



# FAI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 3 SUMMER FY 2013 | FAI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## From the Director



**Donna Jenkins,  
Director, FAI**

Our legacy within government should expand beyond our personal achievements throughout our career. To make an exponentially greater impact on the Federal Acquisition Community and the way government functions, we need to share our proven practices with our colleagues and those in our acquisition workforce community.

In our knowledge-based economy, what we know is equally or more valuable than the work we produce. But, most large organizations can do more to foster a culture where inter-office knowledge sharing and assistance are encouraged, supported, and rewarded. Most of us

agree that increased knowledge sharing would make us a more efficient and effective community, but it is often a difficult task with many constraints. As a result, for every proven solution, there are countless professionals struggling to re-invent the wheel without knowing that a proven practice or alternative solution already exists.

One of the greatest barriers to sharing our proven practices and enhancing government-wide operations is not knowing how to take the first step. Everyone can begin locally by identifying the available outlets within their agencies to exchange knowledge and proven practices, including tools, templates, or processes that were successful for their specific situation.

You don't need to have a 100% solution to meet everyone's needs; you just need to provide them with a baseline to review, revise, and advance for their purposes. Whether you are hoping to share a great solution or find one, your agency's Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) can assist you in identifying the most appropriate outlet. Your ACM can also help to get you recognized at a Federal-wide level when your efforts lead to enhanced agency performance and cost-savings.

FAI is developing the capability to collect and share proven practices, but until that is completed, we are providing other means of sharing proven practices across organizational boundaries. One example is the Acquisition Learning Seminars. These sessions have shared proven practices with over 10,000 viewers over the past year. FAI also hosts a variety of knowledge-sharing meetings with acquisition leaders and managers from across government, like the recent annual planning meeting for the Interagency Acquisition Career Manager Council (IACMC). During this meeting, ACMs shared their strategies for developing and managing acquisition workforce initiatives. In the future, FAI will host targeted, web-based communities of practice to enable knowledge sharing at a government-wide level.

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Welcome FAI's New Hires

The FAI Team Welcomes Two New Members, Lori Taylor and Hope Dolan.



**Lori Taylor,  
Operations  
Research Analyst**

Lori comes to us from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) where she served as the Business Finance and Cost Estimating career manager and supported the DHS strategic human capital planning efforts. She joins the team as an Operations Research Analyst and will be performing acquisition workforce analysis to enable managers and leaders to make informed data driven decisions.



**Hope Dolan,  
FAITAS Program  
Manager**

Hope comes to us from ASM Research, where she served as the contractor support for the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). She joins the team as the new FAITAS Program Manager and brings with her several years of FAITAS expertise which is necessary to continue the enhancement of system capabilities to support the federal acquisition workforce community.

## Team Kudos



It's through dedication and commitment that a mission is successfully accomplished. These accomplishments, many times are not achieved by a single person, but by a group or team of individuals. Below are a few "kudos" received by the FAI Team:

To the FAI Team: "I don't know that I can show a silver lining with this message, but I wanted to share honestly with you that I had put in a nomination for a group award for all of you, speaking to the collaborative effort to get more of our small agency brethren better equipped by gaining access to FAITAS and the tools available to help all of us do our jobs. Without your support and willingness to go above and beyond it would not be possible. I think the competition is superb for these awards, but I didn't want your collaboration, volunteerism and willingness to give back to go unrecognized. There is no mistake about it, your support is what makes this concept work, without it we could not support the small agencies the way we are. I appreciate all the work you do on behalf of your SAC colleagues. Thank you."

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Team Kudos

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*To the FAI Team - “The entire S&D Division would like to thank you all so much for making this event the huge success that it was. I could not have imagined that over 2300 government-wide would have wanted to learn about this topic. All of you were so helpful and professional and everything was so well planned and organized. I have gotten several emails and lots of great feedback from the audience. It was our pleasure working with you all on this and I look forward to working with you again on other topics.”*

To John Andre - “I can speak for the OPM team on how much we appreciate your support in making the Recruitment Boot Camp Session for the FAI a success! Not only was the venue perfect, but the turnout was great and the audience was also well informed. You definitely targeted the right audience from the FAI members. We’d appreciate the opportunity to further support the FAI on the topic of recruitment. Perhaps we can discuss future partnerships with OPM in the not-to-distant future!”

To Bob Faulk - “Thank You Very Much! This is very helpful. I really appreciate your response and the detailed information. Have a Great Day!”

To Bob Faulk - “...FAI is great to work with and gets things done – quick.”

To Bob Faulk - “Again, thank you for participating in the conference as a guest speaker; your presentation was insightful and provided a wealth of information about what is new and happening within FAI and FAITAS. The first day of the ED's Acquisition conference was a success with your participation, thanks again.”



Thanks to those who took the time to share your appreciation. Many times it's the less than positive comments that are shared or brought to a higher level of attention. A few kind words shared with an individual has more impact than many recognize - so take a few minutes and let an individual or team know that they are appreciated - don't let appreciation and kindness go unrecognized.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Acquisition Track

The President Management Fellows (PMF) program [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov) is an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) program in which outstanding graduate students are recruited for public service. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), and the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) have partnered with the OPM PMF Office to establish an Acquisition Track (AT). The PMF AT requires selected PMF candidates to achieve Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) level II in one of three career fields – Contracting, Contracting Officers Representative or Program/Project Management - <http://www.fai.gov/drupal/certification/certification-and-career-development-programs>. OPM pre-qualifies the finalists to get the best qualified candidates. OPM charges agencies a \$7,000 fee to cover the cost of recruitment, screening, selection, placement, PMF

Program Office sponsored events (e.g., job fair, orientation, and graduation), and general program administration. However, FAI will fund the \$7,000 fee for each PMF AT candidate. Agencies are highly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to hire some of the best and brightest candidates into the federal acquisition workforce community.

On April 8, 2013, the PMF Program Office selected 663 Finalists for the PMF Class of 2013. This year, there were 12,120 applicants. Over 50 disciplines (graduate degrees) from 220 graduate schools are represented. Demographics include: Veterans: 256 (38%); 44% Female and 56% Male. A PMF Virtual Job Fair was held on May 1-3 where PMF finalists had an opportunity to engage with agency representatives. Twenty PMF finalists expressed an interest in an acquisition career field. If your agency is hiring

PMFs, we can forward you the resumes of the interested candidates.

### OFPP and FAI Program Support

- FAI will sponsor up to 24 PMF candidates for the Acquisition Track
- FAI serves as the top level PMF Acquisition Track Program Coordinator
- FAI will provide the opportunity for acquisition training through FAC level II
- OFPP will integrate PMFs into new acquisition professional learning sessions and networking events
- OFPP will obtain feedback from agencies and PMFs for continuous improvement of the program

OPM is transitioning to a new PMF Talent Acquisition System (TAS) where agencies will post their PMF job opportunities for Finalists. The PMF TAS is expected to launch in the May/June timeframe. The [PMF website](#) will be updated to include additional instructions for Finalists on how to use the PMF TAS to search and apply for PMF positions.



**PMF** PRESIDENTIAL  
MANAGEMENT  
FELLOWS PROGRAM  
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## The Community Corner



### Collaboration at its best ...

The 3rd Annual Inter Agency Career Managers Committee (IACMC) Planning Meeting took place on Wednesday, May 22nd at the GSA Federal Acquisition Service Office. This meeting was attended by the agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and members of the Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT). The objective of this all day event is to highlight accomplishments made throughout the year, highlight government-wide acquisition workforce initiatives and discuss how the FAI team can better support the ACMs in conquering shared acquisition workforce challenges. Ms. Lesley Field, Deputy Administrator Federal Procurement Policy served as the keynote speaker. She highlighted shared goals of Mr. Jordan, Administrator of Federal Procurement Policy. Ms. Field continues to be an advocate for the acquisition workforce community as well as Ms. Joanie Newhart, Associate Administrator for Acquisition Workforce Programs who works very closely with Ms. Donna Jenkins, Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute, in spearheading the Administration's acquisition workforce initiatives.

### Congratulations Lori!

On May 19th 2013, Lori Taylor (right) from FAI and her running partner Stacey Thomas (left) competed in the 6th Annual Marine Corps Historic Half Marathon in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The Historic Half is a 13.1 mile journey through the historic downtown streets, up the famous Hospital Hill to awaiting Marines at the Historic Half finish line. Perfectly situated in the timeless city of Fredericksburg halfway between the capital of the Commonwealth in Richmond and the nation's capital in Washington, D.C. Lori followed a 10-week training schedule peaking at 26 miles in preparation for the big event. Lori finished in 2:01:38, which was the top 20% for her age group and a personal best, great job Lori!



# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR) Update

### COR Competencies Mapped to FCR 100

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](http://FAI.gov).

The COR Functional Advisory Board mapped the FCR 100, Contracting Officer's Representative course to the performance outcomes for level I CORs and determined that the course tracks to 38 of the 42 level I outcomes.

- **Three Performance outcomes were not addressed by the course:**
  1. 1-5 Understand the contract options available that can be used when recurring requirements are identified.
  2. 7-4 Knowledge of basic financial principles
  3. 9-3 Understand agency knowledge management tools (e.g. continuous process improvement) and how they are implemented.
- **One Performance Outcome was only partially addressed:**
  1. Ability to provide CO with warranty information advantageous to the acquisition.

Not bad for a course that was developed a year prior to the performance outcomes being developed.

### COR Functional Advisory Board (COR FAB)

The FAB is currently reviewing the charter to determine if an update is required. The current charter was signed by Ms. Newhart and Ms. Jenkins in October of 2011. The FAB is also gathering requirements for a 20 hour level III. 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 "...Is there a need to establish a career field for a COR?"

We have received feedback from several agencies, both pro and con; all with very good points and consideration for how it might be implemented for their organization. Mr. Robert Burton, Executive Office of the President (EOP), has volunteered to head up the review of this initiative. (Thanks RB). We will report out on this in the next newsletter.

Thank you to the COR FAB for your continued support in sharing information across the agencies and for all the great recommendations!



**Robert Burton (EOP, left) working with Bob Faulk (FAI, right) at the June COR FAB.**

# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Contracting (FAC-C) Update

### CON Functional Advisory Board (FAB) Accomplishments

To ensure the Federal Contracting Workforce had the tools necessary to perform their jobs, FAI, made a number of changes to the Federal Acquisition Certification-Contracting (FAC-C) program in the past year. Three new Level I online courses were developed, piloted, and fielded:

- FCN 110: Mission Support Planning
- FCN 111: Mission Strategy Execution
- FCN 112: Mission Performance Assessment

These three courses replaced the older CON 110/111/112 courses that were no longer supported by the Department of Defense (DOD). In addition, the test banks for FCN 110/111/112 courses were updated and revised to align with the curriculum content changes.



In collaboration with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), FAI evaluated and recommended to the Contracting Functional Advisory Board (CON FAB) DOD's new CON 200: Business Decisions for Contracting as an updated replacement for CON 214: Business Decisions for Contracting, and DOD's new CON 360: Contracting for Decision Makers as an updated replacement for CON 353: Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support. For FY 13, the Acquisition Workforce can take either CON 200 (online) or CON 214 (classroom). These course revisions resulted in the following FAC-C changes:

- FY 13, the Acquisition Workforce can take either CON 353 or CON 360
- FY 14, the Acquisition Workforce must take CON 200; CON 214 may be used for certification until September 30, 2014
- FY 14, the Acquisition Workforce must take CON 360; CON 353 may be used for certification until September 30, 2014

To meet the needs expressed by the CON FAB, FAI started development of two new Level I courses focused on the use of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). FCN 101: Contracting Fundamentals will delete the DOD references and will include expanded materials on how to use and conduct research using the



FAR. FCN 190: FAR Fundamentals will be a two-week classroom version of DOD's CON 090: FAR Fundamentals course for commercial vendor delivery.

Two FCN 190 pilots are planned for July, 2013 and October/November, 2013. Both will be offered in the Washington, DC area. Students may register for the July, 2013 offering in FAITAS at this time. We anticipate that both courses will deploy in the FY 14 timeframe.

In addition, FAI briefed the CON FAB on actions FAI is taking to address the largest competency gaps based on the FY12 Competency Survey. These include Requirements Definition, Negotiations, and Solicitations.

# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Contracting (FAC-C) Update

### Parity or Reciprocity

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) is continuing to take comments and gather data concerning their decision on “PARITY” of the Federal Contracting Certification program with the Department of Defense’s (DOD’s) DAWIA program. The decision is not an easy or simple one. OFPP is having ongoing dialogues with the Senior Procurement Executives, members of the Contracting Functional Advisory Board (CON FAB), senior executives from DOD, and, most importantly, the Federal contracting workforce.

As mentioned in the last edition of the FAI Newsletter, a key question is whether “PARITY” or “RECIPROCITY” is desired by the federal contracting workforce. When used in the context of the FAC-C/DAWIA programs, those two words have different meanings. Reciprocity means “interchangeable.” With reciprocity, a person with the right experience is able to move between agencies, both DOD and non-DOD. To the extent that DOD job announcements look for someone who is DAWIA certified or someone who is able to be DAWIA-certified in 24-36 months or the announcement is silent on certification, there already is reciprocity. For the contract professional, the key to getting the interview and/or getting the job is having the right kind of contracting experience.

The word “PARITY” means “equal.” In order for the FAC-C program to be in PARITY with DAWIA, the three elements of the certification programs—(1) education, (2) training, and (3) experience--have to be exactly the same. Currently, the education requirements in the FAC-C and DAWIA programs are not the same. A college degree is required for all levels in DAWIA. In the FAC-C, a college degree is only required for Level III.

In addition, for both programs to be in “PARITY,” the training has to be exactly the same. This means more than just taking classes with the same title and learning objectives. The course content—student materials,

case studies, examples, etc.—have to be the same. If the FAC-C is brought into parity with DAWIA, all the training courses must contain the DOD content including DFARS, DOD’s PGI, DOD examples, DOD cases, etc. The method of delivery and the prerequisites would also have to be the same as DAWIA’s.

As you can see, OFPP’s decision is not an easy one. There are many things to think about and consider in order to ensure that the federal contracting workforce has the appropriate set of tools to do their job.



# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Program and Project Manager (FAC-P/PM) Update

### New Entry-level PPM Course Developed by VA Acquisition Academy, Department of Energy, and FAI

The VA Acquisition Academy (VAAA), Department of Energy (DoE), and the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), have teamed up to create a new course offering for entry level certification. The new course, "Acquisition Fundamentals of Program and Project Management" will be a blended course, combining a distance learning (DL), online course of approximately 40 hours, with a one week resident classroom course. The DL increment is a prerequisite before entering the classroom phase, and completing both course increments is required for full course credit. Both the VAAA and the DoE contributed much of the content for the DL increment currently under development at FAI. The VAAA and FAI will team up later this year and develop the one week classroom increment. The new course is scheduled for availability in January 2014.

The FAI, VAAA, and DoE saw the need for more flexible PPM training options in budget constrained times where travel costs, curriculum development resources, and time constraints would force some tough decisions on workforce and training managers. VAAA Vice Chancellors Richard Garrison and Paul Graf, Department of Energy's Workforce Manager Linda Ott, and FAI PM Program Executive Bruce Moler worked together and launched this

great training opportunity to leverage existing content, expertise and resources. This is yet another example of the collaborative spirit among these interagency members of the PPM Functional Advisory Board (PPM-FAB) and the Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT).

**TEAMWORK**  
coming together is a beginning  
keeping together is progress  
working together is success  
-Henry Ford

The idea behind a blended course offering is a relatively new direction in training delivery for PPM certification. The DL increment focuses on imparting the knowledge and comprehension topics, while the classroom phase raises the bar to application of those topics using a case-based approach with students working in teams the same way they apply PPM skills on the job. This approach reduces travel costs and limits the time employees are away from their job location. Rather than the traditional four weeks of classroom training, a workforce member can complete entry-level certification training in one week of resident training. And the DL

portion can be taken anywhere there is internet access, including the student's duty station, while on business travel, or at home.

Bruce Moler of FAI met with a top-notch team of course managers at the VAAA's Program Management School who agreed to design the resident training. The VAAA lives what they teach - each development effort at the Academy is run as a project using the model the Academy delivers in its FAC-P/PM curricula. Once FAI's development of the DL phase matures and approaches completion around July 2013, FAI and VAAA will start a 60 - 90 day effort to develop the resident portion of the course. Using good instructional systems design, FAI and the VAAA took the traditional load of 112+ hours of resident classroom training at the entry-level, and distilled it down to about 80 total hours without loss of required learning outcomes. The course presents the PPM topics in a generic fashion and is relevant across all Federal agency acquisition efforts. Agencies can supplement this blended course with their own agency-specific learning objectives to satisfy unique training requirements.

The FAC-P/PM represents a much needed skill set for the Federal acquisition work force. "Acquisition Fundamentals of Program and Project Management" is another collaborative step toward competent and confident PPMs, armed with the right skill set to take on the challenges ahead.

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Recruiting Boot Camp for Acquisition Professionals

On April 9-10, 2013, over 100 Federal employees attended a special acquisition learning seminar, Recruiting Boot Camp for Acquisition Professionals, hosted by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI). This seminar, developed by the Recruitment Policy and Outreach team at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), was designed to advance strategic and tactical recruiting acumen at all levels and support the end-to-end human resources management framework to attract acquisition professionals to Federal service. The two-day event was held in the Guy D. Boston, Jr., Auditorium of the U.S. General Services Administration National

Capital Region building, located at 7th & D Streets, SW, Washington, DC. Thomas Formby, Todd Floersheim, and Karlos DelToro, all from OPM, discussed six subjects:

1. Effective Job Opportunity Announcements
2. Recruitment Sourcing
3. Collaboration
4. Employment Branding
5. Campus Recruiting
6. Onboarding

Participants expressed great appreciation for the advice and encouragement of the OPM team and thanks to FAI for hosting this informative and well attended event.



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAI Training Stats

As of May 31, 2012, the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) provided 2,190 training seats in its contracting, contracting officer's representative, and program/project management certification classes. These training opportunities were at no-cost to the agencies and have been provided to supplement training provided directly by Federal agencies. This training along with on-the-job experience is vital to ensure the acquisition workforce is well-prepared to steward the tax payers' dollars.

2,149 students enrolled to take advantage of this free training for an enrollment rate of 98%. This is a marked improvement over FY2010, FY2011, and FY2012 enrollment rates. A point of concern, however, is the drop-off in the attendance rate of those who enrolled.

1,972 students attended FAI classes thus far in FY2013 for a respectable 90% fill rate which, also, is an improvement over FY2010, FY2011, and FY2012. The 218 empty seats are broken down by those not reserved (41) and those where students simply did not cancel their enrollments nor did not attend the class (273). Some of these losses were mitigated by students who "walked" into the class (96); that is, students who did not have confirmed reservations but took the chance that seats would be available. But, the lost opportunity

cost represented in the 218 empty seats is considerable. While there is no cost for FAI-provided training charged to students or their agencies, there is a cost borne by FAI. So, we must very conscientiously account for our resources. When seats go unused, lost training opportunity costs add up very quickly. For FY2013, so far this amount is \$120,811.

When you enroll for FAI-provided training, we implore you to attend the class. There are certainly times when you cannot attend a class, but please cancel your enrollment in a timely manner allowing others the opportunity to take your place. We ask that you be as diligent as possible as we steward our share of the tax payers' dollars in the fiscally constrained environment that we are all experiencing. We ask that each of you assist us in maximizing all training opportunities.

	# Seats	Enrollments	Enrollment Rate	Attendees	Attendance Rate <sup>+</sup>	Fill Rate <sup>#</sup>
FY2010	3,042	2,107	69%	1,894	90%	62%
FY2011	3,314	2,522	76%	2,513	99%	76%
FY2012	4,152	3,726	90%	3,568	96%	86%
FY2013*	2,190	2,149	98%	1,972	92%	90%

\* as of May 31, 2013

<sup>+</sup> of students who enrolled

<sup>#</sup> of seats offered



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Treasury Acquisition Institute (TAI): Celebrating 21 Years of Service



Greetings from the Treasury Acquisition Institute, better known by our many satisfied students as TAI! Located just off the DC beltway in Oxon Hill, MD, we are the principal training activity for all contracting professionals of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the preferred provider for contracting professionals within the Treasury departmental bureaus.

We are celebrating our 21<sup>st</sup> year of service to the acquisition community, and we have trained many thousands over that period. Although IRS and Treasury bureau employees are our primary training focus, on a limited basis, we have also made many of our courses available to the acquisition workforce at other federal agencies throughout the National Capital Region, earning us a reputation for training excellence government-wide. Our offerings are designed to meet the needs of the changing federal acquisition environment while providing training for required certification standards, addressing competencies needed for success, and ultimately, to develop world-class acquisition professionals. We continuously update our program to reflect cutting-edge topics facing the contracting and acquisition community. In addition to serving the 1102 workforce, we also provide continuous learning opportunities for Contracting Officer Representatives who attend our training from offices throughout the country.

The strength of TAI training is centered in our hands-on approach to ensuring that our students get the maximum benefit from the courses provided. This is accomplished through an integrated effort where our seasoned Acquisition Career Managers, each of whom have decades of experience in contracting, monitor the skills and capability needs of the workforce. They vigilantly search the training base community to identify contemporary, solutions-based learning

opportunities designed to maintain the highest level of expertise and proficiency. Our training vendor base consists of well-respected providers such as ESI, Management Concepts, Northwest Procurement Institute, Houseman & Associates, Steven Tomanelli & Associates, Perfena, and Federal Publications Seminars – West Publishing Corporation. Each of these providers is committed to excellence, and our post-class surveys are a testament to the quality of their leadership in the field.

Like all other training and academic centers, TAI is in the midst of leveraging technology to expand our reach across the workforce. We are working to provide a mix of learning experiences as we develop an array of virtual products that, when combined with instructor-led resident training, allows for the widest dissemination of meaningful and real-time preparation possible. We will continue to leverage training center partner developed products from the Federal Acquisition Institute and Defense Acquisition University, and we are continuously encouraging and challenging the training vendor community to make the key investments in the advanced, cost effective virtual learning systems that will empower the contracting workforce going forward.

These are exciting times to learn and work at TAI. We welcome you to visit our website at <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Treasury-Acquisition-Institute-Course-Catalog> to see what we offer. Please come and enjoy our hospitality and fantastic training whenever you get a chance!



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Highlights from the Acquisition Learning Seminar Series

**DODGING THE FISCAL SHARKS:  
THRIVING IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT**

ACQUISITION LEARNING SEMINAR

WATCH IT > [WWW.FAI.GOV/WEBCAST](http://WWW.FAI.GOV/WEBCAST) <

**MAY 8**  
1pm-3pm, EDT

WATCH IT > [WWW.FAI.GOV/WEBCAST](http://WWW.FAI.GOV/WEBCAST) <

Joanie Newhart, Associate Administrator for Acquisition Workforce Programs at the Office of Management and Budget, facilitated this Acquisition Learning Seminar (ALS) webcast on May 8th. The speakers shared proven practices and tips with the viewers that could be considered to improve acquisition outcomes and achieve their mission goals.

The first speaker was Mr. Bryon Young, Executive Director of the US Army Contracting Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Mr. Young spoke about DoD's [Better Buying Power](#) initiatives. Several specific tasks that Mr. Young's organization has utilized include:

- (1) on competitive contracts include no fees for Other Direct Costs (ODCs)
- (2) convert Time & Materials (T&M) contracts to other contract types. On the average, the Contracting Command has been saving approximately 8% of total costs with this effort
- (3) for acquisitions receiving only one bid, the Command negotiates on an other than certified cost and price basis to reduce costs
- (4) increased competition



- (5) use of Lowest Price Technically Acceptable source selection method. Acquisition personnel at the Command work with program and technical personnel to set the technical acceptability level appropriately to ensure that there is a high degree of confidence of performance
- (6) use of reverse auctioning.

Use of all of the above initiatives has caused the Command to achieve better results. A Better Buying Power 2.0 [memo](#) was signed in November of 2012 and [implementing guidance](#) was issued in April of this year. At the end of Mr. Young's presentation, Ms. Newhart urged attendees to review the memo and implementing guidance. Although these memos were issued by DoD, there are many items that can be applied to civilian agency acquisitions.

The next speaker was Sharon Fernandes, Contracting Officer, Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Acquisition Operations, Technology Acquisition Center, in Eatontown, NJ. Sharon discussed achieving an effective small business strategy at both the Contract and Task Order levels. Her office was able to award a multiple award/IDIQ contract which included a small business reserve strategy. Her actions included:

- (1) conducted extensive market research,
- (2) utilized a small business reserve strategy,
- (3) acquisition strategy to meet the VA's IT mission and offer maximum opportunities for SDVOSB and VOSB concerns,
- (4) embraced the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 prior to implementation,
- (5) the source selection evaluation plan included the provision to set-aside at the task order level to meet agency small business goals, SDVOSB and VOSB specifically.



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Highlights from the Acquisition Learning Seminar Series

Next, Mr. Jim Blades, Managing Director, Contracts and Grants Management (CGM) Division for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Chair of the Small Agency Council gave his remarks. The Small Agency Council is comprised of 90 plus small government agencies representing 50,000 employees. Approximately 50% are grant-making and 50% are law enforcement agencies. The Small Agency Council Procurement committee meets every other month to discuss best practices and agency concerns. As a result, there has been increased e-mail collaboration, sharing of Word documents and templates, and providing insight to each other on complying with OMB and OFPP policies where some agencies only have three to five contracting personnel responsible for award and administration of contracts and a myriad of other acquisition workforce responsibilities.

During Mr. Blades's remarks, he quoted Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" and "I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw some things back." The second quote spoke to one of the reasons for the webcast – to share strategies that an acquisition professional could use at his/her agency to better the acquisition process. It's up to all of us to share what we know so that others may learn.



*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*

*- Maya Angelou*

Mr. Bob Namejko, Industry Liaison at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) then gave his remarks. Mr. Namejko talked about DHS' effective vendor engagement as a result of OFPP's [Myth-busting memos](#). DHS has established a cadre of Industry Liaisons that work with the Small Business Specialists to interact with the stakeholder and vendor communities. In addition, they have collaborated with Associations and Interest Groups to provide seminars with Industry for the 1102 workforce. Recent topics have included: Strategic Communications – Industry Perspective and How Industry Assesses Risk. DHS has made great use of Industry Days, Requests for Information (RFI), and Pre-Proposal Conferences. The Return on Investment for these initiatives has increased cost savings and has provided DHS with a more resilient vendor base.



The next speaker was Ms. Terry Schooley, Deputy Chief, Contracting Operations Division, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (Contracting), Assistant Secretary (Acquisition) for the Air Force. Ms. Schooley discussed the Air Force's use of the Better Buying Power initiatives. Some of the strategies she discussed included:

- (1) Achieve affordable Programs
- (2) Control costs throughout the product life cycle
- (3) Promote effective competition
- (4) Improve the professionalism of the total acquisition workforce by centralizing lessons learned and instill culture change



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Highlights from the Acquisition Learning Seminar Series

Ms. Schooley's office developed a PowerPoint tool to share samples, examples, and lessons learned. The result has been better collaboration in the areas of pricing, small business, services, and program management. Ms. Newhart then mentioned a Better Buying Power on-line site at [bbp.dau.mil](http://bbp.dau.mil) which has a number of tips and tools that can be used by all acquisition professionals.

Mr. Rob Burton, Chief, Acquisition Integrity and Contract Oversight, Executive Office of the President/Office of Administration next spoke about their office's use of full-time Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) to manage multiple large contracts in a very dynamic organization. These CORs all have a good understanding of IT and Program Management and are FAC-COR certified. The office has instituted a program office procurement package which includes market research, the IGCE, the acquisition plan and strategy and ensures that the requirements are very clear. In addition, for larger contracts, the CORs conduct a weekly contract program review. They have also established specialized IT Acquisition Cadres and utilize a charter to assign cadre members by name and responsibility and to empower these individuals early in the process.

The next speaker was Mr. Charles Yook, Strategic Sourcing Program Manager at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Mr. Yook talked about the award of an IT Services BPA (ITS). Mr. Yook spoke about his strategy which included:

- (1) conducted extensive market research,
- (2) issued a Q&A based RFP which captured only relevant technical information,
- (3) issued Excel-based pricing sheets to the vendors for completion,

- (4) provided vendors with very specific feedback on their initial pricing.

As a result of this initiative, the IRS achieved a cost savings of \$32.2 Million, completed the acquisition in half the normal acquisition lead time, and 100% of the spend was directed to HUBZone and SDVOSB businesses.

The final speaker was Ms. Donna Jenkins, Director, Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) who discussed the individual benefits of the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). If you are not already registered in FAITAS, go to the [FAI website](#) and click on the FAITAS link at the top of the page. Add your information in the profile to be counted as a member of the acquisition workforce as a Contract Specialist/Contracting Officer, COR, or Program/Project Manager. Once you have a profile, you can apply for training, apply for and maintain your Federal Acquisition Certification(s), and track your Continuous Learning progress. New initiatives coming soon are the end-of-course survey module and the warrant management module.

Joanie Newhart challenged all attendees to take one of the things they've heard in the webcast and try it. She also mentioned a great article that appeared in the May 7, 2013 Government Executive publication entitled: "[11 DIY Ways to Advance Your Government Career.](#)"

The May 8th ALS on "Dogging the Fiscal Sharks" was viewed by over 3,000 federal acquisition workforce members. If you missed it, you can still view the entire [webcast recording](#). The next ALS, titled "It **Is** Easy Being Green" will be broadcast on July 17th, from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Registration is now open.



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Seeking Subject Matter Experts to Assist in Training Development

FAI is seeking volunteer subject matter experts (SMEs) to collaborate in the development of training for the federal acquisition workforce community.

Initially, FAI needs SMEs from the contracting, contracting officer's representative (COR) and program/project management (P/PM) workforce community. This activity entails reviewing interim and draft training material, and/or participating in course review student sessions. SMEs may participate in these activities through meetings, phone consultation, and individual document reviews - depending on the task, virtual participation is possible, and welcomed.

SMEs may be asked to assist with activities such as:

- Helping to establish training needs and objectives
- Providing important context for key requirements and tasks
- Providing insight into how professionals use resources to

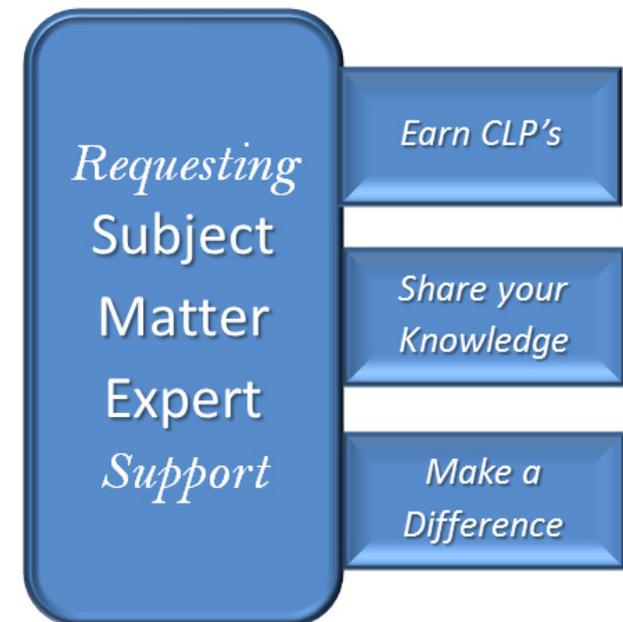
do their jobs

- Pointing training developers to information and resources
- Providing information on processes, procedures and content
- Describing realistic job scenarios and case studies
- Providing realistic examples and experiences to enforce learning

As part of FAI's SME Program, we ask all candidates to complete the SME Recruitment Form, which will be posted on [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov) and once completed, return it to [contact@fai.gov](mailto:contact@fai.gov). This will allow us to enter you into our pool of potential SMEs, and then to match you up with a particular activity that needs a SME and fits your preferred level of commitment. When we determine a potential match, we will contact you with a Letter of Engagement detailing exactly what the commitment would entail, including the activities needed, the estimated amount of time those activities will take you, and the amount of continuous learning points (CLPs) you can obtain by completing the activity. This will allow you and your supervisor to make a decision regarding whether or not you are available to participate as a SME for a particular initiative. If you decide not to participate in a particular activity, you will still

be considered as a SME for future projects, unless you tell us that you would like to be removed from our SME pool.

We look forward to learning more about you and working together!



# HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

## FY13 Acquisition Human Capital Plans

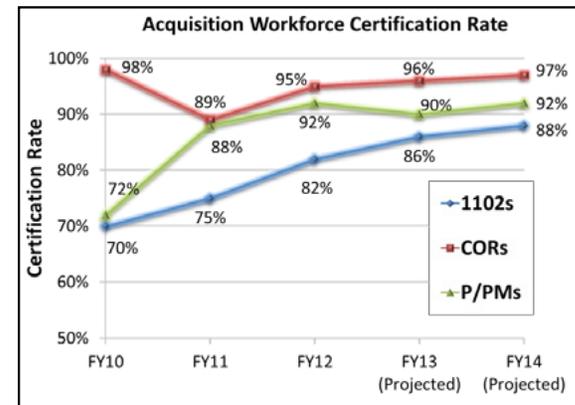
Many thanks to the Agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) for submitting their FY2013 Acquisition Human Capital Plans (AHCP) as well as to all that supported this collaborative intra-agency effort - job well done! FAI appreciates the responsiveness of the Acquisition ACMs and also wants to recognize the Department of Homeland Security for submitting their report two weeks early!

The President's [March 4, 2009 Memorandum on Government Contracting](#) identified acquisition workforce development as a pillar for strengthened agency acquisition practices and improved government performance. Successful acquisition outcomes are a direct result of having the right personnel develop, manage, and oversee agency acquisitions in accordance with sound acquisition management principles. Since FY2010, the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act agencies have developed and updated their annual AHCP as a roadmap to strengthening the capacity and capability of each segment of its acquisition workforce - contracting professionals, Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), and Project and Program Managers (P/PMs), and others who contribute substantially to successful acquisition outcomes.

One metric that we use to assess the capability of the Acquisition workforce is the percentage of members with Federal Acquisition Certifications (FAC). FAC training along with education and experience requirements are the three critical components that shape a capable acquisition workforce professional. As shown to the right, the FY2013 AHCPs revealed that the CFO Act agencies increased their certification rates from FY2011 to FY2012 in each FAC career field. This is an indication that sharing training opportunities across the agencies optimizes resources and increases efficiencies.

Another strategy that has boosted certification rates is the increased use of FAITAS. There are now over 125,700 Acquisition members registered in FAITAS, and the number continues to grow each month. If you are a member of the

acquisition workforce and have not registered in FAITAS, you can do so [here](#). By registering in FAITAS, you'll be able to track your certification requirements, register for upcoming training opportunities, and manage your career progression as an acquisition workforce member.



The FY2013 AHCPs revealed that the federal acquisition community faces some common challenges in the coming years. Agencies must continue to provide cost-effective training and development opportunities under increasing budget constraints. In response, some agencies are implementing innovative strategies for coupling classroom training with lower-cost learning programs, such as mentoring and knowledge sharing. Also, agencies are facing projected declines in their mid-level and senior-level acquisition workforce populations. The Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC) has been meeting regularly to address these common challenges and recently participated an annual planning meeting to share best practices and identify government-wide solutions.

To learn more about your agency's AHCP to strengthen and support your acquisition workforce, contact [your agency's ACM](#).

# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS)

### Who is using FAITAS?

FAITAS is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the acquisition workforce. Since the launch of FAITAS v.2, not only can users register for training, but they can apply for certifications, track their continuous learning points and request renewal of the current certifications. With the enhanced FAITAS functionalities, agencies are discovering the time-saving efficiencies that FAITAS provides. The Small Agency Council, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Department of Labor, and Department of Transportation have recently activated the Continuous Learning Module for their agencies.

Additionally, agencies are discovering that FAITAS can meet another need, registration for their agency's training. Currently, 5 agencies use FAITAS for their class registration, and 3 additional agencies will soon join the ranks.

This chart shows agency usage of FAITAS.

FAITAS		FEDERAL ACQUISITION INSTITUTE TRAINING APPLICATION SYSTEM					
	CFO Act Agencies	Registration	Career Path Mgt	Certification	CL Module	B/A Tool License	Teaching Schools
1	Department of Agriculture (USDA)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Department of Commerce	✓	✓	✓		✓	
3	Department of Defense	✓					✓
4	Department of Education	✓	✓			✓	
5	Department of Energy	✓	✓			✓	✓
6	Department of Health and Human Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Department of Housing and Urban Development	✓	✓	✓		✓	
8	Department of the Interior	✓	✓			✓	<i>In process</i>
9	Department of Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Department of Labor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
11	Department of State	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12	Department of Transportation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Department of the Treasury	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
14	Department of Veterans Affairs	✓	✓			✓	
15	Agency for International Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16	Environmental Protection Agency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>In process</i>
17	Department of Homeland Security	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	General Services Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>In process</i>
19	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	✓	✓			✓	
20	National Science Foundation	✓	✓			✓	
21	Nuclear Regulatory Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	Office of Personnel Management	✓	✓			✓	
23	Small Business Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
24	Social Security Administration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Small Agency Council (six Super ACMs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

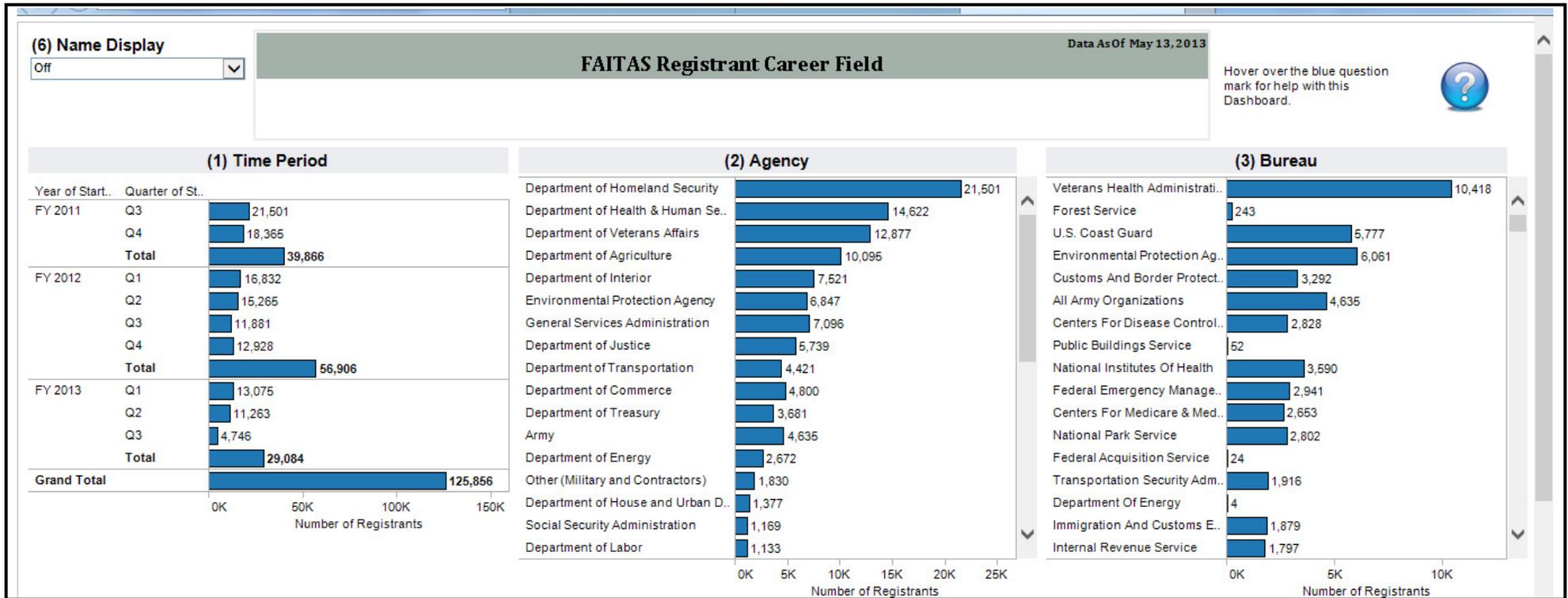
# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS)

### Using the FAITAS Business Analytics Tool (BAT)

With over 124,000 folks using FAITAS, there is now more data than ever before available to leadership to make well informed decisions. The BAT provides OFPP, FAI staff and licensed agency users high level dashboards that can be sorted, filtered, and exported based on the users' data needs.

With several computer clicks, leadership now can review valuable information such as FAITAS registration by career fields, course registration and class seat execution. This information can be filtered by time periods, bureaus within agencies, even down to name and physical location of the employee as seen below. FAI understands the growing need for data analytics and will be introducing two new dashboards in the upcoming months.



# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## FAI.gov Update

### Newsletter Readers Boost FAI.gov's Popularity



**John P. Varghese**  
Chief FAI Technology  
Manager

We were thrilled with the reception of FAI.gov when it first launched in early 2012. We are very pleased to see a continued escalation of its popularity. Our goal with the site is to serve as a one-stop-shop for federal acquisition workforce resources and tool to support the acquisition workforce community. In the first half of 2013, we have already received over 115,000 visitors and over one million page views. On the day of the launch of the FAI Newsletter - Spring Edition, the site received more visitors than ever before. We strive to deliver, enhance or increase the tools and capabilities we offer, so please take a minute to share your suggestions and comments about our FAI.gov website by completing the [FAI.gov Feedback Form](#).

### Department of Energy Training Needs Assessment



The Department of Energy (DOE) partnered with FAI to conduct a Training Needs Assessment for their acquisition workforce members. The assessment survey was conducted through FAI's state-of-the-art survey tool on [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov). The survey enabled acquisition members to guide how DOE budgets and allocates FY14 and FY15 training and development resources. The FAI support team performed survey data analytics that enhanced the response rate and usability of the results. We received 1,340 responses! The survey results have proven to be very valuable in helping DOE to better meet the training and professional development needs of its entire acquisition workforce.

### Be FAI's Friend

FAI delivers the announcements you need and in the way you want. If you prefer instant access to information on all of your mobile devices, then follow us on twitter and be our friend on Facebook. Click on the Twitter and Facebook graphics to stay connected to FAI.



# ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Getting to Know Debbie Hahn, Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), Social Security Administration

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### 1. How long have you worked at the Social Security Administration (SSA)?

Almost 38 years.

### 2. Where were you before coming to the SSA?

I started working at SSA 5 months after graduating from high school in November 1975. Prior to that, I did title work for an attorney while attending school.

### 3. Tell us about one of your biggest successes achieved by your team.

We are most proud of the rigorous training and development of our agency's acquisition workforce under all three Governmentwide certification programs. We are very fortunate to have upper management that recognizes the importance of increasing the capability of our acquisition workforce. They understand the value of investing critical resources in the training and development of this staff for quality improvement. Because of this ongoing support, we are able to schedule competency-based training for every segment of the acquisition workforce on a regular basis. We are closing knowledge gaps identified in the Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey and are able to meet the goals we established in the agency's Acquisition Human Capital Plan. Additionally, our increased use of FAITAS allowed us to streamline our certification process to reduce the processing times of various aspects of each certification program.

### 4. What is the biggest challenge in your position?

As an ACM, the biggest challenge my team has is maintaining the integrity of all three Federal Acquisition Certification Programs. We perform numerous outreach activities to the acquisition workforce and provide as much information to them as possible about their role in the acquisition process. We strive for consistency in the application of agency and FAI policies and procedures and take every opportunity to get involved with the workforce to ensure their understanding of what they must do to achieve and maintain certain levels of

training and experience. As with many other ACMs, this is a collateral duty for me and it is an ongoing effort to devote adequate time to these critical programs when other priorities are competing for my time. Doing more with less while maintaining the highest standard is very hard in today's environment with limited funding and staffing.

### 5. What motivates you to put your best foot forward on a daily basis?

Many people depend on me to do my job. I have a responsibility to those that depend upon me to be. I feel that people are relying upon my support and guidance and I don't want to let them down. I have always led by example and worked hard at whatever I do. I really don't need any outside motivation to work hard or do what is right. I have a strong sense of responsibility as a public servant and work hard to support the mission of our agency.

### 6. What skills do you think are most critical to successfully perform your job?

Interpersonal skills, decision-making, and flexibility come to mind as critical skills of an ACM. I deal with a diverse group of individuals on a daily basis and my ability to get along with others while getting the job done is crucial. The ability to listen and see things from someone else's perspective enables me to collaborate across component lines and reduce or eliminate communication barriers in order to achieve a common goal.



**Debbie Hahn,  
Social Security  
Administration**

# ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Getting to Know Debbie Hahn, Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), Social Security Administration

### 7. What could the FAI Team do to move the federal acquisition workforce forward?

I think FAI's role in the Federal acquisition community has grown significantly since I first became involved in the early 80s. Donna Jenkins has taken FAI to new heights since becoming the Director. She is totally involved and understands what challenges agencies face when it comes to recruitment and retention; training and development; and overall improvement of the acquisition workforce. I think FAI is doing everything necessary to support the needs of the current acquisition workforce and keeps agencies involved in the strategic planning for the acquisition workforce of the future.

### 8. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow acquisition career manager?

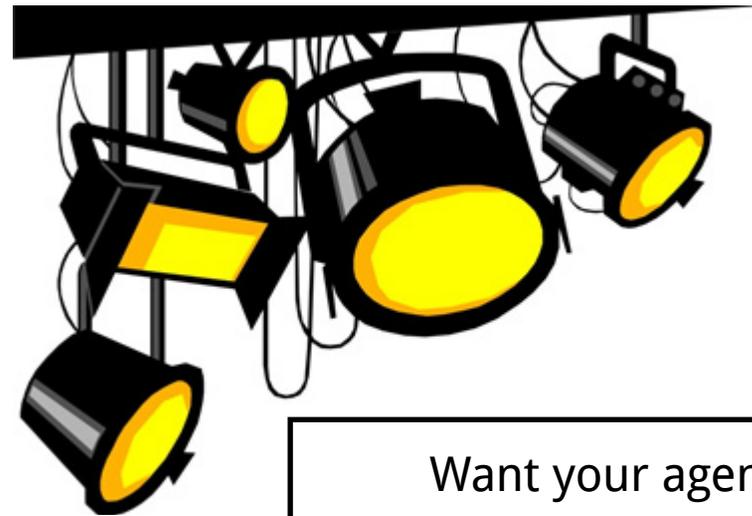
Keep collaborating! I believe the collaborative effort of the ACMs is exceptional. We have come to rely on each other for advice, examples of best practices, sharing resources, and working together to provide the best training and development possible for our respective workforces. We need to continue working together to strengthen the acquisition workforce and devise new and innovative ways to achieve our goals in an environment of limited funding and staffing.

### 9. What is a goal you have for your acquisition workforce?

One of my goals is to maintain continued emphasis on the importance of providing high quality competency-based training for all segments of the acquisition workforce.

### 10. What is something about yourself that others might not know?

Although I spend a great deal of time at the beach, I haven't been in the ocean since seeing JAWS in 1975! And, ironically, it is one of my favorite movies of all time. Go figure!



Want your agency's  
Acquisition Career Manager  
to be the star of an  
upcoming Edition of ACM in  
the Spotlight?  
E-mail your nomination to  
[contact@fai.gov](mailto:contact@fai.gov).

# WORKFORCE RESOURCES

## Student Support

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

[List of ACMs](#)

[FAI.gov](#)

[FAI Help Desk](#)

[DAU.mil](#)

