



Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve
Performance, Drive Innovation, and Increase Savings



MEMORANDUM FOR ANNE RUNG
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SUBJECT: Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to
Improve Performance, Drive Innovation, and Increase Savings

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) are the leading organizations for developing the federal acquisition workforce which, for the contracting professional series alone, numbers over 35,000 employees. The entire federal acquisition workforce including contracting, project and program managers, Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs)¹ and other related acquisition disciplines is estimated to be about 250,000. FAI and DAU work collaboratively together and with other agencies, academia, and industry to leverage capabilities to stretch limited training resources that contribute to the development of an acquisition workforce capable of executing a better and more effective and efficient acquisition system.

As requested in your December 4, 2014 memorandum entitled, "Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve Performance, Drive Innovation, and Increase Savings," the General Services Administration (through FAI) and the Department of Defense (DoD) (through DAU) are pleased to submit this response in support of your goal to develop and deploy talent and tools across agencies and growing talent within agencies to drive innovation.

¹ DoD does not include CORs in its acquisition workforce number.

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This proposal also represents needs identified by FAI’s Board of Directors and other stakeholders and is organized by the below table to reflect initiatives already underway, those planned for FY ’16, and those with longer term timeframes.

1) Develop training and tools for the federal acquisition workforce to build capability to use agile approaches to technology acquisitions that facilitate continual customer testing of creative contractor ideas	
Currently Underway	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Just-in-Time Tools – Finalize and promote the use of an interactive Contracting Professional Smart Guide and a Program Manager Desk Guide. Better promote the benefits of using the Government-owned Automated Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT) to facilitate the development of better and more defined service contracting requirements. b. Back-to-Basics Series – Utilize existing learning assets where available to develop a back-to-basics suite of training that is grounded in lean principles and that promotes the agile practices already permitted by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). c. Core Plus IT Tracks: Digital Services Specialization - Leverage elements of the Digital Services Contracting Professional Training and Development Program pilot and the Digital IT Acquisition Professional (DITAP) Community of Digital Learning to scale and deploy digital service specialization under the existing Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) and DAWIA contracting certifications. Utilize existing learning assets where available to develop a digital services training track for other agency stakeholders. 	
Planned for FY '16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training Inventory - An inventory of existing acquisition training available throughout the government is necessary in order to understand what’s available and what gaps or duplication exists. DAU and FAI plan to work together on this task, along with help from the Federal Acquisition Council on Training Executive Steering Board (FACT ESB). b. FITARA - Align Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) requirements with existing curriculum; DAU completion dependent on DoD incorporation of FITARA into policy. c. Leverage Public Domain Content - Assess and leverage public domain content (e.g., YouTube videos, presentations, podcasts, etc.) and make available to the federal acquisition workforce on topics such as innovation, digital services, flexibility, customer service, and critical thinking/problem solving to take advantage of industry best practices and lower training development and delivery costs. 	
FY '17 & Beyond	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Additional Specialty Tracks (FAI): Design and implement specialty certification tracks in areas, such as IT, leasing, services, and architect-engineering and construction. 	

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2) Provide a joint plan to promote new and innovative approaches to workforce development and training, including cross-functional training, rotational development and assignments, and effective training and education used by the private sector.	
Currently Underway	
<p>a. Cross-Agency Collaboration - Leverage the FACT Executive Steering Board (ESB) to address government-wide acquisition workforce challenges, identify opportunities for cross-government acquisition training collaboration, reduce redundancy/duplicative efforts, and standardize how the Federal Government is collecting and analyzing training effectiveness data.</p> <p>b. FAI will coordinate and leverage best practices gleaned from following DAU initiatives into FAI model, where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AWQI (DAU): Working with USD (AT&L), support and promote Acquisition Workforce Qualification Initiative (AWQI) as an on-the-job development guide and standard. • Cross-Functional Key Leader Development Pilot (DAU): Continue pilot with the Missile Defense Agency as proof of concept for mixed functional cohort development. • Cross Functional Team Training (DAU): Update and refine cross-functional ACQ-405, Executive Refresher Course, and ACQ-451, Integrated Acquisition for Decision Makers, to meet classroom training needs of cross-functional workforce leaders at GS-15 level. • Education with Industry (DAU): Military services currently have rotational opportunities with industry. DAU encourages industry participation in classroom courses as students and guest speakers to provide government students, who may not be able to do rotational assignments, with deeper industry perspectives. 	
Planned for FY '16	
<p>a. Cross-Functional Training – Partner with FACT ESB members and other acquisition teaching schools to pilot courses as elective and/or continuous learning offerings that include the opportunity for interagency sharing and for bringing the entire acquisition team (contracting, program, finance, industry, legal, and others) to learn together.</p> <p>b. Incentives and Recognition Program - Determine the feasibility for a “badges” program to recognize and incentivize the acquisition workforce and to demonstrate depth and breadth of specialized experience needed to obtain and maintain necessary acquisition certifications. DAU will work with Functional Leaders and FIPs to explore badging in various career fields, including Contracting.</p>	

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<p>2) Provide a joint plan to promote new and innovative approaches to workforce development and training, including cross-functional training, rotational development and assignments, and effective training and education used by the private sector. (Continued)</p>	
<p>Planned for FY '16 (Continued)</p>	
<p>c. Identify Skills Gaps - Establish a process to gain better insight and visibility into acquisition workforce competency proficiency levels and gaps to baseline our "as-is" state and to inform future training resource investment decisions and curriculum continuous improvement efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue FAI biennial Acquisition Workforce Competency Self- Assessment Survey • Pilot objective assessment instrument with select agencies 	
<p>FY 17 & Beyond</p>	
<p>a. Flipped Classroom - Evaluate the “flipped classroom” model that reverses typical classroom training by delivering instructional content online prior to having students engage in more meaningful discussion of the concepts in the classroom. This strategy is currently being explored in DAU’s alternate delivery IPT for incorporation in future course offerings.</p> <p>b. Certification Experience Requirements - Build on DoD’s review of and solicit civilian agency input of current FAC certification experience requirements to determine if adjustments are necessary. Present findings and recommendation to OFPP Administrator for any possible adjustments and associated implementation plan, as applicable.</p> <p>c. Career Paths - FAI: In collaboration with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), continue building career paths (complete, validate, and publish) for Contract Specialists (1102s). Build out the career development continuum from the entry level, to the Contracting Officer, the Contracting Manager, and the Contracting Leader roles as part of the Federal acquisition workforce succession planning strategy.</p> <p>d. Rotational Development and Assignments – Develop a best practice guide for setting up an inter/intra-agency rotational assignment program</p> <p>e. Exchange Program - Design and promote an education exchange program between Government and industry that leverages best practices of public and private sector rotational programs. Participants will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other’s roles, responsibilities, and challenges to enable a more efficient and effective acquisition system.</p>	