

MS 730: Acquisition Plans

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Responsible Office: OACM

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Table Of Contents

- 1.0 Purpose
 - 2.0 Authority
 - 3.0 Policy
 - 4.0 Definitions
 - 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities
 - 6.0 Process for Acquisition Planning
 - 7.0 Acquisition Planning Lead Time
 - 8.0 Effective Date
-

1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section describes the policy for the developing acquisition plans as required by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Acquisition plans are required so that the Government meets its needs in the most effective, economical and timely manner.

2.0 Authority

Section 10 of the Peace Corps Act, 22 USC 2509; FAR Part 7

3.0 Policy

- (a) It is the policy of the Peace Corps to require offices to conduct market research and provide input to acquisition plans for acquisitions in order to promote and provide for full and open competition in accordance with FAR. For purposes of the Manual Section, a post is considered an office.
- (b) When full and open competition is not required by the FAR, it is Peace Corps policy to provide competition to the maximum extent practicable with due regard to the nature of the supplies and services being acquired.

- (c) The Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), who heads the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management (OACM), oversees the acquisition of supplies and services and monitors the preparation of acquisition plans.
- (d) Acquisition planning should commence as soon as an office's procurement needs are identified. The extent of acquisition planning may vary, depending on such factors as the acquisition's size, scope and complexity.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Acquisition

The acquisition by contract of supplies or services by and for the use of the Peace Corps through purchase or lease, whether the supplies or services are already in existence or must be created, developed, demonstrated and evaluated.

4.2 Acquisition Planning

The process by which the efforts of all personnel responsible for an acquisition are coordinated and integrated through a comprehensive plan for fulfilling the needs of the Peace Corps for supplies or services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. Planning includes the development of the overall strategy for managing the acquisition. In certain cases, acquisition planning requires a written plan.

4.3 Acquisition Plan

A written plan developed with the requiring office or post that addresses the technical, management and business considerations of a given acquisition or group of acquisitions and that identifies milestones at which decisions should be made. An acquisition plan must provide sufficient information to describe in an understandable manner the proposed acquisition pursuant to requirements set forth at FAR 7.105. It is a concise, clear statement of the facts and rationale supporting the technical and business judgment of the proposed acquisition. Acquisition plans are required for all acquisitions in excess of the micro-purchase threshold.

4.4 Contracting Officer

An individual in an office who has received written authority from the CAO to enter into, administer, or terminate contracts and who can make related determinations and findings. Contracting Officers are responsible for ensuring performance of all necessary actions for effective contracting and safeguarding the interests of the United States in its contractual relationship.

4.5 Chief Acquisition Officer

The CAO is responsible for the policy and operational management of Peace Corps' acquisitions program.

4.6 Contract Specialist

An individual in OACM who works with a Peace Corps office needing supplies or services to assist on acquisition planning for the office.

4.7 Market Research

Collecting and analyzing information in the market about the supply and cost of supplies and services needed by the Peace Corps. The requiring office performs the market research.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- (a) The CAO, as delegated by the Director of the Peace Corps, is responsible for promoting and providing for full and open competition, encouraging the supply of commercial items, ensuring that acquisition plans meet the needs of the Peace Corps and establishing criteria and thresholds for written acquisition plans requiring greater detail and formality. The CAO establishes the standard acquisition plan formats and related guidance on the acquisition process. The CAO must also facilitate competition by and among small business concerns and avoid unnecessary and unjustified bundling that precludes small business participation as contractors.
- (b) The Contract Specialist is the acquisition planner in OACM who is responsible for working with a Peace Corps office, which has a need for supplies or services, to form an acquisition team consisting of technical, fiscal and legal personnel and others responsible for significant aspects of an acquisition and to collaborate with such personnel to develop an acquisition plan.

6.0 Process for Acquisition Planning

- (a) All acquisition plans must be prepared in accordance with Part 7 of FAR, which describes how to prepare acquisition plans.
- (b) In preparing acquisition plans, the Contracting Specialist must use the Acquisition Milestone Checklist provided by OACM in order to schedule and record the key steps in the acquisition process.
- (c) For more complex acquisitions, the Contracting Specialist must use the Acquisition Planning Template provided by OACM to help ensure that all significant factors are taken into consideration when developing acquisition strategy.
- (d) For major or complex acquisitions, a formal meeting (referred to as the Acquisition Strategy Briefing) of the key stakeholders to review and finalize the acquisition strategy is required. Senior level stakeholders must participate in the Briefing because they must be more involved in the decision making process. The Briefing is required to facilitate discussion and obtain consensus on key acquisition strategy points. The Template and Checklist must be

current and form the basis of discussion at the Briefing. The Contract Specialist shall discuss the strategy points/issues with working level stakeholders before conducting the Briefing. The Briefing may be conducted by the Contract Specialist and/or members of the acquisition planning team.

7.0 Acquisition Planning Lead Time

OACM shall meet with each client office to identify all requirements (new and recurring) planned for the upcoming year. The client office shall present to OACM an excel spreadsheet or other written report of their planned requirements to include estimated dollar value, period of performance or expiration date of an existing contract and description of the supply or service.

OACM shall initiate detailed acquisition planning for all actions at least six to nine months before the required contract award or renewal. The degree of acquisition planning may vary, depending on such factors as the acquisition's size, scope and complexity. Acquisition planning for ad-hoc requirements not covered in the initial planning meeting will begin as soon as possible depending on the requirement.

8.0 Effective Date

This Manual Section shall take effect on the date of issuance.