

(k) *Acquisition Training Program (ATP)* means a program designed to provide contracting officers with classroom knowledge to further develop their acquisition skills.

[52 FR 24010, June 26, 1987, as amended at 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989; 54 FR 40062, Sept. 29, 1989]

801.690-2 General.

(a) The VA COCP applies to all programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs except for those contracting officers appointed pursuant to the Inspector General Act (Pub. L. 95-452).

(b) A certification of appointment is not required for contracting officers designated in 801.670 who exercise special and limited delegations of authority.

(c) The COCP is based on three levels of authority:

(1) *Basic*. Expenditures up to and including \$25,000 or the maximum order limitation for orders placed against established contracts.

(2) *Intermediate*. Expenditures up to and including \$100,000 for negotiation and \$1,000,000 for sealed bids.

(3) *Senior*. Unlimited.

[52 FR 24011, June 26, 1987, as amended at 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989]

801.690-3 Responsibility for administration of Contracting Officer Certification Program (COCP).

(a) *The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Materiel Management (A&MM)*. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for A&MM is responsible for:

(1) Administering the COCP to ensure that the certification board evaluates, recommends acceptance, rejection, or termination of applicants at the Senior and Intermediate Levels according to the requirements of the COCP.

(2) Developing additional training and the level of certification as required by the COCP.

(3) Serving as the designating official, and in that capacity appoints or terminates contracting officers at the Senior and Intermediate Levels of authority.

(b) *Heads of contracting activities (HCA)*. The HCA is responsible for:

(1) Implementing and maintaining an effective and efficient program for the procurement of personal property and

nonpersonal services assigned to the activity.

(2) Establishing adequate controls to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(3) Appointing or terminating appointments of contracting officers at the Basic Level within their activity. Each HCA will establish procedures for the appointment or termination of appointment of contracting officers at the Basic Level to include maintenance of records on individual training and experience, as well as appointment and termination actions.

(4) Recommending to the designating official the appointment or termination of appointment of contracting officers at the Intermediate and Senior Levels of authority based on candidate qualifications, as well as a valid organizational need.

(c) *Contracting Officer Certification Board (COCB)*. The COCB may receive, evaluate, and recommend to the designating official, candidates for contracting officer positions at the Intermediate and Senior Levels. The board will be chaired by the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisitions, OA&MM, and membership will consist of:

(1) Chief Administrative Officer (VHA) (or designee),

(2) Deputy Facilities Management Officer (or designee),

(3) Acquisition Training Officer, and

(4) Additional members to be selected on an ad hoc basis depending on the organizational need for certified contracting officers.

(d) *Acquisition Training Officer (ATO)*. The ATO in the OA&MM will serve as the Executive Secretary to the COCB. The ATO will coordinate all requests for certification with the COCB. Upon the decision by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for A&MM, the ATO will respond to the HCA with a copy of the appropriate action. In addition, the ATO will maintain records on the development and administration of the Contracting Officer Certification Program (COCP) as well as the records on individual training, certification and termination actions at the Intermediate and Senior Contracting Officer Level. The ATO will identify all

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records created and maintained and ensure they are scheduled for disposal by the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management Records Officer.

[52 FR 24011, June 26, 1987, as amended at 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989; 54 FR 40062, Sept. 29, 1989; 63 FR 69218, Dec. 16, 1998]

801.690-4 Selection.

(a) Contracting officers (CO) shall be appointed only in those instances where a valid organizational need for certified personnel can be demonstrated. Such factors to be considered in making these assessments include complexity of work, volume of actions and organizational structure.

(b) Requests for appointment of contracting officers will be made in writing. Request for appointments at the Senior and Intermediate Level will be signed by the HCA and forwarded to the Acquisition Training Officer (90) for processing. The request for appointment will include at a minimum a justification of need, and a qualification statement for the candidate. Requests for appointment of HCAs as contracting officers will be made at one level above the head of the contracting activity.

(c) The COCB and HCAs (limited to Basic Level) will evaluate candidates for CO certifications based on training, experience, and performance, and consideration of academic education, in addition to meeting standards of ethical conduct and avoiding conflicts of interest. Minimum qualifications of contracting officers are based on a combination of training, experience, and performance with consideration of relevant academic credit or degrees earned. The following minimum requirements are established for designation of contracting officers:

(1) *Basic level.* (i) *Training*—Forty hours of basic acquisition or small purchase training that can be accomplished on the job or in formalized courses of instruction. If on-the-job training is conducted, it must be documented for the record and include a brief description of the duties and responsibilities that comprised that training.

(ii) *Experience.* Three years of progressive assignments in an acquisition related field within the last five years

and demonstrated broad technical ability related to acquisition.

(iii) *Performance*—Satisfactory rating.

(iv) *Education (desired)*—High school diploma.

(2) *Intermediate level*—(i) *Training*—(A) *ATP Level I*—Basic Acquisition.

(B) *ATP Level II*—Advanced Contract Administration.

(C) *ATP Level III*— Cost and Price Analysis.

ATP courses may include tests or other assessments to indicate what information has been learned by the student. An assessment will then be made to determine if additional formal or on-the-job training is needed.

(ii) *Experience.* Two years of progressive work assignments in an acquisition related field leading to broader technical ability within the last five years.

(iii) *Performance.* Satisfactory rating.

(iv) *Education (desired).* Associate degree.

(3) *Senior level*—(i) *Training*—(A) *ATP Level I*— Fundamentals of Acquisition.

(B) *ATP Level II*— Advanced Contract Administration.

(C) *ATP Level III*— Cost and Price Analysis.

(D) *ATP Level IV*— Contract Negotiation.

ATP courses may include tests or other assessments to indicate what information has been learned by the student. An assessment will then be made to determine if additional formal or on-the-job training is needed.

(ii) *Experience.* Three years of progressive assignments in an acquisition related field within the last five years and demonstrated broad technical ability related to acquisition.

(iii) *Performance.* Satisfactory rating.

(iv) *Education (desired).* Bachelor degree.

(d) Other training courses may be substituted for the prescribed core curriculum provided that the training meets equivalent content and difficulty per course. Recommending officials must fully document and justify equivalent courses when recommending candidates for appointment as contracting officers. The COCB will review and determine if equivalent