

Functional Leadership Plan

Office of Procurement

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OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the NASA Procurement Office Functional Leadership Plan as required by the NASA Strategic Management Handbook. The Plan describes the Office's overall purpose and direction including goals, objectives, and performance metrics used to assess success. It also describes the Office of Procurement's major initiatives.

II. MISSION

The Office of Procurement provides functional management, leadership, and policy direction of procurement and financial assistance activities (excluding Space Act Agreements) for the entire Agency.

III. GOAL

The goal of the Office of Procurement is to ensure the Agency executes its mission successfully by effectively and efficiently managing the acquisition process.

IV. OBJECTIVES

The Office of Procurement has three primary objectives by which it achieves its goal and provides functional leadership for the Agency. These are:

- To help customers plan acquisitions and get what they need at fair and reasonable prices, when they need it, using the best methods and tools; ensuring adherence to high standards of professional integrity
- To continuously improve the Agency acquisition process, anticipating evolving Agency needs, with particular attention to improving contract management
- To develop the people (and related infrastructure) geared to aggressively pursue the acquisition opportunities and challenges the Agency faces in the decades to come

V. METRICS/INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

- Customer feedback – The Office of Procurement conducts electronic surveys of procurement customers on an ad hoc basis. In the past, we have surveyed Center procurement offices' technical customers to assess how well those offices are satisfying their customers' procurement requirements. We also surveyed NASA contractors to get their feedback on NASA's procurement processes. Two other surveys were used to measure how well the Office of Procurement is meeting its customers' needs. One was sent to Center procurement personnel and the other to customers at Headquarters and senior Center management. Survey results are used to assess the Office of Procurement's performance and to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Self-evaluations – The Office of Procurement conducts surveys of each NASA procurement office about every three years under the authority of NASA Handbook 1101.3, "The NASA Organization." Surveys include a review of procurement offices' progress in implementing initiatives such as electronic commerce, which should reduce the amount of resources—cost and/or personnel—required by NASA projects and programs. In addition, when the need arises, the Office of Procurement conducts special focus surveys, where it focuses its review on a particular procurement activity or responsibility.
- Contracting Certification Program – The Procurement Office is preparing its contracting professionals for the challenges of the future through a career development program that includes education requirements, developmental assignments, and mandatory procurement training that consists of three levels of courses. Successful completion of Levels I, II, and III courses, as well as meeting the education requirement, is required before a GS-1102 can be promoted above grade 12.

VI. MAJOR FUNCTIONAL INITIATIVES

- Electronic Commerce: – NASA is focusing on the Internet for rapid, low-cost, and reliable delivery of procurement information to a broad audience, especially small and small disadvantaged businesses. NASA is recognized as a leader within the federal government in the use of Internet technology to improve the acquisition process. NASA's Acquisition Internet Service, or NAIS, is located at <http://procurement.nasa.gov>. NAIS offers user features such as an automatic e-mail notification service and easy access to NASA contract award information. It is an excellent reference source for those seeking contracting and subcontracting opportunities.

- Risk-Based Acquisition Management – This initiative seeks to integrate risk management principles (including safety, security, health, cost, schedule, technical, and unintended technology transfer) throughout the acquisition process, thereby reducing the incidence and severity of unforeseen programmatic events. The implications of programmatic risk will be considered when developing the acquisition strategy, selecting sources, choosing contract type, structuring fee incentives, and conducting contractor surveillance. The Office of Procurement supports this initiative by embedding these principles into the acquisition regulations and indoctrinating and training the entire acquisition community.
- Re-engineering of Grants and Agreements – The goal of this initiative is to develop and implement more effective and efficient guidance and processes for grants and cooperative agreements, NASA Research Announcements, and Announcements of Opportunity and to, where possible, streamline them. These improvements should save time and money for NASA as well as its science and industry partners.
- NASA Contracting Intern Program (NCIP) – The program was established to address future staffing needs within the Agency’s procurement organization. The NCIP is a 30-month program, consisting of two mandatory rotational assignments between NASA Centers. The rotational assignments provide interns with maximum exposure to the Agency’s missions and to different types of procurements. Interns also attend the NASA procurement career development courses required for Level I and Level II certification. Upon successful completion of the program, interns are eligible for permanent positions at one of the NASA Centers.
- Past Performance: – The Federal Acquisition Regulation requires that competitive procurements include a contractor’s past performance as an evaluation factor, unless the contracting officer documents an exception. Additionally, the FAR requires agencies to evaluate contractors’ performance on all contracts over \$100,000. A government-wide past performance database, the “Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS),” was established and became operational in July 2002. NASA contractor past performance data is now available through both the “Past Performance Database” (PPDB) and PPIRS. PPIRS is managed by the Department of Defense and contains data from the four recognized federal past performance collections systems: the National Institutes of Health Contractor Performance System; the NASA PPDB; the Army’s Past Performance Information Management System; and the Department of Defense Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System.

- Set Fee: – This initiative allows NASA to pre-establish a fee amount or percentage in the solicitation, rather than have contractors propose fee amounts. The goal of the initiative is to improve product/service quality and attract new companies competing for NASA contracts. Pilot project candidates should have enough historical information to assess the effectiveness of this initiative. A point paper has been developed and distributed to center Procurement Officers asking them to evaluate upcoming procurements for potential application as pilot projects.
- Nontraditional performance incentives, such as Award Term Contracting – Motivating contractors to excellent performance through the use of innovative performance incentives is an important tool in helping the Agency successfully execute its mission through its contractors. Award Term Contracting, as one example, motivates contractors by extending the term of the contract in return for excellent performance. This departure from the traditional government reward mechanism of fee/profit is consistent with commercial, private sector practice where a continuing relationship (as well as profit) is a prime motivator.

VII. TOOLS

- Various E-Business Activities – The Office of Procurement continues to pursue Internet technologies to deliver a more effective procurement process. These improvements are evolving under three major initiatives. The Contract Management Module (CMM) under the Integrated Financial Management Program (IFMP) will deliver significant benefits to the Agency's internal processes, including contract writing, workload management, data reporting, and contract administration. The Office of Procurement is also engaged in several interagency eGov initiatives that seek to improve our reach to industry, especially small and small disadvantaged businesses. These initiatives, including FedBizOps and Central Contractor Registration, support the President's Management Agenda for electronic government and focus on low-cost-of-entry tools to exchange procurement information with a broad audience. The NASA Acquisition Internet Service (NAIS) develops and maintains browser-based tools that complement the above initiatives, filling functionality gaps that are not provided by current Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) solutions or interagency initiatives.
- Contract Management Module (CMM) Project – The CMM Project, as part of the Integrated Financial Management Program (IFMP), is providing NASA's procurement offices with a uniform COTS software solution with the following capabilities:
 - Contract writing
 - A web-based document generation and transmission system integrated with the Agency's financial systems

- Procurement workload management
 - Workload tracking and data system which provides metric and status data to procurement personnel, managers, customers, and interested stakeholders
- Integrated data reporting, both internal with SAP and external to satisfy Federal requirements
 - Direct integration with the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG) as well as reporting to Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration
- Contract administration functionality
- Supports more effective contract management with automated and customizable features to expedite and assist procurement personnel in administering contacts

The CMM software will integrate with existing Integrated Financial Management (IFM) software already in use across the Agency, improving efficiency, timeliness, and accuracy across the end-to-end business process. The CMM software will mitigate many of the burdensome tasks associated with processing procurement actions, allowing procurement personnel to devote more of their efforts on the qualitative aspects of procurement, such as negotiating terms, conditions, and pricing of complex actions. The CMM software will also serve as a platform for developing future eBiz applications.