

August 23, 2010

ACQUISITION ALERT 10-07

NOAA FAC-COTR Recertification Procedures

This Acquisition Alert is being transmitted to all NOAA Heads of Contracting Offices (HCOs) for dissemination within their respective Acquisition Divisions.

On November 26, 2007, OFPP memorandum, "The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives", dated November 26, 2007, established a structured training program for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives that standardized competencies and training across civilian agencies. It mandates that to maintain a FAC-COTR certification, Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) are required to earn 40 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years calculated from the date of issuance of the certification. Commerce Acquisition Manual (CAM) Chapter 1301.670 implemented the requirement within the Department of Commerce (DOC).

Effective immediately, the attached policy and procedures shall be followed by the NOAA CORs to effect recertification of FAC-COTR certifications every 24 months from date of initial certification as required by the OFPP Memorandum and CAM 1301.670. These procedures will be incorporated into a more formal AGO policy in the future.

Questions concerning this Alert should be directed to Jerry Rorstrom-Lee at Jerry.Rorstrom-Lee@noaa.gov or by telephone at 301-713-3478 ext. 174.

NOAA FAC-COTR Recertification Procedures

A. Background

The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003, P. L. 108-136, expanded the definition of acquisition to include functions performed by Contracting Officer Representatives, such as managing and measuring contract performance and providing technical direction. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 05-01, dated April 15, 2005, built upon that broader definition of acquisition workforce and required the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) to develop better standards for training and managing Contracting Officer Representatives.

On November 26, 2007, OFPP issued a memorandum implementing the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR) program, which establishes a structured training program for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives with standardized competencies and training across civilian agencies. The Department of Commerce implemented the program via issuance of Commerce Acquisition Manual 1301.670, Department of Commerce Contracting Officer Representative Certification Program.

Among other requirements, CAM 1301.670 sets forth the training required for initial certification at the various levels as well as the continuous learning points (CLPs) that must be completed to maintain certification. A FAC-COTR certification will automatically expire at the end of the certification period if the required 40 CLPs are not earned every two years.

A recertification will occur every two years from date of initial certification upon verification that the required CLPs have been earned. For certifications held by NOAA employees, the recertification will be processed by the Policy Branch of the AGO Policy and Oversight Division (POD) and verified by the FAC-COTR Program Manager within that Branch.

B. Earning and Documenting CLPs

The request for recertification will be submitted to the FAC-COTR Program Manager in the POD Policy Branch using the application form at Attachment 1. CAM 1301.670, Appendix E, details the types of activities that may be used to meet the continuous learning requirement.

All activities completed to earn the CLPs shall be documented on the CLP Worksheet at Attachment 2. Appropriate documentation to support the type of CLPs earned shall be attached to the worksheet. Instructions for completing the entries on the worksheet are as follows:

1. **FAC Certification Type:** FAC-COTR
2. **Certification Date:** The date employee was initially issued the certification.
3. **Activity (Formal/Informal Training, Professional Activity):** Describe the activity performed; *i.e., Training, Professional Activities, Education.*
4. **Date(s):** Date(s) the activity was performed or completed, as applicable.
5. **CLPs:** Indicate how many CLPs are to be applied for the activity. See CAM Chapters 1301.6, 1301.670, or 1301.671 that provide information on how to calculate and/or convert CLPs.
6. **Description/Topic:** Provide the course title and/or topic of activity.
7. **Provider:** Indicate vendor or state where applied training was taken.
8. **Comment/Notes:** Provide any additional information as it relates to the activity. Sufficient detail must be provided to clearly document the activity to support the CLPs claimed for the activity.

C. Submission of Request for Recertification

The applicant is responsible for gathering and submitting all required documentation to support that the CLPs for recertification were earned prior to expiration of the certification. Applicants may submit a request for recertification as soon as the 40 CLPs have been completed during the 24-month period, and are encouraged to submit their requests as early as possible. In any event, applicants must submit recertification requests in sufficient time to be received by the POD FAC-COTR Program Manager no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the certification.

The recertification request shall include the following:

- Completed application form (Attachment 1) with all required endorsements
- Completed CLP worksheet (Attachment 2)
- Appropriate documentation to support the type of CLPs earned, depending upon the type of training activity completed. Examples of documentation include:
 - Training certificates
 - Syllabus
 - Transcript
 - Written description of activities and/or training with supervisor's signature (or university letter, if teaching)
 - Presentation Materials

The applicant should contact the POD FAC-COTR Program Manager, if necessary, for guidance as to the type(s) of supporting documentation required for a specific training activity.

D. Review of Recertification Request Package

The POD FAC-COTR Program Manager will review the package for completeness to determine whether it fully supports the CLPs claimed. If the review indicates that the applicant has failed to substantiate that the 40 CLPs have been earned within the required 24-month time frame, the applicant and applicable HCO will be so informed and processing of the application will be suspended.

The applicant will be allowed two weeks from date of notification to submit additional documentation to verify completion of 40 CLPs. If the applicant fails to do so within the two-week time period, the POD FAC-COTR Program Manager will complete the endorsement at Attachment 3 and return the request form to the applicant with a copy to the HCO and Line/Staff Office Acquisition Liaison. The employee will be required to resubmit a new recertification request with supporting documentation when the 40 CLPs have been earned, provided that time remaining in the certification period permits the application to be processed. If the certification is delayed beyond the point where DOC will accept the recertification request, the applicant will be required to submit a new certification request under the then-current rules.

If the package is complete and supports the CLPs claimed, the FAC-COTR Program Manager will submit the package to OAM. OAM will review the package to ensure the required number of CLPs have been earned and, if so, will enter the information in the OAM database. If OAM determines that the submission does not verify that the required number of CLPs have been earned to maintain the certification, OAM will so notify the POD FAC-COTR Program Manager. The FAC-COTR Program Manager will inform the applicant and applicable HCO and Line/Staff Office Acquisition Liaison that submission of a new application package will be required when the applicant has completed the required CLPs (Attachment 3).

E. Notification of Recertification

At the conclusion of the process, if the applicant has successfully substantiated that the 40 CLPs have been earned within the required 24-month period, the POD FAC-COTR Program Manager will complete the endorsement at Attachment 4 and return the request form with the endorsement to the employee with a copy to the applicable HCO. The employee should retain the recertification documentation with the original FAC-COTR certificate to verify that the certification was properly maintained after issuance as required by OFPP and DOC.

F. Expiration of FAC-COTR Certification

To maintain the certification, the required 40 CLPs must be earned within the applicable 24-month period. The employee's failure to complete the required 40 CLPs within the applicable 24-month period will result in expiration of the FAC-COTR certification. An employee's failure to process their recertification request timely or in accordance with these procedures may likewise result in expiration of the FAC-COTR certification.

If the certification is allowed to expire, the employee will be required to submit a complete FAC-COTR application package to apply for a new certification from OAM under the then-current rules.

Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting Officer Technical Representative Recertification Request

PART A – APPLICANT INFORMATION

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

Agency Name DOC Bureau NOAA Job Title, Series, Grade _____

FAC-COTR Certification Level Held _____ Expiration Date of Current Certification _____

PART B – RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicant checks all boxes to verify that recertification requirements are met and all required documentation is provided with request.

- 40 CLPs have been completed.
 - CLP Worksheet identifying CLPs earned is attached.
 - Additional documentation substantiating completion of the 40 CLPs is attached.
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PART C – SIGNATURES

I have completed all CLPs required for certification, as substantiated by the attached documentation.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Endorsement:

I have reviewed the applicant's documentation and confirm that the applicant has earned the required 40 CLPs required for recertification.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Head of Contracting Office Endorsement:

I have reviewed the applicant's documentation and confirm that the applicant has earned the required 40 CLPs required for recertification.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

