



FAI NEWSLETTER

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From the Acting Director



Jeff Birch,
Acting Director, FAI

First, I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2015 and thank each of you for your dedication and support in shaping and developing a more efficient and effective federal acquisition workforce community!

Across government, we have exceptional talent with the drive to “make a positive difference” ... this talent comes from individuals of all ages, experience levels, and walks of life. As a community, we are making great strides in achieving our diverse and complex agency-specific missions, while also conquering our

many common challenges, needs and goals - regardless of civilian agency, military department or defense agency affiliation. How great would it be to have the ability to reach across government to determine if an agency was developing a specific federal contracting job aid that you were planning to develop or have the ability to reach into the Department of Defense to see if they were preparing to launch an acquisition workforce development initiative that would meet your need with only a few minor changes?

As we all learn how to “do more with less”, fostering collaboration and building relationships across agency boundaries are two critical elements to achieving success. It is time for us to take advantage of our membership in the largest network of acquisition professionals in the world – the

federal acquisition workforce. The benefits of fostering increased collaboration are endless - unlike our resources and budgets. We can no longer afford to continue with duplicative development efforts due to a lack of both financial and human resources. As one government, we are so much stronger and better positioned to be successful on behalf of the American taxpayers.

Here at FAI, all team members have first-hand experiences in seeing the value and knowing the importance of fostering collaboration across agency boundaries. Having a governmentwide focus in the acquisition training and human capital management arenas requires that we stay abreast of individual agency acquisition workforce development initiatives. This awareness enables us to share our knowledge of these developments with other agencies, reducing the number of duplicative development efforts. Not to mention, the great synergy created when an interagency team comes together is extremely valuable and the outcomes are much greater ... and who knows, it could be the beginning of a new and rewarding relationship. When was the last time that you reached out to another agency or department - go ahead, reach out today!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acquisition Excellence 2015

Mark your calendar for March 3rd to attend [Acquisition Excellence 2015](#). This is a unique education and training event that brings together both the government and industry acquisition communities to collaborate on the latest acquisition challenges and generate innovative solutions for potential implementation.

Hosted by ACT-IAC, in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Veterans Affairs, General Services Administration, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), this year's Acquisition Excellence is a one-day event held in Washington, DC at the Grand Hyatt Washington. Invited speakers include:

- **Anne Rung**, Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP)
- **Leslie Field**, Deputy Administrator, OFPP
- **Joanie Newhart**, Associate Administrator of Acquisition Workforce Programs, OMB

As a member of the acquisition workforce, this is an event that you cannot afford to miss! Highlights of this year's event include:

- Highly interactive Challenge Zone sessions to facilitate the generation of innovative solutions for specific acquisition challenges,

covering the areas of:

- o Market Intelligence/Market Research
- o Lowering Barriers to Entry
- o Evaluation
- o Rate the Agency
- o Knowledge Transfer/Management
- o Acquisition of the Future

- Training sessions focusing on best practices, use cases, and demonstrations of innovative acquisition tools.
- An Innovation Contest held throughout the conference to recognize the innovative ideas generated by attendees during the sessions, including the concepts that could make a significant, immediate impact on the acquisition community.

Whether you are a contracting officer or specialist, program manager, legal professional, acquisition leader or policy maker, by participating in Acquisition Excellence 2015, you will learn best practices, have a chance to network with your fellow acquisition professionals, and help generate solutions that could solve your daily acquisition challenges. Additional details and registration sign up is provided at: <https://actiac.org/events/AE2015>.

2015 Acquisition and Small Business Excellence Awards Nominations Closing Soon!

As part of the efforts to recognize acquisition professionals who contribute to outstanding improvements in acquisition throughout the Federal government, the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) is seeking nominations for the 2015 Acquisition Excellence Awards and Small Business Excellence Award. Nominations are being solicited for Federal employees engaged in team or individual activities that led to excellent results in any of the following five acquisition categories in FY 2014:

- Agile Software Acquisition
 - Innovation
 - Program Management
 - Small Business Excellence: Effective Collaboration
 - Small Business Excellence: Maximize Opportunity
- Nominations are being accepted through January 20, 2015. The awards will be presented at "Acquisition Excellence 2015". To learn more about the awards and to nominate an individual or team, visit the [Award Submission form](#).



Pictures from Acquisition Excellence 2014

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAU Contracting Courses Receive ACE College Credit Recommendation

American Council on Education (ACE) college credit recommendations allow students to leverage their DAU training courses for credit toward degrees, helping them achieve Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification and saving government tuition assistance funds and out-of-pocket expenses. The ACE College Credit Recommendation Service issued the results of their review and evaluation on Oct. 17, 2014, making recommendations for seven DAU Contracting courses:



- For completion of Contract Planning (CON 121), Contract Execution (CON 124), or Contract management (CON 127), ACE recommends three semester hour credits in the lower division baccalaureate/associate category.
- For completion of Fundamentals of Cost Accounting Standards (CON 252) or Intermediate Cost and Price Analysis (CON 270), ACE recommends three semester hour credits in the upper division baccalaureate category. Reviewers noted that CON 252 presents the student with real-world scenarios requiring critical thinking skills to determine the outcome. Additionally, reviewers recognized the rigor of CON 270, stating that students should be highly qualified to conduct cost-and-price analysis upon successfully completing the course.
- For completion of Source Selection and Administration of Service Contracts (CON 280) or Contract Administration and Negotiation Techniques in a Supply Environment (CON 290), ACE recommends three semester hour credits in the graduate degree category. Reviewers noted CON 280 contains a comprehensive assessment and requires the student to initiate, evaluate, and administer the complex service-contracting process. Reviewers also noted that CON 290 presents a comprehensive course with a high level of critical thinking, analytics, and application.

ACE is the major coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 colleges and universities and over 200 related associations nationwide.

New and Improved PPIRS Reports

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memoranda dated July 10, 2014, [Making Better Use of Contractor Performance Information](#), emphasizes the importance of effectively using and timely reporting contractor performance information. The memo requested system enhancements to improve the collection and display of contractor performance information. GSA's Integrated Award Environment team developed two NEW reports in the Past Performance Information Retrieval System-Report Card (PPIRS-RC) that will allow agencies to actually sort, filter, and view contractor performance information. The first report is the ENHANCED Assessment Report and second report is the NEW AD HOC Report. The reports are now available on the PPIRS website at www.ppirs.gov.



To better support the acquisition workforce community, a new "Topics" section is being added to www.fai.gov. This new section will serve as an information repository on given topics that integrates memos and guidance, training, and tools and resources from various sources. The first topic area, Past Performance, will be available starting the week of January 18, 2015. Additional topics, including Source Selection and Small Business Contracting, are under development and will be available soon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFPP Memo on Transforming the Marketplace

The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) has issued a new memorandum entitled [“Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve Performance, Drive Innovation, and Increase Savings”](#), dated December 4, 2014.

The memo is in response to feedback from industry and other stakeholders that the complexity of the Federal marketplace is leading to less innovation, higher costs, and weaker performance. It describes ongoing actions to address these concerns and directs a series of agency actions that build upon the Administration’s efforts to create a more innovative, efficient acquisition system.

The three core elements of this new approach are as follows:

- **Buying as One through Category Management.** This initiative shifts from the current practice of managing purchases and prices by individual procurement organizations to managing entire categories of purchases across the Government collaboratively.
- **Deploying Talent and Tools across Agencies and Growing Talent within Agencies to Drive Innovation.** This initiative will develop a plan for increasing digital acquisition capability, and pilot a program to train government personnel in digital IT acquisitions.
- **Building Stronger Vendor Relationships.** This initiative includes an online dialogue with industry, pilot of a new tool for vendors to provide constructive feedback on agency acquisitions, taking actions to reduce burden in commercial item acquisitions, and managing key vendor relationships as a single enterprise.



MAX.gov: Are You a Member Yet?

As a member of the acquisition community, would you find it useful to have a central location that houses website links to use for market research, contract vehicles, case samples, templates and more? Would you like to collaborate with other acquisition professionals across the federal government?

[MAX.gov](#) includes a “MAX Federal Community” site that has compelling capabilities for doing collaborations and information sharing that is far better than our usual work methods of E-mail, attachments, and network file sharing, supporting workgroups and information sharing across office, agency and governmental boundaries. Within the “MAX Federal Community,” registered users can join the Acquisition-specific community, which is a forum that offers the acquisition community the opportunity to upload contract/case samples, view documents, receive guidance and feedback, interact via online discussions and much more.

Did you know the MAX Community as a whole is now over 120,000 users? Did you know there are over 10,000 government acquisition professionals currently using MAX.gov for various reasons? Are you one of them? Chances are if you have been looking for answers and have not been able to find them, MAX.gov may be able to help you.

Registration is free. So....don't wait, [register today](#) and see what you can do for the acquisition community and see what the acquisition community can do for you at MAX.gov!



* Please direct any questions/concerns to maxsupport@omb.eop.gov

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

The “WIIFM” of FAI Verification, or... What’s In It For Me?

Anyone who collaborates with FAI on a regular basis may find themselves a bit confused about a specific FAI process known as “verification.” In this article, we will clarify what verification is, what it is not, and most importantly, “What’s In It For Me (WIIFM)?”

Verification applies to project and program management (P/PM), Contracting, and contracting officer representative (COR) certification courses*. It’s the label FAI has officially tagged to the process of auditing any training provider’s certification courses to determine the fidelity which those courses address the performance outcomes in the P/PM or COR Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) competency models or to the FCN course competencies. Before digging into verification, we first need the basics of competency-based certification.

What is Competency-based Certification?

This topic alone could consume several newsletter articles. Briefly, competency-based certification refers to the standards and the job tasks on which we measure the competence of an AWF member. In other words, it’s a person’s ability to possess and perform a specific set of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Do you know your job and can you successfully perform your job? Defining and measuring performance helps us define and measure competence. AWF members become competent in their jobs as a result of (1) formal education, (2)



Three Standards for Awarding Federal Acquisition Certifications

targeted training, and (3) experience in the workplace. For that reason, they are the three certification standards we evaluate to support awarding Federal Acquisition Certifications.

It’s not easy to measure performance in a highly objective manner. To help offset this difficulty, we create a competency model made up of any number of performance outcomes. Performance outcomes are achieved and measured in two domains: (1) Learning - education and training; and (2) Experience - on the job.

So, What is Verification?

During verification, FAI evaluates how performance outcomes can be acquired through the Learning Domain, primarily through targeted training (i.e., certification courses). As the name implies, targeted training focuses on a specific and efficient set of learning outcomes geared toward achieving specific knowledge, skills, and abilities.

During the verification process, the FAI evaluator determines if the performance outcomes in the competency model can be reasonably achieved if the learner gains the intended learning objectives of the training course. To do this with confidence, verification goes beyond comparing performance to just the subject matter of the course. The instructional design of the course, the instructional method in which it’s delivered, and the assessment approach to measure the learner’s mastery of the learning objectives are also evaluated.

FAI uses the term “verified” to illustrate that certification training is in alignment with the applicable competency model. Since the majority of our training is purchased from commercial providers, FAI must ensure we

* **Footnote: This article does not address courses developed by DAU. DAU has an equivalency program for their courses.**

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

The “WIIFM” of FAI Verification, or... What’s In It For Me? (Cont’d)

ethically comply with the tenets of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Using terms like “FAI-approved” or “FAI-certified,” could be perceived as an endorsement of their course, thus breaching the rules regarding competitive advantage.

What’s Different for Contracting (FAC-C)?

For courses supporting certification in the FAC-C program that start with the course designator (CON), the process known as “DAU Equivalency” is used to determine if courses are aligned with the DAU-developed course competencies. Training providers must apply to DAU for DAU equivalency which has similarities and differences to FAI verification. For courses used for certification in the FAC-C program, a course must be delivered by either a DAU Equivalent training provider or a FAI Equivalent training provider. It’s required for FAC-C courses.

What I Really Care About Is...WIIFM?

Verification confirms that the course is teaching the right content in a manner resulting in high probability that the AWF member gains the requisite learning that ultimately contributes to successful job performance. “That’s the WIIFM!” You can be confident that FAI verified courses will help you develop your competencies as an acquisition professional.



How Do I Know if a Course is Verified?

The Government cannot mandate that training providers have their FAC-P/PM and FAC-COR courses verified. The verification process is voluntary for P/PM and COR training providers, whether public university or private industry. Agencies can buy FAC-P/PM or COR training from whoever they choose, verified or not. (Remember, by OFPP policy, that is not true for the FAC-C courses.) After a course has been reviewed, FAI issues an official letter to the vendor, verifying the course, including the certification level.

For an Acquisition Career Manager or supervisor, knowing which training providers have had their FAC-PPM, FAC-COR, courses verified for alignment to current competency models provides leverage in making informed decisions regarding the certification and professional development of acquisition workforce members. Knowing the process behind verification can also assist source selection boards make best value determinations when selecting one training provider over another. Lastly, training providers volunteering their course material for verification is one way to team with customers and stakeholders on the utility, viability, and quality of their product before it goes to market. Of course, being listed on www.fai.gov as a verified provider is simply good business and a win-win for both training providers and our acquisition workforce.

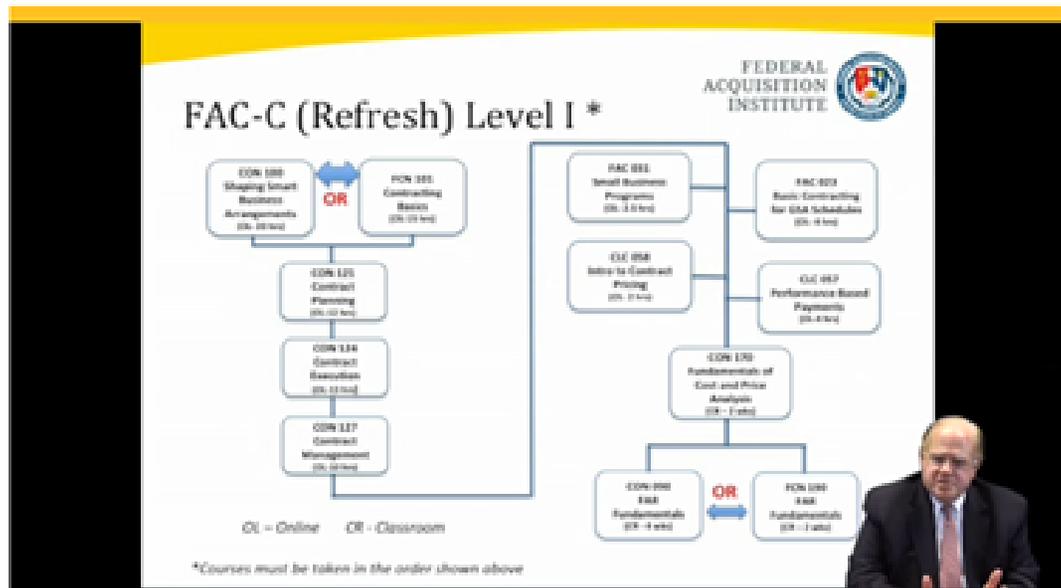
More questions about verification? For FAC-COR courses contact Bob Faulk at bob.faulk@fai.gov, for FAC-PPM courses, contact Bruce Moler at bruce.moler@fai.gov, and for FAC-C courses, contract Tony Grayson at anthony.grayson@gsa.gov or molly.parker@gsa.gov

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

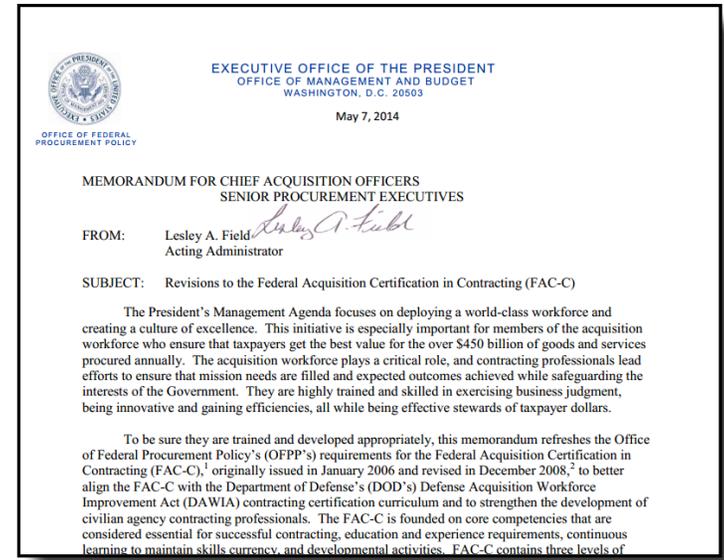
OFPP Flash: FAC-C (Refresh) Video

Joanie Newhart, Associate Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP); and Tony Grayson, Acquisition Program Executive-Contracting, FAI recorded a fifteen-minute video to explain the most critical components of the FAC-C (Refresh) policy. The purpose of the video is to help civilian agency contracting professionals achieve a successful transition from the FAC-C (Legacy) to the FAC-C (Refresh) program. [The video is available now at the FAI Video Library.](#)

FAI Video Library



OFPP Flash: FAC-C (Refresh)



Additional information on FAC-C (Refresh) can be found from the following sources:

- OMB Memo: [Revisions to the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting \(FAC-C\)](#), dated May 7, 2014
- [FAC-C Section of FAI.gov](#)
- Your [Agency's Acquisition Career Manager \(ACM\)](#)

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Multi Agency Contract (MAC) for CON Courseware Delivery Coming Soon!

FAI and the Veterans Affairs Acquisition Academy (VAAA) have partnered to develop a Multi-Agency Contract (MAC), with the help of GSA Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). This provides Government agencies with a vehicle to purchase the delivery of FAC-C courses and elective training classes for Continuous Learning Point (CLP) credit for the acquisition workforce.

Per the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memorandum dated September 3, 2013 entitled [“Increasing Efficiencies in the Training, Development, and Management of the Acquisition Workforce.”](#) this effort is being conducted in partnership to:

- Leverage commercially available acquisition training,
- Increase awareness of and collaboration between agencies working on similar curricula delivery efforts,
- Incorporate strategic sourcing principles into government-wide courseware delivery, and
- Identify agencies to take lead roles in the delivery of common curricula for use by all agencies.

The Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) is intended to enable the Government to provide high quality, low cost training solutions that represent the best value in meeting the Federal Governments training delivery needs. Specifically, FAI and GSA will serve as the contract managers, but ultimately this is a win-win relationship for all Federal agencies and ultimately, the acquisition workforce professional. Additionally, it promotes standardization and training across the government, and also provides training at a reduced cost based on quantity buys. If all goes according to the current plan, look for the BPA to be awarded in July 2015.

“Over the past year, we’ve worked closely with the OFPP and the FAI to leverage our respective expertise and resources and reduce duplication of efforts so that we can deliver better and more cost-effective acquisition-related training to our Government-wide workforce.”
-Melissa Starinsky, VAAA Chancellor

FAITAS Course Catalog

Did you know that there is now a complete course catalog in FAITAS?

Log onto FAITAS and click on Release Notes under the user guides in the help menu to discover all the new features in FAITAS.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Knowledge Nuggets are Coming; The Knowledge Nuggets are Coming!

With so many new demands on our time and the need for “just-in-time information”, it is imperative that we get the information we need as quickly as possible. In recent years, explainer videos have become very popular to get this type of information on-demand. We all know how YouTube transformed the “How to” video market.

So what is a Knowledge Nugget?

A Knowledge Nugget is a quick blast of information presented in a whiteboard animated video used to introduce an acquisition workforce member to new concepts or information or to refresh their learning based on previous training. It should answer a few fundamental questions and explain the basics of the subject and try to inform the viewer why they should want to learn more about this and where to go for more information. It is similar to a 30-second elevator pitch, but with visuals, and a more casual, fun vibe. It is used to pique the viewer’s interest, and be informative and clear without taking up too much time.

Research has shown that short, quick blasts of knowledge-based information provide an engaging, customized, and just-in-time learning experience to a targeted audience. So, FAI has initiated a project to provide a series of 2-10 minute educational multi-media videos (i.e. “Knowledge Nuggets”), to support on-demand, virtual learning. The intent is to provide these condensed, quick blasts of information through an on-demand multi-media library with no prerequisite course or knowledge base requirements for the topics selected. These videos will be hosted on the [FAI.gov video library](#) and upcoming FAI YouTube channel.



What topics will be covered?

FAI is currently gathering potential topics for the Knowledge Nuggets. The list isn’t set, and it will continue to evolve as new topics emerge. So, let us know what topics you’d like to have included. Here is a sample of topics under consideration:

Procurement Ethics – Why it Matters
The 5 “W’s” of an ACM and what they can do for you? (Who, What, Why, When, Where)
What is a Program Manager (PM)?
The Many Faces of a Contracting Professional
Strategic Sourcing Overview
FAITAS in 3 Minutes or Less
Anti-Deficiency Act
Simplified Acquisition Procedures
Procurement Integrity Act
Buy American Act
Flow of Contracting Authority (U. S. Constitution/Congress/President/ Head of Agency/Head of Contracting Activity/Contracting Officer)
Big “A” – What is Acquisition?
How a Budget is Enacted (Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution)
Market Research & IGCE Preparations
Types of Contracting Authority (actual, implied, and apparent)
Restrictions on Procurement Spending (anti-deficiency act/bone-fide needs rule)
Value Engineering – What is It?
Agile/Modular Acquisition
Developing a Business Case Analysis (BCA)
What is Logistics? Life Cycle Logistics for the Rest of Us

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Acquisition Seminars: Past, Present, and Future

Past Acquisition Seminar

On October 29, 2015, FAI partnered with GSA and three industry subject matter experts to broadcast an Acquisition Seminar titled, "To Bid or Not to Bid: An Industry Perspective." The seminar provided insightful strategies for developing solicitations in a manner that will elicit the level of industry engagement and competition that you are looking for. If you were not one of the 3,716 live viewers, or if you want to see it again, you can view the recording in the [FAI.Gov Video Library](#).

Present Acquisition Seminar

FAI's next Acquisition Seminar, "[The Next Generation of GSA's Federal Strategic Sourcing Solution for Office Supplies](#)" will broadcast live on Wednesday, January 21st at 1:00pm. During this webcast, you will learn how to use the Office Supplies Third Generation (OS3) solution to achieve massive savings while meeting your small business goals. If you haven't registered for this great, free webcast in FAITAS yet, don't delay! You can receive 2 continuous learning points for viewing, but you need to register.



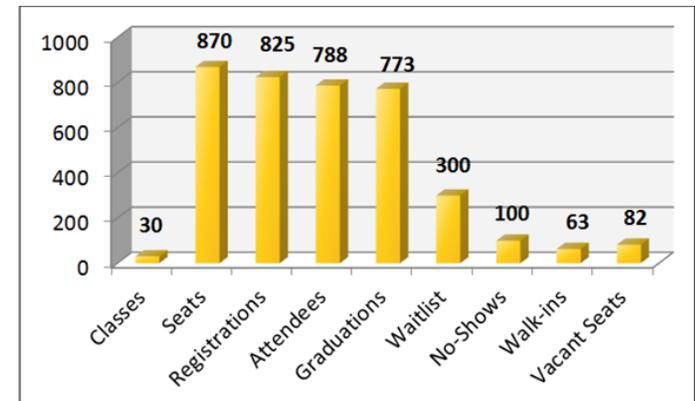
Future Acquisition Seminars

FAI is preparing for two upcoming Acquisition Seminars, including "EEO Responsibilities in Federal Procurement" on February 18th, and a seminar on agile and innovative acquisition that will broadcast in early Spring 2015. Keep an eye out for additional announcement on [FAI.Gov](#).

FAI Training Stats: That's the End of the First Quarter

Agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) sought 20,549 seats of training from FAI for FY2015. Clearly, they perceived a great deal of demand for the no-cost training that FAI provides. Now that we've complete the first quarter of FY2015, let's take a look at how training is going so far.

For the most part, we have respectable first quarter stats. 95% of the seats in FAI training are registered for, and 91% of those seats are actually filled. Of the students registered, 96% attended classes. Of the students who attend classes, 98% graduate. Furthermore, 0 classes have been cancelled. Zero. Nada. Goose egg. Not bad.



It's true; no classes have been officially "cancelled." However, percentages don't tell the whole story. 27 classes were postponed and rescheduled. 50 classes were postponed and put on-hold for later scheduling (20 CON and 30 FPM). That's nearly 1,800 training seats rescheduled all due to low registrations. Also, the 100 No-shows and 82 empty seats are puzzling given the incredibly high demand.

Let's work together to close out the first half strong.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Federal Transportation Officer Training Program: eLearning Level 2 Sessions

The Office of Government-wide Policy's [Federal Transportation and Logistics Management eLearning website](#) was introduced in the [FAI Newsletter Summer 2014 and Fall 2014 editions](#). These articles presented an overview of the Federal Transportation Officer program and introduced the Basic (Level 1) Federal Transportation Officer course. This article provides information on the Intermediate (Level 2) Federal Transportation Officer course.

One important concept taught in our training is that Federal agencies can procure transportation and traffic management services using either (1) a Contract or (2) a Tender of Service.

The procurement decision is based on agency rules and varying transportation requirements such as:

- An items criticality,
- What is being transported (Freight, Cargo and Household goods, HAZMAT),
- Mode of transportation (Road, Pipeline, Water, Air, Rail or a combination), or
- Where it is being moved from and to (CONUS or OCONUS, or a combination).

Federal Transportation Officer Intermediate (Level 2) Course

This course provides content for a first-line supervisor, mid-level, or someone with 3+ years of transportation experience. The Intermediate (Level 2) course also provides information and references for federal employees that actively engage in transportation activities, without transportation being their prime role. All sessions earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs). Individuals are encouraged to take one or more of the following sessions:

- Session 1: Determining Best Value in Transportation reviews the concept of best value and how to determine best value in transportation. (1.5 CLPs)
- Session 2: Tenders of Service focuses on tenders of service and explores

when tenders may be the best procurement and identifies other situations when tenders may not be advantageous. (2.5 CLPs)

- Session 3: One-Time-Only Rates reviews the One-Time-Only (OTO) procurement, terms and conditions, and determining when an OTO may be the best choice for transportation service procurement. (1.5 CLPs)
- Session 4: Transportation Contracts reviews transportation contracts as a means to procure transportation services. (3.0 CLPs)
- Session 5: International Freight Shipments and Customs reviews international freight shipments and customs for both export and import shipments. (5.0 CLPs)
- Session 6: Small Package Transportation discusses the small package transportation activities. (2.0 CLPs)
- Session 7: Packing and Marking Shipments reviews the importance of proper packing and marking shipments. (2.0 CLPs)
- Session 8: Special Requirements and Accessorials explores the difference between requirements and accessorials, and the fuel surcharge. (2.0 CLP)
- Session 9: Customer Relationships reviews customer relationships in the transportation area and introduces customer relationship management. (1.5 CLPs)

The Federal Transportation Officer eLearning program does not provide agency-specific information. It was created to provide a government wide standard of federal transportation knowledge. This site offers online training in transportation, traffic management, and logistics management at no cost to agencies. Completion of the courses is one way for you to fulfill your annual training needs.

For more information on the Federal Transportation and Logistics Management eLearning website, please contact [Lois Mandell](#), Transportation Policy Director (202) 501-2735 or [Lee Gregory](#), Senior Program Manager, (202) 507-0871.

The logo for the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) is located in the top left corner. It features a circular emblem with a key, a torch, and a scale, surrounded by the text 'FEDERAL ACQUISITION INSTITUTE'.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

New FAITAS Human Capital Plan Module

FAI is pleased to announce the deployment of a new FAI Training Application System (FAITAS) module for the Acquisition Human Capital Plan (AHCP). The AHCP module was made available for Agency use on December 19, 2014. The AHCP module provides an automated questionnaire that includes access to historical data and customizable workflows which allows an Agency to collaborate and internally coordinate the questionnaire, prior to its automated submission to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP). Prior to the development of the FAITAS AHCP module, agencies submitted their plans in a word document to OFPP. Then, over a several month period, the data was aggregated and analyzed by FAI to identify trends across the civilian agencies and the acquisition workforce. With the development of the AHCP module, agencies will enter their data directly in FAITAS. The new module provides agencies with (1) immediate access to a variety of current and historic acquisition workforce data elements, (2) ease of reporting for Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and stakeholders, and (3) an AHCP dashboard within FAITAS reducing the front-end data aggregation time. Ultimately, this centralized module provides agencies and OFPP with more efficient and reliable reports and analytics to make data-driven workforce planning decisions.

The AHCP originated from a [2009 OFPP memorandum](#) for Chief Financial Officer Act agencies to submit an annual strategic plan for enhancing the capacity and capability of their civilian acquisition workforce. Specifically, the Plan establishes: 1) the need for workforce growth; 2) a comprehensive annual workforce planning process; 3) a blueprint for increasing the use of intern programs and other training and development initiatives; and 4) a five-year action plan to improve workforce development efforts and the workforce management infrastructure.

FAI appreciates all the time and support ACMs and their staffs contributed in testing and implementing this new FAITAS capability.

Get to Know Your Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)

One of our favorite articles in every edition of the FAI Newsletter is the “ACM in the Spotlight” article. It provides an opportunity to showcase some of the most important and influential leaders in the Federal acquisition workforce community. Your agency’s ACM is a great resource for achieving your acquisition career goals. He or she is your “go-to” person for all questions and opportunities related to attaining and maintaining your acquisition certification.

As a member of the Federal acquisition community, you’ve probably heard of the “ACMs.” But who are they, and what do they do?

Who is your ACM?

A list of agency ACMs along with their contact information is available on the [FAI.gov Acquisition Career Manager page](#). ACMs are grouped by those at Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Act agencies, Small Agency Council (SAC) agencies, and others. CFO Act agency ACMs are appointed by the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO). For some ACMs, the role is a full-time job; for others, it is a collateral duty.

If your agency is one of the 90+ agencies that belong to the SAC, then you are represented by one of six “Super ACMs” who are each assigned to support a group of small agencies.

What are an ACM’s responsibilities?

The day-to-day activities of an ACM may differ from agency to agency, but all ACMs are called upon to perform the core responsibilities described on the next page.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Get to Know Your Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) (Continued)

- Manage the identification and development of the agency's acquisition workforce.
- Propose to the agency's CAO an annual budget for the development of the acquisition workforce.
- Provide input to the CAO and Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) regarding short and long term human capital strategic planning, including developing and maintaining the agency's AHCP.
- Ensure that agency policies and procedures for acquisition workforce management and certification are consistent with those established by OFPP, as appropriate.
- Recommend to the agency CAO, on a case-by-case basis, extensions to the date which a Program/Project Manager (P/PM) must be certified.
- Maintain and manage consistent agency-wide data on those serving in the agency's acquisition workforce in the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS).

ACMs also support the Federal-wide acquisition workforce by serving on Committees and Advisory Boards. The Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC) meets quarterly to discuss the development and implementation of interagency plans and programs for advancing the management of the acquisition workforce.

What is the ACM Guidebook?

Most members of the acquisition workforce are unaware of all of the duties associate with the ACM role, including some newly appointed ACMs. Luckily, the IACMC consists of experienced ACMs who are helping FAI to document their successful procedures, best practices, and useful tools and resources related to their core responsibilities. The ACM Guidebook will be a valuable source to new and current ACMs alike, when it is published this summer.



2014 Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC) Annual Planning Meeting

ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Pauline Tonsil, PhD, Acquisition Career Manager, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



**Pauline Tonsil, PhD,
Acquisition Career Manager
EPA**

1. How long have you worked at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?

3 Years.

2. Where were you before coming to EPA?

General Services Administration (GSA), Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), Office for Acquisition Management (OAM).

3. Tell us about one of your biggest successes achieved by your team.

One of my biggest successes is the development of the EPA OAM Training and Development Plan. The training and development plan outlines training in four categories: Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3, and Priority 4. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that the organization is properly resourced with people who have appropriate skills, knowledge, and experiences to enable the organization to achieve its mission and strategic goals. This plan is implemented and managed by the Training and Resources Management Council (T&RMC), of which I am a member. The purposes of the T&RMC are to: (1) set priorities for achieving and maintaining an efficient, effective, and skilled workforce; (2) allocate annual funding to meet requirements for balanced and affordable training goals; (3) adopt, wherever possible, the innovative and creative training and development practices of public and private organizations; and (4) anticipate and incorporate steps for meeting succession planning requirements for supervisory, managerial, and specialized skill positions.

4. What is the biggest challenge in your position?

Not having direct staff assigned to manage training and other human capital requirements as defined in OMB OFPP Letter 05-01, titled "[Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce](#)," and the EPA strategic goals, objectives, and initiative requirements.

5. What motivates you to put your best foot forward on a daily basis?

I love my job and my assigned duties and responsibilities. I get to be innovative and creative while using my knowledge, skills, and abilities to support EPA's mission, strategic goals, and objectives.

6. What skills do you think are most critical to successfully perform your job?

Having education, training, and experience in acquisition management, training and development, and human capital management (for example, strategic workforce planning and training; program and process measurement and evaluation; recruitment and hiring; and diversity management).

7. What could the FAI Team do to move the federal acquisition workforce forward?

Because of generational dynamics in today's workforce, FAI should move toward providing more leadership training in areas such as teambuilding, conflict resolution, management, critical thinking, communication styles, developing team creativity and initiative, coaching, and mentoring to address the leadership implications for and the interplay between multiple generations.



ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Getting to Know Pauline Tonsil, PhD, Acquisition Career Manager, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

8. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow acquisition career manager?

“Daring ideas are like chessmen moved forward; they may be beaten, but they may start a winning game.” ~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet (1749-1832)

9. What is a goal you have for your acquisition workforce?

As my organization changes under the Center of Expertise initiative, my goal is to move the acquisition workforce into the knowledge management age using “just-in-time learning” that allows employees to focus on “nuggets” of information as needed to perform specific tasks and solve problems as they come up. In the process of performing this goal, I will conduct a return-on-investment impact study to analyze the benefits of this move.

10. What is something about yourself that others might not know?

I have a passion for online education because it provided me the platform to complete my graduate and postgraduate degrees. I have a Master of Science in Management from the Florida Institute of Technology and a Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a concentration in Higher Education Administration from Capella University.

I am the author of three books:

- School Reform, Finance, and Law, May 2003;
- Ways to Finance a College Education, September 2005; and
- Messages of Encouragement: Inspirational Stories of Triumph over Challenge, April 2014.

In addition, I am the 2009 NCMA Honorable Mention Award winner for an article I submitted in the professional category of the W. Gregory Macfarlan Excellence in Contract Management Research and Writing Program. The article, “Human Capital Management: A New Vision, Succession Planning in the Federal Acquisition Workforce,” was published in the Summer 2010 issue of the Journal for National Contract Management.



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