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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS  
SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVES  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS  
CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM:

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Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT:

Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan  
for Civilian Agencies – FY 2010-2014

The President's March 4, 2009, Memorandum on Government Contracting identifies acquisition workforce development as a pillar for strengthened agency acquisition practices and improved government performance. The Federal government acquires over \$500 billion of goods and services annually to support a wide variety of missions and depends on highly-skilled acquisition professionals to deliver the best value to the taxpayer. As required by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2009, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) has developed the attached Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan to guide the growth in capacity and capability of the civilian agency acquisition workforce over the next five years.<sup>1</sup>

Although agencies are already required to provide input regarding the acquisition workforce to the agency's human capital strategic plan,<sup>2</sup> this planning has often been conducted as a tactical exercise addressing short-term human capital needs. Many agencies concentrate on filling vacancies in the contracting community rather than developing longer-term growth and succession plans for the broader acquisition workforce, including program managers and contracting officer technical representatives. While the Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) programs have brought structure to training and development and new recruiting initiatives have made it easier to find and apply for federal acquisition jobs, the overall growth and development of the civilian agency acquisition workforce has remained largely unguided.

The attached Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan for FYs 2010-2014 provides a structured approach to improve both the capacity and capability of the civilian acquisition workforce. Specifically, the Plan establishes:

- 1) the need for workforce growth;
- 2) a comprehensive annual workforce planning process to be managed by OFPP, in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), through FY 2014;

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<sup>1</sup> See section 869 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2009 (P.L. 110-417).

<sup>2</sup> See OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*.

- 3) a blueprint for increasing the use of intern programs and other training and development initiatives; and
- 4) a five-year action plan to improve workforce development efforts and the workforce management infrastructure.

For human capital planning to be successful, it must be an integral part of each agency's strategic planning process and reflect the unique and dynamic nature of that organization. Agencies must consider, among other things, specific mission objectives, high-priority performance goals, and the variety and complexity of an agency's acquisition practices.

Using the information and guidance in the attached Plan, each civilian agency covered by the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act shall develop an annual Acquisition Human Capital Plan that identifies specific strategies and goals for increasing both the capacity and capability of the workforce for the period ending in FY 2014.

The agency's plan shall be submitted to OFPP by March 31, 2010, and annually thereafter, and will reflect specific hiring and training needs for FY 2011 and serve as a component of the agency's budget preparation beginning with the FY 2012 budget cycle. OFPP will review these plans and work with agencies to measure progress in meeting these goals. Additionally, OFPP will work with agencies to measure certification rates for all FAC programs beginning in FY 2010 and assess improvements regularly. Agencies not covered by the CFO Act are encouraged to use the attached information and considerations in their planning processes.

Refinements to this process and the strategies for assessing and improving the workforce's capacity and capability will be considered as agencies gain experience. OFPP will issue additional guidance, as necessary, to support annual planning activities. Please contact Karen Pica (tel: 202-395-3302; e-mail: [kpica@omb.eop.gov](mailto:kpica@omb.eop.gov)) if you have questions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Attachment



# Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2010-2014

*A Framework for Enhancing the Capacity and Capability  
of the  
Civilian Agency Acquisition Workforce*

*October 2009*

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## Introduction

Successful acquisition outcomes are a direct result of having the right personnel supporting the acquisition lifecycle. The government needs talented and trained individuals who can develop, manage, and oversee acquisitions in accordance with sound acquisition management principles. According to the 2008 Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) Annual Report on the Federal Acquisition Workforce, nearly 10,000 contracting professionals and tens of thousands of other acquisition professionals, including program and project managers and contracting officer technical representatives, supported \$138 billion in civilian agency contracting in FY 2008. The inflation-adjusted dollar value of civilian agency contracting increased by 56 percent between FY 2000 and FY 2008, but the capability and capacity of the federal acquisition workforce has not kept pace with the increase in spending, the number of actions, or the complexity of federal purchases.

As a result of this, FAI's 2008 Acquisition Workforce Competencies Survey found that the acquisition workforce spends less time on critical steps in the acquisition process— such as planning, requirements development, market research, competition, and contract administration. This lack of capacity requires the workforce to make tradeoffs during the acquisition lifecycle that may reduce the chance of successful acquisition outcomes. For example, with little time to plan, requirements may be less defined, which promotes the use of cost-type contracts. As another example, competition may be reduced because of the need to award quickly.

This Plan sets a strategic framework to increase the capability and capacity of the civilian agency acquisition workforce over the next five years. Growth and development of this workforce, which includes those individuals who contribute substantially to successful acquisition outcomes, such as contract specialists, program/project managers (P/PMs), and contracting officer technical representatives (COTRs), will improve overall agency performance.

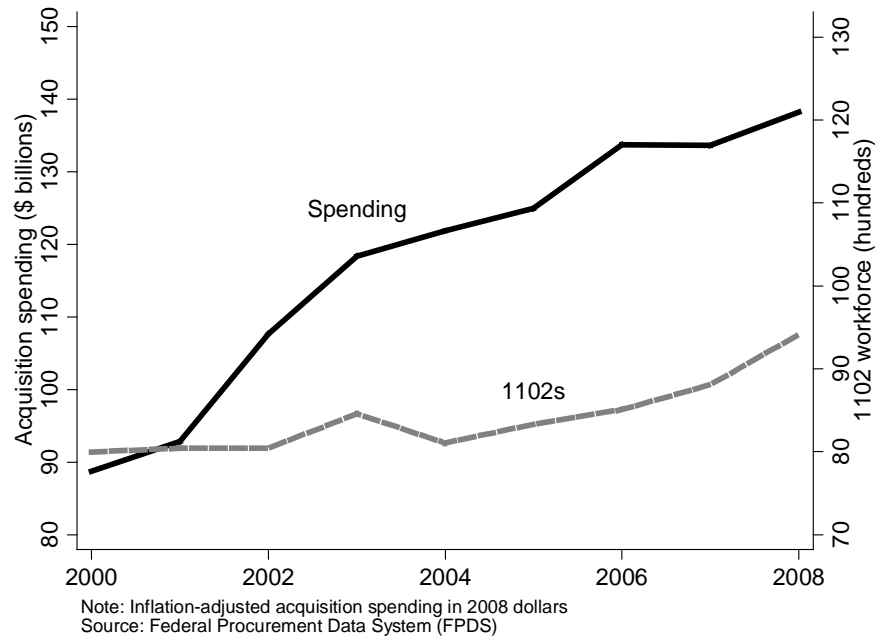
### **I. The Case for Growth and Planning**

The nature of government contracting has changed in recent decades and the federal government's investment in the acquisition workforce has not kept pace. Since FY2000, acquisition spending has increased by 56 percent while the contract specialist (GS-1102) segment of the acquisition workforce increased only half that much. Contract actions have also increased significantly over this period.

#### *Spending and Workforce Trends*

Between FY2000 and FY2008, acquisition spending by civilian agencies expanded by 56 percent, from \$80 billion to \$138 billion (in inflation-adjusted dollars). Over this same time period, the number of contract specialists (GS-1102s, the only segment of the acquisition workforce for which historically consistent data are available) grew by only 24 percent from 7,995 to 9,921 (see figure below). In contrast, both acquisition spending and the number of contract specialists in civilian agencies were little changed during the previous decade.

## Civilian Agency Acquisition Spending vs. Workforce Growth

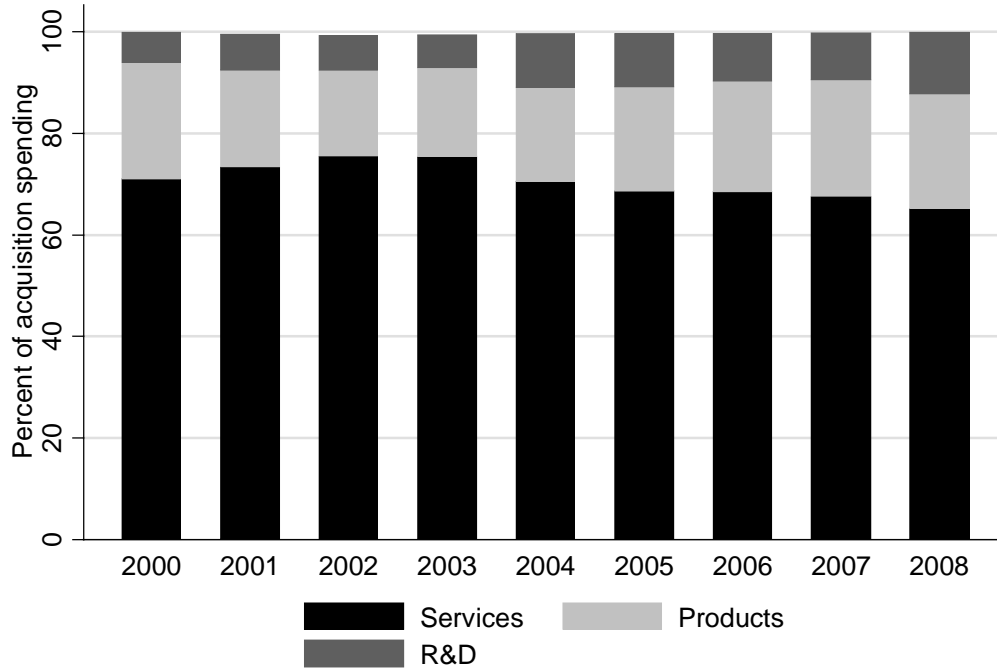


### *Changes in the Profile of Acquisition Activity*

Federal agencies acquire a wide variety of goods and services to support the achievement of program goals. As the spending and actions have increased over time, there has been an evolution in the types of contracts used to acquire the variety of goods and services needed by the agencies. The appropriate capacity and capability of an agency's acquisition workforce depend on the "what and how" of acquisition.

For example, the acquisition of research and development (R&D) and other services necessitates a different mix of skills and workforce focus than the acquisition of products. The figure below shows that spending on R&D has grown relatively more rapidly than spending in general services. Between FY2000 and FY2008, R&D's share of contract spending increased from 6 percent to 12 percent, while the share spent on other services fell from 72 percent to 65 percent. Acquisition of products has remained relatively stable at 23 percent over this period.

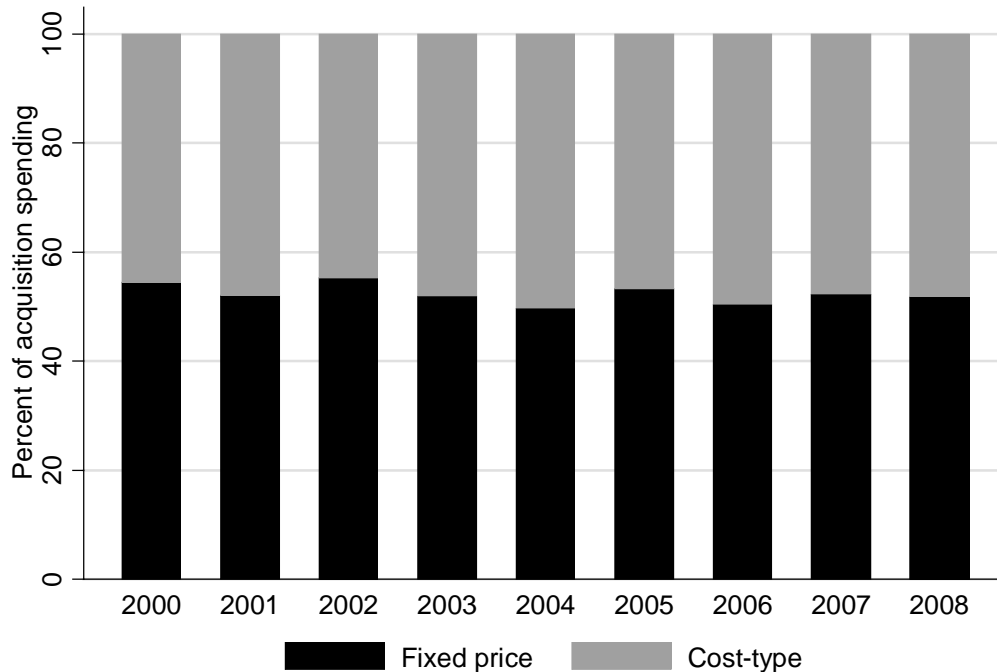
### Civilian Agency Share of Spending by Contract Category



Source: Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)

The changes in acquisition activity reflect changes not only in “what” is acquired but also “how” agencies are doing the acquisition. Both are essential components to be considered in human capital planning. For example, some types of R&D spending may best be managed via cost-type contracts, which increase the risk to the government. The acquisition workforce needed to manage these may require, in addition to core acquisition skills, advanced expertise in competencies such as cost analysis and market awareness to mitigate risk while achieving results. Agencies using fixed-price arrangements to acquire services, such as call centers or security services, may require a workforce with greater focus on building clear requirements and performance measures. The figure below indicates that the split between cost-type and fixed price spending has remained roughly constant over the past decade.

### Civilian Agency Share of Spending by Contract Type



Source: Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)

As described above, the demands on the critical federal acquisition workforce have grown substantially while growth in the workforce has not kept pace. This increased workload leaves less time for effective planning and contract administration which can lead to diminished acquisition outcomes. Advanced planning is necessary to develop clear requirements and performance measures that are used in the pre-award phase to determine competition and negotiation strategies and in the post-award phase for managing the contract and making appropriate award and incentive fee decisions.

However, the current acquisition environment does not afford the workforce adequate time for these and other functions (FAI, 2009). FAI indicated in its report on the 2008 Competencies Survey that the acquisition workforce was spending less time on critical steps in the acquisition process. The lack of capacity to effectively define requirements and plan an acquisition often results in the unnecessary use of cost-type or non-competitive contracts. Consequently, the risk of the government paying more than necessary increases (MSPB, 2005). Furthermore, faced with under-capacity, agencies, in some cases, resort to contracting out the traditional duties of the acquisition workforce, which can diminish the agency's core acquisition capabilities. Another challenge facing the acquisition comes from the aging of the workforce. Slightly more than half of the acquisition workforce will be eligible to retire between now and FY2018 (FAI, 2009a).



### *Better Human Capital Planning is Needed*

GAO and MSPB agree that better workforce planning is needed to improve acquisition (GAO, 2002, 2007, 2009, MSPB, 2005). However, the processes are not in place in Federal agencies to support strategic human capital planning for the acquisition workforce. GAO reported in 2002 and 2007 that the inherent challenges in identifying the size and skills of a workforce to meet changing program needs results in agencies taking an incremental, budget-driven approach to acquisition workforce planning rather than a strategic approach based on agency performance goals and desired outcomes. Others claim that the training, recruitment and retention of these managers remains a low priority (Brown, Potoski, & VanSlyke, 2006; Gansler, 2007).

The need for planning extends beyond the traditional contracting workforce to COTRs and P/PMs, who provide critical support throughout the acquisition process. For example, in 2005, the MSPB found that COTRs are critical to the contract administration process and that their workforce needs must be considered. In addition, GAO found that millions of taxpayer dollars can be lost when performance management information is not available for consideration by the COTR or the program manager in determining contractor performance awards or incentives (GAO, 2009a).

In sum, the information and analysis presented above confirms that agencies must take affirmative steps to grow the size and skills of the workforce so as to ensure that acquisitions are awarded and managed in the government's best interest.

## **II. Foundation for Workforce Growth – Building Capacity**

The analysis presented above indicates that adding capacity to the federal acquisition workforce will improve acquisition outcomes. However, agency acquisition needs vary and will evolve over time. For example, increases in spending due to the Recovery Act, changes in the way programs are executed from grants to contracts, or the assumption of new agency responsibilities can change acquisition workforce requirements. Recognizing the inherent difficulty in projecting macro-level acquisition workforce needs, OFPP analyzed existing FPDS data, studied workforce demographic and competency data provided by FAI and OPM, reviewed various projection methodologies, and interviewed agency acquisition career managers. The analysis led us to conclude that an increase in the acquisition workforce of at least 5 percent, except in unusual circumstances where analysis shows it not to be required, is needed at all civilian agencies.

On November 2, 2009, agencies will be submitting plans for strengthening their acquisition workforce as part of the acquisition savings plans required under OMB's guidance, *Improving Government Acquisition*, M-09-25. As part of the FY2011 budget process, OMB will consider the strength of these acquisition savings plans and the related acquisition workforce information and will evaluate the associated budgetary needs and sustainable funding mechanisms.

### III. Strategic Human Capital Planning and Considerations

Successful acquisition outcomes are a direct result of having people with the right skills supporting the acquisition function. During the critical planning phase, the government depends on skilled acquisition and program personnel to:

- conduct thorough market research so that competition is maximized, independent cost estimates are accurate, and small business opportunities are promoted;
- describe clear requirements so that vendors' prices and technical approaches accurately reflect the work to be done – no more, no less; and
- establish discrete performance metrics so that contractors understand how they will be evaluated and paid, such as in performance-based acquisitions or incentive-type contracts.

Different skills are needed for the development of various acquisition approaches. For example, fixed-price contracts require more planning up front while the contract administration phase of such contracts is generally less complex. In contrast, cost-type contracts require a broad range of skills throughout the acquisition lifecycle including, but not limited to: finance, accounting, cost and price analysis, industrial engineering, and program management. Skilled and experienced pricing specialists are especially needed to project costs and help contracting officers determine if offered prices are fair and reasonable.

After award, functional experts with training and experience in earned value management and other performance management techniques are needed to:

- evaluate if the contractor is meeting its cost, schedule, and performance goals,
- identify early corrective measures, or
- recommend termination if contracts are not meeting the government's needs.

#### a. Annual Strategic Human Capital Planning

Agency efforts in acquisition workforce planning vary significantly. Currently, the only common planning effort is the annual reporting requirement for the contract specialist occupation submitted to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for their Human Capital Management Report.

Although agency Chief Acquisition Officers have workforce planning responsibilities under OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, these efforts remain largely unstructured and uncoordinated across agencies. To support a more comprehensive planning framework that addresses the general changes in acquisition described earlier and responds to agency-specific needs, OFPP will lead a robust annual workforce planning process, in consultation with OPM and others as necessary.

The agency’s Acquisition Human Capital Plan (AHCP) plan shall be submitted to OFPP by March 31, 2010, and annually thereafter, and will reflect specific hiring and training needs and serve as a component of the agency’s budget preparation beginning with the FY 2012 budget cycle. The plan will address the growth and development needs of entry, mid, and senior level members of the acquisition workforce – contract specialists, P/PMs, COTRs, and others who contribute substantially to successful acquisition outcomes – and should be developed in consultation with other agency officials, as described below, using the strategic considerations outlined in section c.

Specifically, agencies will develop their target acquisition workforce profile and compare this to their current workforce profile to determine gaps in capacity and capability. In doing so, agencies shall establish recruitment goals, retention targets, and certification goals. The plan shall also address training and development needs and other operational goals such as starting an intern program, increasing the number of re-employed annuitants, gaining experience with direct hire authority, and expanding rotational assignments. OFPP will review these plans and work with agencies to establish baselines and measure progress in meeting their goals.

While general guidance is provided here, OFPP will work with the Chief Acquisition Council Human Capital Working Group (CAOC HCWG) to develop a template that will be available to agencies through an acquisition workforce planning portal on [www.FAI.gov](http://www.FAI.gov) and other appropriate websites. Projection methodologies and other information to help agencies in their planning efforts will be available on the site, and OFPP and FAI will host monthly planning meetings to help agencies prepare for the first submission in March 2010.

**b. Roles and Responsibilities**

Successful workforce planning and implementation should involve significant and meaningful collaboration among agency leaders and across agencies. Agencies often focus on filling vacancies or reacting to short-term workforce needs and do not always identify strategies that support long-term human capital growth. Chief Acquisition Officers must work with their Chief Human Capital Officers, Acquisition Career Managers, and Chief Financial Officers to plan for and resource growth in the capacity and capability of the acquisition workforce. This shared responsibility involves key senior leaders taking specific actions supported by OFPP and FAI:

	General Roles & Responsibilities	AHCP Roles & Responsibilities
Office of Management & Budget Office of Federal Procurement Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the activities of the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), which advises the OFPP Administrator on acquisition workforce issues.</li> <li>• Establish qualification requirements for key acquisition positions.</li> <li>• Direct the activities of the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) to support development of a professional acquisition workforce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue guidance as necessary to support agency workforce planning.</li> <li>• Provide a governance structure for implementing solutions.</li> <li>• Review and measure agency progress in meeting capacity and capability growth targets established in the AHCP.</li> </ul>
Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect and analyze workforce data and periodically analyze career fields to identify critical skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of training and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate implementation of strategic human capital initiatives identified in this Plan.</li> <li>• Collaborate with agencies in</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>career development programs for acquisition personnel.</li> <li>Facilitate development and assessment of interagency intern and training programs.</li> <li>Facilitate rotational assignments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing acquisition workforce recommendations for annual government-wide human capital initiatives.</li> <li>Assist OFPP with its AHCP roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Agency Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set the workforce development strategy of the agency and assess workforce characteristics and future needs based on agency mission and strategic plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead human capital planning activities of the agency and provide advice, recommendations, and solutions for the acquisition workforce.</li> <li>Integrate the AHCP into the agency human capital plan.</li> </ul>
Agency Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify strategies for appropriately resourcing the acquisition workforce to include recruiting, training, development, and other associated costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate the AHCP results into agency resource planning and budget preparation.</li> </ul>
Agency Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and maintain an acquisition career management program to ensure an adequate professional workforce.</li> <li>Assess adequacy of requirements for agency acquisition personnel and develop strategies and plans for hiring, training, and professional development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define and identify the agency's acquisition workforce in accordance with OFPP policies.</li> <li>Provide input into the agency's human capital strategic plan regarding the acquisition workforce.</li> </ul>
Agency Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the agency acquisition workforce in accordance with OFPP agency policies.</li> <li>Identify training requirements and other workforce development strategies.</li> <li>Implement and support federal acquisition certification programs,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead agency acquisition workforce initiatives.</li> <li>Conduct data driven analysis to support agency planning activities.</li> </ul>
Acquisition professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serve as leaders to facilitate success of program objectives that support agency missions and goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide input to the ACMs and others on changes needed to support career development and management at the agency.</li> </ul>

c. Strategic Considerations

The planning process described in this section requires that agencies go beyond identifying short-term hiring needs. For agencies to meet the complex challenges of the future and to operate more strategically and efficiently, steps must be taken to identify workforce needs in the context of the agencies' larger strategic goals. In preparing the AHCP, agencies must consider the challenges and goals of an agency and examine agency-specific data about the volume, variety, and complexity of acquisition spending. Additionally, to build a comprehensive plan, agencies shall also consider, at a minimum:

- the extent to which acquisition supports the agency's high-priority performance goals submitted to OMB;
- any changes needed to support the acquisition savings plans developed in accordance with OMB Memorandum 09-25 *Improving Government Acquisition*, and additional guidance on competition and contract type;

- the support needed to implement corrective action plans for high-risk areas as defined by the GAO, the Inspector General (IG), or other internal review;
- the support needed to award and manage Recovery Act actions;
- the results of program evaluations that indicate a need to improve cost, schedule, or performance outcomes;
- availability of acquisition personnel to build requirements, evaluate proposals, and effectively manage the assigned contracts with consideration for managing competition and effective management of contract type;
- the impact of any policy changes on acquisition such as changing the way agencies implement their programs from grants to contracts;
- the skills and competencies of the current workforce as determined by the recent FAI competency surveys or any similar review conducted by the agency;
- gap closure strategies to address development needs, attrition rates, or other workforce needs;
- strategies to address multi-sector workforce management in accordance with OMB Memorandum 09-26, *Managing the Multi-Sector Workforce*; and
- other strategic considerations unique to the agency.

d. Projection Methods

Because agency missions and acquisition activities differ considerably, there is no simple formula that can relate the size and composition of an agency's acquisition activity to its ideal workforce size. In developing a target acquisition workforce profile, agencies should examine their current acquisition management practices and determine where performance is hindered by insufficient resources. In particular, agencies should plan to increase the size of their acquisition workforce so long as the cost-savings and performance improvement benefits to taxpayers from better acquisition management exceed the cost of the additional acquisition employees. Additionally, FAI will develop and maintain an online toolkit for use by the agencies that will include various projection methodologies that agencies can use as part of their workforce analysis.

**IV. Training and Development – Building Capability**

The government needs talented and trained individuals who can develop, manage, and oversee acquisitions. Increasing the size of the workforce, while necessary, is not sufficient to improve acquisition outcomes; agencies must also focus on building the capabilities of the workforce.

OFPP analysis of the variety and complexity of civilian agency acquisitions, results of the recent acquisition workforce competencies surveys, and consultations with agency acquisition career managers and the CAOC HCWG identified a need to focus on three areas related to improving workforce capability:

- expanding the use of intern programs;
- improving the federal acquisition certification programs; and
- targeting training to workforce needs.

a. Expanding the Use of Intern Programs

Experience has shown that intern programs can be an effective recruitment and retention tool. Four civilian agencies, the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Veterans Affairs, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and Department of the Interior have developed their own specialized intern programs for their acquisition workforce professionals. In addition, the Department of the Interior offers a government wide intern program in which all agencies may participate. These programs all include formal training, rotations, on-the-job assignments, and mentoring. In an effort to identify the best approach to developing new acquisition professionals, OFPP established an interagency intern working group to make recommendations for this Plan on expanding the use of these programs.

This working group of experienced agency professionals recommended a mixed-model approach that recognizes the need to retain and build existing intern programs while also supporting a more structured approach for other agencies without intern programs and for mid-level career entrants whose development needs may be different. The recommendations include:

- expanding the current Federal Acquisition Intern Coalition; and
- leveraging existing programs by facilitating agency relationships.

*i. Expanding the Federal Acquisition Intern Coalition (FAIC)*

In 2008, OFPP launched the FAIC to provide a government-wide framework for increasing awareness of federal acquisition careers and facilitate government-wide recruiting and retention efforts. Based on recommendations from the FAIC and the interagency intern working group, OFPP will lead changes in the structure of this government-wide development environment to address solutions for recruiting and developing acquisition professionals throughout the life-cycle of their careers. Specifically, over the next five years, OFPP will:

1. rename and restructure the FAIC to address professionals at all career levels;
2. develop an annual plan for outreach and recruitment initiatives;
3. facilitate rotation assignments for new hires;
4. host community-building activities for new hires at all levels – mid, entry, and senior;
5. create a mid-level recruitment program, including a central registry, focused on attracting mid-level professionals and develop an expedited training program that recognizes the advanced skill level of these new recruits while providing Federal acquisition specific training; and
6. establish metrics for assessing agency workforce development programs.

*ii. Leveraging Existing Development Programs by Facilitating Agency Relationships*

Agencies with existing programs have significant experience and expertise in developing new acquisition professionals. Leveraging this experience – such as using DOI’s program in full or

partnering with another agency for rotational assignments – can greatly improve the value of an agency’s scarce training dollars. For example, if an agency decides to hire a large number of employees at one time, perhaps from a hiring fair or a targeted recruitment effort, it should consult early with DOI, one of the other agencies with intern programs, and the FAIC to determine whether is cost effective and/or feasible for the agency to begin its own new program, whether it would be more effective to leverage an existing program, or a combination of the two.

In developing their workforce plans, agencies are strongly encouraged to take advantage of other agency programs that are open to them and to participate in the FAIC. If agencies choose not to support development of their new hires through intern programs, their plans must include the steps they will take to provide their new hires with equivalent training and development opportunities. Agencies are also encouraged to participate in the FAIC, which will help leverage recruitment, training, and development resources through the interagency activities described above.

#### b. Improving the Federal Acquisition Certification Programs

To provide common standards and approaches to developing acquisition professionals across the civilian agencies, OFPP established the Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) programs for contracting professionals (FAC-C), program and project managers (FAC-P/PMs), and contracting officer technical representatives (FAC-COTR). The certifications provide the foundation and structure for training, development, and experience of the civilian agency acquisition workforce and improve mobility of employees across agencies. However, the FAC-C curriculum needs to be updated to more closely align with that of the Department of Defense (DOD) and current priorities, and the FAC-P/PM curricula needs to be better defined. The FAC-COTR is a binary certification that provides a common standard for all COTRs regardless of risk or complexity associated with the activity managed, which may no longer be the appropriate approach given the importance of the COTR in contract performance.

To better keep pace with the changing training needs of the community, OFPP will establish three functional advisory boards for each of the contracting, P/PM, and COTR communities under the direction of the CAOC HCWG. The CAOC HCWG will continue to be the overarching advisory group for acquisition workforce needs, but now will be supported by functional advisory boards comprising experienced acquisition professionals and led by senior agency managers who will advise OFPP and FAI on changes needed to improve the workforce, such as making changes to the competencies and curricula. For example, the functional advisory board for contracting might suggest changes to the core curriculum to emphasize a particular area, such as cost/price analysis. The functional board for program and project management might recommend additional competencies that need to be addressed through training.

In collaboration with these boards, OPM, the Department of Defense, and others, OFPP will:

- re-evaluate the FAC-COTR to develop recommendations for changing the existing policy from a binary approach to a more robust certification, such as a multi-tiered program similar to the FAC-C and FAC-P/PM, that recognizes the varying degrees of responsibility and complexity associated with the role of the COTR;

- seek agency recommendations for improving the structure and curricula associated with the FAC-P/PM; and,
- assess the FAC-C to identify curriculum changes necessary to retain parity with DOD’s curriculum and/or improve the ability of the contracting workforce to execute and manage agency acquisitions.

c. Targeting Training and Development to Workforce Needs

Obtaining core competencies can be satisfied in a number of ways. Two primary means are through training and rotational assignments, and these work together to provide core skills and reinforcement through experience. Since 2007, OFPP has been surveying acquisition professionals about their competencies (a summary of all the results and survey contents are available on <http://www.fai.gov/acm/2008compsurvey.asp>). These surveys suggest specific competencies where each of the different classes of acquisition professionals would benefit from additional development:

Acquisition Workforce Government-wide Competency Focus Areas

Contracting	Program/Project Managers	COTRs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance based acquisition (PBA)</li> <li>• Negotiations</li> <li>• Financial management</li> <li>• Defining requirements</li> <li>• Dispute resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracting</li> <li>• Business, cost estimating, financial management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Market research</li> <li>• Defining govt requirements in commercial/non-commercial terms</li> </ul>

*i. Increase FAI Training*

To address these and other needs in the contracting, P/PM, and COTR communities OFPP will collaborate with FAI and/or other federal training providers to provide the workforce with formal training opportunities that specifically address these gaps. In the next two years, FAI will continue the partnership with the DOD Defense Acquisition University to leverage resources and provide training for the acquisition workforce and:

- expand the current negotiations class to include more COTRs and offer more instances of this classroom course;
- provide training in defining requirements and use of performance-based acquisition, including using award and incentive fees;
- develop on-line tools and training that will increase acquisition workforce awareness of FAR changes that impact all functional areas – such as using the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS); and
- offer additional learning seminars, on-line courses, and other performance support tools to promote learning and performance in the areas listed above.



## *ii. Improve the use of Rotational Assignments*

Career development and retention strategies must include opportunities for professionals to learn new technical and interpersonal skills and apply skills learned in training to on-the-job experiences. Rotational assignments are an excellent way to do this. These informal learning opportunities are important in creating teams and building intra- and interagency networks to which professionals may turn when seeking advice or best practices. Similarly, viewing problems from multiple angles supports better solutions. The workforce recognizes the benefit of informal learning, but these opportunities are often offered only through intern programs.

To address this shortcoming and improve career development and retention of acquisition professionals, OFPP will work with FAI and the CAOC HCWG to:

- facilitate interagency rotation assignments through a central internet portal at [www.FAI.gov](http://www.FAI.gov) or other appropriate website that will provide a listing or rotation assignments, associated competency areas, geographic location of the assignment, and other information to provide more opportunities; and
- share guidelines with agencies on building and managing effective acquisition rotation programs across functional areas.

## **V. Improving the Workforce Management Infrastructure**

To build the capacity and capability addressed in this Plan, steps must be taken to improve the current workforce management infrastructure. Primary pillars of this infrastructure include, among other things, Functional Advisory Boards to keep curricula and development efforts current, skilled Acquisition Career Managers who have broad insight into an agency's needs, planning and management tools that are data-driven and timely, and resource strategies that consider a variety of options but are targeted to meeting the specific needs of the acquisition workforce.

### **a. Establishing Acquisition Workforce Functional Advisory Boards**

As noted above, OFPP will establish functional advisory boards for each of the contracting, P/PM, and COTR communities under the direction of the CAOC HCWG. The CAOC HCWG will continue to be the overarching advisory group for acquisition workforce needs, but will now be supported by functional advisory boards that will be comprised of experienced acquisition professionals in each of the segments of the workforce. These groups will be led by senior acquisition professional in the agencies and will provide advice, recommendations, and solutions focused on workforce improvements associated with their area of expertise. For example, the functional group responsible for recommending changes to contract specialist training might suggest changes to the core curriculum to emphasize a particular area, such as cost/price analysis, or an increase in the number of continuous learning hours to improve skills currency. The functional group responsible for program and project management might recommend the use

of new tools that can increase awareness of FAR changes to these individuals who may not read the FAR with the same frequency as contract specialists.

These boards parallel DOD's Functional Integrated Product Teams to provide a similar user-based approach to workforce management. The kinds of changes these functional advisory boards will pursue under this Plan are further discussed in section IV under certification programs.

b. Strengthening the Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) Role

In accordance with OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, the ACM in each agency is designated by the CAO and is responsible for managing the identification, development, and planning activities associated with the acquisition workforce. While each agency has identified an ACM, the responsibilities and authorities of this position vary across agencies. OFPP will work with the CAOC HCWG and the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC) to recommend changes to the OFPP Policy letter that will: 1) expand the duties of the acquisition career manager to improve workforce management at the agencies, and 2) establish skill and experience guidelines for new acquisition career managers. These changes and other, more tactical guidance will be included in an updated ACM guidebook that will better articulate the ACM role and strengthen the ACM function across agencies.

c. Providing More Workforce Planning and Management Tools

Long-term organizational success requires the use of data, analytical tools, and other resources. Existing workforce data reside in multiple systems, and agencies often have difficulty integrating the information to support acquisition workforce planning. For example, training registration systems may not provide needed information in ACMIS and acquisition workforce members often enter multiple systems to register for training, complete competencies surveys, record training data, or apply for certification. To leverage resources and avoid redundancy, FAI will provide agencies better tools for competency management, workforce data (to include certification information), and a workforce planning portal through which agencies may access a variety of workforce planning resources and tools. Specifically, FAI will:

1. conduct biennial surveys of workforce competencies in 2010 and 2012 for contract specialists, program managers, and COTRs;
2. integrate acquisition workforce data to improve access to training, certification, and other acquisition workforce information;
3. in collaboration with OPM, develop an identification mechanism through the central personnel data file (CPDF) that will use the OPM CPDF as the source for identifying members of the acquisition workforce; and
4. collaborate with agencies and OPM to make available projection methodologies that agencies can use, along with detailed analysis of current capacity and needs, to project future agency workforce personnel hiring requirements.

## **VI. Conclusion**

A well-equipped acquisition workforce is the backbone of the federal acquisition system. As acquisition spending and complexity grows, we must take affirmative steps towards a more strategic, more targeted human capital process that supports the lifecycle of our acquisitions – from planning, through execution, to performance management. The workforce analysis and strategic planning process outlined in this guidance will help build capacity and capability across the civilian agencies.

## References

## Appendix A

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**Acquisition Workforce Development Five-Year Action Plan**

<b>Strengthening Capacity and Capability – Action Plan FY10</b>		
<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Strategic Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new acquisition human capital planning and reporting to grow workforce capacity and capabilities (Q1)</li> <li>Agencies submit plans that include growth figures and incorporate into 2012 budgets (Q2 annually)</li> <li>Review plans and adjust government-wide planning efforts as needed(Q3 annually)</li> <li>Establish metrics for assessing agency workforce development efforts (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OFPP</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>OFPP, CAOC HCWG</li> <li>CAOC HCWG, OFPP</li> </ul>
Talent Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restructure the FAIC to expand use of intern programs (Q2)</li> <li>Provide new hires at all levels with community building &amp; learning activities (Q3 and ongoing)</li> <li>Develop &amp; implement annual outreach and recruitment plan that considers agency growth needs (Q4 annually)</li> <li>Launch mid-level recruitment effort (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAIC</li> <li>FAIC</li> <li>FAIC</li> <li>FAIC, agencies</li> </ul>
Training & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide training in negotiations (Q2)</li> <li>Develop and launch on-line tools to increase awareness of FAR changes for broad acquisition workforce (Q3 and ongoing)</li> <li>Develop training in use of award/incentive fees, requirements development (Q4 completion)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAI</li> <li>FAR Council/ FAI</li> <li>FAI</li> </ul>
Workforce Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch acquisition workforce planning portal (Q1)</li> <li>Provide agencies with template for AHCP (Q1)</li> <li>Establish and charter functional advisory boards (Q2)</li> <li>Assess FAC-certification programs and associated policies and training (Q2 ongoing)</li> <li>Conduct acquisition workforce competencies survey (Q2)</li> <li>Develop plan for workforce data management structure (Q3)</li> <li>Update the ACM guidebook (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAI</li> <li>OFPP</li> <li>OFPP</li> <li>Functional group</li> <li>FAI, agencies</li> <li>FAI</li> <li>FAI</li> </ul>

<b>Strengthening Capacity and Capability – Action Plan FY11</b>		
<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Strategic Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies submit acquisition human capital plans that include growth figures and incorporate into 2013 budget (Q2)</li> <li>Assess agency human capital efforts (Q3 annually)</li> <li>Begin workforce identification through CPDF (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OFPP</li> <li>OFPP, CAOC HCWG</li> <li>OPM, OFPP</li> </ul>

Talent Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide infrastructure for managing rotation assignments and begin rotation program (Q1 and ongoing)</li> <li>• Establish metrics for assessing agency intern programs (Q2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI, agencies</li> <li>• FAIC</li> </ul>
Training & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand training offerings in negotiation (Q1)</li> <li>• Deliver training in award/incentive fees &amp; writing effective requirements (Q1 ongoing)</li> <li>• Share guidelines on building and managing effective rotation programs (Q3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI</li> <li>• FAI</li> <li>• FAI</li> </ul>
Workforce Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin implementation of workforce data management structure (Q1)</li> <li>• Issue revised FAC-COTR, FAC-C policies (Q4)</li> <li>• Revise FAC-P/PM policy for curriculum clarification as needed (Q4)</li> <li>• Strengthen role of ACM, provide clarity on desired ACM skills (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI</li> <li>• OFPP</li> <li>• OFPP</li> <li>• OFPP</li> </ul>

### Strengthening Capacity and Capability – Action Plan FY12

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Strategic Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies submit acquisition human capital plans that include growth figures and incorporate into 2014 budget (Q2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies</li> </ul>
Talent Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess agency intern programs (Q3)</li> <li>• Revise FAIC activities based on assessment (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAIC</li> <li>• FAIC</li> </ul>
Training & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue providing targeted training based on needs (Q1 ongoing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI</li> </ul>
Workforce Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct acquisition workforce competencies survey (Q2)</li> <li>• Complete implementation of workforce data management structure (Q2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI, agencies</li> <li>• FAI</li> </ul>

### Strengthening Capacity and Capability – Action Plan FY13

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Strategic Human Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies submit acquisition human capital plans that include growth figures and incorporate into 2015 budget (Q2)</li> <li>• Review agency plans and efforts over past three years to develop revised strategic plan (Q4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies</li> <li>• OFPP, CAOC, HCWG</li> </ul>
Training & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training targeted to results of competencies survey (Q1 ongoing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAI</li> </ul>

### Strengthening Capacity and Capability – Action Plan FY14

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Strategic Human Capital	Provide government-wide acquisition human capital plan for 2015-2020	OFPP

## List of Acronyms

ACM	Acquisition Career Manager
ACMIS	Acquisition Career Management Information System
AHCP	Acquisition Human Capital Plan
CPDF	Central Personnel Data File
CAO	Chief Acquisition Officer
CAOC	Chief Acquisition Officer Council
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CHCO	Chief Human Capital Officer
COTR	Contracting Officer Technical Representative
DOD	Department of Defense
FAC	Federal Acquisition Certification
FAC-C	Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting
FAC-COTR	Federal Acquisition Certification for COTRs
FAC-P/PM	Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers
FAI	Federal Acquisition Institute
FAIC	Federal Acquisition Intern Coalition
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FPDS	Federal Procurement Data System
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GS	General Schedule
HCWG	Human Capital Working Group
IG	Inspector General
IACMC	Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee
MSPB	Merit Systems Protection Board
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
OFPP	Office of Federal Procurement Policy
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PPIRS	Past Performance Information Retrieval System
PBA	Performance Based Acquisition
PM	Program Manager
P/PM	Program/Project Manager
R&D	Research & Development