



# FAI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 13 SPRING 2017 | FAI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## From the Acting Director



**Jeff Birch,**  
Acting Director, FAI

As we continue to gain more clarity about our new Administration's goals and priorities, one thing is certain: qualified acquisition workforce members are essential to achieve successful mission outcomes.

The competencies and abilities of our acquisition workforce, which continue to be a topic in many discussions, are developed through mandatory training, meeting appropriate education requirements, and gaining a variety of on-the-job experiences.

This three-pronged approach has existed for many years in both the DoD and the civilian agency acquisition workforce certification process.

On-the-job experiences vary depending on the specific agency mission. Gaining a diverse array of acquisition experiences can be challenging. However, the value of on-the-job experience can significantly outweigh those challenges. The need to identify and evaluate an individual's job experience is a critical step in the certification process that cannot be overlooked. As many acquisition offices continue to optimize resources to achieve mission goals, it's time that we, as a community, identify more nonconventional ways of gaining meaningful career development experiences.

Without a formal job detail, how does one expand their on-the-job experience to increase their capabilities? Our Federal government acquisition process contains several experiential learning opportunities. One tool that FAI has made available is "Acquisition Open Opportunities," explained on the next page. There are distinct process requirements through which individuals can gain specific experiences, such as participating in a negotiation, serving as a member of a technical evaluation team, or serving on a source selection panel. These individual experiences mean less time away from the workforce member's office in comparison to a formal three-to-six-month job detail assignment.

Collaboration across agency boundaries is a key element in overcoming our shared challenges. As Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

### FAI Newsletter Feedback Survey



#### We Want Your Suggestions!

Tell us how we can improve the FAI Newsletter to better meet your needs in our [short online survey!](#)

***Your Opinion Matters to Us!***

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## FAI Learning 2021: A Targeted Approach

Through the FAI 2021 strategic planning process, the FAI team is exploring a more robust and integrated competency assessment strategy to implement over the next five years. This strategy is multi-pronged and integrates several FAI programs; the concept has been termed FAI Learning 2021.

FAI Learning 2021 involves integrating our competency assessment tools with the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS), providing a wealth of information about the competence of the civilian workforce that has never been tapped into before. The Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey (AWCS) is an instrument that FAI administers bi-annually and produces valuable data for FAI, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), and civilian agency leadership. However, the AWCS currently lacks a feedback loop to directly benefit individual workforce members. Learning 2021 would provide participating workforce members with a customized report based on the results of their competency assessment. The report would contain targeted learning opportunities that will help the workforce member address any competency gaps. Additionally, the workforce member will be able to see how their proficiency improves over time.

Integration into FAITAS will allow FAI to leverage and build upon the most robust government-wide civilian acquisition workforce certification and training data set. At the agency level, the aggregated results can be used in making informed strategic human capital planning decisions about their workforce and to support funding requests for training.

At a government-wide level, Learning 2021 will enable OFPP and FAI to analyze correlations between competence, training, and certification. It will provide empirical evidence to support or refute commonly held beliefs and anecdotal reports about the acquisition workforce. It will then inform new training priorities and help aggregate government-wide training requirements.

## Acquisition Open Opportunities: What Are You Waiting For?

If you have been following the FAI Newsletter, you know that we have been promoting Acquisition Open Opportunities, a marketplace of opportunities for acquisition professionals to get hands-on experiential learning by sharing skills and collaborating on projects across offices and agencies. Acquisition Open Opportunities offers a number of perks and benefits to the entire 1102 community, regardless of your level of Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) or experience.

Through Acquisition Open Opportunities, you can:

- Find individuals who are equipped with specific acquisition-related skills and abilities that you need to help you accomplish a project or task;
- Discover and support cross-agency initiatives and efforts that are particularly interesting to you; and
- Serve as a mentor to the 1102 community!

Don't wait any longer! Visit [Open Opportunities](#), create an account, and post or respond to opportunities today!

### Need Help Getting Started with Acquisition Open Opportunities?

#### **Create an Open Opportunities Account**

- Registration is quick and easy—sign up directly from the [Open Opportunities homepage](#)

#### **Contact FAI with Questions**

- If you have questions about Open Opportunities, or would like to discuss a potential opportunity before posting, please contact FAI's [Anne Reinhold](#)

#### **Learn More About Open Opportunities**

- Read previous articles about Acquisition Open Opportunities from [FAI's Newsletter archives](#)
- Visit the [Open Opportunities homepage](#)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## FAR Case Updates: Privacy Training and Uniform Use of Line Items

### Privacy Training

[FAR Case 2010-013](#), Privacy Training, was issued as a final rule by the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council (FAR Council) and took effect on January 19, 2017. This rule requires contractors handling personally identifiable information (PII) or those having access to PII records systems to complete training in order to protect this sensitive information.

**What are contractor responsibilities under this rule?** Contractors are responsible for ensuring that initial and annual privacy training is completed by any employees who 1) have access to a Privacy Act system of records; 2) design, develop, maintain, or operate a Privacy Act system of records; or 3) create, collect, use, process, store, maintain, disseminate, disclose, dispose, or otherwise handle PII. The rule adds a definition of PII to the FAR and specifies required content for adequate training and recordkeeping. The standard clause language allows the contractor to select any privacy training that meets the requirements for use by their employees, while use of Alternate I requires that the agency provide its own agency-specific training to contractor employees.

**Which contracts are affected?** All contracts involving contractor employee access to Privacy Act systems of records and PII, including contracts and subcontracts at or below the simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) and contracts and subcontracts for commercial items and commercially available off-the-shelf (COTS) items.

**What do I as a Contracting Officer need to remember?** Insert the clause at FAR 52.224-3, Privacy Training, in solicitations and contracts when contractor employees will develop or have access to a system of records or will handle PII or a system of records for the Government. This clause flows down to all affected subcontractors. Use the clause with Alternate I when the agency will provide privacy training to identified contractor employees.

### Uniform Use of Line Items

[FAR Case 2013-014](#), Uniform Use of Line Items, was published as a final rule on January 13, 2017, but agencies have until October 1, 2019, to apply this requirement to solicitations and contracts. This will allow agencies time to transition their information systems and ensure their workforces are trained.

#### Purpose

This rule will improve the accuracy, traceability, and usability of procurement data. It represents a move to standardizing contract line item use for improving procurement data for future analysis. It also represents a new shift in how the workforce will define and structure line items.

#### Specifics

The Uniform Use of Line Items rule:

- Standardizes the data line item reporting structure;
- Allows contractors to propose alternate line item structure; and
- Requires standard data elements and numbering for line and subline item numbers and accounting classification citations.

#### Training

DAU courses reflect this approach to contract line items as DoD previously adopted this standardized line item treatment. FAI is creating additional training for the civilian acquisition workforce with planned deployment in late 2017/early 2018.

*Stay tuned for more information!*



# TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Make the Most of FAI's **FREE** Training Opportunities

### More Offerings of FAC-COR Level II Training

FAI has scheduled ten (that's right, TEN!) FCR 201 classes in 2017 to support FAC-COR level II requirements. Both classroom training in the Washington, DC area and virtual instructor-led training (vILT) are on the schedule.

Check out [FAI.gov for the full announcement, schedule, and instructions for registering for one of the FCR 201 courses](#). Additional links to the daily schedule, syllabus, and systems testing for the vILT classes are also included.

### Other FAI Training Opportunities

FAI has a number of great training opportunities, with seats still available, for the entire acquisition workforce! More training for 2017 will be added to FAI's training schedule, but in the meantime, [check out these upcoming FAI classes that still have open seats available!](#) Register in [FAITAS](#) today and take advantage of this **FREE** training!

#### vILT Courses with Open Seats



- CON 170 (FED)
- FCN 190
- CON 270 (FED)
- CON 280 (FED)
- CON 290 (FED)
- FCR 201

Looking for a virtual class? No worries, FAI has you covered! Among the **FREE** FAI course offerings with seats still available are a variety of vILT classes. The vILT courses that are still open for enrollment are shown to the left.

Check out the [FAC-C training announcement](#) and the [FAC-COR training announcement](#) on FAI.gov for more information

about the vILT courses, including sample class schedules.

Register in [FAITAS](#) today—and never forget that training through FAI is **FREE**; there is no tuition cost to students or their agencies!

## Future Acquisition Seminars: Tell FAI What You Want!

FAI's Acquisition Seminars are **FREE** video webcasts available for acquisition professionals to earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) by registering for seminars through FAITAS or watching them via the FAI Media Library. During these seminars, Federal acquisition workforce members have the opportunity to learn relevant, timely, and applicable tips and techniques; develop acquisition skills and abilities; hear best practices from acquisition experts; and learn about emerging topics and trends.

FAI is currently developing its Acquisition Seminar schedule for the rest of 2017 and wants to hear from **YOU**, members of the Federal acquisition workforce, regarding what topics should be covered during these events! Suggestions can pertain to any aspect of Federal acquisition or procurement!

Submit your suggestion via the [Acquisition Seminar Suggestion Form](#) today! Suggestions are being accepted through Friday, April 28. FAI wants to ensure the subjects covered during Acquisition Seminar events are those that are most interesting and useful to you, so make your voice heard today!

### Visit the FAI Media Library to View All the Acquisition Seminars!

*Examples of Previous Seminar Topics:*

- Past Performance
- Agile Acquisitions
- AbilityOne
- Information Disclosure
- Suspension and Debarment
- Debriefings



# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## Debunking Urban “Contracting” Legends

Welcome to our second installment of urban “contracting” legends! Today, we are going to examine whether or not the technical evaluation team should ever be provided the technical and business proposals concurrently.

### Urban “Contracting” Legend vs. Fact

#### URBAN LEGEND

The technical evaluation team should NOT be provided the technical and business proposals concurrently

We’ve all been taught that you should not release the business proposal with the technical proposal. This may be true, particularly when the purchase is highly technical and intricate and we need the technical experts to buy-in on the technical approach. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that in certain circumstances, providing both

#### FACT

Providing evaluators the technical and business proposals concurrently may allow them to make a more informed decision

the business and technical proposals at the same time to the evaluation team may allow them to make a more informed decision.

The FAR does not prohibit the Contracting Officer from simultaneously sending the evaluation team both the technical and price/cost proposals. This speaks to the larger issue of whether or not we can trust the process and trust our acquisition team members (technical evaluation panel).

If you were replacing the heating system in your house, would you evaluate the contractor’s approach to doing the work separately, without regard to the price? Probably not. Likewise, in the government, we can’t always know whether or not the technical approach will work if we do not also look at the price or cost. We need to understand and have confidence that the contractor’s technical proposal is going to yield us the service or product that we are expecting at the price they have proposed and that we have negotiated.

### The Bottom Line



The key point here is to trust in your technical evaluators. You need to know your team, and building relationships is very important. Although it may not always be in the government’s best interest to simultaneously release the technical and business proposals to the technical evaluation team, for simplified purchases, it would not only streamline the review process, but it could also render a better contract.



## FAI Verification Program is On-Hold

**FAI's Verification Program is currently on hold for FAC-COR and FAC-P/PM reviews.**

Agencies shall not restrict competition to only FAI verified vendors when purchasing COR or P/PM certification training for the federal acquisition workforce. Instead, agencies shall include strong evaluation criteria in solicitations to determine which vendors are the most highly qualified to provide training that meets the FAC-COR and FAC-P/PM competencies.





# FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

## New Competencies and Courseware Structure for IT PM Specialization!

Since the 2015 kickoff of the IT PM Improvement Initiative, six Integrated Project Teams (IPTs) have steadily made progress on initiatives to help agencies better leverage their FAC-P/PM-IT certification requirements and comply with the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) and the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA).

One of the IPT's primary initiatives was to simplify the IT PM competencies and restructure training requirements to align with the new competencies for the IT PM Specialization. We are excited to report that this has successfully been completed, and the IPTs recently received approval from the IT PM Executive Steering Board (ESB) to reduce the current 33 competencies down to a set of "Sweet 16" IT PM competencies. They also received approval to work with training vendors to realign courses and focus courseware on how a PM should manage an IT project or program vice the current highly technical focus.

The new set of "Sweet 16" IT PM competencies are listed to the left. To learn more about these competencies, including the top-level learning objectives for each one, please visit the [FAC-P/PM Competencies section on FAI.gov](#).

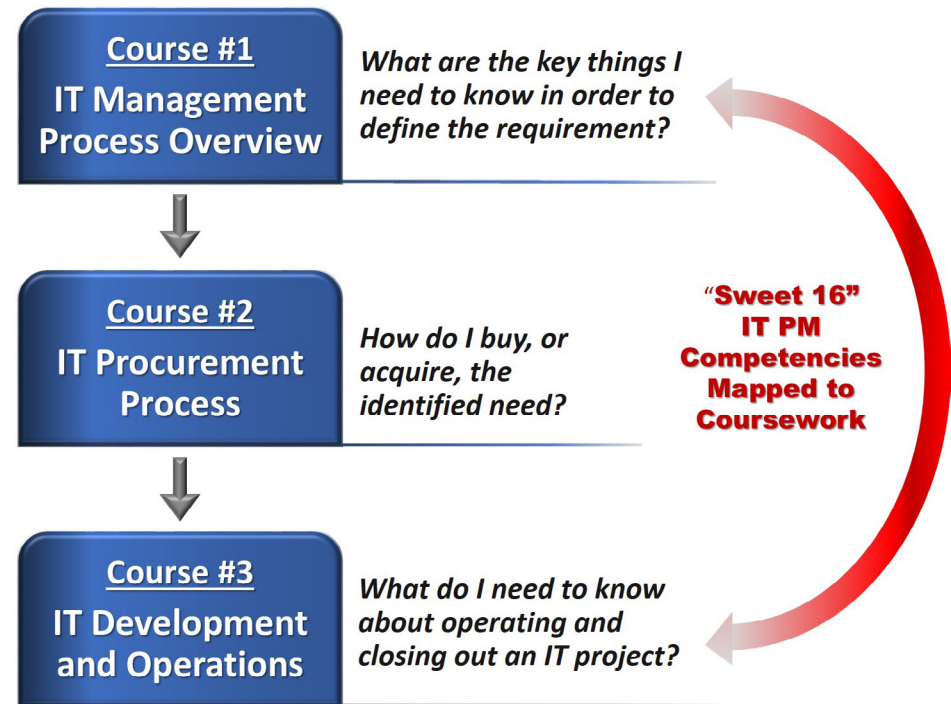
The new courseware structure will address, from an IT PM standpoint, how to identify the requirements through the total project lifecycle. The courseware will include three categories, as shown to the right, and the "Sweet 16" IT PM competencies will be mapped to these

categories. The courseware revision effort should be completed in FY18, so keep an eye out for the new course announcements on FAI.gov and in FAITAS.

### "Sweet 16" IT PM Competencies

Mission Capability Gap Assessment
Technology Awareness
Enterprise Architecture
Requirements Generation, Analysis, & Management
IT Strategy and Planning
Capital Planning and Investment Assessment
Analysis of Alternatives
Contracting/Procurement
Acquisition Planning
IT Program Monitoring & Controlling
IT Program Execution & Delivery
Quality Assurance
Risk Management
Operations and Maintenance
System Re-Engineering and Re-Evaluation
Program/Project Closeout

**NEW**



### New IT P/PM Specialization Courseware Structure

At this time, most of the IPTs have reached the implementation stage for their respective initiatives. In order to maximize resources and to continue to build on the IT PM efforts during this next phase of work, the IPTs presented a strategy to the IT PM ESB to consolidate the six teams into one. The ESB approved of the consolidation plan and assigned Dr. Christopher Rahaim from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) as the new IPT lead.

Stay tuned for progress reports on the IT PM efforts in the coming months!

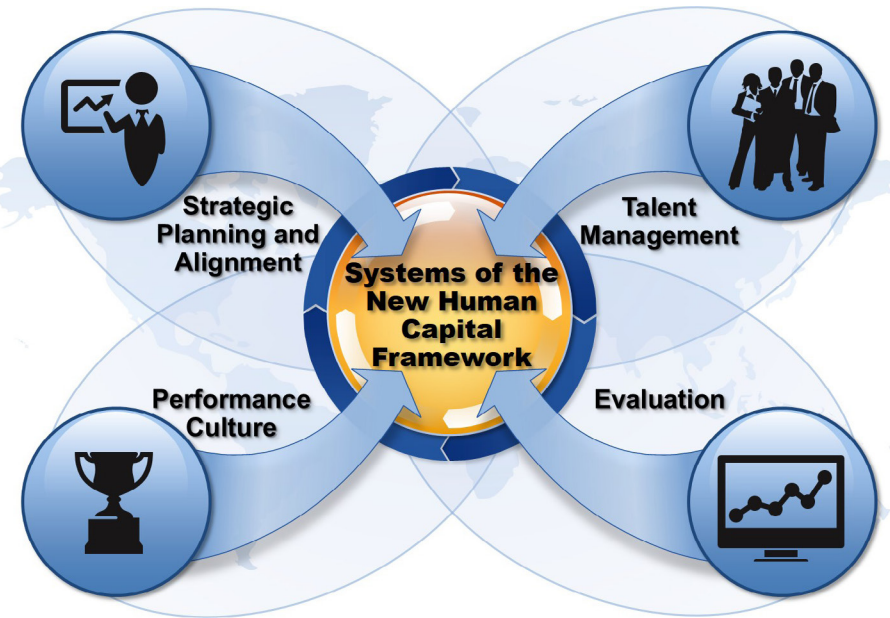
# HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

## New Human Capital Framework (HCF): Aligning People with Mission





When government leaders say, “Our people are our most valuable resource!” it isn’t just rhetoric; it can actually be measured. Staff often make up the largest line item for an organization, including the costs to acquire, develop, and compensate. However, the workforce also represents a significant liability if not properly managed, prepared, positioned, and motivated. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers tools, resources, and support to agencies in planning and managing human capital programs that enable the workforce to operate at peak performance and achieve its potential greatness.

Over the last decade, the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF) has been one of OPM’s key mechanisms for ensuring agencies have the programs and systems in place to support managers and employees throughout the human capital lifecycle (e.g., recruitment, hiring, onboarding, training, engagement, performance management, recognition, retention). The HCAAF has been used as a cornerstone for agency Acquisition Human Capital Plans (AHCPs). This year, OPM is transitioning from the HCAAF to the new HCF, which will better align an agency’s human capital management strategies with its mission and goals. The new HCF systems include: Strategic Planning and Alignment, Talent Management, Performance Culture, and Evaluation.

OPM is seeking to capitalize on advancements in talent management and personnel data systems. The final rule and guidance will reduce the time and resources spent by agencies on reporting procedures and leverage data to drive decision-making through more consistent and efficient tracking of agency progress toward goals and targets. As one of Federal government’s largest, most cross-cutting, and mission-critical populations, the acquisition workforce is one of government’s greatest assets. The HCF transition is expected to have a direct effect on how programs that develop and support the acquisition workforce are planned and managed. As OPM releases additional guidance, OFPP, FAI, and your agency’s Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) will work to leverage the new HCF to strengthen strategic human capital planning and management for the acquisition workforce.



### Definitions of the Systems of the New Human Capital Framework

 <b>Strategic Planning and Alignment</b>	A system that ensures agency human capital programs are aligned with agency mission, goals, and objectives through analysis, planning, investment, and measurement
 <b>Talent Management</b>	A system that promotes a high-performing workforce, identifies and closes skills gaps, and implements and maintains programs to attract, acquire, develop, promote, and retain quality and diverse talent
 <b>Performance Culture</b>	A system that engages, develops, and inspires a diverse, high-performing workforce by creating, implementing, and maintaining effective performance management strategies, practices, and activities that support mission objectives
 <b>Evaluation</b>	A system that contributes to agency performance by monitoring and evaluating outcomes of its human capital management strategies, policies, programs, and activities



# TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

## FAITAS Course Catalog— New and Improved Features!

The Federal Acquisition Institute's Training Application System (FAITAS) Course Catalog has been updated! In addition to a brand new layout, we hope that you will take advantage of the following features to enhance your experience viewing and applying for class offerings!

**Featured Courses** – Check out this selection of highlighted courses for a sample of “hot” classes that may be of interest to you! Courses showcased here are color-coded and grouped by category type so you can easily identify courses of related topic and subject area.

**Filter or Search for Courses** – Searching the entire course catalog is now easier and faster than ever! Quickly search for a course by applying one or more of the following filters: Keyword(s); Category; Teaching School; Location; Start Date/End Date; and Delivery Method (Online or Classroom).

**Access Important Course Information** – Interested in a course but want to learn more about it before registering? For each course, the FAITAS Course Catalog provides the following details and information so you will fully understand the expectations and requirements of the class: Quick Facts (e.g., number of Continuous Learning Points); Class Schedule; Full Course Description; Teaching School Policy Notice; and Prerequisites, if applicable.

**Apply for a Course/Class Directly** – Have you searched the Course Catalog and found a class you want to take? Then don't delay in registering—you can now access the Training Request page directly from the Course Catalog to submit your application!

For more information on navigating the Course Catalog and for step-by-step instructions on how to use these new and improved features, check out the [FAITAS Course Catalog User Guides](#).

## FAI.gov User Assessment Survey— Help FAI Help You!

FAI is committed to providing **YOU**, our customers, with the best service and quality. In line with our commitment to continuous improvement, we are looking to examine our current performance across a broad range of issues that are critical to our success. The best way to do this is by asking you, members of the acquisition workforce, for your feedback and opinions on how FAI is currently performing.

Thus, FAI is conducting a survey of the acquisition community to assess your satisfaction of [FAI.gov](#) and the tools provided by the website. Your opinions are important and this survey is your chance to make your voice heard!

By participating in this survey, you will make an important contribution to help FAI serve you better—your opinion counts! FAI appreciates your honest feedback and would like to thank you in advance for your support and input!

Please contact [Troy Jones](#) with any concerns or questions.

**Important Details About the FAI.gov User Assessment Survey!**

**How long will the survey take to complete?**  
The survey should take no more than 3-5 minutes to complete.

**Who will see my responses?**  
All responses and feedback will remain confidential and anonymous.

**Take the Survey NOW!**



# ACM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

## Getting to Know Brian Heath, Acquisition Career Manager, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)



**Brian Heath, DOI, ACM**

*Photo taken near the North Pole, above the 78 parallel (Aug. 2016)*

### **1. How long have you worked at the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and where were you before?**

I have been fortunate to work for the Department of the Interior and multiple bureaus that make up Interior for going on 28 years. The focus of the National Park Service attracted me back to high school and the mission of Interior has kept me here.

### **2. Tell us about one of your biggest successes achieved by your team.**

Implementing a new system is a challenge regardless of the circumstances. Our bureau acquisition career coordinators have worked hard within their bureaus, to achieve acceptance and successful implementation of FAITAS to over 10,000 system users at Interior. That is a big undertaking.

### **3. What is the biggest challenge in your position?**

We are all bombarded with data through every medium imaginable. Filtering to our clients timely, meaningful information is a critical challenge. Capturing their attention is a whole other issue.

### **4. What motivates you to put your best foot forward on a daily basis?**

When our bureaus are successful, I really feel we share in that success at the agency level. The converse is also true. So the old saying "your success is my success" strikes a chord with me.

### **5. What skills do you think are most critical to successfully perform your job?**

We are often told in life that it is all about the big picture, yet it is true that the small things can derail the big picture items. So, being able to recognize risk and taking the appropriate steps to minimize that risk is critical. There is no need to play every card in your deck, just the most important ones.

### **6. What could the FAI team do to move the Federal acquisition workforce forward?**

Experience is the catch word these days. Could an informal mentoring (lite) program be established to match up participants across agencies? Maybe a mentoring outline on FAI.gov for those agencies that want to start their own in-house mentoring.

### **7. What words of wisdom would you offer to your fellow Acquisition Career Managers?**

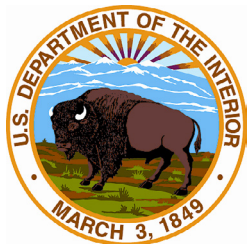
An inspector general once shared with me that documenting a decision (even a bad decision on my part) did much to mitigate the outcome of an IG report. No one likes to second guess, nor are we in the business of guessing. Clarity and transparency are the key.

### **8. What is a goal you have for your acquisition workforce?**

We need to continue our education even when it does not result in a trophy, certification, etc. The certificate on the wall means nothing compared to the knowledge we have learned.

Want your agency's Acquisition Career Manager to be the star of an upcoming edition of ACM in the Spotlight?

E-mail your nomination to [contact@fai.gov](mailto:contact@fai.gov).



# WORKFORCE RESOURCES

## Student Support

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If you have training and development questions, always begin with your agency Acquisition Career Manager (ACM).

[List of ACMs](#)

[FAI.gov](#)

[FAI Help Desk](#)

[DAU.mil](#)

