



# Federal Acquisition Insight

March 2004 Edition

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## From the Desk of the Director

By Gloria Sochon

The Federal Acquisition Institute was established to foster and promote the development of a professional acquisition workforce. One step in achieving this goal is to identify workforce competencies – the knowledge, skills, and attributes that practitioners need to perform successfully. Competencies provide the foundation for recruitment, career development (including training, progression, and alternative paths), and succession planning. With this issue, FAI begins a series of articles that will explain the competencies identified for the acquisition workforce, how they will be used, and career management initiatives that build on the competencies.

We also inaugurate a series of articles on initiatives under the Federal Acquisition Council Working Groups. This issue features an article from the Human Capital Working Group. Future issues will highlight news from the Working Groups on Competitive Sourcing, Small Business, and E-gov and Performance Management.

Other articles feature news about the Integrated Acquisition Environment program, the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) program, energy savings performance contracts, and the Acquisition Career Management Information System. GSA and the Performance Institute provide you an opportunity to recognize a deserving associate with the Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award.

Finally, keep current and sharpen your skills at the Federal Acquisition Conference and Exposition 2004! Register early to take advantage of early bird discounts for this premiere training event.#

## Register Now for the Federal Acquisition Conference and Exposition 2004 (FACE 2004)!

Online registration is now available for this year's Federal Acquisition Conference and Exposition 2004 (FACE 2004). To register, please visit [www.fai.gov/face](http://www.fai.gov/face). The conference will be held June 2-3, 2004 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia and June 22-23 at the Dayton Marriott in Dayton, Ohio.

The theme of this year's conference, Partnering for Performance, emphasizes the need for strategic partnerships between contracting professionals, program managers and private sector counterparts. Federal acquisition professionals and industry partners are invited to attend. FACE 2004 features agency and industry experts, networking opportunities, a wide range of exhibitors, plenary and breakout sessions, and an awards banquet.

Featured speakers include the administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, several Senior Procurement Executives, and other knowledgeable acquisition and industry professionals. The conference features several breakout sessions on two program tracks, People and Projects and Smart Contracting. Topics covered in the breakout sessions were generated by conference sponsor, the Federal Acquisition Council, and include human capital, program management, competitive sourcing,

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More information, easier to use!

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performance based contracts, and e-commerce, among others.

The conference awards banquet will feature several awards for outstanding acquisition professionals presented at a dinner on June 2. The awards include the Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition, a \$5,000 award presented to a government employee who embodies the "contract specialist as business leader/advisor" concept. The Procurement Round Table will present the Elmer Staats Award for Young Acquisition Professional Excellence, a \$5,000 award given to a young federal acquisition professional who makes significant contributions to acquisition operations or policy. Additionally, the Performance Institute will present the Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award. More information on this can be found in this issue of *Federal Acquisition Insight*.

Exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities are also available for the conference. Exhibitors may register for booth space at one or both conferences by visiting [www.fai.gov/face](http://www.fai.gov/face). There is an exhibitor discount for those exhibiting at both venues, and exhibitor benefits include two full complimentary conference registrations, mention in the conference program, and exposure on the website.

For more information on the conferences, please visit <http://www.fai.gov/face> or e-mail [face@sra.com](mailto:face@sra.com). Early bird conference registration deadline is **April 9, 2004**, so register now for savings! #

### Inside the Federal Acquisition Council's Human Capital Working Group

By Deborah O'Neill, NASA Headquarters Office of Procurement

*Federal Acquisition Insight is pleased to present a new in-depth series on the Federal Acquisition Council's Working Groups. Stay tuned for updates on other working groups in upcoming editions.*

The Human Capital Working Group is one of four groups established under the Federal Acquisition Council (FAC) to focus on specific acquisition-related issues. The chair of this working group is Tom Luedtke, Assistant Administrator of Procurement at NASA, and participating agencies include EPA, HUD, DOD, USDA, the Social Security Administration, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which represents the Small Agency Council. As a result of a brainstorming session at the FAC's first meeting, several issues quickly emerged as major topics of focus for the Human Capital Working Group.

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) tasked the working group with broadly defining the "acquisition workforce" to encompass the wide range of activities that support the acquisition function. The group is reviewing their definition in light of the definition of acquisition stated in the Services Acquisition Reform Act to ensure that the necessary support functions are considered.

OFPP also tasked the working group with identifying human resource needs and human resource flexibilities required for the acquisition workforce. The working group divided this task into two parts: recruitment and retention. The working group considered such human capital flexibilities as: prompt hiring authority, managers' awareness of existing human resource tools and flexibilities, increased awareness of the federal acquisition field, consistent standards and training requirements, assistance in developing a skilled workforce, and the need for flexible and consistent pay.

The working group is reviewing the possibility of establishing a governmentwide recruiting consortium in which agencies can participate to recruit acquisition workforce members. Toward this end, there is a web-based recruiting brochure in development to explain the various functional elements within the acquisition workforce, career opportunities, as well as the benefits of a government career. Discussions with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Partnership for Public Service have helped refine the focus of the brochure and create an awareness of the field of acquisition.

Information on existing human resource flexibilities can be found in an OPM document called the Manager's Online Toolkit, which is available on [www.opm.gov/demos/flex/main.htm](http://www.opm.gov/demos/flex/main.htm). Tom Luedtke issued a memo to all FAC members encouraging agencies to link to this information from their acquisition websites, and this document is now posted on a variety of acquisition websites including AcqNet, NASA's Jumpstation, the Social Security Administration's website, and the USDA's Acquisition Toolkit site.

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## Human Capital Working Group *(continued from page 2)*

Additionally, at the request of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the working group is developing a plan to identify staffing and skill needs for the future acquisition workforce. This may include conducting a competency assessment of the federal acquisition workforce, including assessing the skills and staffing levels of the current acquisition workforce, and determining future requirements.

Fortunately, the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) has already issued its report identifying the technical and general competencies needed by the 1102 series. This report, outlining FAI's study, was based on extensive interviews and critical incidence analysis in compiling the necessary competencies. The competencies and skills identified in the report also form the basis upon which procurement training courses are developed today. The working group is currently studying options for conducting a competency assessment of the federal acquisition workforce.

Finally, the OFPP administrator requested that Tom Luedtke serve as the chair of the Board of Directors for FAI. The OFPP administrator established the Board to act on OFPP's behalf to ensure that FAI fulfills its statutory responsibilities, to ensure that OFPP's priorities are addressed, and to fulfill certain duties for the OFPP administrator as they relate to the operation of FAI. Based on the charter developed by the working group, the Board will provide direction to FAI regarding training and career development of the federal acquisition workforce.

The Board will ensure that FAI meets the needs of the entire federal acquisition workforce, implements appropriate programs, coordinates with appropriate organizations and groups that have an impact on the federal acquisition workforce (e.g., Chief Human Capital Officers Council), and develops and implements plans to meet future challenges of the federal acquisition workforce. The Board is identifying short and long term priorities for FAI, opportunities and strategies for more partnering with Defense Acquisition University, and training priorities for the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund.

The FAC's Human Capital Working Group has several interesting and dynamic issues to address on behalf of OMB and the acquisition workforce. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Deborah O'Neill, [Deborah.c.oneill@nasa.gov](mailto:Deborah.c.oneill@nasa.gov). #

## The New JWOD Catalog is Here!

By Annmarie Hart Bookbinder, Committee for Purchase From People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled

The new Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program Catalog for 2004 is the federal customer's reference guide to JWOD mandatory source items with descriptions and ordering instructions for over 2600 SKILCRAFT® and other JWOD products.

To order your copy of the 2004 JWOD Catalog, call Customer Service at (800) 433-2304 or send an email to [customer\\_service@nib.org](mailto:customer_service@nib.org). Please be sure to specify whether you would like to receive a print copy of the catalog or an electronic copy of the catalog on CD-ROM.

SKILCRAFT and other JWOD products are provided by people who are blind or have other severe disabilities working in community-based nonprofit agencies associated with National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a wide range of severe disabilities).#





## **ACMIS – E-Tool for Acquisition Workforce Career Management**

By Joanne Shore, Federal Acquisition Institute

The Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) provides a useful new tool for federal acquisition professionals and managers to manage and track career information. ACMIS records and tracks:

- Training and education levels
- Warrant information
- Training certifications
- Planned activities for establishing required job skills.

ACMIS is easy to access and requires no special software or licensing to operate — only an Internet connection and web browser are needed. Employee information is secure; ACMIS passed an independent third party evaluation to receive full accreditation and approval to operate.

For employees, ACMIS helps in career management by providing a central location to update employment, education and training records in a real-time environment. This lets an employee identify gaps and, together with his or her supervisor, plan needed developmental activities. ACMIS includes an Individual Development Plan tool to help record and track these development activities. An employee also has the option of using ACMIS as a resume-building tool by entering data on earlier experience.

For acquisition supervisors and managers, ACMIS provides insight into acquisition workforce training and education, and resource needs. This assists with budget allocations, staff resource planning, as well as tracking training requirements for employees. ACMIS standard and ad hoc reports can be run within seconds and are easily printed or downloaded to any office desktop suite (Word, Excel, etc.) for specific agency use. ACMIS also helps agencies meet the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act (41 USC 433(d)) to collect and maintain standardized data on acquisition workforce qualifications and eliminates the need for separate agency systems.

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), which manages the system, continues to work on implementing ACMIS throughout civilian agencies. FAI staff is available to answer your questions or provide a demonstration of the system and its functionality. To schedule ACMIS implementation in your agency or for more information, contact Sherry Booth at [sherry\\_booth@sra.com](mailto:sherry_booth@sra.com) or at 703-284-9491. #

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## **Insight into Acquisition Career Management Competencies**

*This article is the first in a continuing series on competencies.*

### **What are competencies?**

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, capabilities, attitudes, and behaviors required to perform a particular job or job function well. They become standards of success to support an organization's vision, mission, strategies, and goals. Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) have long been recognized by human resource development professionals as a critical element of success in job performance and have historically been the primary focus of most selection and career development efforts. Specific competency models contribute to the foundation of strategic human resource management. Well-defined competencies, often called "core competencies," provide the basis for identifying individual development needs, targeting curriculum and other development activities, and improving overall performance.

### **Why are competencies important for the acquisition workforce?**

The use of competencies can improve the acquisition environment in many ways. Establishing competencies common to the federal acquisition workforce that can be used to identify subsets of competencies common to

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## ESPCs and UESCs Can Be a Win-Win for the Government

By Cynthia Vallina, Office of Federal Procurement Policy

There's been a lot of talk lately about energy savings performance contracts (ESPCs) and utility energy savings contracts (UESCs) and whether they benefit the government. When used as intended, they can be an innovative contracting technique that saves the government time, energy and money and help agencies meet federal mandates to reduce energy consumption.

ESPCs and UESCs are contracts between the government and an Energy Service Company (ESCO) or local utility. Under these contracts, the contractor provides the upfront funding needed to design and implement an energy savings project in a federal facility. Once the project is implemented, the government reimburses the contractor (utility or ESCO) for the investment through the savings it would have otherwise continued to spend on its energy bills and maintenance of old, inefficient systems.

Because the federal government is the largest energy consumer in the United States, it has an important role to play in saving energy and being a model consumer. The government spends approximately \$7.35 billion per year on energy at its more than 500,000 federal facilities. The Energy Policy Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-486) authorized the use of alternative financing mechanisms to retrofit aging facilities with energy-saving and environmentally beneficial improvements and provided the statutory authority for the use of ESPCs.

Executive Order 13123 on efficient energy management requires agencies to reduce the government's energy use (in terms of energy used per square foot of building space) 30 percent by 2005 and 35 percent by 2010 as compared to 1985 usage. It specifically recommends the use of ESPCs and UESCs to reach these goals. To date, ESPCs and UESCs have contributed as much as 48 percent toward agencies' progress in reducing energy use, and are expected to make up more than half of the energy investments needed to achieve the federal goal by 2005.

As recently as June 2003, the Administration directed agencies to redouble their efforts to reduce energy consumption and offered ESPCs and UESCs as tools to help them reduce energy costs, obtain capital equipment, and improve indoor environments. Because agency budgets are tight, it is difficult for them to justify and fund cost saving upgrades and efficiency improvements from appropriated funds. Those funds must be used to cover the necessary repairs and maintenance that keep the existing equipment functioning. ESPCs and UESCs are available to help agencies fund the improvements that make sense and save money on a life cycle basis rather than what they can afford today.

The use of ESPCs is implemented and addressed in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) parts 2, 15 and 23. UESCs are covered in FAR Part 41. Although procurement and acquisition personnel are not generally concerned with energy conservation, they should be aware that ESPCs and UESCs can streamline procurement procedures and offer substantial fiscal benefit to an agency. They are also the ultimate in performance-based service contracting because the government is not required to pay the contractor if the requisite energy savings are not achieved.

If you as an acquisition professional would like to learn more about these contracting techniques and how you can become a procurement advocate for them in your agency, they will be discussed both at this year's annual National Contract Management Conference in Orlando, Florida, April 26-28, and at the Energy 2004 workshops in Rochester, New York, August 8-11. #

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## Insight into Acquisition Career Management Competencies *(continued from page 4)*

specific acquisition jobs allows the leadership of the acquisition workforce to ensure consistency across all agencies, acquisition positions, and performance management efforts.

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) oversees federal acquisition workforce management including planning, managing, and coordinating the development and implementation of acquisition career and acquisition workforce programs and practices. One of FAI's roles is to analyze the acquisition career field including identifying critical competencies, duties, tasks, and related skills and knowledge. FAI has identified and validated 24 professional business and 14 technical competencies central to the role of the Contract Specialist.

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## Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award - Nominations Due March 19!

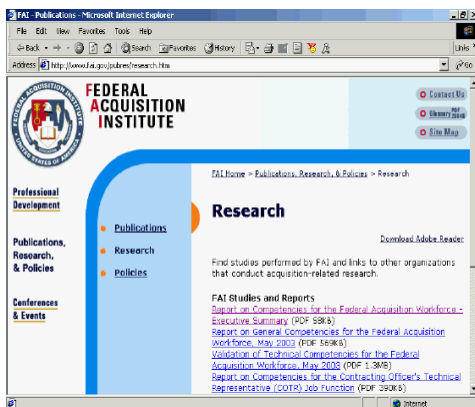
GSA is partnering with the Performance Institute to sponsor the governmentwide award. The Excellence in Performance-Based Service Acquisition Award is a **\$2,500 governmentwide award**, recognizing an individual who has made a significant contribution or has been a driving force in a performance-based acquisition. This award serves as an incentive for acquisition professionals to continue to improve their use of performance-based contracts.



To be eligible for this award, the nominee must be a government employee for an agency subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation and have played a leadership or key role in driving a performance-based acquisition. The employee may be anyone on the "Acquisition Team" as defined in FAR 1.102, excluding non-government employees, i.e., any participant in government acquisition including representatives of the technical, supply, and procurement communities and the customers they serve.

The Performance Institute must receive nomination packages **no later than March 19, 2004**, to be considered. For more information and the nomination package, please visit [www.excellenceinacquisition.org](http://www.excellenceinacquisition.org) or contact Beverly Cromer at (202) 501-1448.#

## See What's New on [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov)!



The FAI website, [www.fai.gov](http://www.fai.gov), features several new and updated resources for acquisition personnel. Click on the title to link directly to the resource.

[Report on Competitive Sourcing Competencies](#). FAI supported OFPP and the Federal Acquisition Council in identifying competencies for the six competitive sourcing roles identified in OMB Circular A-76.

[Report on Competencies for the Federal Acquisition Workforce – Executive Summary](#). This Executive Summary provides a convenient, one-stop review of the competencies identified in two separate FAI studies, the study of professional business competencies and the study on technical competencies. It also includes a crosswalk of the competencies identified by FAI to those used by the Department of Defense.

[Report on Competencies for the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative \(COTR\) Job Function](#). The COTR plays a unique "linking-pin" function in the acquisition process. In many cases, these individuals provide both technical and project management oversight during the contract lifecycle. Using these competencies to guide training and development efforts can produce numerous benefits to the agency, including attaining mission objectives.#

## Performance-Based Acquisition Update

The purpose of the Seven Steps to Performance-Based Service Acquisition (PBSA) Online Guide is to provide a one-stop resource for all PBSA information to assist the acquisition community in awarding performance-based acquisitions. The guide is updated constantly with new policies and regulations, guidance, and now samples and examples. Some new additions to the guide at [www.acqnet.gov](http://www.acqnet.gov) are:

- Vetted samples and examples available online, click on the Library; and
- Executive Version (hardcopy) of the guide that you can download and print, see the Executive Summary, and click on "Download Executive Version."

PBSA information is welcomed, especially your best practices, samples, and examples of performance work statements, performance incentive plans, performance measures and standards, and quality assurance surveillance plans for any service. To contribute to the PBSA repository of information, please submit documents to [SevenStepstoPBSA.Feedback@gsa.gov](mailto:SevenStepstoPBSA.Feedback@gsa.gov). #

## New York Transit Authority Uses the Federal Technical Data Solution (FedTeDS)

By Lisa Cliff, Integrated Acquisition Environment

In the first non-federal government deployment of Federal Technical Data Solution (FedTeDS), the City of New York began using FedTeDS to protect their acquisition-related information considered to relate to high-risk locations. In January 2004, the City of New York deployed FedTeDS to assist with the needs of their procurement process for the Metropolitan Transit Authority New York City Transit (MTA NYCT).

NYCT manages one of the most extensive and complex public transportation systems in the world – it operates round-the-clock bus and subway service for more than six million people daily. Prior to FedTeDS, NYCT simply posted their solicitations and associated acquisition-related information on the Internet via their Transit EBids system. This system requires that users register to download data, but does not perform any validation on the individuals or companies accessing this information. FedTeDS supplies the needed safeguards and provides secure distribution of sensitive but unclassified procurement related materials related to their contract opportunities.

Vendors interested in bidding opportunities listed on MTA NYCT's Active Construction and Architectural/Engineering Contract Solicitation page, which includes all bridges, tunnels, railroad and subway procurements for the five boroughs of New York City, must first register with the Central Contractor Registration ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)) since FedTeDS only accepts CCR registered vendors. Then vendors may request bid documents via a bid document order form that resides on the FedTeDS website. All addenda documents can only be downloaded from [www.fedteds.gov](http://www.fedteds.gov). This validates and controls a requestor's access to sensitive documents yet does not limit access to the inherently public procurement process by which certain documents are required in order to facilitate the bidding process. Since September 11, 2001, much of this required information has taken on a special sensitivity especially when it pertains to public buildings, transportation networks, bridges, dams, and national parks. Vendors proposing on such solicitations can seamlessly link to FedTeDS from the solicitations posted on MTA NYCT's website.

The Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) E-government initiative launched FedTeDS in February 2003 as a means to provide secure and reliable access in real-time to acquisition related materials including technical data packages, construction drawings, specifications and designs. IAE is one of the 24 federal-wide E-government initiatives that are



*New York City Transit*

improving how the federal and state governments disseminate and share information through the efficient use of IT resources. IAE is focused on streamlining procurement processes and creating a secure business environment that supports cost-effective acquisition of goods and services.

For more information contact: Lisa Cliff, IAE Communications Office, 703-872-8593.#

### **Acquisition Competencies** *(continued from page 5)*

The professional business competencies cover a range of categories including interpersonal skills, work ethic, communication skills, business acumen, analytical reasoning, and creative thinking. These competencies were tested for validity and successfully predicted whether an incidence of Contract Specialist performance was effective or ineffective about 85 percent of the time.

Technical competencies are more targeted than professional business competencies and relate to more specific facets of acquisition jobs. Technical competencies are applied to acquisition phases, such as acquisition planning, contract formation, and contract administration.

Both sets of competencies facilitate recruitment by providing a better job description, targeted recruiting and better marketing. Competencies also provide a framework for building career paths, training and awards programs.

For detailed information on these competencies and how they are used in acquisition career management, download a copy of the three-part "Report on Competencies for the Federal Acquisition Workforce" under "FAI Studies and Reports" at [#](http://www.fai.gov/pubres/research.htm)

*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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