



Federal Acquisition *Insight*

November 2003 Edition

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From the Desk of the Director

by Gloria Sochon

New developments continue to shape the challenges acquisition professionals face at work and the tools available to help meet those challenges.

This month's edition provides news on Javits-Wagner-O'Day contracting, equal opportunity in federal contracts, green buildings, and Interagency Procurement Career Management Committee activities. It also includes descriptions of acquisition tools, including the "Next Generation" Federal Procurement Data System, which simplifies contract award information data entry and improves data accuracy.

One of our most existing updates for you this month is the launch of our new home page, www.fai.gov. The FAI site has been redesigned to provide easier access to guides and information to help you manage your

federal acquisition career. The site is now organized into three key areas: Professional Development; Publications, Research, and Policies; and Conferences and Events. The latest offerings we have uploaded to the site are new reports on Contract Specialist and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative competencies designed to shape future workforce training, keep you current, and improve your ability to serve as a business leader. Our vision for the site's new look was to provide an easy-to-use, effective starting point for meeting your acquisition needs. Let us know what you think of it.

Finally, to learn more about the latest developments in federal acquisition, plan now to attend the 2004 Federal Acquisition Conference and Expo. We look forward to seeing you! ■

GSA Launches Next Generation of FPDS to Store Procurement Data on over \$250 Billion

On October 1, 2003, GSA launched the first major redesign of the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) (<https://fpds.gov>) since it was created in 1979. This upgraded "Next Generation" version is an enterprise-wide, web-based IT system for the federal government acquisition community. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated new processes to streamline federal acquisition. The Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), an e-government initiative identified under President Bush's Management Agenda, is orchestrating this effort as part of its work on these processes.

The upgraded FPDS stores information on \$250 billion in federal contracts awarded each year for goods and services. It provides detailed information on contracts above \$25,000 and summaries of procurements below \$25,000. This "Next Generation" of FPDS will store information on all procurement awards and is expected to process more than one million transactions per month from over 100,000 registered users worldwide. The FPDS's data input methods will reduce process time and make data more readily available to the federal acquisition community. It is also expected to save an estimated \$10 million annually by eliminating agency feeder systems and improving data accuracy.

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David Bibb, Acting Deputy Administrator, GSA, cuts the ribbon for the FPDS launch with Pat Brooks, Director of the FPDS Reengineering Program Office, GSA.



Visit FAI's new home page at www.fai.gov.

More information, easier to use!

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Federal Agencies Reaffirm Commitment to Employment Program for Severely Disabled

by Annmarie Hart Bookbinder, Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled

In honor of October's observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, a number of federal agencies reaffirmed their support of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program through a series of memoranda to their acquisition and procurement professional and purchase card holder communities.

These memoranda of support call on federal employees to learn more about the JWOD Program, the various products and services it provides, and federal employees' responsibility to purchase JWOD products and services in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.7. Federal agencies have also asked their acquisition professionals to review their current and future purchasing needs to determine where they can create new employment opportunities through the JWOD Program for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Copies of updated JWOD memoranda issued by the agencies listed above as well as standing memoranda from other federal agencies can be found on the JWOD Program website at http://www.jwod.gov/jwod/library/memos_of_support.html.

If you would like assistance in developing a memorandum of support for your agency, please contact



Federal Agencies that Reissued Memoranda of Support to JWOD Program

- Defense Logistics Agency
- Department of the Air Force
- Department of the Army
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of the Interior
- Department of the Navy
- Department of State
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- US Postal Service

Annmarie Hart-Bookbinder of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, which administers the JWOD Program, at abookbinder@jwod.gov. ■

FAI to Release Contract Specialist Competency Report: First of its Kind in FAI History

Report identifies professional business and technical competencies

FAI will soon release the *Report on Competencies for the Federal Acquisition Workforce: Executive Summary*, FAI's first effort to identify professional business and technical competencies central to the acquisition workforce.

Beginning with the core capabilities reflected in their Acquisition Career Model, FAI followed the approach established by the Office of Personnel Management to incorporate competencies into career management. FAI identified and validated two kinds of competencies—professional business competencies and technical competencies—for the GS 1102 series and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR). These competencies combine knowledge, skills, and abilities with behavior and other characteristics needed to successfully accomplish assignments in an acquisition environment.

Professional business competencies apply to a broad range of situations encountered while performing acquisition tasks. In contrast, technical competencies are more targeted in nature, relating to more unique facets of acquisition roles. Since representatives from a wide range of federal agencies participated

in this effort, the competencies identified are valuable to all acquisition employees regardless of their particular agencies' missions or responsibilities.

Taken together, these competencies provide a comprehensive understanding of the capabilities needed to perform the Contract Specialist job function. Using competencies specific to the acquisition workforce focuses the worker and the organization on leveraging sound business solutions to achieve each agency's strategic goals.

Becoming familiar with these competencies will help agencies target training and career development activities and maximize their return on training investments. The competency report will also help individuals increase their ability to self-assess their knowledge, progress, and performance. This career development tool will assist the acquisition workforce assume its role as business leaders. As a result, these competencies will provide FAI the foundation for their competency-based career management program and help guide the acquisition community in all areas of workforce management. ■

Training Opportunities

Program Spotlight: Bowie State University

Bowie State University, located in Bowie, Maryland, has an Acquisition and Contracting concentration as part of its undergraduate business program. The following are the courses in this concentration the university will offer in the Spring 2004 semester:

- Fundamentals of Contracting (BUAD 130/CON 101)
- Fundamentals of Contract Pricing I (BUAD 230/CON 104)
- Intermediate Contracting (BUAD 330/CON 202)
- Intermediate Contract Pricing (BUAD 430/CON 204)
- Government Contract Law (BUAD 453/CON 210)

These courses will run for eight weeks on Saturdays beginning January 31, 2004 pending enrollment of a minimum of eight students in each class. The



Fundamentals of Contracting (CON 101) course may also be offered online.

Bowie State University, a partner to FAI and the federal acquisition team, would like to encourage increased federal employee enrollment in its acquisition courses. The university is also available to provide training onsite at federal agencies on a contract basis. For information about Bowie State University's acquisition and contract courses, call Dr. Shelton Rhodes at (301) 860-3637 or contact him via e-mail at srhodes@bowiestate.edu. ■

OFCCP Programs Enforce Equal Opportunity in Hiring and Employment Legislation

by Mary Arch, Department of Labor

The Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is a national network of regional, district, and area offices that enforce the following US equal opportunity in hiring and employment legislation, as amended:

- Executive Order 11246 signed in 1965;
- Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and
- Affirmative action provisions in Section 4212 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act.

Together, these laws ban discrimination and require federal contractors and subcontractors to take affirmative action to ensure all individuals have an equal opportunity for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, status as a qualified individual with a disability, or as a Vietnam era veteran, special disabled veteran, other protected veteran or recently separated veteran.

These laws also require government acquisition professionals to include the following clauses referencing affirmative action requirements in all contracts they award:

- 52.222-21: Prohibition of Segregated Facilities;
- 52.222-22: Previous Contracts and Compliance Reports;
- 52.222-23: Notice of Requirement for Affirmative Action to Ensure EEO for Construction;

- 52.222-24: Pre-award On-Site Equal Opportunity Compliance Evaluation;
- 52.222-25: Affirmative Action Compliance;
- 52.222-26: Equal Opportunity;
- 52.222-27: Affirmative Action Compliance Requirements for Construction;
- 52.222-29: Notification of Visa Denial;
- 52.222-35: Equal Opportunity for Special Disabled Veterans, Veterans of the Vietnam Era, and Other Eligible Veterans;
- 52.222-36: Affirmative Action for Workers with Disabilities;
- 52.222-37: Employment Reports on Special Disabled Veterans, Veterans of the Vietnam Era, and Other Eligible Veterans; and
- 52.222-38: Compliance with Veterans' Employment Reporting Requirements.

Maintaining up-to-date contract data is also very important to ensuring proper regulation jurisdiction and compliance. Contract specialists and contracting officers can help the OFCCP by ensuring that award data and contract amendment data are posted to the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) as soon as they are available. This data will also eventually be integrated with the Business Partner Network (see www.bpn.gov). OFCCP provides free technical assistance to individuals or groups, including speaking at NCMA chapter meetings. For more information on OFCCP or to request assistance, visit <http://www.dol.gov/esa>. ■

IPCMC Provides Updates and Announces Formation of New Training and ACMIS Groups

The Interagency Procurement Career Management Committee (IPCMC) met on October 15, 2003 at the GSA Central Office with 13 agencies in attendance.

Following introductions, Gloria Sochon, FAI Director, provided the following updates on the Federal Acquisition Council (FAC) working groups:

- **Human Capital Working Group:** The group's current projects are drafting a single definition of the acquisition workforce, creating a charter for the FAI Board of Directors, and designing a common marketing brochure for recruiting for 1100 series positions.
- **Competitive Sourcing Working Group:** This group has made two competitive sourcing resources, the *Managers' Guide to Competitive Sourcing* and guidance on the OMB Circular A-76, available on the FAC website at this location: <http://www.fac.gov/index.cfm?display=committees>.
- **Small Business Working Group:** The group is currently developing guidelines for how to monitor subcontractors.
- **Performance Measurements Working Group:** The group is making progress on a performance metric guide.

Bill Wilson, FAI, announced the creation of the Training Working Group, which will address the migration of FAI Online University courses to Gov Online Learning Center (www.golearn.gov), assess

existing courses, and identify potential courses. FAI is in the process of determining the Training Working Group membership.

Joanne Shore, FAI, discussed the formation of the Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) User Group. This group of agency representatives and subcontractors will share ACMIS best practices, identify potential system enhancements, and work together to implement ACMIS in the members' respective agencies.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Cori Sabet, DOI University, on the Governmentwide Acquisition Management Intern Program. The two-year program is designed to attract a talented, diverse, and motivated group of individuals interested in careers in the acquisition field. The program consists of four six-month rotational assignments for acquisition knowledge and exposure to different organizational cultures and leadership styles; Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for the intern's development; core training with a minimum of 240 hours of technical training and 80 hours of non-technical training; and mentor relationships.

For more information on the intern program, contact Cori Sabet, DOI University Intern Coordinator at (202) 219-2213 or at corinne_c_sabet@nbc.gov.

For meeting minutes or additional information on the IPCMC, contact Gloria Sochon at gloria.sochon@gsa.gov. ■

Dates Set for FACE 2004 "Partnering" Event

The Federal Acquisition Conference and Expo (FACE) for 2004 will be held on June 2-3, 2004 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia, and June 22-23, 2004 at the Dayton Marriott in Dayton, Ohio.

FAI is partnering with the Federal Acquisition Council (FAC), GSA, and DoD to organize and sponsor the conference. The event's overarching theme is "Partnering for Performance" and will focus on forming strategic partnerships between contractors and program managers, and the government and industry, to achieve the best program results.

The FACE 2004 event will offer informative workshops, dynamic speakers, and opportunities to network with acquisition professionals and review exhibitors' products and services. The FACE website and online registration form will be available by the end of the year. For more information on the FACE 2004 event, send an e-mail message to Joanne Shore, FAI, at joanne.shore@gsa.gov. ■

GSA Launches FPDS (continued from page 1)

This FPDS launch is the culmination of more than four years of effort spearheaded by the Procurement Executive Council (now called the Federal Acquisition Council), then under the leadership of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Administrator Dee Lee and Department of Transportation Senior Procurement Executive David Litman. All federal agencies participated in the development effort under the guidance of GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy.

Integrated Acquisition Environment will eventually encompass the Business Partner Network, the Central Contractor Registration, the Intragovernmental Transactions Exchange, the Past Performance Information Retrieval System, the Federal Technical Data System, and the new Federal Procurement Data System. This work will eliminate several standard forms and allow agencies to research similar contracts, obtain contractor information, and perform project research.

For more information on the FPDS, contact Lisa Cliff, IAE, at lisa.cliff@gsa.gov or (703) 872-8593. ■



New Report Provides First Assessment of Federal Progress in Greening Buildings Report includes recommendations for overcoming current barriers

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE), together with many federal agencies, recently issued the first assessment of the federal government's policy and practices related to making its buildings more environmentally sustainable. This assessment is described in the final report, "Federal Green Building: Experiences and Expectations," and includes recommendations for how the federal sector can make even greater progress. (You can find the report online at http://www.ofee.gov/sb/fgb_report.html).

Green—or sustainable or high performance—building is the practice of designing, constructing, operating, maintaining, and removing buildings in ways that conserve natural resources and reduce pollution. Green building is expanding around the world and the US federal government is leading the US contribution

The role of the Federal government as a funder and facilitator of research is extremely important...[it] creates the opportunity for Federal agencies to become the laboratories and showpieces of cutting-edge green technologies.

Excerpt from "The Federal Commitment to Green Building: Experiences and Expectations"

to this effort by example. The federal government has several key green building policies in place and has already achieved some successes: The Energy Policy Act of 1992 and Executive Order 13123 require federal buildings to reduce their energy use by 35 percent in comparison to levels in 1985 by 2010. Executive Order 13123 also requires federal agencies to "apply [sustainable design] principles to the siting, design, and construction of new facilities."

The Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-11 encourages agencies to incorporate ENERGY STAR® or LEED (the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system) into designs for new building construction and renovations. The GSA, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Park Service, Department of State, and Department of Health and Human Services all now require the use of LEED or similar tools for their new projects.

Using sustainable principles in buildings can reduce environmental impacts, improve worker conditions and productivity, increase energy, water, and material



The Federal Building in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho is one of many with ENERGY STAR labels

efficiency, and reduce costs and risks. Sustainable buildings can also be showcased to educate people about environmental issues, possible solutions, partnerships, creativity, and opportunities for reducing environmental impacts in our everyday lives. Green buildings is one of many sustainable concepts on which the federal government is working; others include environmental management systems, waste prevention, recycling, and green product purchases.

As a result of these policies and many personal efforts, federal buildings have reduced their energy intensity by 23 percent and cut their carbon emissions by 2.8 million metric tons, the equivalent of removing 2.1 million vehicles from the road in one year, since 1985. Today, more than 110 federal buildings are now ENERGY STAR rated, eight federal buildings already

My hope is that this report – highlighting the progress that the Federal government already has made and offering recommendations for discussion and action – will serve as a solid foundation for even greater, more sustainable Federal government buildings. Working together, we can achieve this important goal.

*John L. Howard, Jr., Federal Environmental Executive
"The Federal Commitment to Green Building: Experiences and Expectations"*

have been LEED certified, and more than 60 federal buildings are undergoing LEED certification.

In its conclusion, the report identifies several barriers to improved progress and provides recommendations for overcoming them, including obstacles in the areas of budget and life cycle costing, education, research, metrics, and coordination. A senior interagency green building council is also being formed to lead this work. ■

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

**For more information
or to submit an article**

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