus supplies a pipeline of talent to the acquisition function.



Team Members: Joanne Choy, David Sella, Stephanie Belella, David Brigham, Steve Munson, Anne Reinhold, Teresa Reefe, Diane Fernandez, Yolanda Davis, Kasey Kazakovich

Presenters: Lesley Field (Deputy Administrator for OFPP), Nancy Gunderson (Deputy Assistant Secretary HHS Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability)

CONGRATULATIONS

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2013 Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC)/Small Business Procurement Advisory Council Small Business Excellence Award Winners



Charles Yook

Presenters: Lesley Field and Nancy Gunderson

2013 CAOC Acquisition Excellence Award Winner for Innovation

Charles Yook, Internal Revenue Service

Mr. Yook developed an innovative approach to procuring IT services that saves the IRS \$32 million annually while also reducing the procurement cycle time to weeks, as opposed to months. The new approach leverages a temporary staffing model, as opposed to a system integrators model, to achieve cost savings and a collaboratively redesigned procurement process to reduce cycle times. Mr. Yook led this strategic sourcing initiative to provide an alternative, cost-effective vehicle for the IRS to procure IT services.

2013 Small Business Procurement Advisory Council Small Business Excellence Award Winners

Transformation Twenty-One Total Technology (T4) Team U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

The T4 Team awarded 15 IDIQ contracts for a broad range of IT and telecommunication services. Out of the 15 contracts, six were awarded to Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and one was awarded to a Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB). By taking proactive steps to help their small business contractors and by focusing on meeting small business goals, over 70% of the task orders awarded, worth \$1.5B, have gone to the small businesses.



**Team Members: Brandon Utt, Sharon Fernandes
and Kendra Archbald**

Presenters: Lesley Field and Nancy Gunderson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy Welcomes a New Chancellor



**Melissa Starinsky, VAAA
Chancellor**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has named Melissa Starinsky, a member of the Senior Executive Service, to serve as Chancellor of the VA Acquisition Academy (VAAA).

"I am excited to be a part of the team that will address and respond to our acquisition challenges throughout the VA," said Chancellor Melissa Starinsky. "The strategic and holistic training and development approach offered by the Academy, combined with other Office of Acquisition, Logistics and Construction initiatives such as but not limited to the establishment of the Strategic

Acquisition Center in Virginia, and the Technology Acquisition Centers in New Jersey and Texas, reflects a strong commitment by senior leadership toward improving the Federal acquisition system within the VA organization.

"Melissa Starinsky is an outstanding fit for the Academy. She brings a wealth of experience in acquisition, contracting, strategic workforce planning, organizational development, resource allocation, and talent and performance management. Her passion for developing employees into highly-trained and skilled professionals makes her well-suited for this position."

-- Jan R. Frye, VA Deputy Assistant Secretary, Acquisition and Logistics

"The VA Acquisition Academy has an extremely dedicated and competent group of professionals who have strong backgrounds in acquisition operations and program management, and bring deep expertise in instructional systems design methodologies," noted Starinsky. "I am honored to have been selected as the Chancellor to lead this best practice operation and work with such incredibly talented people."

In her new role as Chancellor, Starinsky will provide executive direction to the VAAA and reinforce its commitment to assure the effectiveness and efficiency of the VA acquisition workforce. She will oversee five schools at VAAA:

- » Acquisition Internship School
- » Program Management School
- » Contracting Professional School
- » Facilities Management School
- » Supply Chain Management School

"We are particularly proud of our Warriors to Workforce (W2W) Program within the Academy's Acquisition Internship School that is providing a career development pathway for our returning and wounded Veterans. These men and women, as well as other Veterans who come through our doors, exemplify the best in courage, commitment, and perseverance," commented Starinsky.

Starinsky believes that training is an important component of a larger strategy toward developing higher performing organizations. "I intend to work with others across and within the VA enterprise to refine this strat-

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Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy Welcomes a New Chancellor

egy and to better understand how our Academy can be more responsive to their operational business needs," she said. "Our focus is not on 'what classes do you need,' but rather 'what are your business needs,' and then designing course content and a curriculum that responds to those business needs." In particular, Starinsky believes more attention and support needs to be given to mid-level acquisition personnel through development of an electives curriculum (to satisfy the required 80 hours of continuous learning point credit) that is relevant, meaningful, and helps these critical members of the workforce continue to grow in their careers and position themselves for future leadership opportunities.

She plans to continue pioneering acquisition workforce development for the VA. Some of her priorities include:

- » **Continuing and expanding the Warriors to Workforce Program to include visually impaired or blind warriors**
- » **Reviewing Academy curriculum and content to ensure it is relevant and current, reflects operational realities, and includes a meaningful electives curriculum based on stakeholder needs**
- » **Implementing a value measurement methodology to ensure Academy offerings reflect a positive business impact or return on investment**
- » **Reaching out to all stakeholders to better understand business needs to refine content and curriculum**
- » **Expanding partnerships with organizations such as the Federal Acquisition Institute, the Defense Acquisition University, and others to enhance performance by the Federal acquisition workforce.**

Starinsky previously served as a member of the Senior Executive Service as the Deputy Director of the Office of Acquisition and Grants Management for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services where she was responsible for overseeing the execution of more than \$8 billion annually in discretionary contract, grant, and interagency spend. Prior to that, she served as the first Vice-Chancellor of the VAAA's Acquisition Internship School, a program aimed at accelerating the learning curve of VA acquisition interns and strengthening the VA acquisition workforce.

"The acquisition field can be challenging and we've got some really great people out there that are doing some really great work. We've also got room for improvement. I have seen that through the lenses of contracting officer, program manager, private sector consultant, and other roles I have held throughout my career," said Starinsky. "I have an appreciation of the challenges each member of the acquisition team faces and hope I can contribute toward further developing the workforce by sharing the different perspectives I bring from these prior experiences.

"The VA has clearly recognized that acquisition is a mission critical asset by the investment it is making toward improving the performance of the acquisition workforce. " "I look forward to contributing to the Academy's training programs as they play a critical role in VA's succession planning and workforce development strategies to improve and recapitalize the acquisition workforce,"

More information about VAAA is available at:

www.acquisitionacademy.va.gov.

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Contracting (FAC-C) Update

Parity – Is that the Question?

In order to refresh and shape the contracting certification program for the non-defense agencies, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) has been working over the last two years with: FAI, the Senior Procurement Executives, the Functional Advisory's Board for Contracting, the Department of Defense (DoD), and in various forums the contracting workforce at large.

A brief summary of comments received from students and acquisition senior leadership include: "The courses are too DoD specific;" "Why do I have to learn about the Defense Supplement (DFARs);" "I want my workforce to be able to transfer between DoD and the civilian agencies;" "We want to ensure we don't develop two classes of contracting professionals;" "I can't transfer the examples of buying a major weapons system into what I buy at my agency." Based on these comments, suggested solutions ranged an entire spectrum, from follow the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) curriculum verbatim thorough using an established not-for-profit professional organizations program, and everything in between.

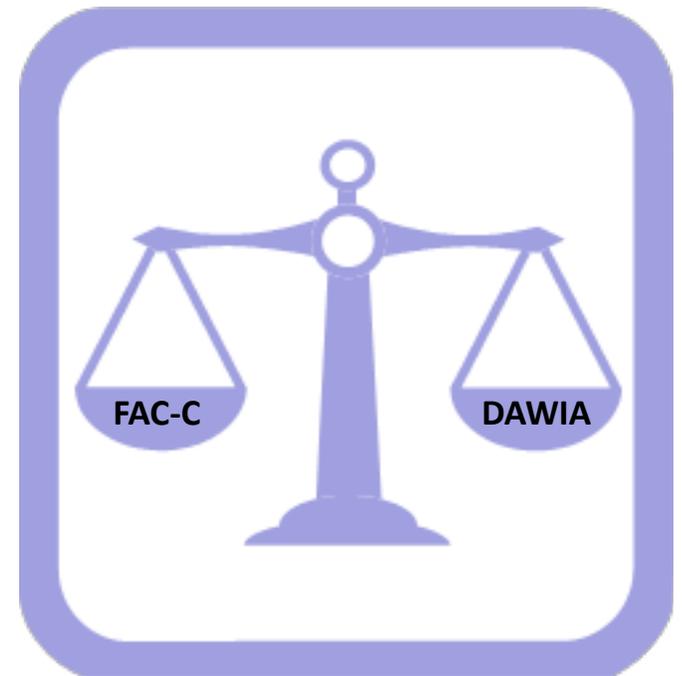
As a quick refresher - Certification programs are comprised of three elements: education, experience, and training and the foundation of each element are based on a series of competencies. For competencies fulfilled through training, each is mapped to a terminal learning objective which could be composed of several enabling learning objectives.

This may surprise you, but at the competency level the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) and the Defense contracting certification program are in parity. That means there are learning objectives that map back to each competency throughout the three levels. So you may be asking yourself: Why do the programs seem so different? How can the Defense program have so many more courses and still meet the same competencies? Why can't I transfer my FAC-C to DoD without further review?

And therein lays the real question(s): Are we really concerned with "PARITY," or are we more concerned with "RECIPROCITY?" Do the civilian agencies require the same DoD management focus? These are the additional cost and pricing, major systems acquisition, and Defense supplements.

So what do you think? We'd like to hear directly from you! Send your constructive thoughts, comments, and ideas to:

Feedback@FAI.Gov



FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR) Update

COR Competencies Updated

On January 22, 2013, Ms. Joanie Newhart, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), approved the updates to the FAC-COR competencies. The revised competencies, and their associated performance outcomes, are available on FAI.gov.

The updated competencies will better define the needs of the agencies for COR responsibilities and increase the emphasis on areas of improvement that were identified in the Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey.

COR Functional Advisory Board (COR FAB)

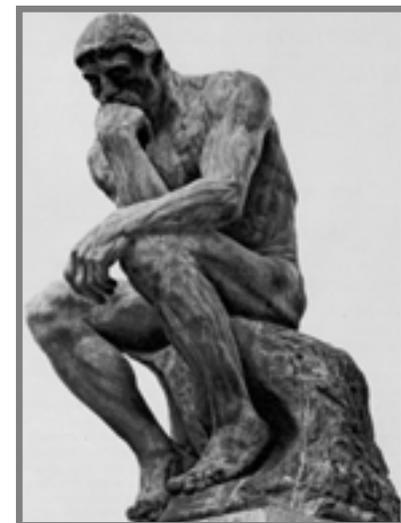
The COR FAB, as chartered by OFPP, is the collaborative, federal-wide working group charged with shaping the management policies and practices of the Federal Acquisition Certification for CORs. The FAB, which meets on a bi-monthly basis, looks at existing and emerging challenges to ensure the future success of the CORs within of the Federal acquisition workforce.

With the approval of the new COR competencies, the FAB has turned its focus on establishing the agenda for the remainder of FY 2013. In FY13, the FAB will focus on mapping the competencies and performance outcomes to the existing courses, propose learning outcomes for a 20 hour, level III COR certification course and review the existing charter to ensure that the FAB is meeting the expectations of OFPP. The FAB will continue to share information regarding upcoming agency offered training and look at different ways to communicate information on leading practices for certification reviews utilizing the FAITAS resource.

We asked the FAB “...How does your agency capture COR duties in the employee’s performance work plan?”

FAI received great feedback from agencies that are having success implementing this initiative as well as some feedback from others that are struggling with the concept. A few strategies from the feedback include: adding a performance standard once a COR receives their ap-

pointment letter; identifying specific goals and evaluation criteria for CORs to include in their PWP; having example PWPs in the COR handbook; and having memorandum signed by the Senior Procurement Executive directing supervisors to include at least one performance standard specific to contract management. **Thank you to the COR FAB for their help in sharing information across the agencies and for all the great recommendations.**



FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Program and Project Management (FAC-P/PM) Update

Your Program and Project Management Functional Advisory Board (P/PM FAB) - Working for You

Now more than ever, we need trained, experienced and innovative PMs in the acquisition ranks to manage the Federal government's future challenges with reduced budgets, tough decisions on agency priorities and the critical need to capitalize on productivity gains through information technology (IT). The P/PM Functional Advisory Board (P/PM FAB) is working to assist you with implementing the programs needed to meet the challenging times ahead.

As you know the FAI and OFPP chartered P/PM FAB is an interagency, collaborative board tasked to continuously review, evaluate, and update the P/PM career field in the Federal sector. Your P/PM FAB is tackling four initiatives during calendar year 2013:

1. Maintaining the progress gained last year to update FAC-P/PM certification and related policy for OFPP approval
2. Researching and implementing an equivalency standing between FAC-P/PM certified professionals, DoD acquisition professionals and other certifying bodies such as the Project Management Institute
3. Standing up a new focus group within the FAB to work training development initiatives
4. Researching new P/PM specialties for possible certification structuring, such as facilities management

P/PM "Specialty" Certifications Coming Soon

Federal agencies have a critical need for competent PMs in the business of acquiring IT assets for their agencies. To meet that need, the P/PM FAB's certification policy recommendations forwarded to OFPP in 2012 and scheduled for implementation in 2013, include standing up Federal level "specialty" certifications. Once approved, acquisition professionals can receive a FAC-P/PM-specialty certification by first holding a mid-level certification and then through training, experience and continuous learning pursue specific competencies in a specialty within the greater project and program management environment. The first specialty program set up by the FAB targets those PMs managing IT acquisitions. This new FAC-P/PM-IT specialty certification aligns with all recent OPM and OMB guidance regarding the qualifications of IT PM professionals. Future specialties currently under consideration by the FAB include facilities management, services management and possibly grants management.



FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

Program and Project Management (FAC-P/PM) Update

Revitalization of Policy for PM-Related Acquisition Governance

Another policy initiative in the works for the P/PM-FAB is the revitalization of a Federal-level policy for acquisition governance which brings to the forefront the role of the PM, similar to the former OMB Circular A-109, titled "Major System Acquisition." When PMs move to job assignments among different Federal agencies, they obviously encounter different acquisition cultures, as well as agency-specific procedures and policy on how to manage projects and programs. Some agencies have viable and dynamic governance directives to handle complex programs, such as NASA, DHS, and Commerce. Other agencies may not have definitive project management directives.

They typically rely on the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and OMB Circular A-11, "Preparation, Submission and Execution of the Budget" to provide this management structure to their programs and projects. While

the FAR governs the procurement process, it fills only a portion of the gap in the much needed governance structure that mitigates many of the program risks encountered by the PM. Likewise, OMB Cir. A-11 is primarily a guide for assembling the agency portion of the annual President's Budget. It does not provide a definitive life-cycle management structure that effectively integrates budgeting, requirements generation, contracting, and life-cycle management.

In the rapidly approaching resource and budget constrained environment, now more than ever, effective acquisition strategies will demand competent PMs armed with a holistic governance approach that skillfully brings together requirements generation, resources, funds and the procurement cycle. The P/PM-FAB has offered policy recommendations to OFPP to fill this much needed governance gap, including a reinstatement of A-109 and a robust revision to A-11.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Homeland Security Acquisition Institute (HSAI)



Nick Nayak
DHS Chief Procurement Officer

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been making great strides in developing their acquisition workforce since the Department stood up in March of 2003. While strengthening the acquisition workforce is a top priority, they are also willing to lend a helping hand to the rest of the civilian agencies too.

In 2012, under the strategic direction of the Chief Procurement Officer Nick Nayak, DHS opened the doors to its new acquisition

training facility as part of the HSAI. The HSAI training facility is located at 90 K Street NE, Washington, DC, and provides a dramatic expansion of HSAI's acquisition training capability with five fully equipped classrooms, four break-out rooms, an expanded multi-purpose room, and a lecture hall that can seat as many as 180 students.

As good stewards of the tax-payers dollars, when HSAI has open seats, they make them available to other agencies' acquisition workforce members at no cost. In 2012, HSAI delivered 215 classes and trained a total of 6,085 acquisition workforce students, of which ~8% were outside of DHS.

Collaboration doesn't stop at the classroom door though. DHS worked closely with FAI and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to develop three new on-line courses. These classes are available to all federal employees on-line, and at no cost. They can be located on the icatalog at: <http://icatalog.dau.mil/onlinecatalog/tabnavcl.aspx?tab=FAC> and students may register for them through the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). In 2012, DHS employees completed over one thousand distance learning opportunities.

While delivering training is an important function of HSAI, their additional key focus areas include: recruiting, developing, certifying, sustaining and supporting a strong and knowledgeable acquisition workforce. In order to facilitate DHS's mission success, HSAI's acquisition workforce development program includes nine distinct acquisition certification programs covering a wide range of disciplines across the full acquisition lifecycle. They include the three required by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) for Contracting, Program/Project Management, and Contracting Officer's Representatives and also include Systems Engineering, Cost Estimating, Lifecycle Logistics, Test and Evaluation, Program Financial Management, and Ordering Official.

In addition to its numerous certification programs, HSAI also manages DHS's innovative entry-level career development program known as the Acquisition Professional Career Program (APCP). This three-year development program trains, develops, and provides on-the-job rotational experience and mentoring opportunities for participants in one of six acquisition career fields, including Contracting, Program Management, Systems Engineering, Information Technology, Lifecycle Logistics and Cost Estimating. The intensive training program uses a strategic combination of classroom and on-line training, formal mentoring, and on-the-job training to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to excel in acquisition and to receive progressively higher levels of certification. Since its beginning in early 2008, the APCP has graduated 99 participants, and currently has 140 program participants in various disciplines within the acquisition realm—79 Contract Specialists, 38 Program Analysts, 1 Logician, 14 Systems Engineers, 2 Cost Estimators, and 6 IT Specialists.

Through its certification programs, developmental program, and classroom and on-line training, HSAI offers an integrated approach to keeping the DHS acquisition community ready to meet mission needs.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acquisition Learning Seminar Series

Looking for Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) - at no training or travel costs?

FAI sponsors periodic Acquisition Learning Seminars (ALS). The ALS is a webcast highlighting a current acquisition topic. CLPs are earned for registration and participation in an ALS. Past webcasts have included CORs, Think Big for Small Business, Meet the Administrator, the Automated Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT), the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI), and Suspension & Debarment. These and past webcasts can be viewed on FAI's Video Training Library at:



<http://www.fai.gov/drupal/training/videos>.

**The next ALS event is planned for:
May 8th (1:00 - 3:00) "Dodging the Fiscal Sharks.....Thriving in Today's Environment"**

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook or check the Announcements section on the front page of <http://www.fai.gov> for new ALS events. As with other FAI Training events, registration for ALS events is managed through FAITAS.

Have a topic that you think would be of interest to the entire acquisition workforce for an upcoming ALS? If so, please submit your topic ideas to feedback@fai.gov.

CON 360, Contracting for Decision Makers

For FY 2013, contracting workforce members can take either CON 353, Advanced Business Solutions for Business Support or CON 360, Contracting for Decision Makers. **In order to take either course, workforce members must have a FAC-C Level II certification.**

In CON 360, students work both individually and in teams to practice developing sound business solutions as a valued strategic and expert business advisor. Students will learn to analyze complex contracting situations with emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, research, and risk reduction. Student course work is designed to contribute real solutions on real acquisition problems to senior leadership and local supervisors.

Upon successful completion of CON 360, the course may be used for FAC-C Level III certification purposes. The course can also serve as an equivalent or acceptable substitute for CON 353. Those who complete CON 360 will be granted 81 CLPs.

Contracting for Decision Makers



CON 360

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Optimizing FAI Training Opportunities

FAI Responsibilities

In FY2013, FAI is offering 3,240 seats of training in contracting, contracting officer's representatives, and program/project management career fields. This training is free of tuition cost with no charge to the student or the agency. As you can imagine, the seats can fill up quickly.

60 Days

The seats FAI is providing have been allocated across Federal agencies according to the agencies':

- **Number - wide acquisition workforce**
- **Demand - the number of seats requested by acquisition career managers**
- **Attendance History - registered students showing up to class**

However, there are limits - agency specific allocations do not remain available indefinitely. If course reservations are not made at least 60 days before the course start date, then the remaining seats are no-longer set-aside for that specific agency. Once that 60 day deadline comes, all remaining seats are filled first by those students on the class waitlist in the order they registered for the class and then by all others on a first come, first served basis. It is well worth your time to register for a class that holds your interest even if it appears there are no seats available.

30 Days

FAI must be diligent with the resources it has been granted to purchase training, so there is a minimum number of students we must have to conduct a course offering. FAI must have at least 23 students registered for a class 30 days prior to a class start date. If the minimum numbers of students are not registered, a decision to hold or cancel the course offering is made - or to move the course offering to a different geographic location. It's FAI's responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and to ensure we operate in a fiscally responsible manner.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Optimizing FAI Training Opportunities

Student Deadlines

35 Days

Life happens. You may be completely on top of your schedule, but other life events can get in your way and you might have to cancel your class reservation. If you must cancel your attendance in a class and the cancellation request is processed through FAITAS 35 or more days prior to the class start date, no penalty will be imposed. However if your cancellation is processed between 34 and 10 days prior to the class start date, you will be prevented from registering for the same course for a period of 90 days.

Student No Shows

A "No Show" is when an enrolled student fails to report to class on the first day at the class start time or fails to cancel a reservation through FAITAS at least 10 days prior to the class start date. A No-Show action will result in the student being unable to register for ANY classroom course offerings for a period of 180 days.



Don't Get Stuck on the Waitlist for Open Courses

FAI continually updates its course schedule with new offerings and locations that fit the needs of the workforce. We broadcast all new course offerings through Twitter and on Facebook as they become available for registration in [FAITAS](#). Be the first to learn about the new course offerings and avoid the waitlist!

FAI's full training schedule for the remainder of FY2013 is at:
<http://www.fai.gov/drupal/training/find-and-register-for-courses>. The clock is ticking.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Strengthening the Acquisition Workforce

In our current financial climate, a strong acquisition workforce is more critical than ever. With more than \$500 billion spent on Federal contracts each year, we need a full complement of knowledgeable and skilled stewards of tax payer dollars. Smart buying decisions and savvy project management by well-prepared acquisition workforce members can have an enormous impact on an agency's mission effectiveness and financial efficiency. Conversely, decisions made by underprepared acquisition members will only compound our financial difficulties.

One of the key roles of the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) is to strengthen the acquisition workforce, which is recognized as one of the government-wide mission critical occupations. CAOs have been urged by OMB and GAO to work with their agencies' Chief Human Capital Officer to develop and implement an annual Acquisition Human Capital Plan (AHCP) to strengthen the capacity and capability of the acquisition workforce. To support agencies' senior leadership, FAI continues its focus on improving acquisition-related human capital planning strategies for federal civilian agencies. For the 2012 and 2013 AHCPs, FAI redesigned the format for the AHCPs to better align with Federal leading practices in human capital planning. FAI provides the tools and guidance to Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) to collaborate with their human capital

counterparts to design, implement, and manage human capital strategies that support you, the acquisition workforce. Additionally, FAI provides data and analysis to inform strategies, like from the Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey. Right now, agency management leaders have just completed or are working to complete their respective annual AHCP. Sample human capital programs that may be included in your agency's AHCPs are listed to the right. [Contact your ACM](#) to learn about the exciting programs that you may be able to take advantage of in your agency.

FAI, in partnership with OFPP, and other Federal acquisition leaders, continues to make significant strides in identifying opportunities to strengthen the acquisition workforce at a government-wide level, including the Acquisition Learning Seminar Series, Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Acquisition Track, and interagency Multiple Award Contracts (MAC) for certification-related training. Additionally, OFPP has re-chartered the Federal Acquisition Fellowship Coalition (FAFC) to implement recommendations that came out of a recent mid-level 1102 working group. The overall mission of the FAFC is to help OFPP and Civilian Agencies with recruiting and retaining mid-level acquisition professionals.

Human Capital Programs to Strengthen the Workforce

Workforce & Succession Planning

Recruitment, Outreach, & Hiring

On-boarding

Intern Programs

Coaching & Mentoring

Training & Continuous Learning

Individual Development Planning

Career Path Management

Knowledge & Best Practice Sharing

Awards & Recognition Program

Performance Management

Diversity & Inclusion

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

FAI is Reaching Farther and Faster

Over 200,000 Served

On February 1st, FAI celebrated the first anniversary of the revamped www.FAI.gov. Since its launch, the site has received over 200,000 visitors and over 1.8 million page views! We are constantly monitoring and updating the site to better suit your needs. Please visit the site and let us know what you think on our [Feedback Page](#).

FAI supports a global workforce that cuts across all civilian agencies. We understand that our customers and stakeholders have different communication preferences and we are working diligently to meet each one of them. Some prefer e-mail to stay connected; some prefer to regularly



visit our site to see what is new and relevant for them; but, a growing number prefer information instantly, when and where they want. In response, FAI has launched Twitter and Facebook accounts to keep you more closely connected to FAI's latest news and events!

Follow Us

To celebrate FAI.gov's first anniversary on February 1, FAI launched its Twitter account to keep you instantly connected on your favorite devices. Click on the Twitter graphic to follow us.

Like Us

On April 1, FAI launched its Facebook page. Become our friend and let us know what you "like."

Browse the New FAI Video Library

The new [FAI Video Library](#) will be deployed in April. It has user-friendly search functions to help you select videos from a variety of FAI's continuous learning events, including webcasts that were viewed by over 10,000 Acquisition workforce members over the last year. The videos are programmed to launch in any of the most common video players.

Having trouble accessing the online FAR?



If you are having difficulty accessing the online FAR, just drop the "s" from "https" and find it at: <http://www.acquisition.gov/far>

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS) Update

New Capabilities for Data Analysis: Business Analytics Tool

Did you know that FAITAS now has more than 115,000 registered users? How many are from your agency? How many are in Contracting or the Program Management career field? The FAITAS Data Analytics tool can provide this information to your Agency's leadership.

FAITAS Data Analytics provides enhanced analytical and reporting capability. The data is presented in Dashboards that may be sorted, filtered, and exported based on the user's preferences and needs. The dashboards are designed to allow OFPP, FAI staff and licensed agency users to review FAITAS user registration, course offering and seat execution metrics.

A sample dashboard from the business analytics tool is presented on the next page.

DHS Enhancements to FAITAS

DHS continues to support enhancements to FAITAS. Through their funding and leadership the following enhancements have recently been deployed the system:

- » Continuous Learning Module – Submit and track your CLPs
- » Training Request module – New notification when cancellation request date has passed
- » My Certifications View - New CL Status column displays “Current” or “Expired” under My Certifications and Manage Certifications
- » Registrar's Prerequisite Screen - Add the Certification History button/view to the prerequisites screen
- » Registrar / Prerequisites View - Add Registrar Remarks to the prerequisites view for Registrars
- » Individual Agency Resources Page in Help Menu - The agency-specific page can accommodate text, links, and documents. The page will be edited and maintained by the Agency FAITAS Administrator.

More DHS-sponsored Features Coming Soon

- » Survey Module – Course evaluation survey must be complete to receive completion certificate. Various reports will be available to evaluate and enhance courses based on your feedback.
- » Specializations for Certifications – Agencies will be able to provide their employees with an additional Agency-specific certification for required training over and above FAC requirements. Employees will still receive the FAC certification after meeting the FAC requirements.
- » Training History and IDP View –CLP data will be added to Training History and IDP views
- » User Profile Information – Ability to note and track “Program of record” affiliation with Major Acquisition programs and/or OMB 300s

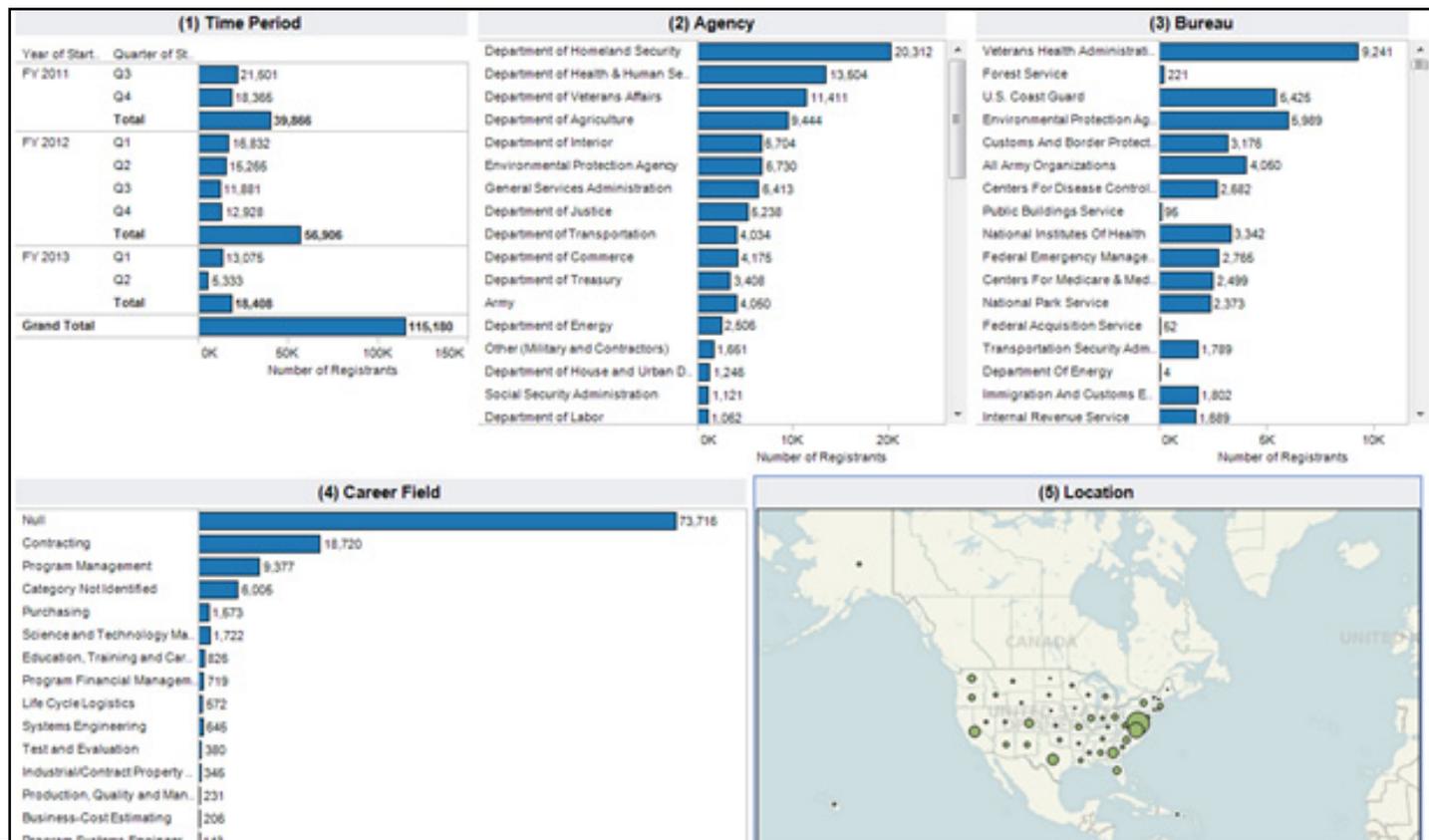
More FAITAS enhancements are under development to better support the Federal Acquisition Community! Thank you DHS!

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS) Update

Data Visualization

By presenting the FAITAS Data in the visual dashboard format, FAI's goal is to assist agencies gain a better understanding of the large amount of available data. This understanding leads to more informed users and better data-driven decisions. Data allows for unemotional decision making, leading to increased efficiencies across government.



ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Michelle Sharpe, Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), Department of Treasury



Michelle Sharpe,
Department of Treasury

1. How long have you worked at Treasury? I started my wonderful journey with Treasury in October of 2011.

2. Where were you before coming to Treasury? Prior to coming to Treasury, I started my contracting career as an intern in the Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and subsequently moved to the Agency for International Development's Office of Acquisition and Assistance.

3. Tell us about one of your biggest successes achieved by your team. Thanks to the hard work of the Department's contracting offices and procurement customer organizations, Treasury for the second year in a row exceeded its goals for ALL socio-economic (small business) contracting categories as well as for Department-wide acquisition savings.

4. What is the biggest challenge in your position? As the ACM, the biggest challenge is overseeing the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and Project and Program Management (P/PM) workforce. As these individuals typically do not fall under the purview of the procurement offices, ensuring these individuals understand the importance of their role in the acquisition process has proven difficult. Treasury continues to focus on building relationships to foster a collaborative acquisition environment.

5. What motivates you to put your best foot forward on a daily basis? Every day I have the opportunity to work with colleagues dedicated to ensuring Treasury's acquisition function is effective and efficient. The hard work of these individuals is admirable and I aspire to contribute to their efforts to the best of my ability.

6. What skills do you think are most critical to successfully perform your job? The ability to be flexible and collaborate with colleagues. The acquisition environment is constantly changing; therefore, understanding and adapting to change is essential to having a successful acquisition workforce. Collaborating with colleagues creates an environment in which everyone is working towards a common goal which can lead to positive results for acquisition organizations.

7. What could the FAI Team do to move the federal acquisition workforce forward? FAI has done a wonderful job in partnering with agencies to strengthen and develop the acquisition workforce. To move the acquisition workforce forward, FAI could increase its outreach efforts to promote the acquisition career field as a career choice and attract qualified individuals to the workforce, supporting agencies in meeting short-term and long-term workforce needs.

8. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow acquisition career manager? Hang tough! This is a challenging and demanding job, but we are in a unique position to develop and strengthen our acquisition workforce to ensure the acquisition process is effective, efficient, and of best value to the American taxpayers.

9. What is a goal you have for your acquisition workforce? One of Treasury's goals is to close identified competency gaps through mandated training. Treasury will continue to focus on FAC-C certification and promote knowledge and best-practice sharing.

10. What is something about yourself that others might not know? I did gymnastics for ten years. I still have some of the bumps and bruises to prove it!

WORKFORCE RESOURCES

Help is Here!

Have you ever had a question for FAI and don't know where to start? Are you looking for help in answering a question about a class, FAITAS, the fai.gov website, FAC Certification, etc.? This article may help you find the answer.

If you have a question about FAC-C, FAC-COR, or FAC-P/PM Certification, Always check with your Agency Career Manager (ACM) first - some agencies have bureaus and sub-components and there may be additional agency specific policies and requirements A listing of the ACMs for the 23 civilian Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act agencies can be found at: <http://www.fai.gov/drupal/community/acquisition-career-managers-acms>. The ACMs are the best resource for agency-specific questions on the various certification programs and should be your first contact source.

For FAITAS questions, questions about an upcoming class you've registered for, or for questions regarding a course completion certificate, there are several ways to contact the FAITAS Help Desk:

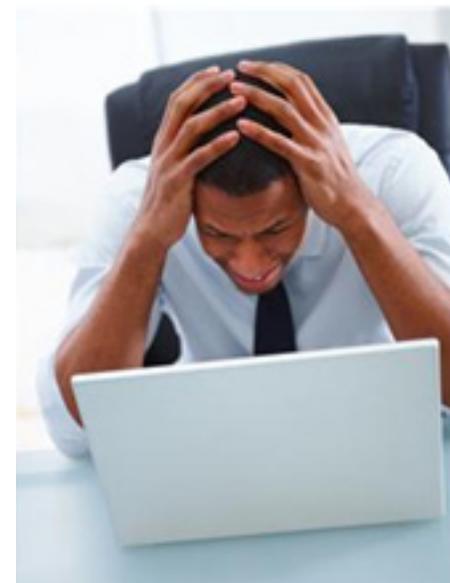
- Via submitting a written ticket at: <http://www.fai.gov/drupal/content/help-desk>.
- By phone (Monday – Friday, from 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM EST) at: (703) 752-9604
- There are also “Frequently Asked Questions” about a wide variety of FAITAS issues and they can be found at: <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/faitas/External/FAQ>.

Please note that the FAITAS Help Desk number was changed to (703) 752-9604

Review the FAI website at www.fai.gov for FAI's course catalog, course schedule, course descriptions, continuous learning opportunities, training videos, announcements, and a calendar with upcoming events, among many other items on the site.

For all other questions: submit an e-mail to contact@fai.gov.

To provide feedback to FAI about any issue: submit an e-mail to feedback@fai.gov. Your constructive feedback enables us to make your FAI experience a pleasant one. Whether it's our website, an Acquisition Learning Seminar (ALS), an FAI sponsored training class or any other asset, we want your feedback - both good and bad! Submit your feedback to feedback@fai.gov. Please be specific when providing your feedback so that we can evaluate and take appropriate action on your comments.



WORKFORCE RESOURCES

Student Support

If you have training and development questions, always begin with your agency Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)



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