



# FAI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 9 SPRING 2016 | FAI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## From the Director



**Melissa Starinsky,**  
Director, FAI

Seasons come and seasons go, but the resilience and commitment of the Federal acquisition workforce never ceases to amaze me! We kept our government running amidst another potential budget crisis and a historic blizzard that froze the majority of the East Coast for a week. Civilian agency missions depend upon the Federal acquisition workforce, and collectively we obligated an impressive \$55,912,715,544 and executed 1,572,550 transactions in the first half of FY 16.<sup>1</sup>

It used to be that winter offered something of a workload reprieve and period of rejuvenation during which we would invest in ourselves and hone our skills. Unfortunately, with acquisition being almost a 365- (or 366-) days-a-year proposition, I think those days are long gone, which makes it challenging to find the time, and frankly the energy, to continue to learn and flourish in this tough business. At FAI, we recognize this and are working hard to create more flexible learning solutions to make it easier for you to balance your career development needs with workload demands. Recent initiatives include:

<sup>1</sup> Data current as of March 9, 2016, from the [Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation](#) (FPDS-NG) and includes all agencies except the Department of Defense.

**FAI.gov Media Library** – We continue to expand the [FAI Media Library](#) of Knowledge Nuggets, Acquisition Seminars, and other learning solutions, which you can tap into whenever and wherever you need them.

**Training Scenarios and Videos on FAITAS** – We recently partnered with the U.S. Army Contracting Command (ACC) Virtual Contracting Enterprise (VCE) at Fort Dix, NJ, to add a series of leading-edge avatar-based training scenarios and other training videos to Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). When you successfully complete each video and assessment, continuous learning points (CLPs) are automatically captured in your learning history. All videos are listed in the [FAITAS Course Catalog](#) and can be accessed from FAITAS once registration is completed.

**Continuous Learning Solutions** – We have developed an [inventory of current learning solutions from across the Federal government](#), which may already be available to you for access to more choice, variety, and flexibility.

**Back-to-Basics** – We are building a Back-to-Basics (B2B) Series that is grounded in lean principles and promotes the agile practices already permitted by the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#). Through input provided by agencies, this Series will focus on the fundamentals that might need some fine-tuning as part of your CLP plan. We plan to launch the B2B Series later this year.

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# FAI NEWSLETTER

## From the Director (Cont'd)

**Applied Learning Opportunities** – With the help of agency acquisition professional volunteers discovered through our own open opportunity, we are testing ways to leverage the [Openopportunities.gov](http://Openopportunities.gov) platform to connect you with applied learning opportunities not otherwise presented in your current role. Stay tuned for more information on this as our work evolves.

### Volunteers for the Open Opportunities Initiative

- |                      |                         |                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| • Daniel Briest, GSA | • Ali Pourghassemi, HHS | • Robin Gates, DOT  |
| • Lisa Nelson, GSA   | • Richard Robinson, NRC | • Stacy Greber, VA  |
| • Virginia Huth, GSA | • Suman King, HHS       | • James Morris, NSF |



As many of you know, this winter saw a unique kind of stillness and hardship as our civilian agency acquisition professionals encountered an unexpected interruption of access to FAITAS. While I'm relieved that full access has since been restored, I must share my heartfelt appreciation for the patience, flexibility, and extra effort demonstrated by agencies' ACMs, their staff, and all of you. With your help, we manually processed the time-critical training registrations as well as certification and warrant requests during this time. We are taking steps to further reduce the risk of a similar event happening again.

With winter now on the retreat (knock on wood!), I've been scanning my backyard for one of my favorite signs of spring: the crocuses breaking through the frost-covered soil. Although pale in comparison with Mother Nature, we too have been hatching some new elements in the career development spectrum.

**IT Program Management** – In partnership with the Office of the Federal Chief Information Officer (OFCIO) and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), we are working with the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) communities to reshape IT program management certification under the [Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act \(FITARA\)](#). See the [newsletter article on the next page](#) to learn more about this initiative.

**CON 360 Competency Assessment** – Working with Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Health and Human Services, we are piloting an objective competency assessment instrument during offerings of CON 360 and the senior P/PM level capstone course to help us better understand where gaps may remain. This information will help continuous improvement efforts and inform areas of focus and investment in developing the workforce.

**Digital Services Training** – As the inaugural cohort of acquisition professionals moves toward completion of the innovative and much-lauded [OFPP and U.S. Digital Services \(USDS\) Contracting Professional Training & Development Program](#), FAI is preparing to operationalize the training, expand its reach to other acquisition disciplines, administer appropriate FAC core-plus certifications, and apply its “agile-learning” approach more broadly. Through this innovative OFPP and USDS collaboration, 30 acquisition professionals have learned how to buy digital services in iterative ways that will streamline contract award activities and increase successful implementation of digital services projects. The next cohort will begin in June.

Spring is my favorite season; it signifies renewal, warm weather, and an opportunity to sow seeds for a prosperous future. I've lived through about 100 seasons over the course of my acquisition career, and despite the challenges of a very complex business, I become reenergized every spring as we enter the third quarter of the fiscal year. I am reminded of a quote I stumbled upon a number of years ago (source unknown) that has helped ground me when facing tough challenges in the acquisition business: “Bloom wherever you are planted.” We are not always planted in the best of soil with the best of weather, yet I have seen many acquisition professionals bloom into something magnificent over the years, in some of the toughest and adverse conditions. I challenge all of us, as we enter this beautiful time of the year, to bloom to our fullest potential regardless of where we are planted. Thanks for all you do, and happy spring!

### Call for Candidates!

Nominations for the second cohort of the new Contracting Professional Training & Development Program are due **April 29, 2016!**

[Contact your agency's ACM for information](#)

# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Reshaping IT Program Management Certification under the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA)

Our [Winter 2015 Newsletter](#) highlighted important first steps in implementing the most significant Federal IT reform in two decades: the [Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act \(FITARA\)](#). Among its numerous provisions, FITARA calls for agency Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) communities to work together to address the spectrum of talent management challenges within the context of IT acquisition. IT Program and Project Managers (P/PM-IT), widely seen as the keystone human capital element to improving poor IT program performance, are members of both the IT and the acquisition workforces. Yet to date, less than 2 percent of P/PMs with a Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) have obtained the P/PM-IT specialization core-plus certification (FAC-P/PM-IT). The responsibilities reinforced through FITARA to recruit, develop, manage, and

retain skilled IT and acquisition workforces make this the optimal time to consider how best to improve the FAC-P/PM-IT program.

Accordingly, on December 11, 2015, the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), and FAI convened a summit of approximately 60 par-

ticipants from 20 agency CIO, CAO, and acquisition workforce management communities with the purpose of helping agencies better leverage the FAC-P/PM-IT certification to comply with the requirements of FITARA and the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA). Melissa Starinsky, FAI Director, kicked off the meeting with the goal of developing a consensus recommendation for improvements to the current FAC-P/PM core-plus IT specialization program for civilian agency review and subsequent referral to OMB/OFPP for approval and adoption across all civilian agencies.

As a result of the summit, six improvement initiatives were identified, and six interagency Integrated Project Teams (IPTs) have been established to plan and execute the initiatives. The voluntary chairs and members of these IPTs were drawn principally from among the summit participants. The six initiatives, their primary objectives, and the interagency volunteers of each IPT are provided on the following page.

### OMB Memorandum M-15-14: Management and Oversight of Federal Information Technology

*"... the CAO, in consultation with the CIO... shall ensure there is an agency-wide process to ensure all acquisitions that include any IT ... are led by personnel with appropriate federal acquisition certifications (FACs), including specialized IT certifications as appropriate..."*

### OMB Memorandum M-15-14: Management and Oversight of Federal Information Technology

*"CIO and CHCO—and CAO where relevant—shall develop a set of competency requirements for IT staff, including IT leadership positions, and develop and maintain a current workforce planning process to ensure the department/agency can (a) anticipate and respond to changing mission requirements, (b) maintain workforce skills in a rapidly developing IT environment, and (c) recruit and retain the IT talent needed to accomplish the mission."*

# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Reshaping IT Program Management Certification under FITARA (Cont'd)

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
<b>Develop Federal IT P/PM Workforce Training Asset Inventory</b>	<b>Align IT P/PM Talent Management Lifecycle Strategies</b>	<b>Improve P/PM and FAC-P/PM Value Propositions</b>	<b>Improve, Integrate, and Simplify Competency Models</b>	<b>Identify and Deploy Innovative Learning Strategies</b>	<b>Explore Master IT P/PM Designation</b>
<i>Increase awareness of and access to already-available learning assets from across the federal agencies</i>	<i>Ensure appropriate integration/synchronization between the present P/PM talent development elements and the other elements of the talent management lifecycle</i>	<i>Increase the number of professionals holding the FAC-P/PM-IT certification, both by making it more valuable to all stakeholders and by better communicating that value</i>	<i>Obtain consensus agreement on a better-rationalized set of government-wide competency standards for FAC-P/PM-IT in the context of broader IT and Digital Services competency standards</i>	<i>Lay out a strategy for significantly diversifying and enriching the spectrum of professional development options available to the workforce</i>	<i>Establish a meaningful credential—decoupled from training/certification—to better convey qualifications</i>
<b>Chair: Denny Hafer, FAI</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pam Glass, DHS</li> <li>• LaDonna Bryant, DHS</li> <li>• Gregory Jackson, DOE</li> <li>• Samson Tefferia, DOL</li> <li>• Jeffrey Donahue, PBGC</li> <li>• Subu Sangameswar, OMB</li> <li>• Gary Piercy, DHS</li> <li>• Victoria Barth, DHS</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Michael Bostwick, OPM</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gregory Jackson, DOE</li> <li>• Samson Tefferia, DOL</li> <li>• Jeffrey Donahue, PBGC</li> <li>• Subu Sangameswar, OMB</li> <li>• Cuttie Bacon, DOE</li> <li>• Michelle Carey, OPM</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Gary Piercy, DHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gregory Jackson, DOE</li> <li>• Subu Sangameswar, OMB</li> <li>• Deborah Gadsden, VA</li> <li>• Tim Whalen, DHS</li> <li>• David Patrick, DHS</li> <li>• Pam Kontz, SSA</li> <li>• Pam Glass, DHS</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Sharon Vannucci, DOC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deborah Gadsden, VA</li> <li>• Samson Tefferia, DOL</li> <li>• Jeffrey Donahue, PBGC</li> <li>• Lisa Schmitt, DOJ</li> <li>• Thomas Day, NOAA</li> <li>• Gary Piercy, DHS</li> <li>• Jeanette Duncan, USDA ARS</li> <li>• Karen Simpson, USDA</li> <li>• Pam Glass, DHS</li> <li>• LaDonna Bryant, DHS</li> <li>• Jerome Davin, USDA</li> <li>• Tim Whalen, DHS</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Fawn Freeman, FAA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karen Simpson, USDA</li> <li>• Jerome Davin, USDA</li> <li>• Victoria Barth, DHS</li> <li>• Patrick Ravanera, NSF</li> <li>• Cuttie Bacon, DOE</li> </ul>	<b>Chair: Michele Sharpe, Treasury</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patrick Ravanera, NSF</li> <li>• Lisa Schmitt, DOJ</li> <li>• Tim Whalen, DHS</li> <li>• David Patrick, DHS</li> <li>• Jeanette Duncan, USDA ARS</li> <li>• Gregory Jackson, DOE</li> <li>• Bruce Falk, USHMM</li> </ul>

IT PM Improvement Initiative Integrated Project Teams (IPTs)

Additionally, an IT Program Management Executive Steering Board (IT PM ESB) has been established to provide strategic guidance and integrated governance and support to the IPTs. The IT PM ESB is comprised of senior leaders from the CAO, CIO, and CHCO communities.

Kickoff meetings were held in January and February for each IPT with progress updates provided to the ESB in early March.

These interagency efforts promise to significantly improve the relevance, accessibility, adoption, and impact of the professional development solutions and certification programs offered to our critical corps of IT PMs.

Stay tuned for progress reports from all these efforts in the coming months!

IT PM ESB Members			
Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Barry Berkowitz	DOC	Veronica Villalobos	OPM
Sonny Bhagowalia	Treasury	Joanie Newhart	OFPP
Richard McKinney	DOT	Malissa Levesque	OMB
Iris Cooper	Treasury	Melissa Starinsky	FAI
Anita Blair	Treasury	Michael Palmer	DHS

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAI Announces New Partnership with UMUC: Transfer FAI or DAU Credits Toward an MS in Management with PM Specialization

FAI is pleased to announce it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) to provide Federal Program and Project Managers (P/PMs) the opportunity to sign up for classes through the Fall 2016 semester<sup>2</sup> to transfer credit earned through professional certifications toward [UMUC's Master of Science in Management \(MSM\) with a specialization in Project Management](#).

A Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) or Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification in Program Management (PM), provides students with the necessary skills and abilities to ensure that requirements are appropriately written, performance standards are established, and contractors deliver what they promise. P/PMs develop requirements, lead Integrated Project Teams (IPTs), and oversee budgeting and governance processes, all of which are critical to ensuring that agency-mission needs are filled and expected outcomes are achieved.

Establishing rigorous professional development requirements for this critical workforce in civilian agencies will better position the government for success in its efforts to acquire and manage goods and services.

### About the Program

The UMUC MSM with a Project Management specialization is ideal for individuals desiring to advance their careers and for veterans or recent college graduates who are interested in seeking a rewarding and highly sought-after government position in Program or Project Management.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Beyond the fall 2016 semester, the MOU is subject to renewal and may result in changes that impact the current agreement.

To learn more about this partnership program as well as how to get started and register today, check out the [UMUC Acquisition Flyer](#), visit the [UMUC Acquisition website](#), email [fedprogram@umuc.edu](mailto:fedprogram@umuc.edu), or call 844-UMUC-FED.

### Eligibility Requirements

To participate in this partnership program, you must have completed the FAI Program Management Senior certification or the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Program Management Level III certification, and all coursework for the degree, including courses taken at FAI or DAU, must be completed within a five-year window. If these requirements are met, you may be eligible to transfer up to nine graduate credits toward an MSM with a specialization in Project Management at UMUC.

You must submit [official transcripts](#) from FAI or DAU for review along with the [transfer credit evaluation request form](#) to see if you meet the eligibility requirements.

### UMUC Class Credits Earned

After UMUC has received the official transcripts from FAI or DAU and eligibility requirements have been met, you can receive graduate credits for UMUC classes toward an MSM degree with a specialization in Program Management. The tables above list the classes for which you can receive credits.

UMUC Class Credits Earned with an FAI Program Management Senior Certification		
Course Name	Course Number	Credits Received
<a href="#">Project Communications Management</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 638</a>	3
<a href="#">Project Procurement Management</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 641</a>	3
<a href="#">Financial and Strategic Management of Projects</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 650</a>	3

UMUC Class Credits Earned with a DAU Program Management Level III Certification		
Course Name	Course Number	Credits Received
<a href="#">Foundations of Project Management</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 634</a>	3
<a href="#">Project Communications Management</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 638</a>	3
<a href="#">Project Procurement Management</a>	<a href="#">PMAN 641</a>	3

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAI Training Schedule (FAC-C & FAC-COR) and Statistics for 2016

### FAC-C and FAC-COR Training Schedule for 2016

FAI is pleased to issue its [FAC-C and FAC-COR training schedule for 2016](#), with many courses extending into February 2017.

Class locations are primarily in Washington, DC, but there are a few in Atlanta, GA, and Denver, CO. FAI is also piloting six Virtual Instructor-Led Training (vILT) classes for FCR 201 that are hosted on the Adobe Connect platform. Students participate over a period of two weeks, in 10 four-hour synchronous (real time) vILTs from **anywhere**. Students need only a computer with a Web browser and Internet connection and a phone to utilize a toll-free teleconference number. Sessions include live interaction with instructors who facilitate discussions, respond to questions, and orchestrate team activities. Games and other interactive exercises provide students with a dynamic, enjoyable learning experience.

### Areas for Improvement: Class Registration and Attendance

FAI hopes that better registration and attendance rates will be seen for the rest of 2016, as student "No-Shows" continue to be a challenge and take important learning opportunities away from other students. As a reminder, the "No-Show" policy from the [FAI Student Training Guidebook](#) is as follows:

*"If a student cancels their enrollment **nine or fewer calendar days before the class start date, or fails to report the first day of class within the 5% excused absence time...or the first 2 hours of class (whichever is less), the student will be marked as a "No-Show."** No-Show students are prevented from registering for **ANY** FAI-sponsored classroom course offering **AND** removed from any future class for which the student has a reservation, **for a period of 6 months.**"*

FAI FY16 Training Stats (Oct – Dec '15)	
Seats Purchased	550
Students Registered	510
No Shows	44
Walk-Ins	30
Vacant Seats	54

Please make sure that you understand your responsibility and commitment when registering and attending classes. [Check out this newsletter article](#) that introduces the new [FAI Student Training Guidebook](#) to learn more about the student policies for FAI's training offerings.

FAC-C and FAC-COR Training Schedule for 2016	
Number	Title
<b>FAC-C Level I</b>	
CON 170 (FED)	Fundamentals of Cost and Price Analysis
FCN 190	Federal Acquisition Regulation Fundamentals
<b>FAC-C Level II</b>	
CON 270 (FED)	Intermediate Cost and Price Analysis
CON 280 (FED)	Source Selection and Administration of Service Contracts
CON 290 (FED)	Contract Administration and Negotiation Techniques in a Supply Environment
<b>FAC-C Level III</b>	
CON 360 (FED)	Contracting for Decision-Makers
<b>Electives</b>	
CON 243	Architect-Engineering Services Contracting (5-Day)
CON 244	Construction Contracting (5-Day)
FCN 400	Emergency Contracting Basics (2-Day)
FCN 404	Federal Contract Law (3-Day)
FCN 421	Contract Close-out (2-Day)
FCN 435	Contract Administration (5-Day)
FFM 403	Federal Appropriations Law (3-Day)
FQN 406	Contract Negotiation Strategies & Techniques (5-Day)
FQN 413	Performance Based Acquisition (3-Day)
FQN 425	Simplified Acquisition Procedures (5-Day)
FQN 445	Source Selection (5-Day)
<b>FAC-COR Level II</b>	
FCR 201	FAC-COR Level 2

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAC-P/PM Training Program Goes Modular!

FAC-P/PM
Entry Level
<b>FPM 120 A&amp;B: Acquisition Fundamentals of Project and Program Management I (min 42 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 121: Acquisition Fundamentals of Project and Program Management II (min 38 hrs)</b>
<i>OR</i>
<b>FPM 131: Fundamentals of Project and Program Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 132: Fundamentals of Contracting (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 133: Fundamentals of Business, Cost, and Financial Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 134: Fundamentals of Leading Projects and Programs (min 16 hrs)</b>
Mid-Level
<b>FPM 231: Applications in Project and Program Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 232: Applications in Contracting (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 233: Applications in Business, Cost, and Financial Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 234: Applied Leadership in Projects and Programs (min 16 hrs)</b>
Senior Level
<b>FPM 331: Progressive Concepts in Program Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 332: Progressive Contracting Strategies for Programs (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 333: Progressive Business, Cost, and Financial Management (min 24 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 334: Progressive Leadership in Program Management (min 16 hrs)</b>
IT Core-Plus Specialization
<b>FPM 511: IT Project Management (min 32 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 512: IT Management and Resources (min 32 hrs)</b>
<b>FPM 513: IT Operations and Security (min 32 hrs)</b>

Program and Project Managers (P/PMs) are relied on to develop accurate government requirements, define measurable performance standards, and manage life-cycle activities to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved. Skilled, competent, and professional P/PMs are essential to the success of critical agency missions. Given the importance of this function, it is vital that acquisition workforce members easily understand the training requirements of the Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM). For this reason, FAI is working diligently to add clarity and simplify the process of earning a FAC-P/PM by developing a new FAC-P/PM training delivery course contract package and establishing a plan—a “modular” approach—to standardize P/PM training requirements.

The current certification training policy is built around the FAC-P/PM competency models ([FAC-P/PM Core Competency Model](#) and [FAC-P/PM-IT Core-Plus Competency Model](#)) and include a range of 80 to 120 training hours that are required per certification level as opposed to a set number of hours. As a result, many members of the workforce have been confused on what training courses to take and which courses will actually qualify to meet certification requirements. Although the current competency path is still available, FAI will seek recommendations from the [FITARA IT PM Improvement Initiative Integrated Project Team #4 \(Improve, Integrate, and Simplify Competency Models\)](#) to implement a modularized course construct that will make it easier for the workforce to know which courses to take, or those vendor courses that are FAI-verified, to satisfy the FAC-P/PM and IT training requirements for certification.

With that in mind, FAI’s modular approach will focus on standardizing the P/PM training courses per the modules in the table to the left.

Be sure to check [FAI.gov](#) and in [FAITAS](#) for the new P/PM contract award announcements and the class schedule later this spring!

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Three New Knowledge Nugget Videos Are Now Available!

FAI is pleased to announce that three new Knowledge Nugget videos are now available in the [FAI Media Library](#):

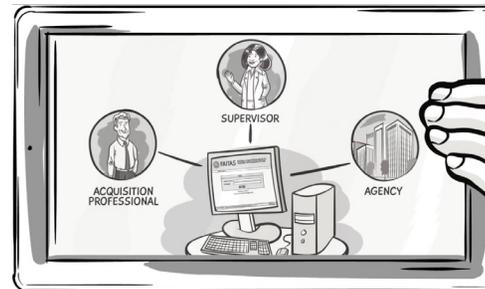
- [“FAITAS in 3 Minutes”](#) – An overview of the capabilities of the FAITAS website and how you can use the integrated career management system to track and manage your training and also obtain and maintain your certifications, warrants, and continuous learning achievements requirements.
- [“The Role of a Contracting Officer’s Representative \(COR\)”](#) – Hear about the duties, responsibilities, and limitations of a COR and recognize the characteristics of a successful Contracting Officer’s Representative. CORs manage the daily operations of many projects and programs to deliver the best value for the American taxpayer!
- [“Category Management”](#) – Learn about the elements of Category Management and recognize its place in the Federal government, including how to access the [Common Acquisition Platform](#) (known as the “Acquisition Gateway” and “Hallways”) that organize common products and services into categories for easier navigation and to access expertise, intelligence, and data. Category Management builds upon strategic sourcing and other smart buying strategies to deliver better value for American taxpayers!

As a reminder, Knowledge Nuggets are quick bursts of information presented in an entertaining format as a way to introduce new concepts or hot topics, answer fundamental questions, provide just-in-time guidance, or serve as a refresher on acquisition-related topics. The Knowledge Nuggets are less than ten minutes in length, and each one provides links to additional training resources so that viewers can obtain more information on the subject matter.

### Knowledge Nugget Topics

- What is a Program Manager (PM)? – **COMPLETE**
- The Many Facets of a Contracting Professional – **COMPLETE**
- The 5 W’s of an ACM (Who, What, Why, When, Where) – **COMPLETE**
- GSA Schedules and Discounts – **COMPLETE**
- FAITAS in 3 Minutes – **COMPLETE**
- The Role of a Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR)? – **COMPLETE**
- Category Management Overview – **COMPLETE**
- Certified Cost & Price Data for Commercial Items
- Ten Tangible Techniques to Trim Time
- Big “A” – The 3 Legs of Acquisition

In  
Production



“FAITAS in 3 Minutes”  
Knowledge Nugget

“The Role of a Contracting Officer’s  
Representative (COR)”  
Knowledge Nugget



*Be sure to check out all of the Knowledge Nuggets in the [FAI Media Library](#), and keep an eye out for new releases!*

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAI Kicks Off 2016 with New Acquisition Seminars – Don't Miss Out!

The Federal acquisition workforce relies on FAI's Acquisition Seminars to learn relevant, timely, and applicable tips and techniques, develop acquisition skills and abilities, hear best practices from acquisition experts, and learn about emerging topics and trends. Acquisition Seminars are free, easy-to-access live webcasts for acquisition professionals to earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) without ever having to leave the office! Thousands of acquisition professionals took advantage of these recent Acquisition Seminars broadcast on [FAI.gov](http://FAI.gov):



"Lifting the Curtain – Can We Talk: Industry Day Conferences" Acquisition Seminar

**January 20, 2016:** "[Lifting the Curtain – Can We Talk: Industry Day Conferences](#)" – During this seminar, viewers heard from industry and government experts who discussed how to set-up and conduct a meaningful and well-defined industry day conference to ensure both sides, government and industry, engage in outcomes that are optimal.

**March 2, 2016:** "[Ten Tangible Techniques to Trim Time: Innovative Practices that Promote Acquisition Efficiencies](#)" – Rules, rules, and more rules and the "need for speed!" Sound familiar? Continuing resolutions, fiscal realities, more complex requirements, and contracting oversight add layers of complexity to

an already stressed Federal acquisition system. If this describes how you feel, then we hope you were able to join us for the "Ten Tangible Techniques to Trim Time" Acquisition Seminar. Our special presenters—Melissa Starinsky, FAI Director; and Leisa Bodway, Director, Acquisition Business & Services Group, Office of Acquisition & Grants Management (OAGM), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)—shared ten creative tips, tricks, and innovative practices, all of which are rooted in the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#) Guiding Principles, to do the following:

- Eliminate or reduce practices that aren't mandated by law, regulation, or local policy, that don't add value to the acquisition life cycle, or that haven't resulted from identified risk or vulnerability to the agency, and
- Streamline acquisition practices and improve efficiency in the Federal acquisition system.

### Ten Tangible Techniques

#1	Consider Releasing the Budget
#2	Designate CORs Only When Necessary
#3	Use FAR Part 15 Terms ONLY for FAR Part 15 Buys
#4	Option Periods are Not Required for IDIQ Contracts
#5	Establish an Appropriate Technical Evaluation Panel
#6	Keep Discussions Simple but Meaningful
#7	Do NOT Make Vendors Revise Their Technical Proposals to Reflect Negotiations
#8	Try True Negotiation Tactics
#9	Consider Releasing Technical and Price/Cost Proposals Simultaneously to Evaluation Team
#10	Keep File Documentation Appropriate

*In case you missed these or any of the previously recorded Acquisition Seminars, you can check them all out, including all related materials and resources, in the [FAI Media Library](#).*

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## FAI Kicks Off 2016 with New Acquisition Seminars (Cont'd)



“Ten Tangible Techniques to Trim Time” Acquisition Seminar

Interested in hearing and learning more from our speakers about what each technique entails and how you can apply them in your upcoming acquisitions? Watch the full “[Ten Tangible Techniques to Trim Time: Innovative Practices that Promote Acquisition Efficiencies](#)” Acquisition Seminar in the FAI.gov Media Library today!

### FAI Is Upgrading Its Webcast Service

***Make Sure You're Compatible!***

FAI is upgrading to the latest version of its webcasting service (Livestream) to comply with government standards. The change will take place in time for the April 13, 2016, Suspension & Debarment Acquisition Seminar. Please review the [Acquisition Seminar FAQs](#) for more information on meeting the minimum system requirements prior to attending!

If you haven't had a chance to catch one of our live Acquisition Seminars, there are plenty more opportunities for you to tune in, including the upcoming webcast, “[Suspension & Debarment – What Makes a Successful Meeting?](#)” The Suspension & Debarment seminar will broadcast live on Wednesday, April 13, at 1:00pm EDT. During this seminar, we will peek into the minds of the General Services Administration (GSA) and U.S. Air Force Suspension & Debarment Officials as they discuss, among other things, what they look for when they are determining a contractor's present responsibility. You will also have the opportunity to learn what goes on behind the scenes by observing a mock meeting between a contractor and a Suspension & Debarment Official.



If you haven't yet registered for this great, free webcast, don't delay! Check out FAI.gov for information on [how to register](#). You will receive one-and-a-half (1.5) CLPs for viewing, but advanced registration is required to earn CLPs!

Be sure to keep an eye out on [FAI.gov](#) for more information about all of the upcoming Acquisition Seminars!

*In case you missed these or any of the previously recorded Acquisition Seminars, you can check them all out, including all related materials and resources, in the [FAI Media Library](#).*

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Suspension & Debarment: What the Acquisition Workforce Needs to Know

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The acquisition workforce plays a vital role in the success of an agency's Suspension & Debarment (S&D) program. Contracting Officers (CONs), contract specialists, and Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) can help detect and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption in Federal contracting by reporting misconduct to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and to agency S&D Officials (SDOs). S&D are effective tools that SDOs use to protect the Federal government against doing business with contractors who have been deemed non-responsible under the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#). This article provides a brief overview of the S&D process, explains the acquisition workforce's role in the S&D process, and provides information about new laws and regulations in the S&D arena that affect the acquisition workforce.

### What Are Suspension and Debarment?

**Suspension:** As outlined under the [FAR 9.407](#), suspension is a temporary exclusion that is used only when the government needs immediate protection. Suspension is used when facts about the possible wrongdoing of a company or an individual doing business with the government (or who is reasonably expected to do business with the government in the future) are still being developed through an investigation or legal proceedings.

**Debarment:** As outlined under the [FAR 9.406](#), a debarment is an exclusion from Federal procurement and non-procurement programs for a specified period of time and is generally for a period of three years. Debarment is used when investigations or legal proceedings have concluded and result in either a civil judgment or a conviction.

### Why Take S&D Actions?

Federal agencies take S&D actions to protect the Federal government and taxpayers from fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption. S&D are not used for the punishment of a contractor or individual; rather, these actions are business decisions that take into account what is in the best interest of the government. When assessing a contractor's present responsibility, the SDO will evaluate whether or not the contractor's misconduct outweighs his or her honesty, integrity, and truthfulness. The SDO will make a determination as to whether the contractor or individual can be trusted to perform in accordance with the requirements of the contract and governing law and whether or not they are capable of conducting business in an ethical manner. Once an SDO takes action against a contractor or individual, the excluded contractor or individual will be listed on the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#), which is available to the public as well as other Federal agencies. Additionally, an S&D action by one agency's SDO is effective for all other Federal agencies.

### Who Can Be Suspended or Debarred?

Companies or individuals directly involved in wrongdoing that (1) have submitted offers for, have been awarded, or reasonably may submit offers for a government contract; or (2) reasonably may be expected to do business with the government as an agent or representative of another contractor (e.g., a former Federal employee or former elected official) can be suspended or debarred. For additional guidance about who can be suspended or debarred, see [FAR 9.403](#) and [FAR 9.406-5](#).

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*Thank you to Maria Swaby, Suspension & Debarment Official for the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), and Dylan Mooney, Integrity Officer in GSA's Suspension & Debarment Office, for submitting this article.*

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Suspension & Debarment (Cont'd)

The causes for S&D actions are presented in the following table:

FAR 9.406-2 Causes for Debarment	FAR 9.407-2 Causes for Suspension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain or performing a public contract or subcontract</li> <li>• Violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers</li> <li>• Commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property</li> <li>• Intentionally affixing a label bearing a "Made in America" inscription (or any inscription having the same meaning) to a product sold in or shipped to the United States or its outlying areas, when the product was not made in the United States or its outlying areas</li> <li>• Commission of any other offense indicating a lack of business integrity or business honesty that seriously and directly affects the present responsibility of a Government contractor or subcontractor</li> </ul>	<p>All FAR 9.406-2 Causes for debarment, in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violations of 41 U.S.C. chapter 81, Drug-Free Workplace</li> <li>• Delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds \$3,500. See the criteria at 9.406-2(b)(1)(v) for determination of when taxes are delinquent</li> <li>• Knowing failure by a principal, until 3 years after final payment on any Government contract awarded to the contractor, to timely disclose to the Government, in connection with the award, performance, or closeout of the contract or a subcontract thereunder, credible evidence of violation of Federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code; violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. 3729-3733); or significant overpayment(s) on the contract, other than overpayments resulting from contract financing payments as defined in 32.001</li> </ul>

### The Role of the Acquisition Workforce in S&D

As noted above, the acquisition workforce plays an integral role in the success of S&D programs by observing contractor conduct and performance and reporting any misconduct or serious/repeated performance deficiencies to the agency OIG or the SDO's office. Some agencies (e.g., Air Force) have regulations that require the flow of information from the acquisition community to the agency SDO office. Information should be exchanged as soon as circumstances permit to allow the SDO to take timely action to protect the government's inter-

ests. SDO offices will ensure government stakeholders are advised of actions and any outcome. Allegations are always taken seriously and are investigated by the agency OIG or Criminal Investigative Division. If substantiated through investigation, the SDO can take action with respect to the reported business or individual.

Similarly, Terminations for Cause/Default should be reported to the SDO's office as the underlying reason for the termination may also give rise to an S&D action. Terminations for Cause/Default must also be entered into the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System \(FAPIIS\)](#). It is important for all members of the acquisition team to communicate with each other when evaluating a contractor's performance. The CO, COR, and program manager should always complete meaningful past performance evaluations and include all relevant information so that they can be relied upon by other acquisition teams during future acquisitions. A history of failure to perform or unsatisfactory performance are causes for S&D action, but that history can only be developed via regular and meaningful past performance evaluations.

As previously mentioned, S&Ds are listed on SAM so that COs, and the entire government, are aware of all exclusions, which can either be a suspension, a proposed debarment, or a debarment. Please see the following for additional details and provisions of the FAR related to exclusions:

- [FAR Subpart 9.404 System for Award Management Exclusions](#)
- [FAR Subpart 9.405 Effect of listing](#)
- [FAR Subpart 9.405-1 Continuation of current contracts](#)
- [FAR Subpart 9.406-1\(c\) Debarment. General](#)

An important note to COs is that [FAR Subpart 9.405](#) explains you must check SAM twice: once when offers are received and once as close as possible to the time of award because contractors may be excluded between the time offers are received and the award is made. This is critical, as without this, the exclusion system does not work and the government is left unprotected.

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Suspension & Debarment (Cont'd)

Additionally, it is imperative you understand that SAM contains inactive records, which are prior and/or expired exclusions. These inactive records cannot be used to exclude a contractor from competition and should not be accessed by the acquisition workforce.

Finally, as an acquisition workforce member, your role is to also report instances of tax delinquency and Federal felony convictions within the preceding 24 months to the agency SDO's office. More details on the regulatory developments in this area are discussed below.

### New Developments in the S&D Field

An interim FAR rule, [Federal Acquisition Circular \(FAC\) 2005-85, FAR Case 2015-011, Item I – Prohibition on Contracting with Corporations with Delinquent Taxes or a Felony Conviction \(Interim\)](#), has been proposed to implement sections of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 to prohibit the Federal government from entering into contracts with any corporation having delinquent Federal tax liability or a Federal felony conviction within the prior 24 months, unless an agency SDO has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation or made a determination that further action is not necessary. This interim rule requires an offeror responding to a Federal solicitation to represent that it does or does not have any delinquent tax liability or any Federal felony convictions within the specified time period. When the offeror provides an affirmative response, the CO is required to request any additional information and notify the agency SDO, who will then consider if suspension or debarment action is necessary to protect the interests of the government.

[Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13673, Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces](#), is another new

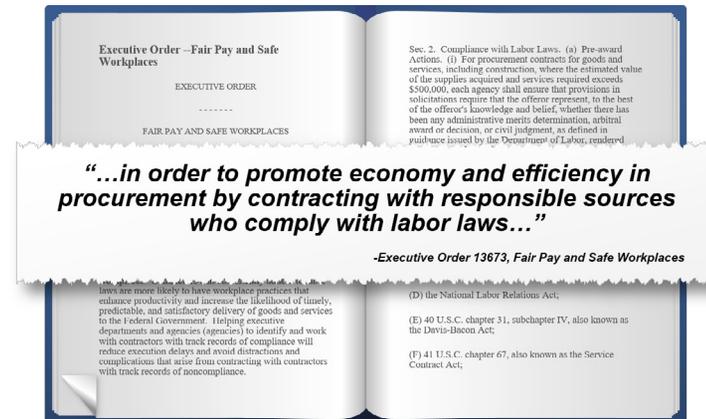
development in the S&D arena that the acquisition workforce should be cognizant of. In short, this E.O. was signed by President Barack Obama on July 31, 2014, as a means to increase efficiency and cost savings in the work performed

by parties that contract with the Federal government by ensuring that the parties are responsible and in compliance with Federal labor laws. Cases of non-compliance with labor laws are to be referred to the SDO when the contractor's

actions show a lack of business ethics and integrity, such as a demonstrated pattern of serious or willful violations, continued violations, or numerous violations with no effort to take remedial action.

For more information about the E.O., check out this [short video on Acquisition.gov](#) (described on the next page) and read the following article, "[Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order Brings Changes.](#)"

In conclusion, the acquisition workforce and agency S&D offices have the shared responsibility to increase the protection of the government's interests and save taxpayer dollars. Working in partnership together, we can accomplish this goal!



For more information on GSA's Suspension & Debarment Program, please contact [William Schmidt](#), Deputy Director, GSA Suspension & Debarment Division. You can also visit the [GSA Suspension & Debarment Division](#) website for additional information.

# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces Executive Order Brings Changes

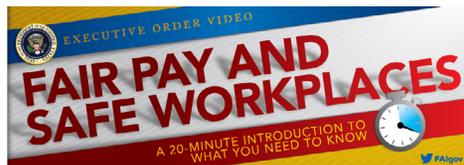
On July 31, 2014, President Obama signed [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13673, Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces](#), to improve Federal contractors' compliance with labor laws and ensure they are responsible in providing basic workplace protections. The E.O. requires prospective and existing Federal contractors to disclose labor law violations and establishes how Federal agencies should consider labor law violations when awarding contracts of \$500,000 or more.

Most recently, in May 2015, the Department of Labor (DOL) issued proposed guidance and the Federal Acquisition Regulatory (FAR) Council published proposed changes to the FAR for implementing the E.O. While the final implementation guidance and FAR rule are still under development to ensure they are manageable and clear, the DOL, FAR Council, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have worked with FAI to develop a [short awareness video](#) that introduces workforce members to the basic features of the E.O. and prepares them for the FAR changes that will be finalized and published later this year.

The goal of the [Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces E.O. awareness video](#) is to provide an understanding of the following:

- The general provisions of the [Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces E.O.](#),
- The responsibilities of the Contracting Officer (CON) and other agency officials in meeting the new requirements, and
- The responsibilities of current and prospective contractors and subcontractors.

Make sure that you are prepared to move forward when the final FAR rule and DOL guidance is released! The E.O., related guidance from DOL, the FAR proposed rule, along with other related reference material can be found at [Acquisition.gov](#).



## New Activity Address Codes in the FPDS - Are You in the Know!?

Activity Address Codes (AAC) are used to identify awarding and funding offices—the smallest organizational units in an agency with direct responsibility for awarding or funding most of the procurement actions—and serve as a uniform way to identify organizations in Federal agencies.

As of March 31, 2016, the [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) Subpart 4.6](#) now requires that all agencies record a new awarding and funding office AAC in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). The new AACs will serve as a way to (1) provide even greater consistency in how data is collected and reported and (2) allow for more transparency for both the public and for Federal agencies using such award data for spending management purposes, such as category management.

The changes to the format of the AACs and, in some cases, the names of the offices (depending on your agency implementation) took effect in FPDS on April 1, 2016. Furthermore, the new codes will also be included in the changes to the Procurement Instrument Identifiers (PIID) that must be in place by October 1, 2017, according to [FAR Subpart 4.1601\(b\)](#).



In order to help you understand the new AAC guidelines, FAI, in close consultation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has developed a short awareness training video that does the following:

- Defines AAC and its impact on the acquisition community,
- Explains your role and responsibility in selecting the correct AAC, and
- Identifies the implications of selecting the wrong AAC.

Check out the AAC training video on [Acquisition.gov](#) today to ensure that you are in compliance with the new FAR policy and to learn more about the importance of AACs!

# HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

## FY16 Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey (AWCS): Experience Is the Best Teacher

Thank you to the nearly 14,000 acquisition workforce members who participated in the FY16 Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey (AWCS)! The FY16 AWCS is the fifth iteration of the biennial assessment that collects self-reported competency proficiency data across the three primary functional areas (i.e., FAC-C, FAC-COR, and FAC-P/PM). FAI received responses from all 23 civilian Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Act agencies as well as 41 small agencies.

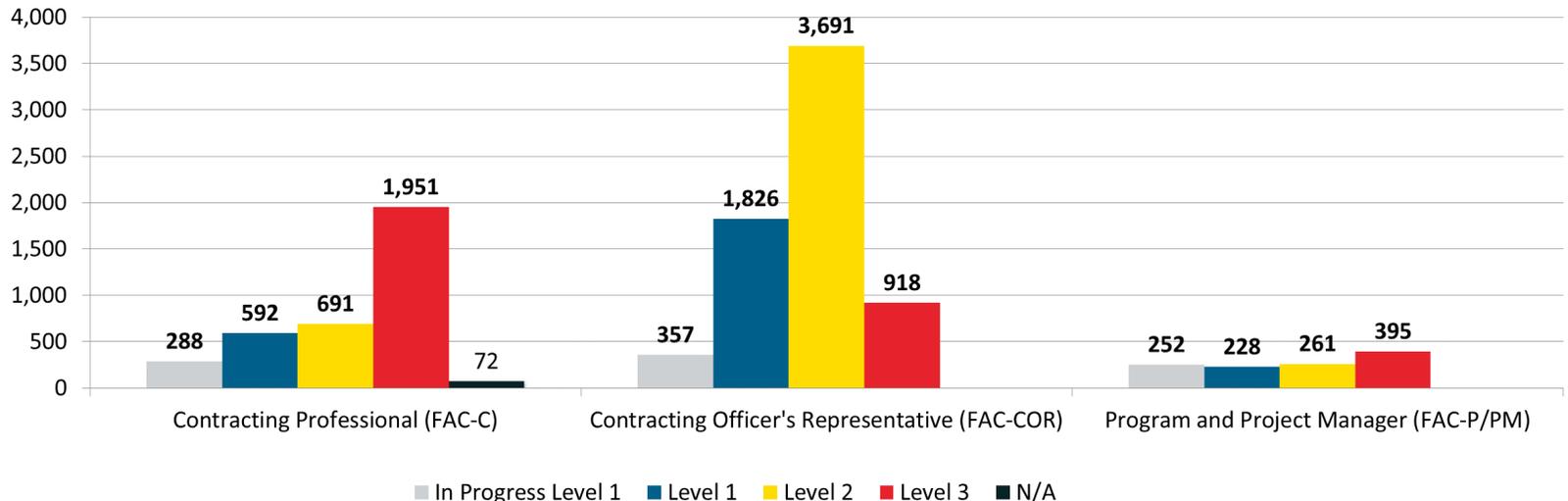
The AWCS is one of several indicators used by FAI and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) to do the following:

- Identify the strengths and priority training needs of the Federal civilian acquisition workforce,
- Improve the acquisition human capital planning actions and activities to develop an agile and qualified acquisition workforce, and
- Gauge the developmental progress of the acquisition community in targeted areas.

FAI has conducted a detailed analysis of each competency and its aligned performance outcomes. Comparisons are made across competencies, certification levels, and survey iterations. Despite a slight decrease in years of experience, the FY16 proficiency rat-

ings across all technical and business competencies remained remarkably similar to the FY14 results. FAI also prepares agency-specific workbooks for each of the 23 CFO Act agencies, which enables the agencies to assess and track their own workforce at the agency and bureau levels. Agency acquisition leaders are currently using their agency-specific AWCS results to inform their Acquisition Human Capital Plans and related workforce development initiatives.

A significant theme in the AWCS results is the critical importance of experience in strengthening proficiency. As you may expect, the leading indicator of proficiency across all competencies is the amount of time you spend performing related activities. The highest rated competency for FAC-C is "Determination of How Best to Satisfy Customer Requirements"; for FAC-COR its "Effective Inspec-

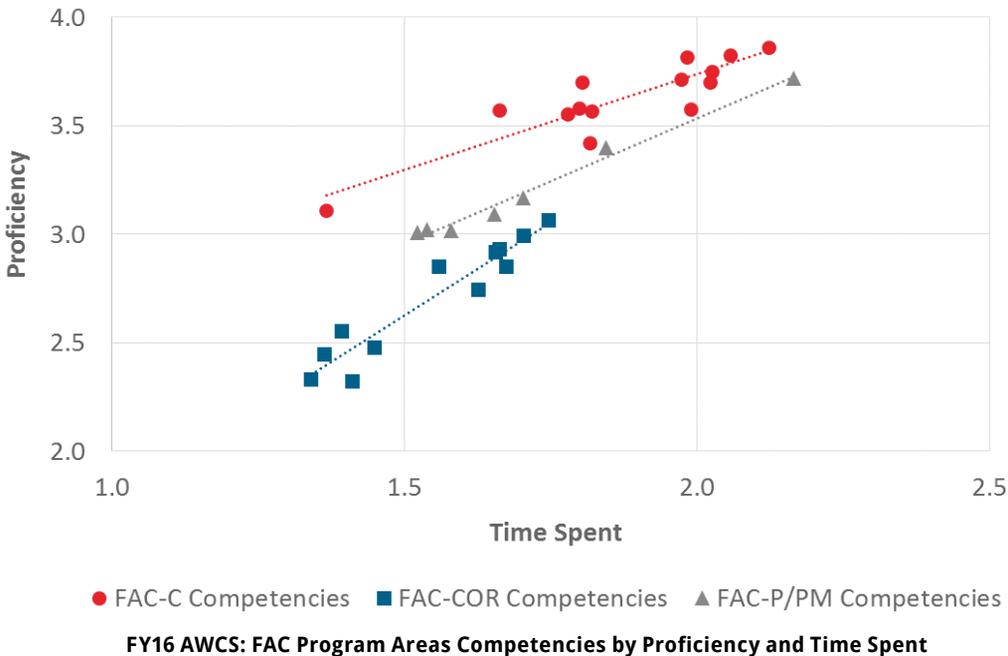


FY16 AWCS: Total Responses by Primary Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) Level

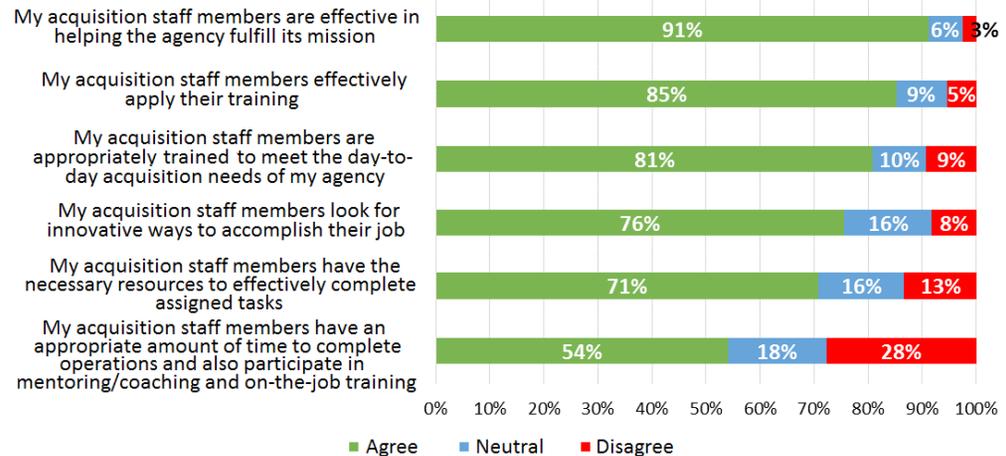
# HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

## FY16 AWCS: Experience Is the Best Teacher (Cont'd)

tion & Acceptance”; and for FAC-P/PM its “Leadership.” Each of these competencies were also reported as the most frequently used by the respective FAC program areas. Conversely, the least frequently used competencies were rated lowest by the respective program areas, including “Protests” for FAC-C, “Effective Pre-Award Communication” for FAC-COR, and “Test and Evaluation” for FAC-P/PM. As demonstrated in the figure below, a positive relationship exists between proficiency and time spent across all three primary functional areas.



Another indicator of the importance of experience is that retirement-eligible acquisition professionals reported the highest levels of proficiency across all FAC technical competencies. This reveals an immediate need for future-focused succession planning strategies, especially for the FAC-C workforce.



**FY16 AWCS: Acquisition Workforce Supervisor Questions Agreement Distribution**

The AWCS survey results suggest that learning through personal experience (e.g., on-the-job training) and the experience of others (e.g., mentoring, coaching) are critical in developing the Federal acquisition workforce. However, only about half of the 2,000 supervisors who completed the “Supervisory” section of the ACWS agreed with the statement, “My acquisition staff members have an appropriate amount of time to complete operations and also participate in mentoring/coaching and on-the-job training.” The Federal acquisition community should take a more strategic and structured approach to developing the capability of the workforce through experiential learning.

*The FY16 AWCS Report will be available on [FAI.gov](http://FAI.gov) later this spring!*

# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Have You Used the Contracting Professionals Smart Guide (CPSG) Yet?

Contracting professionals now have a reference tool that is just one click away! If you haven't accessed the [Contracting Professionals Smart Guide \(CPSG\)](#) yet, then what are you waiting for? Check it out on FAI.gov today!

The CPSG is organized around 51 [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#) driven activities that support the two primary areas in procurement: Contract Formation and Contract Administration. Each activity lists the tasks involved in performing it, includes flow charts that visually demonstrate the tasks, and provides links to relevant FAI and Defense Acquisition University (DAU) training courses where additional material, resources, and information can be found.

In order to keep the Guide current with emerging guidance, the [Federal Acquisition Circular \(FAC\) Update Tracker](#), also located on FAI.gov, provides a list of all the Circulars and FAR Cases (in reverse chronological order) that have resulted in updates to the CPSG since its release on November 2, 2015.

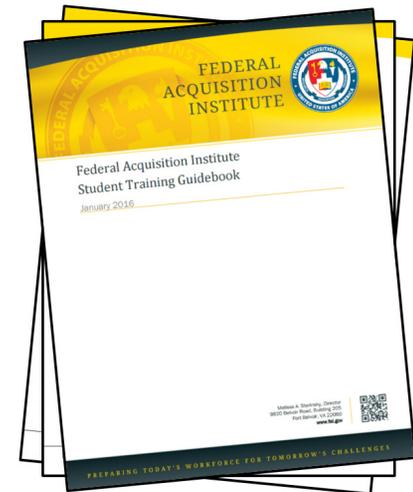
FAI is always interested in ways to improve the Guide to make it more useful for the contracting workforce. Check it out and let us know what you think by providing feedback via the [FAI Guides Feedback Form](#).

The PDF version of the CPSG, the FAC Update Tracker, and the FAI Guides Feedback Form are all available on the [FAI.gov Guides & Manuals](#) page, under the Resources tab. Thousands of Federal contracting professionals are already using the Guide, and FAI hopes that you will take advantage of this valuable tool too!

## New FAI Student Training Guidebook

FAI is pleased to announce the launch of a new [FAI Student Training Guidebook](#), now available on the [FAI.gov Guides & Manuals](#) page. The Guidebook serves as a resource for all civilian agency workforce students, acquisition career and training managers, training and development vendors, and others who participate in FAI-provided training to ensure that all parties are fully aware of the policies and expectations FAI has established for their training.

The Guidebook features topics such as academic integrity and standards of conduct, accommodation for the disabled, attendance policies, inclement weather and emergency situations, and virtual instructor-led training. FAI's goal is to ensure each student has a pleasant, informative, and thought-provoking training experience, and we hope this Guidebook will serve as a useful resource in helping each student and instructor understand their vital role in successfully achieving this goal.



Navigating to the "Guides & Manuals" Page on FAI.gov

# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Take Advantage of These Services Acquisition Tools!

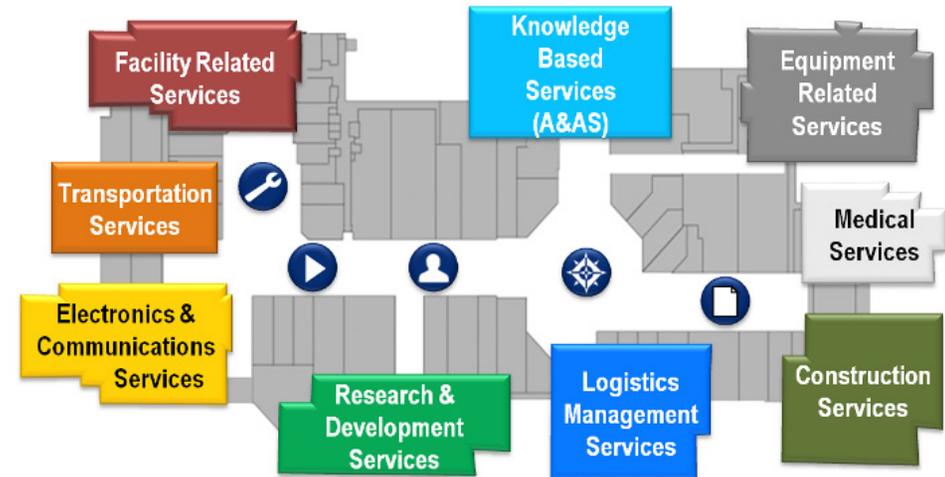
Looking for help to create your performance-based acquisition solutions? If so, then you absolutely need to check out the free resources available in the Defense Acquisition University's (DAU's) [Service Acquisition Mall \(SAM\)](#). Among the wealth of information and exciting features found in the site, the SAM:

- Offers tools, videos, samples, examples, and templates to help you create your performance-based service acquisition requirements,
- Provides extensive guidance on the Seven-Step Acquisition Process, and
- Houses the Automated Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT) Suite, a collection of tools that helps you build strategic elements of your acquisition documents and then generates your work products in MS Word format for further editing.

### Navigating the Mall

The SAM, also referred to as the Mall, is set up to enhance your experience in the world of developing Performance Work Statements (PWS). The Visitor Center offers a short video overview of the site, and the Mall Directory provides a full list of all the content the Mall has to offer; these are good places to start if you're new to the SAM. Here are some of the other key features that will help you navigate the Mall:

- **Wings and Stores** – There are nine “wings” of the Mall that each represent a different service category. Each wing provides an overview of the service, samples and examples relevant to the service category, and a variety of “stores” that drill down to more specific services of the overarching category.
- **Specialty Kiosks** – The “kiosks” offer valuable information, data, and instruction in the form of training videos and downloadable tools, templates, and examples to help develop your skill set and maximize your Mall experience.
- **Newsstand** – The “newsstand” provides news and updates regarding the SAM to inform you of additions or changes to the site.



Map of DAU's Service Acquisition Mall (SAM)

### The Seven-Step Acquisition Process

Acquiring a service contract requires the application of the Seven-Step Acquisition Process, which includes (1) forming the acquisition team, (2) reviewing the current strategy, (3) conducting market research, (4) preparing the requirements definition, (5) developing the acquisition strategy, (6) executing the strategy, and (7) managing performance.

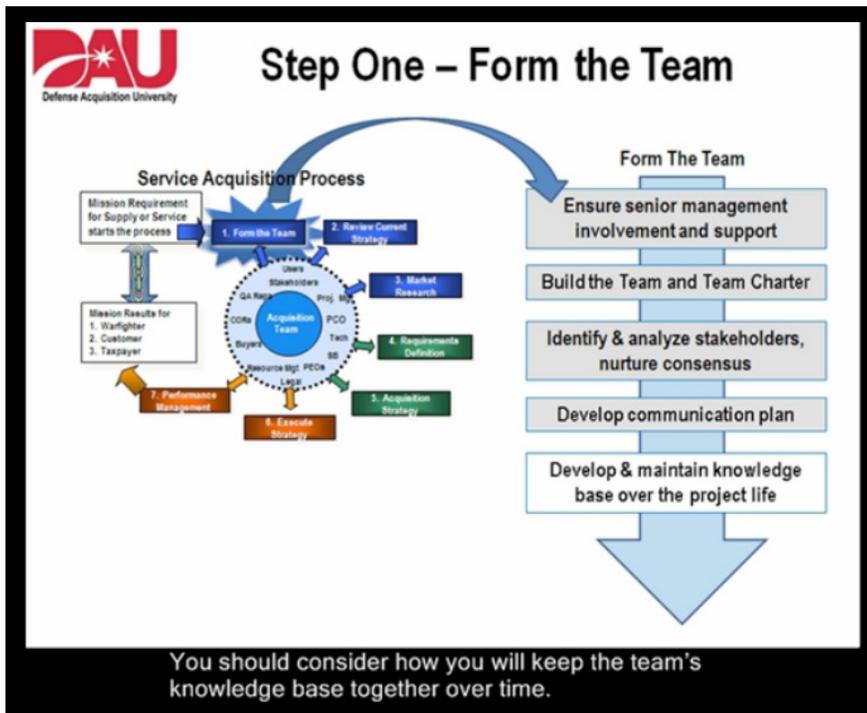
SEVEN STEPS TO THE SERVICE ACQUISITION PROCESS						
STEP ONE	STEP TWO	STEP THREE	STEP FOUR	STEP FIVE	STEP SIX	STEP SEVEN
Form the Team	Review Current Strategy	Market Research	Requirements Definition	Acquisition Strategy	Execute Strategy	Performance Management

Seven-Step Acquisition Process from the Service Acquisition Mall (SAM)

# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## Take Advantage of These Services Acquisition Tools! (Cont'd)

To help you better understand and apply each step of this process, the Mall offers an overview of all seven steps and then specific videos, templates, and samples and examples of work products for each of the individual steps.



Sample Video from Step One ("Form the Team") of the Seven-Step Acquisition Process from the Service Acquisition Mall (SAM)

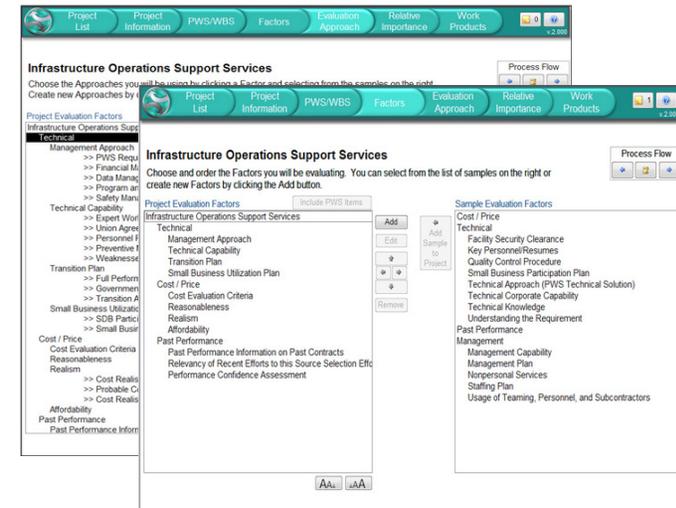
Completing these seven steps sequentially will enable your acquisition team to gain a better understanding of the Service Acquisitions Process while building an effective PWS, and this should increase the likelihood that you will be able to deliver the performance results your customers need.

### The Automated Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT)

The SAM is also the home of the Automated Requirements Roadmap Tool (ARRT) Suite. This is a free collection of tools that automates the Seven-Step Acquisition Process, thereby generating Performance Work Statements (PWS), Quality Assurance Surveillance Plans (QASP), Performance Requirement Summaries (PRS), and Evaluation Factors for you—all of which are necessary for a successful services contract. You can download the [ARRT Suite](#) directly from the Mall.

These are just a few of the exciting features and highlights of DAU's SAM. Be sure to visit the Mall today to check out these and the many other valuable resources and tools that can help you write Performance Work Statements!

But wait, there's more! The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is also working on new tools to help the acquisition workforce develop PWSs for services. As part of their Acquisition Gateway, the [Common Acquisition Platform](#) is going to host a repository of samples and tools that can be used across the Federal government when procuring services; look for these resources to start becoming available in the fall of 2016.



Screenshots from the ARRT Suite

# ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Getting to Know Pamela Kontz, Acquisition Career Manager, U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA)



Pamela Kontz, ACM, SSA

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

I began working for SSA in October, 1999 as a contract specialist. Over the last 16 years, I've worked as a contract specialist, procurement analyst, supervisory procurement analyst, and senior technical advisor.

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

I began my Federal career as a contract specialist at the Department of Education in 1997.

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

Over the last few years, we've put substantial effort into developing our certification program for Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), and subsequently educating our CORs—existing and future—about the program and our expectations. My office has also worked closely with SSA's Office of Learning to bring in a variety of quality training classes, determine which training opportunities available through the agency's online Learning Management System would be beneficial for our CORs, and bring virtual classroom training to our CORs who are located in our various regions. I believe the efforts of all involved have strengthened the FAC-COR program at our agency.

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

I worked for several years as a policy analyst, so I'm comfortable handling questions and undertaking projects that are clearly policy-related. For exam-

ple, writing guidance for others to use to navigate them through the certification process or providing briefings on policy that is related to the various FAC programs are things that I find relatively easy to do. However, resolving problems or answering questions that lie in the realm of human resources are a bit more daunting for me. Fortunately, there are experts at my agency who have always been more than willing to assist me with these types of issues.

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

I'm an intrinsically motivated individual, and I find it very rewarding to feel that I've assisted someone or taught them something new. I'm fortunate that in my role as ACM I'm frequently given the opportunity to do both.

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

Again, I can think of several, and they are not necessarily unique to the job of an ACM. These include (in no particular order of importance) willingness to expand your knowledge-base and continuously learn new things; creative problem-solving; patience; the ability to communicate effectively with individuals who have diverse work-related backgrounds; and the ability to keep your sense of humor through just about anything. And, although I said these were in no particular order of importance, I do believe that last skill is paramount.



# ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Getting to Know Pamela Kontz, ACM, SSA (Cont'd)

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

FAI does an amazing job of keeping both the ACMs and the acquisition workforce informed of issues that affect them and issuing guidance that is both helpful and engaging (e.g., the [Contracting Professionals Smart Guide](#)). I really don't have any suggestions for improvement.

### 8. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow Acquisition Career Managers?

It can be very easy to get bogged down in the minutia of our daily activities as ACMs, but try not to lose sight of the big picture: the efforts that you take to develop the acquisition workforce will pay off in the long run by ensuring the government's acquisition dollars are used effectively and efficiently.

### 9. What goals do you have for your acquisition workforce?

While I think they work well together overall, I would like to see even greater coordination and cooperation among the three segments of the acquisition workforce: Contracting Officers (CONs), CORs, and Program and Project Managers (P/PMs). In particular, I'm interested in engaging P/PMs throughout the acquisition process. At SSA, this will be a bit of a culture change as we have historically focused our attention on cooperation between CONs and CORs; the P/PM will be a new addition to the team.

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

If I answered this question, then everyone would know my secrets, and I'd lose that air of mystique I try so hard to maintain. :)



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](#)

