

# INDIAN AFFAIRS DIRECTIVES TRANSMITTAL SHEET

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**EXPLANATION OF MATERIAL TRANSMITTED:**

This chapter establishes a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Awarding Official Certification System (AOCS) to guide the selection, designation, development, and restriction, suspension, or termination of Awarding Officials for contracts, including construction contracts and grants, awarded under the authority of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Act), as amended.



Signature  
W. Patrick Ragsdale  
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

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**3.1 Purpose.** This chapter establishes a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Awarding Official Certification System (AOCS) to guide the selection, designation, development, and restriction, suspension, or termination of Awarding Officials for contracts, including construction contracts and grants, awarded under the authority of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Act), as amended.

**3.2 Policy.** Awarding Officials' duties and responsibilities are viewed as a professional discipline. Employees must meet established standards of knowledge, training, performance, and experience prior to designation and certification as Awarding Officials.

**3.3 Scope.**

**A.** Authority to award and administer Self-Determination contracts and grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations is vested in employees who are certified under this AOCS. There are no exceptions.

**B.** Certification of a BIA employee authorizes the employee to award, modify, and administer Self-Determination contracts, including construction contracts, and grants. This designation does not alter the routine supervisor-employee relationship, except that Senior Awarding Officials will provide professional supervision of Self-Determination contracting duties and responsibilities.

**3.4 Responsibilities.**

**A. Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs.**

- (1) Approves requests for Awarding Official certification.
- (2) Restricts, suspends, or terminates Awarding Official certification based on recommendations from the Deputy Director – Indian Services (IS).

**B. Deputy Director - Indian Services.**

- (1) Issues and maintains a Handbook to provide detailed administrative procedures to implement the Awarding Official Certification System (AOCS), including qualifications, requirements, and requests for Awarding Official certification.
- (2) Establishes training requirements and a curriculum of study.
- (3) Reviews all requests for certification of Awarding Officials and makes recommendations to the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- (4) Issues Awarding Official certificates.
- (5) Maintains a system of records that accurately reflects the status of Awarding Officials' training, education and experience.
- (6) Reviews all Regional Directors written recommendations for restriction, suspension, or termination of Awarding Official certification and makes recommendations to the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- (7) Terminates Awarding Official certification for administrative reasons, i.e., reassignment, Reduction-In-Force, retirement, or death.

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**C. Regional Directors.**

- (1) Submit applications for Awarding Official certification, with recommendations for approval or denial, to the Deputy Director - IS.
- (2) Ensures that training and technical assistance is provided to Awarding Officials and other Self-Determination staff within the Region.

**D. Senior Awarding Officials.** Senior Awarding Officials or Regional Self-Determination contacts have the following responsibilities under the Awarding Official Certification System (AOCS):

- (1) Function as the regional certification system coordinator.
- (2) Maintain a staffing pattern designed to meet current and future workload needs in an efficient and effective manner, subject to available resources.
- (3) Provide training and other information on AOCS requirements to employees.
- (4) Counsel employees as to present and projected training requirements of the AOCS.
- (5) Ensure that recertification requirements are met.
- (6) Provide written notification to the Deputy Director - IS and Regional Director that an Awarding Official will no longer be exercising certification authority due to transfer, reassignment, resignation, retirement or death.

**3.5 Requests for Certification of Awarding Officials.**

- A.** A BIA employee is certified as an Awarding Official based on that employee meeting applicable training, experience, and work performance requirements, as well as a specific organizational need for the position. Qualifications for Self-Determination positions are outlined in Illustration 1. Awarding Officials must occupy a position in the Self-Determination career field, classification series GS-1101.
- B.** Regional Directors and Central Office Deputy Directors submit written requests to the Deputy Director - IS. The request should include:
- (1) A justification for the appointment of an Awarding Official;
  - (2) The name, classification series and grade of the nominee for whom the request is made and the location and position that the individual will occupy;
  - (3) The nominee's application for certification; and
  - (4) Verification that the nominee's Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Statement is on file in the appropriate Personnel Office;
- C.** The Deputy Director - IS reviews and evaluates the request and either disapproves the request or forwards the request with a recommendation for approval to the Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). If the request is disapproved, the Deputy Director - IS will notify, in writing, the supervisory official and the nominee to include specific reason for declination.

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## 3.6 Certification of Awarding Officials.

- A. If the minimum requirements are met, the Director, BIA approves the request and the Deputy Director - IS issues a certificate with an assigned AOCS number designating the individual as an Awarding Official and indicating the level of authority.
- B. Certificates are effective for four (4) years unless otherwise restricted, suspended or terminated by the Director, BIA.
- C. Awarding Officials are to include their AOCS number wherever their name/signature and title appear on official Self-Determination award documents.

## 3.7 Continued Certification as Awarding Official. Employees who have received certification are subject to the following professional development requirements:

- A. Successful completion of a minimum of eighty (80) hours every four (4) years of relevant Self-Determination and acquisition training provided by training sources approved by the Deputy Director - IS. The Deputy Director - IS may consider on a case by case basis to extend by one (1) year the completion of acquisition training;
- B. Evidence of satisfactory performance appraisals based on performance elements that reflect the employees' Awarding Official duties relating to Self-Determination contract planning and execution, compliance with Federal laws and regulations, and BIA policies; and
- C. Requests for recertification of employees are submitted to the Deputy Director - IS by the Regional Director for review and evaluation prior to submission to the Director, BIA for approval.

## 3.8 Restriction, Suspension or Termination of an Awarding Official's Certification.

- A. An Awarding Official's certificate may be restricted, suspended or terminated by the Director, BIA for a BIA employee for any of the following reasons related to the performance of the employee:
  - (1) Unsatisfactory performance of the designated Awarding Official duties and responsibilities; or, receipt of less-than-satisfactory performance rating from the immediate supervisor;
  - (2) Failure of the employee to exercise good business judgment and to comply with the applicable Federal laws, statutes, Executive Orders, regulations, Departmental and BIA policies or procedures;
  - (3) Inability or unwillingness to institute appropriate corrective management actions to reconcile negative audit findings or internal Self-Determination contract management reviews;
  - (4) Failure to properly exercise certification authority;
  - (5) Failure to maintain certification system standards and successfully complete training requirements after appointment;
  - (6) Violation of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR 2635), Executive Order 12674 - Principles of Ethical Conduct for

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Government Employees, and Supplemental Standards of Conduct for Interior Employees (43 CFR Part 20); and

- (7) Organizational need for a certified Awarding Official no longer exists.
- B.** The appropriate Indian Affairs Human Resources Officer should be consulted if restriction, suspension, or termination of certification is being considered and before a written recommendation is submitted to the Deputy Director - IS
- C.** All requests for restriction, suspension, or termination of certification must be in writing and submitted by the Regional Director to the Deputy Director - IS, who reviews and forwards the request with written recommendations to the Director, BIA for action.
- D.** The Deputy Director - IS may terminate Awarding Official's certificates for administrative reasons when:
- (1) The effective period of the certification appointment has expired;
  - (2) The appointee is voluntarily reassigned to another BIA position where the need for the certification does not exist;
  - (3) The appointee is no longer employed by the BIA;
  - (4) The appointee retires, resigns, or the appointee's employment is terminated;
  - (5) Failure to maintain certification system standards and successfully complete training requirements after appointment;
  - (6) Violation of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch (5 CFR 2635), Executive Order 12674 - Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Employees, and Supplemental Standards of Conduct for Interior Employees (43 CFR Part 20); and
  - (7) Organizational need for a certified Awarding Official no longer exists.

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