

Millennium Challenge Corporation

MCC Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) Program

MCC Contracts and Grants Management Division
Acquisition Instruction 1-2
November 2011

Millennium Challenge Corporation

ACQUISITION INSTRUCTION



MCC Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) Program

1. Purpose. The purpose of the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representatives (FAC-COR) is to establish general training, experience and development requirements for CORs in civilian agencies, such as MCC, that reflect the various types of contracts they manage. For the purpose of this policy, the term "COR" refers not only to positions technically designated as CORs, but also to Project Monitors (PMs) and others who ensure proper development of requirements and assist Contracting Officers (COs) in managing the contracts and assistance agreements executed by the Contracts & Grants Management (CGM) Division. This certification program will promote continued development of essential business and technical competencies for CORs¹.

The revised FAC-COR program is effective January 1, 2012 and will also be considered effective at MCC through this acquisition instruction on January 1, 2012.

2. Authority. The FAC-COR is issued pursuant to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, 41 U.S.C. § 1101 et. seq., and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, which established a requirement for federal acquisition certification programs.

3. Background. Since the designation of CORs as part of the acquisition workforce in the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA), the federal government has taken steps to develop and strategically manage this critical portion of the acquisition workforce. In November 2007, OFPP issued the first Federal Acquisition Certification for COTRs (FAC-COTR), and in October 2009, OFPP issued the Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan, which established a multi-agency Functional Advisory Board (FAB) to improve the FAC-COR program and make recommendations to more effectively manage the COR workforce. This FAC-COR revision, which replaces the original program, is a step toward continuous improvement of the COR function. MCC's own COTR program is hereby revised and replaced with this document, *MCC Acquisition Instruction 1-2 MCC FAC-COR Program*.

4. Applicability. The FAC-COR program applies to all executive agencies, including MCC. The FAC-COR as recognized and implemented by the MCC is a federal certification and, as such, the certification shall be accepted by all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core training and experience requirements to perform COR functions, though authorization to perform COR functions must be in accordance with agency policy.

5. Certification Program Administration.

a. General. In accordance with SARA, the Managing Director of CGM, as the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) is responsible for developing and maintaining an acquisition career management program to ensure an adequate professional workforce and with the participation and coordination of other appropriate agency officials. For purposes of

¹ Note: The term COR is also synonymous with the term Agreements Officer Representative (AOR) which are technical personnel assisting the contracting officer (aka agreements officer) in managing an assistance agreement (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement).

administering the program, the SPE has delegated responsibilities as needed to ensure effective and efficient management of this program to the Deputy Managing Director of CGM, Gerry Nash (nashg@mcc.gov), who will serve as Acquisition Career Manager for MCC's FAC-COR program.

b. Waiver Authority. The SPE may extend in writing, on a case-by-case basis, the date upon which a COR must be certified by an additional six months, if it is in the best interest of the agency. Additionally, the SPE may waive all or part of the FAC-COR requirements in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting the waiver is in the best interest of the agency. A written justification shall include the reason for and conditions of the waiver, and the agency's ACM or designee shall maintain all supporting documentation.

c. Oversight and Continuous Improvement. The OFPP Associate Administrator for Acquisition Workforce Programs, in consultation with the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), the FAI Board of Directors, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC), the COR FAB and other organizations, as appropriate, shall:

- provide general program oversight and direction,
- periodically revalidate the COR competencies,
- identify additional classroom training and development opportunities, and
- recommend improvements to this FAC-COR policy to the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy to ensure the program reflects the needs of all civilian agencies.

Any changes to FAC-COR resulting from OFPP's Oversight and Continuous Improvement process will be made through an update of this policy document, MCC Acquisition Instruction 1-2. MCC will maintain compliance with any FAI issued guidance and other information through its website and, periodically, will review the MCC's FAC-COR Program to ensure consistency of implementation across agencies.

6. Certification Requirements for Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs). The MCC FAC-COR Program shall consist of: (1) competency-based core training and assignment-specific training to achieve certification, (2) experience requirements for Level II and III certifications, and (3) continuous learning to maintain certification. Obtaining the FAC-COR makes an individual eligible for appointment as a COR, which shall be made in writing by the MCC ACM, but does not mandate an individual's appointment as a COR or Project Monitor; the SPE shall make this determination in accordance with agency need.

a. General. The MCC FAC-COR Program contains three levels of certification to allow for appropriate training and experience for CORs managing a range of contract vehicles, from low-risk contracts (such as supplies) to high-risk, complex acquisitions (such as IT systems). New CORs shall be designated within six months of assignment. **Application formats for these certification levels can be found in Appendices 1-3.**

b. Transition of Current CORs. Upon the effective date of the MCC-COR Program current COTRs shall be grandfathered in as Level II CORs. Project Monitors who lack any COTR

delegation on any existing MCC contract will be grandfathered in as Level I CORs for certification purposes, but will still be considered to have the role of Project Monitor. MCC will, as the need arises, reassign some current CORs who meet the new requirements for Level III CORs at Level III after validating their experience and competency to the ACM. Upon being grandfathered in or reassigned, CORs will follow the continuous learning requirements for their new COR level.

c. Competencies for CORs. The business and technical competencies for MCC CORs and Project Monitors are available at the FAI website and reflect the results of a 2003 study conducted by FAI and a 2008 review by FAI and a multi-agency working group. The COR FAB will periodically revalidate these competencies and the COR certification policy will be updated as needed. Changes to the competencies will be available on the FAI website and will be addressed through updates of this Acquisition Instruction as required.

d. Appointment. The program office shall normally provide a written nomination for a technically qualified, responsible and certified COR to the CO. Determining who is most appropriate to be the COR is the responsibility of the CO and CORs shall be appointed in writing by the CO. It may be reasonable to have a COR for a task or delivery order in addition to the COR for the underlying contract; in that case, the roles and responsibilities of each should be made clear in both the COR delegation letters and the contract terms and conditions. Official designation of the CORs in writing shall come from the SPE.

The COR level required for a particular acquisition shall be determined by the CO during acquisition planning. The CO shall consider risk factors, such as complexity and contract type, and will analyze the overall level of risk for the contract when appointing a COR to a contract. CORs assigned to various contracts shall be certified at the highest level required by any one contract within their portfolio.

e. Training and Experience: CORs must have the minimum training and experience, as described below, and must maintain their skills currency through continuous learning.

Level I Certification (See Appendix 1 for Application Format)

This level of COR is generally appropriate for low-risk contract vehicles, such as supply contracts and orders, or for performance of Project Monitor duties on such contracts or larger and more complex contracts where an official Level II COR is designated. MCC requirements for Level I FAC-COR are as follows:

- 8 hours of training (to be selected from recommended COR training Continuous Learning Modules)
- No experience requirement
- Continuous learning: 8 CLPs every 2 years.

Level II Certification (See Appendix 2 for Application Format)

These CORs may be called upon to perform general project management activities and should be trained accordingly. This level of COR is generally appropriate for contract vehicles of moderate to high complexity, including both supply and service contracts. These CORs are expected to oversee Project Monitors and may perform as Project Monitor on similar or larger and more complex contracts where an official Level III COR is designated. Individuals seeking certification or re-certification due to Continuous Learning requirements as a Level II COR should utilize Appendix 1: Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Level II Application for Certification, as well as include any supporting documentation required to support the application. MCC requirements for Level II FAC-COR are as follows:

- 40 hours of training*
- One year of experience required
- Continuous learning: 40 CLPs every 2 years

Level III Certification (See Appendix 3 for Application Format)

Level III CORs are the most experienced CORs within an agency and should be assigned to the most complex and mission critical contracts within the agency. These CORs are often called upon to perform significant program management activities and should be trained accordingly. Individuals seeking certification or re-certification due to Continuous Learning requirements as a Level III COR should utilize Appendix 2: Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Level III Application for Certification, as well as include any supporting documentation required to support the application. At a minimum, those CORs for major investments, as defined by OMB Circular A-11, shall generally be designated as Level III CORs.

- 60 hours of training*
- Two years of experience required
- Continuous learning: 40 CLPs every 2 years

*Training or continuous learning from one level may be applied to training requirements for the next higher certification level. Experience may have been obtained prior to the effective date of this memo.

Levels I and II are not incremental. If a COR meets the requirements of Level II certification, (s)he can be certified at Level II without prior Level I certification. However, in order to be certified at Level III, it is strongly recommended that CORs have prior certification at Level II.

*Initial training for new CORs must include, at a minimum, a course covering COR roles and responsibilities as well as fundamental contract rules and regulations. In addition, it is strongly recommended that this training be provided in a classroom setting. MCC will provide semi-annual COR training onsite that fulfills that requirement. For CORs that need immediate certification or are unable to make MCC onsite training dates, several options for obtaining the necessary training are listed below, available **free of charge** through both a mixture of classroom training and online training by utilizing [the FAITAS system](#). New MCC CORs must follow one of the options below appropriate to their certification level if they cannot attend MCC-provided training.*

LEVEL I – 8 HOURS OF TRAINING REQUIRED

Option I – Classroom Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
COR100	Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Training (1 day)	8	Classroom	FAI (Currently in Development)

Option II – Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
CLC106	Contracting Officer Representative with a Mission Focus	8	Online	DAU

LEVEL II – 40 HOURS OF TRAINING REQUIRED

Option I – Classroom Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
	Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Training (5 day)	40	Classroom	MCC On-site Training

Option II – Combination of Classroom and Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
COR100	Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Training (1 day)	8	Classroom	FAI (Currently in Development)
CLM024	Contracting Overview	8	Online	DAU
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU
CLC013	Performance Based Services Acquisition	6	Online	DAU
CLC011	Contracting for the Rest of Us	2	Online	DAU
CLM017	Risk Management	8	Online	DAU

Option III – Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
CLC106	Contracting Officer Representative with a Mission Focus	8	Online	DAU
CLM024	Contracting Overview	8	Online	DAU
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU
CLC013	Performance Based Services Acquisition	6	Online	DAU
CLC011	Contracting for the Rest of Us	2	Online	DAU
CLM017	Risk Management	8	Online	DAU

Option IV -- Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
CLC222	Online Training for Contracting Officer's Representative	32	Online	DAU
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU

LEVEL III – A TOTAL OF 60 HOURS OF TRAINING IS REQUIRED

Option I – A Combination of Classroom and Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
	Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COR) Training (5 days)	40	Classroom	MCC On-site training
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU
FAC033	Contract Management: Strategies for Mission	3	Online	DAU

	Success			
CLM014	IPT Management and Leadership	8	Online	DAU
CLB016	Introduction to Earned Value Management	1	Online	DAU

Option II – Online Training

Class Number	Class Title	Number of Hours	Online or Classroom	Provider
CLC222	Online Training for Contracting Officer's Representative	32	Online	DAU
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU
CLM017	Risk Management	8	Online	DAU
FAC033	Contract Management: Strategies for Mission Success	3	Online	DAU
CLM014	IPT Management and Leadership	8	Online	DAU
CLB016	Introduction to Earned Value Management	1	Online	DAU

Option III – Online Training for COR Handling IT Procurements

CLC106	Contracting Officer Representative with a Mission Focus	8	Online	DAU
CLM024	Contracting Overview	8	Online	DAU
CLM031	Improved Statement of Work	4	Online	DAU
CLE028	Market Research for Technical Personnel	4	Online	DAU
IRM101	Basic Information Systems Acquisition	35	Online	DAU
CLB016	Introduction to Earned Value Management	1	Online	DAU

f. Continuous Learning: To maintain a FAC-COR, CORs are required to earn the following continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years, either beginning with the date of their certification or in a standard cycle as determined by their agency. ACMs shall monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding FAC-CORs to ensure

they meet these requirements. Additional guidance on determining continuous learning points is available on the FAI website. It is the COR's responsibility to ensure that his/her continuous learning requirements are met. CORs managing Information Technology (IT) contracts would find a course on IT acquisition helpful. Courses in accounting, program and project management, and contract law are particularly relevant for Level II and Level III CORs. All CORs would benefit from ethics and fraud awareness training. In addition, rotational assignments and attendance at learning seminars and conferences may provide continuous learning points for CORs. It is recommended that CORs discuss their continuous learning plans with their supervisor, the CO, and/or the ACM to ensure maximum benefit.

A FAC-COR will expire if the continuous learning requirements are not met and in this case, the CO may revoke the COR appointment in writing on a case-by-case basis and assign another COR to the contract. A COR who has failed to meet the continuous learning requirements and has had his or her COR appointment revoked must complete the necessary training to be reinstated. The COR, COR's supervisor, and contractor will be notified in writing in a timely manner of any changes to the COR appointment.

In addition, any of the following Continuous Learning Modules, available via [the FAITAS system](#), are recommended for COR's seeking CLPs for re-certification purposes if not taken as part of the recommended options above, [CLC106](#) and [CLM024](#) are **strongly recommended** for developing a basic understanding of the COR role and contracting issues:

Continuous Learning Module	Continuous Learning Points (CLPs)
CLC106 – COR with a Mission Focus	8 CLPs
CLM024 – Contracting Overview	8 CLPs
CLC013 – Services Acquisition	6 CLPs
CLC004 – Market Research	3 CLPs
CLC007 – Contract Source Selection	1 CLP
CLM012 – Scheduling	12 CLPs
CLM003 – Overview of Acquisition Ethics	2 CLPs

Other Continuous Learning Modules that may prove useful for recertification purposes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- CLE003 – Technical Review (3 CLPs)
- CLC006 – Contract Termination (2 CLPs)
- CLC011 – Contracting for the Rest of Us (2 CLPs)
- CLM013 – Work Breakdown Structure (6 CLPs)
- CLM014 – IPT Management and Leadership (8 CLPs)
- CLC028 – Past Performance Information (3 CLPs)
- CLC030 – Essentials of Interagency Acquisitions/Fair Opportunity (2.5 CLPs)
- CLC060 – Time and Materials Contracts (1 CLP)
- CLM031 – Improved Statement of Work (4 CLPs)

g. Reciprocity With Other Certifications: As detailed in the chart below, individuals certified as Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Levels I or II or Federal Acquisition

Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) Mid-Level/Journeyman are considered to have met the FAC-COR requirements for Level II. Individuals certified as FAC-C Level III or FAC-P/PM Senior/Expert are considered to have met the FAC-COR requirements for Level III. These individuals must submit their FAC certificates and continuous learning documents to their ACMs or designees for FAC-COR certification. However, an individual with FAC-COR certification does not necessarily meet the requirements for FAC-C or FAC-P/PM certification.

h. COR Performance Management: In order to ensure successful contract management, MCC may consider rating CORs on their performance as part of their annual performance plans in the future, though that is not currently MCC practice.

7. Management Information System: MCC and MCC employees are responsible for maintaining certification documentation for quality assurance purposes. MCC will track its COR workforce, including its continuous learning requirements. As part of this effort, MCC CORs must ensure their training data is properly entered into [the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System \(FAITAS\)](#) and must register in [FAITAS](#) no later than **February 15, 2012**.

Note: CORs requesting training through the FAITAS system should indicate their supervisor as Gerard Nash, MCC Acquisition Career Manager, not their direct MCC supervisor. This will assist Gerry Nash, as the MCC ACM, in tracking and approving training requests and granting certification to CORs.

**APPENDIX 1: Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Level I
Application for Certification**

Employee: I certify that I have completed all necessary training and gained the required experience to obtain the technical competencies required to be certified as a level II Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) in accordance with paragraph 6.c, of the revised policy. The information in this form is, to the best of my knowledge, complete & accurate.

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Title, Series, Grade _____

Address _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

Place an "X" in the appropriate boxes below and provide training date. For all training completed, attach copies of training certificates.

I. Training Requirements:

8 hours of online or resident COR training completed _____ (dates); **and**

1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Concurrence: I reviewed the information in this application, have verified it to the best of my knowledge as accurate and support the individual's certification as a level II COR.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Agency Acquisition Career Manager Endorsement: I reviewed and verify that the information in this application, to the best of my knowledge, is accurate and support or the individual's certification as a level II COR. I will ensure that my organization maintains a copy locally with all back up information, suitable for audit validation.

ACM Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

**APPENDIX 2: Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Level II
Application for Certification**

Employee: I certify that I have completed all necessary training and gained the required experience to obtain the technical competencies required to be certified as a level II Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) in accordance with paragraph 6.c, of the revised policy. The information in this form is, to the best of my knowledge, complete & accurate.

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Title, Series, Grade _____

Address _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

Place an "X" in the appropriate boxes below and provide training date. For all training completed, attach copies of training certificates.

I. Training Requirements:

- 40 hours of online or resident COR training completed _____ (dates); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

II. Experience:

1 year of previous COR experience required. The essential competencies required for CORs or equivalent positions form the foundation for the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively perform as a COR. Attach a resume detailing how the [COR competencies](#) found on the FAI web site have been achieved, including a detailed description of the program/contract(s) you were involved with and your specific actions to attain the required skills. The list of competencies will be updated during FY 2012.

III. Certification Equivalency: (Only one required, if applicable)

- FAC-C Level 1 (or higher) completed _____ (date); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

- FAC-P/PM Level II (or higher) completed _____ (date); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Concurrence: I reviewed the information in this application, have verified it to the best of my knowledge as accurate and support the individual's certification as a level II COR.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Agency Acquisition Career Manager Endorsement: I reviewed and verify that the information in this application, to the best of my knowledge, is accurate and support or the individual's certification as a level II COR. I will ensure that my organization maintains a copy locally with all back up information, suitable for audit validation.

ACM Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

**APPENDIX 3: Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Level III
Application for Certification**

Employee: I certify that I have completed all necessary training and gained the required experience to obtain the technical competencies required to be certified as a level II Contracting Officer's Representative in accordance with paragraph 6.c, of the revised policy. The information in this form is, to the best of my knowledge, complete & accurate.

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Title, Series, Grade _____

Address _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Employee Signature _____ Date: _____

Place an "X" in the appropriate boxes below and provide training date. For all training completed, attach copies of training certificates.

I. Training Requirements:

- 60 hours of online or resident COR training completed _____ (dates); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

II. Experience:

2 years of previous COR experience required. The essential competencies required for CORs or equivalent positions form the foundation for the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively perform as a COR:

- Attach a resume detailing how the COR competencies have been achieved, including a detailed description of the program/contract(s) you were involved with and your specific actions to attain the required skills.
 Provide copies of the letter from the Contracting Officer with your COR appointment.

The list of COR competencies is under review and will be updated during FY-12.

III. Certification Equivalency: (Only one required, if applicable)

- FAC-C Level III completed _____ (date); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

 FAC-P/PM Level III completed _____ (date); **and**
 1 hour of ethics training completed within the past year _____ (date)

Employee Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Concurrence: I reviewed the information in this application, have verified it to the best of my knowledge as accurate and support the individual's certification as a level III COR.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Agency Acquisition Career Manager Endorsement: I reviewed and verify that the information in this application, to the best of my knowledge, is accurate and support or the individual's certification as a Level III COR. I will ensure that my organization maintains a copy locally with all back up information, suitable for audit validation.

ACM Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

