



Federal Acquisition *Insight*

September 2004 Edition

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From the Desk of the Director

by Gloria Sochon

The reforms of the 1990's brought new tools and streamlined processes to federal acquisition. These provided flexibility and reduced the time needed to form business arrangements, improving our ability to support our agencies' missions. They did not, however, dismiss the need for effective acquisition planning, meeting requirements for competition, or responsible fiduciary management. To promote the appropriate use of its multiagency contracts, the General Services Administration initiated the "Get It Right" plan. As part of this plan, GSA's interim Chief Acquisition Officer Karl Reichelt and the Federal Supply Service are promoting training on the effective use of schedule contracts. Look inside for information on the online and classroom training options available. For more information on GSA's "Get It Right" plan, visit www.gsa.gov/acquisitionpolicy. Responsible use of the flexibilities will ensure that we retain them for years to come.

Other news in this issue on current developments and training opportunities to help you improve your knowledge and skills include:

- Guidance for agencies on making deposits to the acquisition workforce training fund established by the Services Acquisition Reform Act.
- The Defense Acquisition University's launch of updated contracting courses and the replacement of CON 101, Fundamentals of Contracting.
- How the Procurement Acquisition Center of Excellence at Bowie State University will foster recruitment efforts in our profession.
- How the Acquisition Center of Excellence on Services will facilitate the building of services knowledge.
- Celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.
- New online training on green purchasing.

Acquisition Workforce Training Fund: GSA and OMB Issue Instructions to Agencies

In a memo dated July 12, 2004, the General Services Administration (GSA) sent payment instructions to all non-Department of Defense (DOD) agency heads for crediting the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund (AWTF) by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2004. The AWTF was established as an outcome of the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA). The AWTF is managed by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) and is financed by deposits of five percent of the fees collected by non-DOD executive agencies under governmentwide contracts. FAI will use the fund to develop training resources needed to enable federal acquisition professionals to transition to a service oriented and technology driven federal market.

Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949;

- Governmentwide contracts for the acquisition of information technology as defined in section 11101 of Title 40, U.S.C., and multi-agency acquisition contracts for such technology authorized by section 11314;
- Multiple-award schedule contracts entered into by the Administrator of General Services.

FAI coordinates with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), the FAI Board of Directors and the Chief Acquisition Officers (CAO) Council to identify

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The memorandum from the GSA Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, referenced in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo M-04-21, requested that all non-DOD executive agencies report and deposit fees generated by governmentwide contracts to the AWTF account. The fund will be credited with five percent of the fees collected by non-DOD agencies under the following contracts:

- Governmentwide task and delivery-order contracts entered into under sections 303H and 303I of the

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training needs and set priorities for use of the fund.

OFPP provides guidance on Administration initiatives and new issues in acquisition. The FAI Board of Directors represents a variety of agencies and provides input on agencies' needs. The Board works to ensure that FAI fulfills its statutory responsibilities, fulfills certain duties for the Administrator of Federal Procurement Policy as they relate to FAI operations, and to ensure that OFPP's priorities are being addressed. The Chief Acquisition Officers Council, formerly the Federal Acquisition Council, provides information on concerns that cut across agencies. In particular, the Human Capital Working Group works to implement CAO Council initiatives in that area.

Several top-level projects have been identified for FAI training initiatives. First is collaborative work with the Defense Acquisition Agency (DAU) to develop a course on services acquisition and to update CON courses.

For more information on the AWTF, please contact Linda Ott at linda.ott@gsa.gov. ■

Changes in CON Courses on FAI Online University

Important changes are now in effect to the way students can register for CON 100 level courses at the FAI Online University (www.faionline.com). The CON101 and CON104 courses are being replaced with CON110 Mission Support Planning, CON111 Mission Strategy Execution, CON112 Mission Performance Assessment and CON120 Mission Focused Contracting. The new track of contracting courses develops a foundational understanding of contracting basics while also focusing on the business advisors' role in shaping successful mission outcomes.

Effective September 1, 2004, new enrollments in CON101 have been halted. However, if you are already enrolled in CON101 you will be able to complete the course and also complete CON104. Between September 1, 2004 and October 1, 2004, CON110 will be opened for limited enrollment to ensure that all technical issues have been resolved.

The three new online courses CON110, CON111 and CON112 are approximately 30 seat hours per course. This provides for better time management. DAU will allow 60 days to complete each course. For DOD students the three on-line courses will be followed by a two week in resident course – CON120. This course will provide students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from the online courses.

For students just starting the level one certification track, DAU and FAI recommend that you start the new track beginning with CON110. For DOD students seeking level one certification once you are in the CON101 track, you will also be required to complete CON104. To develop the same contracting knowledge and skills in both the DOD and civilian agency workforce, the new contract series will be fully open for enrollment starting October 1, 2004.

For more information or for questions regarding FAI Online University, please e-mail questions@fai.gov. ■

Celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program During National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October!

By Stephanie Lesko, Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled

It's not too early to prepare for National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is the perfect time to celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program.

Created in 1938, this unique federal procurement program employs over 42,000 individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities, enabling them to lead more productive and independent lives. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy quality products and services at a fair market price from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities.

According to President Bush, "All of our citizens should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and freedom. Every October, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month, to recognize the talents, skills, and dedication of disabled Americans who are a vital part of our workforce." Not only are people who are blind or have other severe disabilities a vital part of the country's workforce, under the JWOD Program they are also essential suppliers of SKILCRAFT® and other JWOD products and services to the federal government and U.S. Armed Forces.

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“Get It Right” Plan and Training Updates

By Teresa Elbin, Federal Supply Service

The Federal Supply Service (FSS) considers training critical to the successful, cost effective acquisition of services and products under FSS' various acquisition programs and is committed to providing users with the knowledge and tools necessary to perform best-value acquisitions. FSS is working closely with the GSA Interim Chief Acquisition Officer, Karl Reichelt. Reichelt is committed to the “Get It Right” plan and reiterated that, “GSA takes seriously the trust placed in us to properly execute and manage government acquisition activities.”

Training our customers on how to properly and efficiently use FSS acquisition vehicles is also identified as a key component of the General Services Administration's (GSA) “Get It Right” plan. In support of this plan, FSS is taking action on a number of fronts to support the training needs of our customers.

Online Training

In recognition of the critical role that training plays in educating customers, FSS launched an expanded website (<http://www.fsstraining.gsa.gov>) in March 2003 to support the training needs of government acquisition professionals and industry partners called the FSS Center for Acquisition Excellence Virtual Campus. The FSS Virtual Campus currently focuses on GSA Schedules training but is being expanded to be more representative of the totality of customer training needs, including training in using Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) and the FSS Global Supply Program.

Currently, the FSS Virtual Campus offers the following courses: Using GSA Schedules–Customers; Cooperative Purchasing Program Course; How To Become a Contractor–GSA Schedules Program course; and Basic Contracting for the GSA Schedules Program–FSS Personnel.

As a result of recent FAR changes, all of these courses are currently being updated to reflect the new procedures in place for placing orders against Schedule contracts. In the interim, FSS has posted a seminar on the recent Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4 revision. In addition, access to the “Using GSA Schedules-Customers” course was recently expanded to include vendors so that the FSS contractor community can educate themselves about the proper procedures for placing Schedule orders.

In addition, the FSS Virtual Campus contains numerous seminars and audio-visual presentations, including a seminar that covers the recent final rule on the Cooperative Purchasing Program for state and local governments for placing information technology orders against GSA Schedule 70 contracts.

The site has several tools under development. The FSS Virtual Campus is a new application tool that will provide training to customers on how to develop a performance-based statement of work (SOW). This tool will supplement the knowledge-based training provided in the classroom course entitled “Performance Based Service Contracting” by giving students a chance to apply that knowledge in the actual development of a performance-based SOW.

Also under development is a customer agency self-assessment tool on how to properly use the GSA Schedules Program. This tool is intended as a quick, handy reference and will function as a checklist to guide acquisition personnel through the appropriate steps to consider when placing orders under Schedules contracts. This customer self-assessment tool supplements the more comprehensive GSA Owner's Manual, which provides detailed information on using the GSA Schedules program. The Owner's Manual is currently under revision and will be posted to the FSS Virtual Campus when complete.

Another valuable training resource that will be added to the FSS Virtual Campus is a knowledge management center. This center will house a multitude of information about FSS acquisition programs and will capture the knowledge of experienced employees so that all who access it will benefit from the shared knowledge. The initial development of the knowledge management center will include the posting of revisions to the existing “Frequently Asked Questions” about the FSS Schedules program.

The FSS Virtual Campus offers many benefits to customers in that the training is available 365 days a year, 24/7. The training is self-paced, allowing students to start and stop as their schedules permit and is offered at no cost. Courses also allow students to earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

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FAI Partners: Bowie State University Procurement Acquisition Center of Excellence

Helping Set the PACE in Federal Acquisition Procurement Acquisition Center of Excellence (PACE)

By Dr. Shelton Rhodes, Bowie State University



The Procurement Acquisition Center of Excellence (PACE) will host its opening ceremony and seminar, *Opportunities in Federal Acquisition*, on September 22, 2004 at Bowie State University (BSU). PACE was established to help support the Federal Acquisition Institute's (FAI) mission to promote and foster the development of a professional acquisition workforce across the federal government. Specifically, PACE will focus on increasing and enhancing FAI's visibility among Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU).

Through the leadership of Dr. Shelton Rhodes, PACE Project Director and Chair of Department of Management, Marketing, and Public Administration at BSU, PACE will design and implement activities and initiatives that will help ensure students' talents and skills are directly linked to acquisition competencies. In addition, PACE will support FAI's research agenda by leading appropriate research projects, presenting findings at professional conferences, and publishing articles.

PACE will be working with both the federal and public sectors and academia to ensure it establishes a strong, appropriate and exciting vision that supports the federal procurement and acquisition workforce. In addition, PACE will develop outreach and public awareness that will highlight its vision and mission. Finally, PACE will design interesting educational and research opportunities to entice students and engage professionals. Currently, PACE is working with FAI to establish a PACE Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG will serve as a think-partner and resource by providing direction and professional support.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Shelton Rhodes, PACE Project Director at PACE@bowiestate.edu. ■

National Disability Employment Awareness Month *(continued from page 2)*

These workers supply everything from office supplies, such as pens and notepads; military unique items, such as chemical protective suits and first aid kits; food items that support government international relief feeding programs; and services, such as janitorial/custodial, food services, call center operations and digital imaging.

National Disability Employment Awareness month provides federal employees with the opportunity to recognize those individuals within their agencies who support the JWOD Program and to learn more about JWOD capabilities that meet their procurement needs.

There are a number of different activities federal employees may consider in order to recognize the JWOD Program, both in October or any time throughout the year.

Please contact the JWOD Program if you require any assistance in planning a JWOD celebration during National Disability Employment Awareness Month at jwodworks@jwod.gov or visit www.jwod.gov for more information. ■



Online Green Purchasing Training Course Available Soon

By Dana Arnold, Office of the Federal Environmental Executive

This fall, the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) GoLearn web site will offer an online green purchasing training course. This fun and instructional course for contracting personnel, purchase card holders, facilities managers, and fleet managers provides an introduction to the federal "green" purchasing program. Completion of the course satisfies the Executive Order 13101 requirement that agencies provide training to contracting and program personnel.

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Green Purchasing Training Course *(continued from page 4)*

Understanding the myriad green purchasing programs and what is required of purchasers can be very frustrating for the acquisition community. The federal government has statutory, executive order, Federal Acquisition Regulation, and individual agency requirements to purchase products with environmental and energy attributes. Also known as “green” purchasing, this program requires the purchasing of recycled content products, energy-efficient products and renewable energy technologies, alternative fuel vehicles and alternative fuels, biobased products, environmentally preferable products and services, and non-ozone depleting substances.

Using a combination of text, tests, and games, the course is organized into modules explaining why we’re buying “green,” the legal basics, what we are required to do, the different types of “green” products, where to buy them, roles and responsibilities, and required reporting. It also provides examples, resources, and many reference web sites. Individual modules can be used as refresher training in the future.

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE) developed the course in conjunction with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy, with generous support from OPM. It is designed to provide a basic understanding of green purchasing to enable contracting personnel and purchase card holders to help their agencies increase their sustainable environmental stewardship. OFEE will continue to offer classroom training for agency contracting personnel and purchase card holders as requested.

For more information about green purchasing, visit OFEE’s web site, www.ofee.gov, and click on Green Purchasing at the top of the homepage. ■



Right-sizing of the Integrated Acquisition Environment

By Lisa Cliff, Integrated Acquisition Environment, Office of Communications

The Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) is one of the 24 E-Gov initiatives under the President’s Management Agenda. IAE’s vision is to create a secure business environment that facilitates and supports cost-effective acquisition of goods and services in support of agency mission performance. It is part of the Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness portfolio that is focused on applying industry best practices to government successes by advancing agency partnering, citizen focus, and reduction of stovepipe systems.

Recently, the Acquisition Committee for E-Gov (ACE)—a sub-set of the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) and the governing body of the Integrated Acquisition Environment— met to approve the FY 2005-2006 budget. In light of resource constraints within the agencies that are the source of IAE funding, decisions were made to adjust the schedule and scope of the initiative. After a careful analysis including an evaluation of the existing systems’ value to the front line and whether or not the systems were required by statute or regulation, the CAO Council endorses the recommendations of the ACE.

The first two years of the IAE program were committed to analyzing and incorporating the acquisition needs of the federal community, eliminating and consolidating redundant systems, launching new improved systems, working across the federal enterprise to integrate the acquisition environment, standardizing data between disparate systems, and improving and aligning improved processes across multiple agencies. As a result, federal acquisition processes are on a steady road to improvement, and it is now time to revalidate IAE’s original blueprint.

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The Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE) for Services: Mission Focused Services

By Julia Wise, Procurement Analyst, GSA (on detail to Office of Federal Procurement Policy)

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) is establishing an Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE) for Services as required by the Service Acquisition Reform Act (SARA), Section 1431(b). The ACE will be an online central clearinghouse for service contracting government and industry best practices, policy and guidance, e-tools, as well as education and training opportunities.

The ACE for Services will provide value to the acquisition community in the following ways:

- Provide a one stop resource information center for new/more junior employees and senior/more experienced practitioners;
- Facilitate the building of services knowledge;
- Facilitate the rapid identification of individuals with specific knowledge or skills;
- Foster a collaborative knowledge sharing across organizational boundaries (“boundary spanning”); and
- Promote and facilitate the capture and re-use of existing knowledge assets within the acquisition community.

The target audience for the center is the private and public sector acquisition community including program managers, technical representatives, etc. The online center will be available at the end of November 2004, and will be located on <http://acc.dau.mil> and www.acqnet.gov.

To work on this important SARA initiative, contact Julia Wise, Procurement Analyst at (202)395-7561 or submit an e-mail to julia_wise@omb.eop.gov. To contribute useful service contracting information to the center, send the information in an e-mail to Jeffrey Birch, DAU Knowledge Project Officer, at Jeffrey.birch@dau.mil. ■

OFPP Seeks to Increase Use of Performance-Based Service Acquisition

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued a memorandum to Increase the Use of Performance-Based Service Acquisition (PBSA) on September 7, 2004. The memorandum implements several suggestions from OFPP's July 2003 report, “Performance-Based Service Acquisition: Contracting for the Future.” This memorandum changes the target performance goal for fiscal year 2005 to 40 percent; revises the PBSA reporting requirements; encourages award recognition for successful use of PBSA and use of the Seven Steps to PBSA online guide available at www.acqnet.gov; requires each agency to identify a PBSA point of contact; and may require agencies to submit a management plan demonstrating the agency's approach to increasing the use of PBSA techniques and developing core PBSA skills and experience within the acquisition workforce. The memorandum may be found at <http://www.acqnet.gov>. ■

Right-sizing IAE *(continued from page 5)*

Below is a summary of the ACE and CAOC decisions:

Services that will continue:

- * FPDS-NG (Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation) including Pcard socio-economic database
- * FBO (FedBizOpps) extension and award
- * CCR (Central Contractor Registration) and associated BPNse (Business Partner Network Support Environment)
- * EPLS (Excluded Parties Listing System)
- * ORCA (Online Representations and Certifications Application)
- * eSRS (Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System)
- * WDOL (Wage Determinations Online) contingent on the Department of Labor's issuance of regulatory change

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Right-sizing of IAE *(continued from page 6)*

Near term sustainment:

- * FedTeDS (Federal Technical Data Solution) is pending a decision on the FBO recompetes which includes an option to incorporate FedTeDS

Incorporation into other services:

- * ICD (Interagency Contract Directory) into FPDS-NG. Current site will be unavailable 10/1/04.

Pending results of OMB study:

- * IGTE (Intragovernmental Transactions Exchange)
- * FedReg (Federal Registration)

Changes in scope and/or schedule:

- * Online Purchasing is pending further capabilities analysis of existing catalog systems
- * IAE Portal is paused until funds become available
- * CADO (Contract Award Documents Online) is awaiting requirements finalization/funding analysis

Services that will no longer be supported by IAE pending redesign:

- * PPIRS including CPS, CPARS, and PPIMS (systems that feed data into PPIRS). A team will develop requirements for a single system for FY07 deployment that will be linked to contract writing systems.

For more information contact Lisa Cliff, IAE Office of Communications, 703-872-8593 or e-mail integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov. ■



“Get It Right” Plan and Training Update *(continued from page 3)*

To date, 8,173 individuals have registered to the FSS Virtual Campus, 3,813 have started courses and 1,312 have completed courses.

In addition to the online training available through the FSS Virtual Campus, FSS offers a classroom version of the “Using GSA Schedules – Customers” course that is available to all ordering activities. This classroom course is two days in length, offered free of charge, and taught by certified instructors.

More importantly, the course content can be tailored to meet a customer’s specific needs, by having instructors place particular emphasis on one or more aspects of the course that are of particular interest to that customer.

To support the training needs of its customers, FSS has offered the classroom version of the “Using GSA Schedules-Customer” course to the Air Force, the Army, NASA, the Agency for International Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Transportation Security Administration and the Small Business Administration. This represents a total of 580 customers who have completed the “Using GSA Schedules-Customer” classroom course.

As an expansion of the customer outreach program, classroom training is currently being developed to include all online courses available in the FSS Virtual Campus.

In conclusion, as the training needs of customers continue to grow and expand, so, too, will the training opportunities that GSA provides. Whether the choice is online or classroom, GSA will continue to provide training that meets the needs of today’s acquisition professionals.

For more information on the FSS Virtual Campus and classroom training courses available, please contact Teresa Elbin, GSA, at 703-308-4384. ■

We thank guest authors for their contributions and views and present these as part of Federal Acquisition Insight for our readers’ information

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or to submit an article:**

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