

***** Please share these Notes within your agency! *****

Notes from the Administrator

May/June 2012

I want to start this issue with a bit of an introduction: I'm Joe Jordan, and I was confirmed by the Senate on May 24th as the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy. I feel deeply privileged that the President nominated me and the Senate confirmed me for this position. As a taxpayer, I've been pleased by the attention the Administration and members of Congress are giving to improving the acquisition system, and I am excited for the opportunity to work with the dedicated OFPP staff and all of you to produce the best possible results and value for the American people. Before moving to some specific updates, I want to tell you a bit about my background, and about my priorities for moving forward. Prior to being confirmed as OFPP's Administrator, I served as a Senior Advisor to Jeff Zients, the Acting Director of OMB, and before that served as the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting and Business Development at SBA. Prior to joining Government service, I worked with the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company helping clients develop and implement improved purchasing and supply management strategies.

Making improvements to our acquisition system is truly a team effort. As I said in my recent confirmation hearing, the acquisition workforce is the backbone of our acquisition system, and your skills and good judgment are inextricably tied to our Government's ability to efficiently buy needed goods and services and deliver effective results. Strengthening the acquisition workforce is one of my top priorities, and your dedication and hard work are critical to achieving success in all of our priority areas. Your work is essential to our efforts in:

- buying smarter by leveraging the government's purchasing power, increasing competition, and reducing high-risk contracts;
- building the right supplier relationships by motivating and rewarding good performance, maximizing contracting with small and disadvantaged businesses, and protecting taxpayer dollars from non-responsible vendors; and
- developing a better understanding of the marketplace, which will ensure that we're obtaining the best, most cost-effective solutions to support our agency missions.

We can't do it without you.

For all of these reasons, I want to start my first issue of Notes from the Administrator by saying thank you for all of that hard work. I'm very much looking forward to hearing from you and working with you to provide the very best results for our taxpayers.

White House Small Business Procurement Meeting

In my previous role as Senior Advisor, I had the pleasure of joining Acting OMB Director Jeff Zients and SBA Administrator Karen Mills on April 25th as they hosted the White House Small Business Procurement Meeting for Agency Deputy Secretaries and Directors of the Small Business Offices. Participants discussed tools and best practices for meeting the FY12 small business contracting goals, including how to increase utilization of small businesses for awards under the simplified acquisition threshold and agencies' use of the order set-aside authority provided by Section 1331 of the Small Business Jobs Act. One example that I'd like to share here came from NASA. To assist small businesses in finding work for which they were well suited, NASA's Office of Small Business Programs collected the acquisition forecasts from each of NASA's centers and consolidated similar work that was likely to be performed by small businesses. This allowed for the creation of a number of simple, one-page handouts that could be shared at outreach events, giving small businesses a clearer picture into the opportunities available to them at NASA. This example is a great opportunity of how a small amount of effort on the part of the agency can make a truly substantial difference in informing small businesses about available opportunities, and is a great illustration of the benefits of sharing best practices across agencies.

In addition, each agency was asked to take additional steps to ensure that small businesses are utilized to the maximum extent practicable, including maximizing opportunities for small businesses when making small dollar awards, increasing opportunities for small businesses under multiple award contracts, and strengthening accountability for small business goal achievement. As my first official act as Administrator, I co-signed a memorandum with Karen Mills on June 6th, providing more information about each of these steps. That memo is available here: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/follow-up-april_25-2012-meeting-of-the-small-business-procurement.pdf.

Myth-Busting 2

On May 7th, OFPP released "*Myth-Busting 2: Addressing Misconceptions and Further Improving Communication During the Acquisition Process*."¹ This memorandum continues our focus on early, frequent and constructive engagement with industry by addressing the misconceptions that may be held by some in the vendor community – particularly new entrants who are interested in competing for government business. Using the same format as the original "Myth-Busting" memo from last year, this memo highlights the potential misconceptions and provides facts about the Federal procurement process, with the goal of further improving the productivity of our communications and outreach efforts. Since we issued the first memo, we've seen how this engagement has improved procurements, especially complex, high-risk

¹ Available here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/myth-busting-2-addressing-misconceptions-and-further-improving-communication-during-the-acquisition-process.pdf>

procurements for which industry engagement is so helpful. The memorandum also provides additional information and strategies for both agencies and vendors to promote more effective communication. Together, our efforts will result in more effective solutions to the government's needs and provide a better value proposition for all of us as taxpayers. Thank you for your commitment to improving communication.

Career Corner

- ***New Pathways Programs***

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) regulations for the new Pathways programs were published in the Federal Register on May 11². These programs comprise an internship program, recent graduates program and the President Management Fellows (PMF) program, and become effective July 10, 2012. Agencies may continue to use the existing student and Presidential Management Fellows hiring authorities until July 10. More information on these programs is available at <http://www.opm.gov/HiringReform/Pathways/index.aspx>, and additional guidance on implementing these new programs is expected from OPM in the coming months.

- ***Past Performance Training Opportunities***

You likely already know that entering and evaluating past performance information is a critical part of ensuring that we do business with responsible vendors and reward good performers. But you might not know that there are a number of training opportunities available regarding the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS), and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). This training is offered by the Department of Defense, (DoD), the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), and the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), and you can check the websites below regularly for available classes.

- **Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS)**

To improve the collection of past performance information, agencies transitioned to a single government-wide feeder system for past performance reporting - the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System at <https://www.cpars.gov/>. This system provides an automated workflow for documenting contractor performance under a Government contract.

² Available here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-11/pdf/2012-11068.pdf>

Training: DOD offers 40-45 instructor-led, online classes (webinars) on CPARS each month and also offers onsite training several times per year. Information about these classes is available at <http://www.cpars.gov/allapps/cpcbtdlf.htm>.

- **Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)**
CPARS also includes the data entry module for FAPIIS. FAPIIS captures additional contractor performance information such as terminations for default or cause, non-responsibility determinations and defective cost or pricing determinations reported by the Government into the systems. The system also includes contractor reported information about other events such as civil, criminal and administrative proceedings.

Training: DoD offers instructor-led, online training each month that provides an overview of the policies and regulations governing FAPIIS. For more information, see <http://www.cpars.gov/allapps/cpcbtdlf.htm>. FAI's website includes a FAPIIS overview at http://www.fai.gov/video/fap_iis_trailer/fap_iis_trailer/module.htm.

The new FAPIIS online module, FAC 019, provides guidance on how to consider the information contained within FAPIIS. Information about this course is available on DAU's website at www.dau.mil. Students will receive 1 CLP.

- **Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS)**
CPARS assessments are transmitted to PPIRS at www.ppirs.gov. PPIRS includes performance report cards about a contractor's performance on current and completed contracts and orders. PPIRS also includes the FAPIIS retrieval module. PPIRS allows valuable source selection sensitive information to be shared across Federal Government agencies to support informed contract award decisions.

Training: DAU offers a general self-paced module on past performance information: CLC 028, Past Performance Information, based on the current DoD Policy Guide, *A Guide to Collection and Use of Past Performance Information*. This course provides information relevant to all acquisition personnel required to perform this contract administration function. Information about this course is available at www.dau.mil. DoD also offers PPIRS web training classes. To see a complete schedule and to register for classes, visit <https://www.ppirs.gov/webtrain/webtrain.htm>.

- ***Networking Opportunity – Rising Acquisition Professionals Community***

Registration is now open for the June 27th RAP-Ceries event that will be held from 12:30-4:00 PM at the DHS Auditorium at 7th and D St. SW. The event will focus on executive

leadership and the Congressional appropriations process, and additional details, map and registration information can be found here: <http://rapcomm.org/event/rap-series-6-executive-leadership-speaker-congressional-appropriations-process/>.

Cracking Down on Government Waste

On May 11, OMB issued a memorandum titled “Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations”³ to address agency spending on travel, conferences, real estate, and fleet management. In concert with the memo, Acting OMB Director Zients also released a blog post titled “Continuing to Crack Down on Government Waste” to summarize and outline the aggressive efforts being undertaken to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely without sacrificing the ability of the government to deliver for the American people. The blog is available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/05/11/continuing-crack-down-government-waste>.

Data Quality

The quality of procurement data is critical to competition in contracting, supporting increased contract awards to small businesses, and transparency. Since January 2009, agencies have been required to conduct an annual data verification and validation of their procurement data captured in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS). The procurement data quality working group, which was established to help agencies in their data management efforts, continues to identify best practices and challenges associated with improving the quality of Federal procurement data. To assist with these efforts, summary information regarding agencies’ FY2011 data verification and validation efforts is now available to support ongoing efforts to improve procurement data quality. The summary, which also includes 4-year trend data, is available through the acquisition data quality collaboration site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/A4EGEQ>.

Additional tools and information are available to agencies at the main section of the collaboration site at <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/j460IQ>.

Digital Government Strategy

On May 23rd, Federal CIO Steve VanRoekel officially released the Digital Government Strategy, entitled *Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People*.⁴ The strategy builds on several initiatives, including Executive Order 13571 - Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service, and Executive Order 13576 - Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government, and on May 24th, the President

³ Available here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2012/m-12-12.pdf>

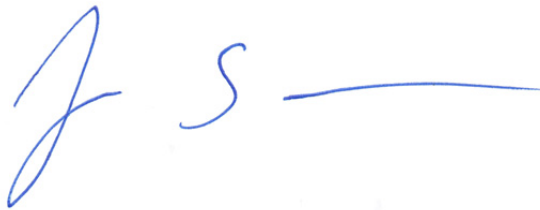
⁴ Available here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/egov/digital-government/digital-government-strategy.pdf>.

issued a memo⁵ directing agencies to implement the strategy and report progress publicly in a machine-readable format.

The strategy leverages recent progress while focusing on the next key priority area that requires government-wide action: innovating with less to deliver better digital services. Over a 12-month roadmap, this will be accomplished through three main objectives:

- Enable the American people and an increasingly mobile workforce to access high-quality digital government information and services anywhere, anytime, on any device.
- Ensure that as the government adjusts to this new digital world, we seize the opportunity to procure and manage devices, applications, and data in smart, secure and affordable ways.
- Unlock the power of government data to spur innovation across our Nation and improve the quality of services for the American people.

That's all of the updates for this month, but I'd like to finish where I started: by thanking you again for all of the work that you do on behalf of your agency and on behalf of the taxpayer. If you have any questions about anything you've read, or any suggestions for improvements, please let me know at jjordan2@omb.eop.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by 'S' and a horizontal line.

Joseph G. Jordan
Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy

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⁵ Available here: <http://www.cio.gov/pages.cfm/page/Presidential-Memorandum--Building-a-21st-Century-Digital-Government>.

Issues of Notes from the Administrator are available online for any employee of the executive branch in the Acquisition area of the MAX Federal Community. The MAX community is open to Federal government employees with a valid .gov, .mil, or .fed.us email address, and you can register here: <https://max.omb.gov/maxportal/registrationForm.do>.

Once you're registered, you can find the Notes from the Administrator here: <https://max.omb.gov/community/x/cYJ2I>.