



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ACQUISITION AND MATERIEL MANAGEMENT  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

IL 049-05-2  
October 14, 2004

**OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND MATERIEL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION LETTER**

**TO:** Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits, and Memorial Affairs; Chief Facilities Management Officer, Office of Facilities Management; Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors; Directors, VA Medical Center Activities, Domiciliary, Outpatient Clinics, Medical and Regional Office Centers, and Regional Offices; Directors, Denver Distribution Center, Austin Automation Center, Records Management Center, VBA Benefits Delivery Centers, and the VA Health Administration Center; and the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, VA National Acquisition Center

**ATTN:** Heads of Contracting Activities (HCAs); GS-1102, Contracting Series Employees; GS-1105, Purchasing Series Employees; and Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs)

**SUBJ:** Contracting Personnel Competencies

1. The purpose of this information letter (IL) is to establish core competencies for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) acquisition work force members. The Procurement Report Task Force recommended that VA establish a set of competencies needed for individuals to progress to higher grades and responsibilities in a particular acquisition series.
2. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), through Policy Letter 92-3 dated June 24, 1992, established a standard set of competencies in which every Federal contracting official is expected to attain an appropriate level of skill. The training requirements are consistent with the Government-wide acquisition training requirements for GS-1102s and GS-1105s.
3. To insure that acquisition training provided by VA is uniform with that of the Federal sector, VA will follow the guidance issued by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) in the Contract Specialist (CS) Training Blueprint, dated October 2003. It is recommended that HCAs use these core competencies in the performance evaluation process for contracting officers and contract specialists. Acquisition work force members should be aware that attainment of the experience, education, and training outlined in the attached documents does not guarantee advancement or promotion. However, attainment of these requirements can enhance an individual's professional competitiveness and marketability.

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4. As stated in Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) IL 90-99-5, Acquisition Training, in addition to GS-1102s, GS-1105s, Contracting Officers, and COTRs, VA's acquisition work force includes a limited number of employees in GS-343, GS-801, GS-1101, GS-1106, GS-1170, GS-2001, GS-2003, and GS-2005 occupational series that perform significant acquisition-related responsibilities. Every VA acquisition work force member should review the 71 duties identified in the CS Training Blueprint. The Blueprint is available at <http://www.fai.gov/prodev/contract.htm> and through a link from OA&MM's training website at <http://www1.va.gov/oamm/acquisition/training/index.htm>.

5. There are 11 acquisition core courses that cover the competencies contained in the FAI CS Training Blueprint. The Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management sponsors these courses and makes access to this training available to members of the acquisition work force on an annual basis. They are as follows:

- Acquisition Planning I
- Contract Formation I
- Contract Administration I
- Price Analysis
- Cost Analysis
- Federal Contract Negotiation Techniques
- Acquisition Planning II
- Contract Formation II
- Contract Administration II
- Intermediate Contract Pricing
- Contract Law

6. Acquisition work force members should also consult their supervisor to determine their acquisition experience, education and training needs and develop a Personal Individual Development Plan using the CS Training Blueprint as a guide. VA Form 4692, Individual Development Plan, is available on at [http://www.va.gov/forms/dot/5\\_4692.dot](http://www.va.gov/forms/dot/5_4692.dot).

7. Purchasing employees (GS-1105) and supervisors are encouraged to follow the CS Training Blueprint core competencies in developing the personal development plan. Following the CS Training Blueprint will provide the necessary competencies for the individuals to pursue assignments leading to additional duties and responsibilities. At a minimum, purchasing series employees must successfully pass the Defense Acquisition University's Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) training on CD-ROM. The SAP CD has been distributed to VA Central Office HCAs and Chief Logistics Officers for each Veterans Integrated Service Network.

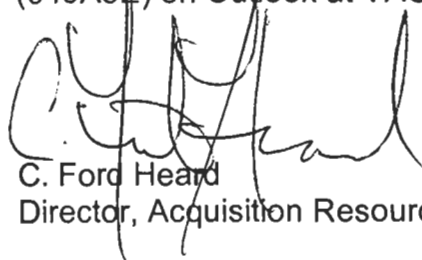
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8. VA COTRs must receive training that covers the competencies contained in the FAI COR/COTR Workbook, now titled the COTR Training Blueprint. FAI's COTR Training Blueprint is also available on the FAI Internet site, <http://www.fai.gov/prodev/corbluebook.pdf>. VA COTRs are encouraged to take the Internet-based COR Mentor Course offered by FAI. The course is available at <http://www.faionline.com/>. VA contracting officers are responsible for ensuring designated COTRs are aware of the COTR Training Blueprint and have received COTR training.

9. Acquisition work force members are encouraged to take proactive steps to ensure all education and training is included in their Official Personnel File and in the Department of Veterans Affairs, Center for Acquisition and Materiel Management Education Online database. Please contact the Acquisition Training and Career Development Division (049A5E) on Outlook at VACO 049A5E if you have any questions.



C. Ford Heard  
Director, Acquisition Resources Service

Attachments

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