

COMMERCE ACQUISITION MANUAL
1301.6

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND CONTRACTING
OFFICER WARRANT PROGRAM

COMMERCE ACQUISITION MANUAL 1301.6

	<u>Page</u>	
Section 1	Overview	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Purpose	1
1.3	Policy	3
1.4	Scope	4
Section 2	Elements of the Acquisition Career Management Program	5
2.1	Roles and Responsibilities	5
2.2	Critical Skills and Career Path for the Contracting Series (GS-1102)	6
2.3	The OPM Qualification Standard and DOC Requirements for the Contracting Series	14
2.4	Other Development Opportunities	22
2.5	Career Planning	24
2.6	Acquisition Certification	25
Section 3	Elements of the Contracting Officer Warrant Program	26
3.1	Roles and Responsibilities	26
3.2	Purpose	27
3.3	Scope	27
3.4	Exemptions	27
3.5	Warrant Levels and Limitations	27
3.6	Selection, Appointment, and Termination of Appointment	28
3.7	Existing Delegations	32
3.8	Waivers	32
3.9	Reporting Requirements	33

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Definitions	A1
Appendix B	DOC Model for Managing and Developing Acquisition Business Leaders	B1
Appendix C	Critical Skills and Model Career Path for Contracting Series.	C1
Appendix D	Description of Mandatory Courses for Contract Specialists	D1
Appendix E	Sample Request for Waiver of OPM Acquisition Workforce Qualification Standard	E1
Appendix F	Sample Individual Development Plan (IDP)	F1
Appendix G	Sample Request for Appointment of Contracting Officer	G1

Section 1 – OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The field of Federal acquisition changed considerably during the 1990's and continues to evolve as we move further into the new century. Business process changes with emphasis on customer service and results rather than process have revolutionized acquisition and the way business is conducted. As a result, the role of the contract specialist and contracting officer has also changed and will continue to evolve. Commerce Acquisition Manual (CAM) Chapter, 1301.6, establishes both the Department of Commerce Acquisition Career Management Program (ACMP) and the Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP). The CAM Chapter describes the education, experience and training requirements for employment and advancement in acquisition positions within the Department of Commerce as well as the requirements for Contracting Officer delegations.

Both the ACMP and the COWP provide the acquisition workforce with a standardized, consistent and high quality-training program that will prepare them to meet the career changes and challenges ahead. The programs are designed to not only develop technical skills, but to also develop good business management and judgement skills, effective communication skills, and team building skills. Through the ACMP and the COWP the Department of Commerce acquisition workforce will develop into the Department's business leaders.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of both the ACMP and the COWP is to implement the vision of the Procurement Executives Council (PEC) (<http://www.pec.gov/>) of a Federal acquisition workforce that is the Government's business leaders. As business leaders, within the Department of Commerce, the acquisition workforce will play a vital role in the supporting and implementing the mission of the Department of Commerce.

1.2.1 The Procurement Executives Council

The PEC is an interagency council consisting of procurement executives in the Executive Branch established to provide a senior level forum for monitoring and improving the Federal Acquisition System. The purpose of the PEC is to continuously improve and promote business practices, which deliver on a timely basis best value products and services to the customer while maintaining the public's trust and fulfilling public policy objectives.

1.2.2 The Vision for the Federal Acquisition Workforce

The PEC defines the Federal acquisition workforce as the Government's business leader and has established a vision that the Federal acquisition workforce will:

- Provide strategic business advice to agency leaders for spending and managing billions of the taxpayers dollars annually.
- Apply the most effective business practices from public and private sectors.
- Join industry in mission-oriented business partnerships.
- Obtain the best value goods and services for the taxpayer.
- Provide responsive, creative, solution-oriented service to support program agency missions.

1.2.3 Supporting the Mission of the Department of Commerce and the Office of Acquisition Management

The Department of Commerce acquisition community is critical to the Department's mission (<http://www2.osec.doc.gov/public.nsf/docs/mission-statement>) of promoting job creation, economic growth, sustainable development, and improved living standards for all Americans, by working in partnership with businesses, universities, communities, and workers: to build for the future and promote U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace, by strengthening and safeguarding the nation's economic infrastructure; to keep America competitive with cutting-edge science and technology and a world-class information base; and to provide effective management and stewardship of our Nation's resources and assets to ensure sustainable economic opportunity. To ensure programs and services are as effective as possible and to work collectively to achieve Department goals, a professional acquisition workforce with sound business skills is imperative.

The Department's management initiatives focus on successfully integrating policy development and program implementation, ensuring the highest level of customer service for users of Commerce programs and products, and providing the most forward-looking management practices and systems for the support and delivery of Commerce programs. In addition, both the ACMP and the COWP strive to implement the mission of the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) (<http://oamweb.osec.doc.gov/mission.htm>) which is to create a model for providing Department-wide business solutions. The ACMP is the means through which the Department of Commerce recruits and retains acquisition professionals who are viewed as team members with knowledge and integrity, and as an essential resource for accomplishing the Department's mission. The COWP is the means by which acquisition professionals are delegated authority to purchase goods and services on behalf of the Department of Commerce. The ACMP is the foundation for the Department's COWP. It serves as the basis for the education, training, and experience requirements of the Warrant Program. Together these two programs will implement the vision for the Federal acquisition workforce as the Government's business leaders.

1.2.4 Workforce Planning

The Federal acquisition workforce has faced many challenges over the last decade. A vast array of regulations has placed increased demands on the workforce and at the same time the size and the skills of the workforce have continued to diminish. A strategic approach to workforce planning is necessary to ensure that the Department of Commerce recruits and retains a skilled and competent acquisition workforce. Workforce planning is a means by which Federal Agencies can strategically match human capital assets with their present and future needs.

Workforce planning should be developed with the Department and Bureau's strategic plans as well as budgets and should include organizational alignment, workforce analysis and action plans.

1.3 Policy

The overall philosophy of both the ACMP and the COWP is based on the need to advance the professionalism of acquisition positions. Neither the ACMP nor the COWP guarantee that fulfillment of all the requirements for a given level will result in promotion to the next level. The programs serve to recognize the essential skills necessary for competent performance.

1.3.1 The Department of Commerce Acquisition Career Management Program (ACMP):

- a) Implements the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's Policy Letter (OFPP) on Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel (Policy Letter No. 97-01, dated September 12, 1997 (<http://www.arnet.gov/Library/OFPP/PolicyLetters/Letters/PL97-01.html>)).
- b) Provides the acquisition workforce access to quality education, training and development opportunities to enhance current performance and allow each member of the acquisition community to acquire the skills critical to successfully implement the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (1994) and the Clinger-Cohen Act (1996).
- c) Identifies critical skills, mandatory and recommended training courses, typical job assignments, and other associated activities for the Entry Level (Level I, GS-5 and GS-7), Intermediate Level (Level II, GS-9 through GS-12), and Advanced level (Level III, GS-13 and above). Definitions of terms are located in Appendix A, Definitions.
- d) Identifies critical skills, mandatory training requirements, specialized and developmental courses, and other associated activities to receive Acquisition Certification within the Department of Commerce.
- e) Provides the DOC Model for Managing and Developing Acquisition Business Leaders (Appendix B).

1.3.2 The Department of Commerce Contracting Officer Warrant Program:

- a) Establishes criteria for the selection, appointment, and termination of Department of Commerce Contracting Officers.
- b) Ensures that the Department appoints qualified individuals as Contracting Officers who meet the Procurement Executive's Council vision for the Federal acquisition workforce and support the mission of the Department of Commerce and the Office of Acquisition Management.

1.4 Scope

The ACMP and the COWP apply to the acquisition workforce within the Department of Commerce, including:

- a) All employees in the contracting series (GS-1102),
- b) All positions in the purchasing series (GS-1105) and procurement clerk series (GS-1106, and
- c) All Contracting Officers with authority to obligate funds above the micro-purchase threshold, regardless of the job series.

END OF SECTION 1

Section 2 - ELEMENTS OF THE ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

a) Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Department of Commerce:

- Responsible for implementation of the Acquisition Career Management Program (ACMP) department-wide as described herein.

b) Senior Bureau Procurement Official (SBPO):

- Responsible for workforce planning to ensure the bureau's acquisition workforce receives training and development opportunities consistent with the program, bureau-specific needs, and Individual Development Plans (IDP).
- Responsible for the coordination of the bureau's annual training needs, submission of the bureau's annual training plan to the SPE, and administration of the training plan.
- Responsible for the coordination and submission of all bureau requests for education and training waivers to the SPE for approval.
- Responsible for review, concurrence and submission of all bureau requests for Acquisition Certification to the SPE for approval.
- Responsible for reporting employee education and training data to OAM, when requested.

c) Head of Contracting Office (HCO):

- Responsible for tracking and reporting completed education and training requirements in accordance with bureau policy and procedures.
- Responsible for ensuring that an IDP is prepared for each acquisition workforce employee.
- Responsible for the development and submission of annual organization training plans based on IDPs to the SBPO.
- Responsible for submission, to the SBPO, requests for education and training waivers.

d) Supervisor:

- Responsible for filling vacancies with employees that meet specific organizational needs as well as the minimum qualification standards as set forth in the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) GS-1102, Contract Specialist Qualification Standard.
- Responsible for determining if the workforce has met the mandatory training requirements to enable them to move to the next training level.
- Responsible for determining if an employee has the requisite qualifications to attend a training course.
- Responsible for providing assistance to the employee to identify training and development opportunities
- Responsible for providing guidance to the employee during the development of the IDP.
- Responsible for review and approval of the employee's IDP.

- Responsible for providing career guidance to the employee as appropriate.
- Responsible for recording the employee's completion of education and training requirements in accordance with bureau policy and procedures.

e) Acquisition Workforce Employee:

- Responsible for personal career progression and development.
- Responsible for the development of an IDP to identify training and development opportunities for a multi-year time frame.
- Responsible for identifying development opportunities that may contribute to the advancement of career goals. Such opportunities may include completing a rotational assignment, requesting additional on-the-job training assignments and/or increasingly difficult assignments, entering into a mentor relationship, and becoming involved in a professional association.
- Responsible for submitting proof of completed education and training requirements in accordance with bureau policy and procedures and to OAM upon request.

2.2 Critical Skills and Career Path for the Contracting Series (GS-1102)

2.2.1 Purpose

The Federal Acquisition Reform Act (FARA) required agencies to establish career paths for the acquisition workforce in terms of education, training, experience and assignments needed for career progression to the most senior acquisition positions. FARA also established requirements for completion of coursework and on-the-job training and required employees to maintain current skill levels through training, academic programs, or self-development activities.

Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 92-3 (<http://www.amet.gov/Library/OFPP/PolicyLetters/Letters/PL92-3.html>), paragraphs 4a through 4c, implemented in section 1.603-1 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), requires the SPE to establish training requirements for the acquisition workforce that facilitate the development of critical skills.

2.2.2. Background

The career paths identified herein are key to developing an acquisition workforce that truly is the Business Leader envisioned by the PEC and ensure that the Department of Commerce acquisition workforce is prepared for the future. The pathways are intended to develop an acquisition workforce that is highly experienced and well trained and one that is poised to meet the acquisition and management challenges that are presented. Career paths are designed to facilitate the development of the necessary critical skills needed by the acquisition workforce to

progress to senior acquisition levels. Pathways for career progression include both vertical and

lateral movement. Within the career paths there are formal training and development programs as well as informal growth and development opportunities.

Lateral movement within and between career fields is highly encouraged, primarily at the intermediate level. Lateral movements, which broaden the acquisition professionals experience base, can be accomplished through details, developmental and/or rotational assignments. Multi-specialty experience for most upper-level positions is desirable and is particularly important for those who strive to secure work assignments and training in more than one of the functional areas of acquisition. For example, a senior level GS-1102 could be assigned a tour in finance or personnel. In addition to multi-specialty experience, a mixture of operational and staff experience will strengthen an individual's competitive position when seeking high-level positions in acquisition career fields.

HCO's are encouraged to provide multi-specialty experience through details, rotations, and development assignments. Such opportunities will benefit both the organization as well as the individual as the experience gained facilitates the development of a quality acquisition workforce that will be better prepared for increased responsibility and higher levels of authority.

2.2.3 Typical Career Paths

The Department of Commerce has identified the critical skills and career paths for the contracting series (Appendix C). To assist contract specialists in planning career development activities and to set goals for accomplishing the necessary training, the career path consists of three levels. The career path identifies the requirements for employment, progression, and advancement to the most senior positions in the contracting field through a standardized, consistent, and top quality education and training program and required experience and job assignments. The requirements identified in each level are cumulative. It is important to note that requirements for a lower level should be completed before progression to the next higher level. For example, a GS-1102-7 employee should complete all Level I mandatory courses and required activities before progressing to the GS-1102-9, Level II. Figure 2-1, Synopsis of Model Acquisition Career Paths, provides a snapshot of the requirements. Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Path for Contracting Series, contains the career paths in more detail, including critical skills, required education, mandatory training, additional recommended training, on-the-job training activities, rotational assignments and other recommended activities.

Figure 2-1 Synopsis of Model Acquisition Career Paths

Typical Grade	Experience	Education	Training
<p>Level I – Entry GS-5 through GS-7 (or equivalent)</p>		<p>A. 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B. At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.</p>	<p>Mandatory: CON 101 – Fundamentals of Contracting OR Acquisition Planning I, Contract Formation I, and Contract Administration I CON 104 - Fundamentals of Contract Pricing OR Price Analysis, Cost Analysis, and Federal Contract Negotiation Techniques</p> <p>40 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years after all mandatory training requirements have been met.</p>

Typical Grade	Experience	Education	Training
<p>Level II - Intermediate GS-9 Through 12 (or equivalent)</p>	<p>One year of specialized experience at or equivalent to the next lower grade level.</p> <p>Critical Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review procurement request packages for completeness and conformity with regulations and procedures. ➤ Review for overall soundness the evaluation and selection decisions for actions resulting from unsolicited proposals. ➤ Determine the appropriate procurement instrument type and pricing structure , and all general and special clauses and representations and certifications. ➤ Analyze cost proposals; structured fee, when necessary. ➤ Conduct negotiations and prepare all necessary pre-negotiation positions and post-negotiations summaries. ➤ Perform all actions required to effectively administer assigned contracts. ➤ Perform all actions necessary to partially or totally terminate contracts. ➤ Perform all steps necessary to close contracts. ➤ Ensure that timely and accurate procurement data are 	<p>A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>B. At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.</p>	<p>Mandatory: Completion of all Level I Mandatory Training Courses, AND</p> <p>CON 202 – Intermediate Contracting OR Acquisition Planning II, Contract Formation II, and Contract Administration II</p> <p>CON 204 - Intermediate Contract Pricing</p> <p>CON 210 – Government Contract Law CON 333 – Management for Contract Supervisors*</p> <p>*Grades 11/12 only</p> <p>40 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years after all mandatory training requirements have been met.</p>

	<p>entered and validated in all appropriate systems.</p> <p>Development Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ Internal and external work assignments ☛ Serve as an advisor or participant on acquisition project teams or cross functional teams ☛ Conduct special projects/reports/surveys ☛ Member of professional organization ☛ Subscribe to professional magazines, newsletters, list-serve services ☛ Serve as a mentor or role model to others in the acquisition workforce ☛ Attend conferences and seminars ☛ Write articles on acquisition related topics. 		
Typical Grade	Experience	Education	Training

<p>Level III – Advanced GS-13 and above</p>	<p>Four years of experience in contracting or related position.</p> <p>At least 1 year of specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position and must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position.</p> <p>Critical Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plan acquisitions and determine acquisition strategies. ➤ Review proposed non-competitive procurements and take appropriate action. ➤ Develop individual procurement strategies and prepare solicitations. ➤ Analyze quotes, bids, and proposals. Conduct evaluations of offers, oversee technical evaluations, and recommend determinations as to competitive range. Recommend contractor selection. ➤ Serve as lead negotiator. ➤ Perform contract administration functions. ➤ Train junior negotiators and program office personnel involved in generating requirements. ➤ Resolve organizational conflicts of interest. 	<p>C. 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree that includes or is supplemented with at least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>D. Certification by the SPE that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance (applicants certified under this provision must meet the requirements of either A or B for GS-5 through 12 positions).</p>	<p>Mandatory: Completion of all Level I and II Mandatory Training Courses, AND</p> <p>CON 301 – Executive Contracting</p> <p>40 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years</p>
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	<p>Development Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Serve on source selection boards ➤ Serve on career management panels ➤ Be team leader on special projects ➤ Work with cross functional teams on special issues ➤ Serve on panels outside of DOC ➤ Plan and/or conduct conferences ➤ Rotate to another office (internal or external to DOC) ➤ Serve as a role model or mentor ➤ Conduct training session on particular topics ➤ Write and publish articles on acquisition topics. ➤ Attend and/or speak at conferences, workshops and seminars 		
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Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.

To qualify for GS-1102 positions on the basis of graduate education, the education must be in one of the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Level I (Entry)

Entry level training standards target grades 5 and 7, or the equivalent, and are designed to establish fundamental competencies and expertise in an individual's job series or career field. Development at the entry level lays the foundation for career progression and is designed to prepare qualified and motivated personnel for positions of increasing responsibility. At the entry level, individuals should be exposed to fundamental procurement procedures and the roles of various support functions such as pricing, property administration, quality assurance, etc. In addition to completing the mandatory training courses and participating in the other training and development opportunities that are identified in Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Paths for Contracting Series, it is important to rotate individuals through structured on-the-job assignments within a variety of functional offices to establish a versatile acquisition professional.

Level II (Intermediate)

Intermediate level training standards target grades 9 through 12, or the equivalent, and emphasize specialization. Development continues, including completing mandatory training courses as well as the other training opportunities identified in Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Paths for Contracting Series. In addition, as the employee progresses to the higher grades within this level they should be introduced to basic management principles through training and development assignments. Employee development also continues to include on-the-job rotational assignments, however, the length of time an individual spends in each position generally increases. While specialization is emphasized at the beginning of this level, the individual should later begin to broaden their background toward a more general expertise in the overall processes of his or her career field and a broader perspective of departmental acquisition programs. Development of the generalist normally involves establishing a good foundation of experience in the employee's primary specialty followed by lateral movement to a related specialty.

Level III (Advanced)

By the time an individual reaches the senior levels of procurement (grades 13 and above, or equivalent), he or she must have completed all mandatory training courses and education requirements (or equivalents) leading up to that level. In addition, the individual should have advanced through a career pattern that provided in-depth knowledge in a functional area and breadth of knowledge across the entire procurement process. The employee's management training should be advanced commensurate with the individual's job performance and their potential for advancement into managerial positions. Advanced procurement education and training become imperative for a more global perspective. The lower level requirements and courses form the basis for the next progressively higher levels of procurement career development. The requirements are cumulative. Standards for development at Level II must be met before progressing to Level III.

2.2.4 Critical Skills

The critical skills for each career path level and the activities that build the critical skill set are identified in detail in Appendix C, Critical Skills and Generic Model Path for Contracting Series. In addition to these technical skills acquisition professionals also need strong, sound business management skills with which to develop innovative strategies, participate in acquisition teams, achieve outcome-oriented results, and manage the information that contributes to timely, supportable decisions. Targeted business skills include: working in teams, customer focus, risk management, using performance measures, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, strategic planning, negotiation and influence, leadership in learning, organization, change management, business writing, workplace diversity, problem solving, benchmarking, career planning, executive coaching, goal setting, mentoring, presenting statistics, computer applications giving presentations, supervision, information technology, and project management. Training in these areas is strongly recommended. Courses in these areas should be selected based on an individual's specific interests, needs, work assignments and discussions with the individual's supervisor.

2.3 The OPM GS-1102 Qualification Standard and the DOC Requirements for the Contracting Series

The incumbent must meet the education, training, and experience standards identified herein, for a position's career path level. Employees assigned to positions, at the GS-12 level and below, that do not meet the prescribed education, training or experience shall have 18 months, from the date they are permanently assigned to the position, in which to achieve the standards. It is the responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to ensure the standards are met within the 18 months. Employees may be granted additional time to fulfill the requirements at the discretion of the Supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to allow employees to pursue the mandatory education requirements during the workday through on-line college courses or alternative means, as appropriate. Employees that do not meet the education, training and experience standards for positions at the GS-13 and above level must follow the waiver procedures set forth in Section 2-3, paragraph 2.3.2.5, Waiver Authority for Training and Education Standards. The education and experience requirements are specifically set forth in the OPM's GS-1102 Qualification Standard (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-IV/B/GS1100/1102.htm>). The courses specified in Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Path for Contracting Series include mandatory and recommended training courses. The courses are designed to provide the acquisition workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to adequately perform as an acquisition professional.

2.3.1 Mandatory Education Standards

To support the changes needed in the skills of the acquisition workforce, the OFPP and the OPM established revised qualification standards for the contracting series (GS-1102) in 1997 and modified it in 1998 (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-IV/B/GS1100/1102.htm>). A significant change to the qualification standards is the mandatory education requirements. The OPM qualification standards are provided below. Answers to many frequently asked questions regarding the qualification standards are available through the OPM at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/1102QAs.htm>. There are no formal education requirements stipulated by OPM for the GS-1105/1106 series (<http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/g1105.pdf> and <http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/g1106.pdf>).

The requirements established by the OPM qualification standards are:

1. Basic Requirements for GS-1102-5 through GS-1102-12.

- (a) A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field

OR

- (b) At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following disciplines:
accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Applicants who meet the criteria for Superior Academic Achievement qualify for positions at the GS-7 level upon entry into government service.

The following table, Figure 2-2, OPM Qualification Standard, shows the amount of education and/or experience required to qualify for GS-1102 positions grades 7 through 12.

Figure 2-2 OPM GS-1102 Qualification Standard

GRADE	EDUCATION	OR SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE
GS-7	1 full academic year of graduate education or law school <i>or</i> superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
GS-9	2 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education <i>or</i> masters or equivalent graduate degree or LL.B. or J.D.	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
GS-11	3 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education <i>or</i> Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
GS-12 and above	None	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level
Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.		

Graduate Education. To qualify for GS-1102 positions on the basis of graduate education, graduate education in one or a combination of the following fields is required: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

NOTE - For positions at GS-7 through GS-12, applicants who are qualifying based on experience must possess at least one year of specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level, that provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position, in addition to meeting the basic requirements in paragraph A or B, above.

2. Exceptions for GS-1102- 12 and below.

Employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the standard for positions they occupy on January 1, 2000. Employees who occupy positions at grades 5 through 12 will be considered to meet the basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions up to and including those classified at GS-12. This includes positions at other agencies and promotions up through grade 12. However, employees must meet specialized experience requirements when seeking another position.

3. Basic Requirements for GS-13 and Above

- (a) Completion of all mandatory training prescribed by the head of the agency for progression to GS-13 or higher level contracting positions, including at least 4 years of experience in contracting or related positions. At least 1 year of that experience must have been specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position, and must have provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position.

AND

- (b) A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree, that included or was supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management; **OR** certification by the senior procurement executive of the agency that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience (Any applicant certified under this provision must meet the requirements of either Paragraph A or B for GS-5 through 12 positions); or a passing score on an examination or examinations considered by the Director, Office of Personnel Management to demonstrate skills, knowledge, or abilities comparable to that of an individual who has completed at least 24 semester hours (or the equivalent) of study in any of the academic disciplines listed above.

4. Exceptions for GS-1102-13 and Above

Employees in GS-1102 positions grades 13, 14, and 15 will be considered to have met the standard for positions they occupy on January 1, 2000. This also applies to positions at the same grade in the same agency or other agencies if the specialized experience requirements are met. However, the employee will have to meet the basic requirements and specialized experience requirement in order to qualify for a promotion to a higher grade, unless granted a waiver, as set forth in Section 2, paragraph 2.3.2.5, Waiver Authority for Training and Education Standards. (END OF OPM GS-1102 QUALIFICATION STANDARD)

2.3.2 Mandatory Training Standards

Both the OFPP Policy Letter 97-1, Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel (Policy Letter No. 97-01, dated September 12, 1997 (<http://www.arnet.gov/Library/OFPP/PolicyLetters/Letters/PL97-01.html>)), and the OPM Qualification

Standard (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-IV/B/GS1100/1102.htm>) require mandatory training for the GS-1102 Contracting series. As a result, the Department of Commerce developed three levels of required training for acquisition employees serving in the GS-1102 series. Figure 2-3, Mandatory Training Requirements for the GS-1102, delineates the mandatory courses, recommended prerequisites, length of course, and the target audience for each level. The levels are cumulative and requirements should be met in each lower level prior to progressing to the next higher level. Completion of entry and intermediate level requirements is mandatory prior to promotion to the Grade 13 and higher. Appendix D, Description of Mandatory Courses, provides

detailed information on each mandatory course including the course description, objectives, target audience, prerequisite, and length of the course.

In addition, the Department of Commerce has established one level of required training for the GS-1105/1106 series and other GS series employees who perform simplified acquisition duties. Figure 2-4, Training Requirements for the GS-1105/1106, delineates the mandatory course, recommended prerequisite, course length, and additional recommended courses.

The training requirements have been established to ensure that job-related knowledge, skills, and competencies are acquired by acquisition professionals as they progress from entry level to journeyman level and beyond. The requirements are tied to series/grade and parallel the learning process that normally occurs within the acquisition field. While these requirements are not grade determining below the Grade 13, i.e., lack of training is not a bar to promotion, the requirements must be met within reasonable time frames to provide the best value to the individual and the organization. Supervisors should use the mandatory training requirements as a guide when scheduling training and establishing IDPs for their staff. For example, a newly hired GS-1102-5 should complete the entry-level training within 2 years of hire, which would normally coincide closely with promotion through the GS-1102-7 level and into the GS-1102-9 level. At that point, the focus should be placed on completion of the intermediate level requirements as the employee works to the journeyman level.

Bureaus may establish additional training beyond the mandatory training requirements set forth in this policy where such training is considered necessary to support the acquisition mission of the organization.

Figure 2-3 Mandatory Training Requirements for the GS-1102

Level	Course	Prerequisite	Course Length	Audience
Level I	1. CON 101, Fundamental s of Contracting (OR) Acquisition Planning I, Contract Formation I, and Contract Administration I	None	160 Hours (OR) 80 Hours, 40 Hours, and 40 Hours	GS-5/7
	2. CON 104, Contract Pricing (OR) Price Analysis, Cost Analysis, and Federal Contract Negotiation Techniques	None	120 Hours (OR) 40 Hours, 40 Hours, and 40 Hours	GS-5/7
Level II	3. CON 202, Intermediate Contracting (OR) Acquisition Planning II, Contract Formation II, and Contract Administration II	CON 101 (OR) Acquisition Planning I, Contract Formation I, and Contract Administration I	160 hours (OR) 80 Hours, 40 Hours, and 40 Hours	GS-9/11/12
	4. CON 204, Intermediate Pricing	CON 104 (OR) Price Analysis Cost Analysis	80 Hours	GS-9/11/12
	5. CON 210, Government Contract Law	Level I courses	80 Hours	GS-9/11/12
	6. CON 333, Management for Contract Supervisors 40 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years after all mandatory training requirements have been met.	All Level I and II courses	40 Hours	GS-11/12
Level III	7. CON 301, Executive Contracting Forty hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years	All Level I and II courses	40 Hours	GS-13 and above

Figure 2-4 Training Requirements for the GS-1105/1106

Course	Prerequisite	Course Length
Mandatory Training: Simplified Acquisition	None	40 Hours
Additional Recommended Training: Advanced Simplified Acquisition	Simplified Acquisition	40 Hours
Acquisition of Commercial Items	None	16 Hours
Market Research	None	8 Hours
24 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years		

2.3.2.1 Recommended Training Sources

Recommended sources for mandatory and recommended acquisition training are as follows:

- GSA Schedule 69, Item 27-500, CLIN 1 and CLIN 2
(<http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/elib/ScheduleSummary.jsp?scheduleNumber=69>)
- Treasury Acquisition Institute (TAI) (<http://www.procurement.irs.treas.gov/tai.htm>)
- Department of Defense Acquisition University (DAU)
(<https://dau4.fedworld.gov/dau/index.htm>)
- Accredited academic degree or certificate programs or academic courses offered by institutions of higher education (if Department of Defense approved equivalents to mandatory courses offered by DAU).

Questions regarding training sources should be directed to OAM, Commerce Acquisition Policy, Performance and Support (CAPPS).

2.3.2.2 Equivalency/Fulfillment Program

The Department of Commerce Equivalency/Fulfillment Program is intended to provide a bridge for current GS-1102 series employees to equate past education, acquisition training, and experience to the current mandatory training requirements. Requests for determination of equivalency and/or fulfillment should be forwarded to OAM, APP. Requests for equivalencies should include the name of the course, course vendor, length and date of the course. In addition to the equivalency information, requests for fulfillment should also include a list of previous formal education that identifies the college/university and courses related to the acquisition field as well as a list of previous acquisition related positions and the length of time the positions were held. In some cases CAPPS may require the course syllabus to determine equivalency/fulfillment.

2.3.2.2.1 Equivalency

Course equivalencies are determined through a review of documented course work, which is determined equal to the mandatory training course based on content of the course.

The following is a general listing of course equivalencies:

CON 101 – Completion and documentation of 160 hours of basic contracting course work. Example: Acquisition Planning (80 hours), Contract Formation (40 hours) and Contract Administration (40 hours).

CON 104 - Completion and documentation of 120 hours of price, cost and negotiated related course work. Example: Price Analysis (40 hours), Cost Analysis (40 hours), and Federal Contract Negotiation Techniques (40 hours).

CON 202 – Completion and documentation of 160 hours of intermediate, advanced and/or specialized contracting course work. Example: Acquisition Planning II (80 hours), Contract Formation II (40 hours) and Contract Administration II (40 hours).

CON 204 – Completion and documentation of 80 hours of intermediate and/or advanced cost, price and quantitative methods and analysis course work. Example: Advanced Cost and Price Analysis (40 hours) and College level quantitative methods (3-semester hrs).

CON 210 – Completion and documentation of 80 hours of Government contract law course work. Example: Contract Law (40 hours) and Advanced Contract Law (40 hours)

CON 333 – No equivalency

CON 301 - Equivalency may be granted for advanced level courses that provide an executive level view of current issues in the acquisition field.

2.3.2.2.2 Fulfillment

Fulfillment of Department of Commerce mandatory training requirements may be accomplished through a combination of previous experience, education, and alternative training that has been successfully completed and documented.

CON 101 and 104 – 6 or more years as an 1102/1105 and the documented completion of some basic contracting and cost and price related coursework as well as negotiation techniques coursework

CON 202, 204 and 210 – 9 or more years experience as an 1102/1105 and currently a GS 12 or higher. In addition, the individual must possess a variety of course work or college credits in business and law related course work. Fulfillment of CON 202 can be met by the completion of at least 120 hours of general and specialized contracting course work. Fulfillment of CON 204 can be met by the completion of at least 80 hours of cost, price and or quantitative methods or analysis course work. CON 210 can be fulfilled by at least 40 hours of government contract law or business law course work.

CON 333 - These requirements can not be met through fulfillment.

CON 301 – These requirements can not be met through fulfillment.

2.3.2.3. Documenting and Recording Mandatory Training Requirements

Upon completion of training, the participant is responsible for submitting proof of completion to their supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for recording the participant's course completion information in accordance with bureau policy and procedures. Participants should also maintain a copy of all certificates for their records. Each bureau's HCO or designated training point of contact must provide timely updates of course completions to the SBPO. The SBPO is responsible for consolidating the information and providing timely updates to the OAM, as

requested. OAM maintains a database for the collection of education and training accomplishments of the acquisition workforce. The data is used to provide statistical reports as required in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, as amended.

2.3.2.4 Continuing Education and Training

The Department of Commerce requires at least 40 hours of continuing education or training every 2 years for contract specialists (GS-1102) and 24 hours for purchasing agents (GS-1105) and procurement clerks (GS-1106) who have satisfied the mandatory and agency/assignment-specific training. The continuing education and training requirements allow the individual to remain current in acquisition knowledge and skills, and can include agency sponsored training, management/executive seminars, special job assignments, professional association related projects, participation in seminars or workshops, or other appropriate developmental activities.

2.3.2.5 Waiver Authority for Training and Education Standards

Individuals that do not meet the education and training standards of the GS-1102 qualification standard and this policy will be required to obtain waivers as set forth herein.

Employees assigned to contracting positions (GS-1102) at grades GS-12 and below, that do not meet the prescribed standards, shall have 18 months to achieve the standards. The Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the employee's IDP documents a timeline for achieving the standards. Employees may be granted additional time to fulfill the standards at the discretion of the supervisor. Formal waivers are not required for GS-1102 positions grades 12 and below.

Education and training standards for individuals applying to contracting series positions (GS-1102) at grades 13 and above must be waived by the SPE. The SPE is required, by the OPM GS-1102 Qualification Standard, to certify that the applicant for such positions possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. Waiver authority cannot be delegated and will only be granted in rare and unusual circumstances such as when there are no qualified candidates readily available.

If it is determined that a waiver will be necessary to fill a vacancy, for a GS-1102 position grade 13 and above, the vacancy announcement must state that the agency will consider applicants who require a waiver. The vacancy announcement must state that candidates who do not meet the qualification requirements may be considered for a waiver in accordance with the GS-1102 qualification standard. HCOs are responsible for coordinating with the Office of Human Resource Management to ensure proper notification is placed within the vacancy announcement.

When making a selection, if an applicant does not meet the qualification standards, the HCO must provide the request for waiver to the SBPO for review, prior to selection. The SBPO is responsible for ensuring that the request clearly documents the need for the waiver and indicates that there are no qualified candidates readily available to fill the position. Upon concurrence by the SBPO the waiver request is forwarded to the SPE for approval. In most instances the waiver provision will be utilized when hiring for hard-to-fill positions or duty locations where it may be difficult to attract qualified candidates.

Waiver packages forwarded to the SPE for approval should include the following information:

- a) A copy of the position description and the vacancy announcement;
- b) A description of the recruiting efforts undertaken by the organization and the results of those efforts including the sources used for recruiting;
- c) The tentatively selected individual's application or resume, accompanied by a narrative from the HCO describing the potential of the applicant for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and Decision-making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience;
- d) The tentative selectee and the supervisor should agree to a draft plan that delineates a time line for achieving the educational and/or training requirements. The plan should be finalized and signed by both parties after the waiver is granted and selection has taken place;
- e) A justification that relates the applicant's background and experience to the performance requirements of the job to be filled. Address why the individual was selected in lieu of candidates who fully met the education and training requirements (if any), and any impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization.
- f) Identification of actions that will be taken if the conditions of the waiver are not met.
- g) A memorandum of concurrence and a recommendation for approval of the waiver from the SBPO.

Requests for waivers that do not include the documentation listed in paragraphs (a) through (g) will be returned to the recommending SBPO without further action. A sample waiver is provided in Appendix E. If a waiver is granted it will be based on the unique circumstances of a specific hiring action. There are no "blanket" waivers for an individual or an organization. The waiver request package should be submitted to:

Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive
Office of Acquisition Management
Department of Commerce
HCHB 14th & Constitution
Room 6422
Washington, DC 20230

2.4 Other Development Opportunities

In addition to the mandatory education and training requirements identified in Section 2, paragraphs 2.3.1 and 2.3.2, there are also non-mandatory development opportunities an individual may choose from to broaden their experience and to expand their acquisition and business skills. Examples of such opportunities include rotational and or developmental assignments, participation in a mentor program, participation on an inter-office, agency or department team, and membership in a professional association. Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Paths for Contracting Series, identifies specific examples of development activities that are appropriate for each career path level. Developmental opportunities are a vital component to developing the acquisition workforce as Business Leaders. The variety and depth of experiences gained through developmental opportunities are not necessarily available through traditional classroom training or from individuals normal work experiences. Developmental opportunities provide individuals with the ability to obtain additional skills that enable them to become a more well rounded acquisition professional, which benefits both the individual as well as the organization. The organization will gain from having an experienced workforce that is

prepared to move forward and accept greater responsibility and tackle challenges. In addition, organizations may benefit by retaining well-trained and experienced acquisition professionals, as best practices from many successful corporations have demonstrated that employees are retained more successfully through a rich variety of assignments, visibility, excitement and change. It is recommended that individuals work closely with their supervisor to identify non-mandatory developmental opportunities and include such activities on their IDP.

2.4.1 Rotational/Developmental Assignments

Rotational/developmental assignments are a vital tool for career development. Valuable experience is gained by working on a variety of assignments in other organizations within a bureau, across bureaus, and in the OAM. Rotational/developmental assignments provide cross-training and establishes skills in other disciplines which, in turn, fosters a better understanding of other disciplines and builds team relationships within the acquisition community. The primary difference between rotational and developmental assignments is that generally rotational assignments involve the assignment to another organization for a specified period of time and may involve a variety of work assignments or may be project specific. Developmental assignments are generally project specific and the individual may maintain their current workload as well as a special assignment from another organization. Through these types of assignments the bureau's procurement office can create professional development opportunities without expending additional funds.

The PEC has established a formal Government-wide Acquisition Rotation Program (ARP) (http://www.pec.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Enhanced&Section_1=8&Section_2=15). The ARP is open to all qualified acquisition workforce employees and is designed to provide federal acquisition professionals the developmental opportunity to rotate through other organizations to strengthen existing competencies or acquire new skills. The objective of the program is to introduce the participant to new experiences associated with the hosting agency's mission and goals. Participants are provided with the opportunity to interact with other offices in other agencies as well as with high-level agency officials. The program provides home organizations with a method of enhancing the skills of the existing workforce, reward performance, and provides additional training at little or no cost.

Individuals and/or offices interested in rotation programs should contact OAM, CAPPS for assistance in establishing assignments or locating opportunities.

2.4.2 Mentoring

Mentoring provides an opportunity for an individual to receive coaching and feedback on their career planning and career choices. Bureau procurement offices are encouraged to sponsor voluntary mentoring programs. The HCO is responsible for ensuring that Mentors are individuals that have progressed sufficiently in their own career to be able to provide career guidance to junior level individuals in the same profession. Mentoring outside the normal employee/supervisory relationship allows the mentor a chance to share valuable information from his or her own professional experiences as well as gain experience in communication, team building, coaching and feedback. Procurement offices are encouraged to work with their servicing Human Resource office for guidance in establishing mentor programs.

2.4.3 Inter-office, Agency or Department Teams and Workgroups

Participation on inter-office, agency or department teams and/or workgroups often provides opportunities to network with acquisition professionals of various backgrounds, gain knowledge in new acquisition related fields or subject matter, share best practices and improve team building and communication skills.

2.4.4 Professional Associations

Membership in professional associations is voluntary but strongly encouraged. It provides opportunities for sharing information and ideas on a variety of issues. Information is available to allow the professional to keep abreast of current topics through professional journals, seminars, and networking opportunities.

2.5 Career Planning

2.5.1 Purpose

Career planning is designed to assist individuals choose realistic career paths and provide direction in developing and reaching career goals. It can include a variety of factors such as previous and current work experiences, training, rotational/developmental opportunities and desired goals.

Career planning involves the employee, the supervisor, and (if appropriate) the human resource specialist working together to set attainable career goals for the employee that are identified through projects, training, rotations, and special assignments.

2.5.2 Individual Development Plan (IDP)

An IDP is required for each employee in the contracting series (GS-1102, GS-1105 and GS-1106). (See Appendix F.) An IDP specifically addresses the education, training, development, and job assignments needed by an individual to progress in the acquisition field, improve business skills, and grow professionally and personally over the next several years. Using this plan as a guide and with the support and approval of the supervisor, each employee must develop an IDP that shows specific training and development needs for both short term (1 year) and long-term (5-year) career goals and objectives. The IDP should specifically identify developmental activities over a two to three year period, consistent with the employee's career path level, capabilities, aspirations and agency mission. The IDP should identify mandatory acquisition training courses and recommended courses. In addition, employees may request on-the-job training, increasingly difficult work assignments, participation in a rotational assignment, entering into a mentor relationship, becoming involved in a professional association, seeking outside education beyond the Department's course offerings, and other job-related activities.

The use of the IDP allows the necessary planning, scheduling, and budgeting of training and development for each employee. It is recommended that an IDP be developed at the same time as a performance plan and reviewed in conjunction with mid-year and end-of-year reviews. IDP's are "living" documents, which identify development activities to take place over a two to three year period. IDPs are required to be updated each year to reflect the progression of the employee and to be adjusted as appropriate. Upon completion of training, the participant is

responsible for submitting proof of completion to his/her supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for recording the participant's certificate of course completion in accordance with bureau policy and procedures.

2.5.3 Performance Plans

It is recommended that the IDP be integrated into the performance plan process. The goal is to have in place performance standards that reflect the critical skills identified in Appendix C, Critical Skills and Model Career Paths for Contracting Series. The IDP is a tool that can be used as part of the process of establishing performance standards. IDPs should reflect the employee's most recent performance appraisal and identify any education, training, special assignments, etc, needed to improve performance or to maintain the current acceptable level of performance. Procurement Offices are encouraged to work with their servicing Human Resource office in establishing performance plans.

2.5.4 Performance Incentives

The Department of Commerce rewards the performance of employees who contribute to achieving the agency's cost, schedule, and performance goals established for acquisition programs. Procurement offices are encouraged to work with their serving Human Resource office to provide monetary and other recognition to employees who have made substantive contributions to the Department's acquisition system.

2.6 Acquisition Certification

The Acquisition Certification process within the Department of Commerce demonstrates that an individual has achieved a practical, well-rounded understanding of acquisition and business processes and skills and that the individual has demonstrated their ability to perform as a business leader within the Department. Acquisition Certification is granted to those individuals within the Department meeting the requirements set-forth in the DOC Acquisition Certification Program.

END OF SECTION 2

Section 3 - ELEMENTS OF THE CONTRACTING OFFICER WARRANT PROGRAM

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Department of Commerce:
 - Responsible for establishing the policies, procedures, and requirements that governs the COWP.
 - Responsible for approving/disapproving deviations from the COWP requirements.
- b) Senior Bureau Procurement Official (SBPO):
 - Responsible for establishing procedures for administering the COWP within the Bureau.
 - Responsible for appointing Level I, II, and III Contracting Officers, within the Bureau, in accordance with FAR 1.603 and CAM 1301.6.
 - Responsible for the coordination of any bureau requests for deviations from the COWP, and submission of waivers to the SPE.
 - Responsible for the submission of an annual delegation report to the SPE.
- c) Head of Contracting Offices (HCOs):
 - Responsible for appointing Purchase Card Warrants, within the organization, in accordance with FAR 1.603, CAM 1301.6 and CAM 1313.301.
 - Responsible for submitting requests for Level I, II, and III Contracting Officer appointments to the SBPO for approval.
 - Responsible for the submission of requests for waivers to the SBPO for coordination and recommendation of approval to the SPE.
 - Responsible for monitoring the performance of Contracting Officers.
 - Responsible for establishing controls to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, procedures, and good business judgment.
 - Responsible for determining the number of Contracting Officer warrants necessary for a particular work unit and the grade levels at which the warrant authority will be granted.
- d) Contracting Officers (COs)
 - Responsible for performing all necessary actions for effective contracting.
 - Responsible for ensuring compliance with the terms of the contract, and safeguarding the interests of the United States in its contractual relationships.
 - Responsible for ensuring that the requirements of FAR 1.602-1(b) have been met and that sufficient funds are available for obligation.
 - Responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of the warrant any specified limitations.
 - Responsible for ensuring contractors receive impartial, fair, and equitable treatment.
 - Responsible for requesting and considering the advice of specialists in audit, law, engineering, transportation, and other fields, as appropriate.

3.2 Purpose

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 1.603 sets forth requirements for the selection, appointment, and termination of Contracting Officers. The Commerce Acquisition Regulation (CAR) supplements the FAR with policies specific to the Department of Commerce. The purpose of the COWP is to mandate the specific standards, which must be met prior to the delegation of Contracting Officer authority. The Department of Commerce is committed to ensuring that only fully qualified employees are delegated the authority to obligate the Department in the expenditure of public funds through the acquisition system.

3.3 Scope

The requirements of the COWP apply to all individuals nominated to be Contracting Officers and all individuals currently serving as Contracting Officers.

3.4 Exemptions

Contracting Officer delegations are not required to make the following types of transactions. These transactions may however, require a delegation from another source.

- a) Purchase Card transactions below the micro purchase limit (see CAM 1313.301 Commerce Purchase Card Procedures (<http://oamweb.osec.doc.gov/app/cam.htm>)),
- b) Call orders against Blanket Purchase Agreements,
- c) Standard Form 44 (Purchase Order-Invoice-Voucher),
- d) Government Bills of Lading,
- e) Real Property Acquisitions,
- f) Standard Form 182, (Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training),
- g) Paid Advertisements for personnel recruitment actions, and
- h) Financial Assistance Agreements.

3.5 Warrant Levels and Limitations

Within the Department of Commerce, there are four (4) Warrant levels (which may be further restricted at the discretion of the bureau, as appropriate). Specific education, training, and experience requirements for each level are identified in Section 3, paragraph 3.6.1. The four levels of warrants are as follows:

Purchase Card Warrant – Applies to Purchase Card holders with purchase authority over the micro-purchase limit of \$2,500 that are not in the contracting or purchasing series. Purchase Card Warrants are limited to purchases between \$2,500 and \$25,000, and are subject to the policies and procedures established by CAM 1313.301, Commerce Purchase Card Procedures (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-IV/B/GS1100/1102.htm>).

Level I - Applies to Simplified Acquisitions, to include purchase orders and any delivery or task orders up to \$100,000.

Level II – Applies to contract actions less than \$1,000,000. When acquiring items under the Commercial Items test program described in FAR Subpart 13.5, the limit is increased to \$5,000,000, to include base and options.

Level III – Applies to acquisitions of any dollar amount. Level III Contracting Officer authority is unlimited.

The Certification of Appointment (SF 1402) should clearly state the Warrant level and dollar limitation conveyed by the warrants.

3.6 Selection, Appointment, and Termination of Appointment

3.6.1 Selection of Warrant Levels

Appointment of Contracting Officers should be commensurate with the volume and complexity of acquisition actions being handled. Individuals selected for Contracting Officer delegations must meet the experience, education, and training requirements that are commensurate with the warrant levels as established in Figure 3-1, Warrant Level Requirements.

Figure 3-1 Warrant Level Requirements

Level	Authority Per Order Against Established Source Contract	Open Market Contracting Authority	Experience	Education ¹	Training ²
Purchase Card Warrant	In accordance with CAM 1313.301. Authority over \$2,500 to a maximum of \$25,000.	In accordance with CAM 1313.301. Authority over \$2,500 to a maximum of \$25,000.	At least 1 Year of current (within last 3 years) purchasing/contracting experience.	High School Diploma	GSA Web-based Purchase Card Training and CON 237
Level I	In accordance with contract terms and conditions or a maximum of \$100,000.	\$100,000 using simplified acquisition procedures.	At least 1 Year of current (within last 3 years) purchasing/contracting experience with progressively broader work assignments.	It is recommended, but not required, that the individual meet the GS-1102 education standards set forth in Footnote No.1.	CON 237 ³ , & Commercial Items Course OR CON 101
Level II	In accordance with contract terms and conditions or a maximum of \$1,000,000.	\$1,000,000 \$5,000,000 when using Commercial Item procedures.	At least 3 years of current (within last 5 years) contracting experience with progressively broader work assignments.	The individual must meet the GS-1102 education standards set-forth in Footnote No. 1.	CON 101, CON 104, CON 202, CON 204, CON 210 ⁴
Level III	In accordance with contract terms and conditions (up to maximum order limitation).	Unlimited.	At least 4 years of current (within the last 10 years) contracting experience with progressively broader work assignments.	The individual must meet the GS-1102 education standards set-forth in Footnote No. 1.	The same as Level II plus CON 301 & CON 333 ⁵

¹ Applicants for permanent Warrants, at Levels II and III, must meet the stated education standards prior to receiving a warrant. These requirements apply to all candidates for permanent warrants, regardless of job series. Applicants at grades 5 – 12 must either have completed a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree or completed 24 semester hours in any combination of the designated fields. Applicants at grades 13 and above must have completed a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree that included or was supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the designated fields. The designated fields are: Accounting, Business, Finance, Law, Contracts, Purchasing, Economics, Industrial management, Marketing, Quantitative Methods, and Organization and Management. Waivers may only be granted by the SPE.

² The HCO may require assignment specific courses depending upon the appointee’s work assignments. Whenever practical, acquisition personnel should attend courses specific to the particular contract action prior to performing pre and post-award contracting functions using simplified acquisition procedures, architect-engineer, construction, environmental, Information Technology contracts, etc.

³ Applicants requesting an Interim Level I warrant must have completed Con 237, Simplified Acquisition Procedures. Completion of the remaining requirements must take place within one year from the appointment date.

⁴ Applicants requesting an Interim Level II warrant must have completed the following courses: CON 101 Fundamentals of Contracting, CON 104 Fundamentals of Contracting Pricing, and CON 210 Government Contract Law. Completion of the remaining required courses must take place within two years from the date of appointment.

⁵ Applicants requesting an Interim Level III warrant must have completed the following courses: CON 101 Fundamentals of Contracting, CON 104 Fundamentals of Contracting Pricing, CON 202 Intermediate Contracting, CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing and CON 210 Government Contract Law. Completion of the remaining required courses must take place within two years from the date of appointment.

- a) Contracting Officer authority shall be delegated when valid organizational needs have been demonstrated.
- b) Warrant levels are based on the dollar value of the individual transaction (e.g., contract, modification, and supplemental agreement) and not the aggregate contract value.
- c) If the basis of award involves evaluating options, the option periods are included in the contract value to determine the Warrant level required for award.
- d) If an action includes both additions and deductions, the aggregate, absolute value of the changes determines the Warrant level required for award (e.g., the value of an action that adds \$30,000 of work and deducts \$80,000 is \$110,000)
- e) Bureau's may further limit Warrant authorities as appropriate.

3.6.2 Issuance of Appointments

- a) All Warrants shall be issued on Standard Form 1402, Certificate of Appointment and shall indicate the Contracting Officers Warrant level and dollar threshold and any other limitations.
- b) HCOs are authorized to issue all Purchase Card Warrants.
- c) SBPOs are authorized to issue all Level I, II, and III Warrants.
- d) Additional limits may be placed on the authority granted by the Warrant, any limitations to the Warrant must be stated on the actual SF 1402.
- e) Requests for Purchase Card Warrants should be submitted to the HCO in accordance with the CAM 1313.301, Purchase Card Procedures.
- f) All requests for Level I, II, and III Warrants should be submitted to the SBPO by the HCO in the format provided in Appendix G, Request for Appointment of Contracting Officer. In addition, the request must be accompanied by Optional Form 612, Optional Application for Federal Employment, prepared and signed by the candidate, or a resume detailing the candidate's experience, education, and training relevant to the position.
- g) Appointing authorities must ensure that all Warrant applicant meet the experience, education, and training requirements, set forth in CAM 1301.6, Section 3, Paragraph 3.6.1 as well as any specialized training required by the bureau prior to issuance of the Warrant.
- h) HCOs are responsible for ensuring that all training requirements are met within the time frame specified for the interim warrant. HCOs are responsible for notifying the SBPO in a timely manner when the interim Warrant requirements have not been met.
- i) The SBPO is required to rescind the Warrant when interim Warrant requirements are not met within the specified timeframes.
- j) The SBPO is required to establish procedures for administering the COWP within the bureau. Appointing authorities shall maintain a file documenting the qualifications of each Contracting Officer. Such files will be available for oversight reviews.
- k) The SPE will issue Warrants for the SBPO. Requests for these Warrants should be sent from the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA) using the format provided in Appendix G, Request for Appointment of Contracting Officer. In addition, the request must be accompanied by a Optional Form 612, Optional Application for Federal Employment prepared and signed by the candidate, or a resume detailing the candidate's experience, education, and training relevant to the position.

3.6.3 Types of Appointment

3.6.3.1 Interim Appointments

Interim appointments may be issued for a specified period of time. Personnel who hold Interim Level I, Simplified Acquisition Warrants, must complete all training and formal education requirements for a Permanent Warrant within one (1) year of the interim appointment. Personnel who hold Interim Warrants above the Level I, Simplified Acquisition Warrant, must complete all training and formal education required for a Permanent Warrant within two (2) years of the interim appointment. Candidates for an Interim Warrant must complete all courses required for an Interim Warrant and have the necessary experience prior to appointment. The SBPO may extend Interim Warrants by granting additional time to complete the requirements of a Permanent appointment when determined appropriate. The Contracting Officer, the HCO and the SBPO must agree to a specified time frame for completion of the requirements.

3.6.3.2 Permanent Appointments

A Permanent appointment is made to a candidate who meets all the requirements for experience, education and training at the time the appointment is made. Permanent appointments may be made for a specified period if the need for contracting authority is limited to specific time period.

3.6.4 Maintaining an Appointment

- a) To maintain competency, Contracting Officers must complete formal or informal acquisition related training as follows:
 1. Purchase Card Warrant – Simplified Acquisition Course (24 hours) every five years
 2. Level I – 24 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years
 3. Level II and III – 40 hours of skills currency training and continuing education every two years
- b) The Level I, II and III training may be accomplished through completion of a training class or through any of the examples cited below:
 1. In-house training sessions
 2. Courses designed to broaden procurement knowledge (e.g., Contract Quality Assurance, Evaluating Contractor Performance, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Performance Based Service Contracting, etc.)
 3. Courses related to procurement (e.g., Ethics, Standards of Conduct)
 4. Acquisition related conferences, seminars and workshops,
 5. Lectures, seminars, or conferences conducted by nationally recognized acquisition organizations or professional associations (e.g. National Contract Management Association, National Institute of Governmental Purchasing) or author a paper or article to be published by these organizations.
 6. Training to acquire knowledge of the product or service the Contracting Officer is responsible for procuring (i.e., courses and in-house training sessions; attending contractor sponsored seminars, conferences, and trade shows; and site visits to a contractor's place of manufacture/performance to learn about manufacturing/operations and processes).
- c) If the Contracting Officer successfully completes a professional certification program offered by a nationally recognized acquisition such as NCMA, NIGP, NAPM, or equivalent organization the individual has fulfilled the continuing education

requirements for Contracting Officers for a period of 3 years. The three-year period begins on the effective date of the professional certification.

3.6.5 Termination of Appointment

- a) Appointments of Contracting Officers under these Warrant provisions remain in effect as long as the appointee is assigned to the position stated on the warrant unless terminated sooner by the appointing officer, the successor, or the SPE.
- b) Contracting Officer warrants may be terminated at anytime for justifiable reasons, such as, but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Failure to comply with applicable statutes, Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, the Commerce Acquisition Regulation, the Commerce Acquisition Manual, and other internal policies.
 - 2. Failure to maintain training standards after appointment.
 - 3. Violation of the Code of Ethics.
 - 4. The need for a Contracting Officer no longer exists.
 - 5. Reassignment to a new position where the need for a warrant no longer exists
 - 6. The appointee transfers to another agency, retires, resigns or is terminated from Government employment.
- c) Upon termination the original SF 1402 should be returned to the issuing office for placement in the individual Contracting Officer's appointment file. The SF 1402 should be annotated as "CANCELLED" and accompanied by a brief cover memorandum indicating the reason for termination.

3.7 Existing Delegations

- a) All appointments made prior to the effective date of this policy shall be reviewed by the BSPO and the HCO to ensure the requirements set forth by CAM 1301.6, Section 3 are met.
- b) All previous appointments will now reflect the dollar thresholds of the Level I, Level II and Level III thresholds established by CAM 1301.6, Section 3.
- c) Existing Contracting Officers that do not meet the requirements of CAM 1301.6, Section 3 must submit a request for waiver to the SPE as specified in Section 3, paragraph 3.8, Waivers under the Contracting Officer Warrant Program.
- d) The HCO should review all current Purchase Cardholders with authority above \$2,500 to ensure the requirements of this policy are met. Warrants should be issued to individuals meeting the requirements when it has been determined that a need for the Purchase Card Warrant exists.

3.8 Waivers

The SPE must approve, in writing, any deviation from the policies, procedures, and requirements of the COWP. Existing Contracting Officers that do not meet the education, training, or experience requirements specified in CAM 1301.6, Section 3, paragraph 3.6.1 must submit a waiver through the HCO. The SBPO is responsible for submission of all requests for waivers to the SPE. The COWP has incorporated Interim Warrants to help address those instances where an individual does not meet all the requirements for a Permanent Warrant. CAM 1301.6, Section 3, paragraph 3.6.3.1, Interim Warrants, sets forth the parameters of an Interim Warrant. Individuals that are issued Interim Warrants are required to meet the requirements of a Permanent Warrant

within specified time frames. The inclusion of Interim Warrants in the COWP incorporates flexibility into the program, as a result it is expected that requests for waivers will be minimal.

There may be instances where a waiver is necessary and appropriate. The SPE may grant waivers in unique situations based on a case-by-case basis. The SPE will take into consideration the education, training and experience of the candidate as well as the contract action(s) the Warrant is requested for and the workload of the organization. The following information should be included in the request for waiver:

- a) Optional Form 612, Optional Application for Federal Employment, prepared and signed by the candidate, or a resume detailing the candidate's experience, education, and training relevant to the position.
- b) A justification that relates the candidate's background and experience to the contract action(s) for which the warrant is required.
- c) A plan agreed upon by the candidate and HCO, delineating a time frame for achieving the requirements or a justification by the HCO as to how the candidate has fulfilled these requirements through other means.
- d) Statement that identifies the impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization.
- e) Concurrence by the SBPO.

3.9 Reporting Requirements

The SBPO shall submit an annual report to OAM, CAPPS by the 30th of January each year. The report shall list all current Warrants within the Bureau. The report shall include:

- a) Name of Appointee
- b) Appointee's grade and series
- c) Appointee's organization
- d) Warrant Level
- e) Interim or Permanent Warrant indication
- f) Date of appointment
- g) Date of Interim Warrant expiration (if appropriate)
- h) Any dollar and/or commodity limitations of the warrant
- i) # of hours of maintenance training completed

END OF SECTION 3
END OF CAM 1301.6

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

Acquisition--The acquiring of supplies or services (including construction) with appropriated funds by contract for the use of the Federal Government through purchase or lease, whether the supplies or services are already in existence or must be created, developed, demonstrated, and evaluated.

Acquisition Certification – The process by which the SPE determines that an individual meets competencies and skills established for the Department of Commerce acquisition professional.

Acquisition Experience--Experience gained while assigned to an acquisition position. Also includes related cooperative education and other acquisition developmental assignments. Includes experience in DOC acquisition positions and in comparable positions outside of DOC.

Acquisition Positions--Employees who are in the acquisition system with duties that fall into an acquisition category. These positions comprise the contracting series (GS-1102), the purchasing series (GS-1105), and positions in other job series in which significant acquisition-related functions are performed.

Acquisition Workforce--Employees performing acquisition-related work. The acquisition workforce includes permanent civilian employees who occupy acquisition positions.

Business Leader -- The acquisition workforce within the federal government that posses the following capabilities: Ability to develop, negotiate and manage business deals, communicate effectively, manage and lead change, solve problems in an ambiguous environment, analyze and understand the marketplace, build and manage relationships across functions and organizations, understand and effectively operate in the customer environment, develop and implement outcome oriented solutions and execute.

Career Development--The professional development of employees by integrating the capabilities, needs, interests, and aptitudes of employees in acquisition positions with designated training and development designed to meet organizational objectives. Career development is accomplished through a combination of work assignments, education, job rotation, training, and self-development programs.

Career Path--The range of opportunities at each career level and the optimum route for progression in a career field.

Career Planning -- A process by which the supervisor and the employee constructively and realistically assess the employee's career goals and development needs and the supervisor gives guidance on planning alternatives to achieve the goals.

Critical Skills -- The technical and business skills required by an acquisition professional to adequately perform the duties of the career field.

Defense Acquisition University (DAU)--A consortium of DOD education and training institutions and organizations providing mandatory acquisition courses for certification.

Equivalent Course--A course that has been determined by the Procurement Executive to contain the level of knowledge that would enable individuals who take the course to perform as if they had completed the comparable designated core course.

Fulfillment--The process through which DOC determines, based on grade, years of procurement experience and training, that an employee is given credit for specific Level I or Level II core training courses.

Head of Contracting Office --Individual's who head the offices within each bureau that can award and administer contracts to the full limit of the Department's contracting authority. The HCO must be an acquisition professional in the GS-1102 occupational series.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)--Document used to plan an employee's education, training, experience and other developmental activities for progression in the procurement career field. Developing the plan is a joint effort of the employee, supervisor, and possibly other knowledgeable persons in the training and/or acquisition fields.

Mandatory Acquisition Course--An approved course of study that meets DOC's acquisition education and training requirement for a career level.

Qualification Standard -- The standard issued by the Office of Personnel Management that specifies the minimum requirements an individual must meet for a specific job series.

Senior Bureau Procurement Official (SBPO) -- The senior acquisition official at each bureau's headquarters.

Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) --The agency's senior official appointed under the "Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act" who is responsible for managing the direction of the organization procurement system, including implementation of unique procurement policies, regulations and standards.

Skills Currency--DOC has implemented a policy from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy requiring an equivalent of at least 40 hours of continuing education or training every 2 years to remain current in the acquisition field. Contract specialists (GS-1102 series) and contracting officers who have satisfied the mandatory and agency/assignment-specific training must take training to maintain their acquisition

knowledge and skills. This may include, but not be limited to, agency-sponsored training and management/executive seminars, special job and/or professional association related projects and/or participation in seminars/workshops, or other appropriate developmental activities.

Waiver (Qualification Standard) -- A provision that permits the Department of Commerce SPE to waive the education or training requirements for an applicant for a GS-1102 grade 13 or above position based on a certification that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority.

Waiver (Warrant) -- Exceptions to the requirements for a Contracting Officer warrant which are granted on a case-by-case basis by the Department of Commerce SPE.

APPENDIX B
DOC MODEL FOR MANAGING AND DEVELOPING
ACQUISITION BUSINESS LEADERS

Appendix B DOC Model for Managing and Developing Acquisition Business Leaders

Strategy → Role ↓	Workforce Planning	Recruitment	Career Management	Training/ Education	Performance Management
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Job Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess personal capabilities employee profile Support recruiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take active responsibility for personal career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek and provide feedback with managers and customers Actively participate in dialogue
Supervisor/HCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forecast future requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruiting and Selection Participation on outside professional boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create/identify development opportunities Provide feedback Provide access to Tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, monitor and evaluate progress of training and development Identify requirements Foster employee participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate mission and organization goals Coach and provide feedback on performance Manage incentives & recognition
HR Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create tools & facilitate process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop overall strategic talent supply process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support as Required Provide tools, training, counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate periodic development planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Tools and coaching Monitor process
Senior Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureau SPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and describe desired future outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support process Provide resources Advocate for the profession/agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create positive environment Provide resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit resources Participate in department acquisition initiatives Identify and participate in development assignments & Career Management initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strategic goals Model desired behaviors Provide visible rewards Provide resources

Appendix B (con't) DOC Model for Managing and Developing Acquisition Business Leaders

Strategy → Role ↓	Workforce Planning	Recruitment	Career Management	Training/ Education	Performance Management
Supporting Functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept HR • DOC Acquisition Council • PEC • GSA/FAI • DOD/DAU • DAU • OMB/OPM • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject Matter experts and HR professionals collaborate to provide tools, structure and facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intern Program • Support talent supply process • Provide resources • Recruiting advocates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create legislative/policy framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training and education programs • Develop/provide training and education • Implement Rotation Programs • Develop and support Career Management initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union support of process • EAP support & counseling • OFPP & Procurement Executives Council provides strategic goals

APENDIX C

CRITICAL SKILLS AND MODEL CAREER PATH FOR CONTRACTING SERIES

Level I–Entry Level GS-1102-5 through -7

Critical Skills

The entry level in the career path is designed to establish basic competency in the acquisition field. Activities that build this critical skill set include:

- Analyze procurement requests to determine adequacy of documents, propriety of requirement, and most appropriate method of procurement.
- Prepare necessary justifications for negotiated procurements. Review justifications for non-competitive procurements and coordinate with the source for selection of source lists in competitive procurements.
- Develop procurement plans by reviewing previous history, market conditions, and specifications or technical data packages. Determine adequacy and completeness of description, which involves research of various manuals and catalogs, or discussions with manufacturers representatives or requisitioning sources to identify and initiate any corrective actions required.
- Prepare procurement documents and solicitations. Prepare Requests for Proposals (RFP) ensuring that all applicable documents are incorporated. Obtain the required coordination and approval; distribute to industry.
- Evaluate proposals for compliance with terms and conditions and applicable clauses.
- Evaluate proposals received from industry for responsiveness, making price analyses, obtaining technical coordination where required, determine responsibility of contractors and make recommendation for award of contracts after due consideration of all factors involved.
- Participate in negotiations with contractors selected for consideration based on proposals received; coordinate cost and pricing analyses; prepare summary of negotiations setting forth the events and occurrences leading to ultimate and mutual agreement on technical, financial, and overall contractual terms; and make recommendations for award of contracts.
- Ensure proper preparation of contractual documents; obtain all required reviews, approvals, and signatures.
- Prepare summaries of negotiations, contracts and supporting files for review and approval.

Level I–Entry Level GS-1102-5 through -7

Career Path

Education Required:

A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree or at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Objective:

To provide recommended core courses and other developmental activities for entry level career professionals. Training and development courses, assignments, and voluntary activities should be documented in an individual development plan (IDP) using short term goals of 1 year and long term goals of up to 5 years (to be determined by employee and supervisor).

Training:

Mandatory Courses:

Fundamentals of Contracting (CON 101)

Fundamentals of Principles of Contract Pricing (CON 104)

Optional Specialized Courses--one or equivalent:

Simplified Acquisition (CON 237)

GSA Federal Supply Schedules/Multiple Award Task/Delivery Orders

Government-wide Commercial Purchase Card

Construction Contracting Fundamentals

Additional courses for consideration:

Related college business courses

Customer focus

Writing skills

Computer applications

Interpersonal communication skills

Project management

Presentation skills

Teambuilding

On-the-Job Training Activities:

Prepare and process Purchase/Delivery Orders

Formulate a Simplified Acquisition and appropriate documentation

Familiarization with DOC orientation (organizational charts, types of goods and services acquired for customers, roles and responsibilities)

Knowledge of internal office operations

Knowledge of staff offices within DOC (Office of General Counsel, Finance, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, Office of Inspector General) and how these offices interact with the acquisition office

Level I (Entry Level, GS-1102-5 through -7) Career Path—Continued

Rotational Assignments:

Internal and external work assignments
Serve on acquisition project teams
Conduct special projects/reports

Other Recommended Activities (Voluntary):

Become a member of a professional development organization, for example, National Contract Managers Association, National Association of Purchasing Management, Toastmasters Club, etc.
Subscribe to professional magazines and newsletters or screen Internet
Seek a role model or mentor in or outside of the organization

Level II–Intermediate Level GS-1102-9 through -12

Critical Skills

The intermediate level in the career path is designed to establish a specialized competency in the acquisition field. Activities that build this critical skill set include:

- Review procurement request packages for completeness and conformity with Federal and Department of Commerce procurement regulations and procedures. This includes taking all actions necessary to make fundamentally sound but deficient procurement requests acceptable for procurement action or returning fundamentally unsound procurement requests to initiating offices with appropriate explanation or correction instructions.
- Review for overall soundness the evaluation and selection decisions for actions resulting from unsolicited proposals. Identify procedural and documentation deficiencies and irregularities, and, with the concurrence of appropriate management, continue or discontinue the proposed procurement or find alternate procurement strategies.
- Determine the appropriate procurement instrument type and pricing structure (including all cost-type and fixed-price arrangements), and all general and special clauses, preaward representations and certifications.
- Analyze cost proposals; structured fee, when necessary.
- Conduct negotiations, making all trade-offs necessary to arrive at reasonable estimated costs or prices (or discontinuing negotiations if the situation warrants) and preparing all necessary pre-negotiation positions, spreadsheets, and post-negotiation summaries.
- Perform all actions required to effectively administer the assigned contracts. This includes overseeing the activities of the cognizant agency technical representatives, analyzing performance, cost, property and other reports, resolving claims and disputes, and approving overtime, travel, and equipment purchases.
- Perform all actions necessary to partially or totally terminate contracts, both for the convenience of the Government and for default. This includes preparing all necessary documentation and performing all analyses and negotiations required for same.
- Perform all steps necessary to close contracts. This includes analyzing all reports, final vouchers, audits and releases, negotiating indirect cost rates, and making all property title, transfer, and disposition determinations.
- Ensure that timely and accurate procurement data are entered and validated in all appropriate systems for all assigned actions.

***Level II–Intermediate Level
GS-1102-9 through -12***

Career Path

Education Required:

A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree or at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Objective:

To introduce additional acquisition activities and related training for more complex acquisition work assignments in developing the career professional. Training and development courses, assignments, and voluntary activities should be documented in an individual development plan (IDP) using short term goals of 1 year and long term goals of up to 5 years (to be determined by employee and supervisor).

Training:

Mandatory Courses:

Intermediate Contracting (CON 202)
Intermediate Contract Pricing (CON 204)
Government Contract Law (CON 210)
Management for Contracting Supervisors (CON 333)

Optional Specialized Courses--one or equivalent:

Performance Based Contracting
Performance Measures
Best Value Procurement
Acquisition of Commercial Items
Oral Presentations

Additional courses for consideration:

Related college business courses
Leadership and teambuilding
Writing skills
Computer applications
Project management
Presentation skills
Decision-making
Managing change
Customer Focus
Alternative Dispute Resolution

Level II (Intermediate Level, GS-1102-9 through -12) Career Path—Continued

On-the-Job Training Activities:

(On-the-job training in the area of acquisition will be determined by supervisor and annotated in IDP)

Rotational Assignments:

Internal and external work assignments

Serve as advisor or participant on acquisition project teams or cross-functional teams

Conduct special projects/reports/surveys

Other Recommended Activities (Voluntary):

Become a member of a professional organization, for example, National Contract Management Association, National Association of Purchasing Management, Toastmasters Club, etc.

Subscribe to professional magazines and newsletters or screen Internet

Serve as a mentor or role model to others in the acquisition workforce

Attend conferences, seminars and symposiums

Write articles on acquisition topics for office newsletters or professional organizations

Level III–Advanced Level GS-1102-13 and above

Critical Skills

The advanced level in the career path is designed to establish in-depth knowledge and broad experience in the acquisition field. Activities that build the critical skill set associated with this level include:

- Plan acquisitions and determine acquisition strategies. Conduct analyses of requirements. Coordinate and advise senior level program office personnel on the submittal of procurement documents such as specifications and statements of work, in-house cost estimates, Government versus contractor performance analyses, justifications for other than full and open competition (JOFOC), information technology (IT) requirements analyses and acquisition plans, source lists, and offer evaluation plans. Coordinate and participate in the re-writing of statements of work and specifications.
- Review proposed non-competitive procurements to determine validity of source selection and either recommend conversion to competitive procurement or take action to assure that a satisfactory JOFOC is prepared, coordinated, and approved.
- Develop individual procurement strategies and prepare solicitations. Determine methods of acquisition, contract type, and create the request for proposal/quotations or invitation for bids. Prepare, obtain reviews and approvals for, and issue procurement plans, wage determination requests, IT agency procurement requests, and all other pre-solicitation and solicitation documents. Issue and publicize solicitations. Conduct industry briefings, site visits, and pre-proposal conferences; respond to inquiries relating to acquisitions; and control the distribution of solicitations to offerors.
- Analyze quotes, bids, and proposals. Conduct comprehensive evaluations of all business aspects of offerors, oversee mission suitability (technical) evaluations, recommend determinations as to competitive range and non-responsive offers, conduct preaward surveys and hold discussions with offerors in the competitive range. Recommend contractor selection. Assist and advise source selection officials in identifying and justifying negotiations with, or award of, a specific offeror or offerors. Consult with unsuccessful offerors, determine offeror responsibility, and prepare all procurement documentation relating to bid protests.
- Serve as lead negotiator. Plan the negotiation strategy, coordinate that strategy with the negotiation team and lead negotiations with the contractor. Make all trade-offs necessary to arrive at sound acquisitions at fair and reasonable prices; prepare all pre-negotiation positions, post-negotiation summaries and contractual documents necessary for award; and may take full responsibility for certain assigned actions by signing them as the Contracting Officer.

Level III (Advanced Level, GS-1102-13 and above) Critical Skills–Continued

- Perform contract administration functions. Oversee the activities of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative, the Government agencies to which administrative functions have been delegated, and the contractors; allow or disallow incurred costs; determine claims, withholding, and liquidated damage amounts; resolve performance problems and disputes; approve requests for property, travel and rebudgeting; negotiate changes, subcontracting plans, unpriced options, terminations for default and convenience and other modifications; analyze performance, financial, property and other reports; and perform all other post award functions necessary to ensure proper contractor performance.
- Train junior negotiators and program office personnel involved in generating requirements. Resolve organizational conflicts of interest, answer congressional inquiries, represent the Division on intra- and extra-mural committees, and perform special assignments as necessary for complete staff work on assigned procurements.

***Level III–Advanced Level
GS-1102-13 and above******Career Path******Education Required:***

Bachelor's degree including or supplemented by 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Objective:

To continue the enhancement of skills identified in the entry level and intermediate levels of acquisition career management and to develop the individual's management and leadership skills. Training and development courses, assignments, and voluntary activities should be documented in an individual development plan (IDP) using short term goals of 1 year and long term goals of up to 5 years (to be determined by employee and supervisor).

Training:**Mandatory Courses:**

Executive Contracting (CON 301)

Recommended Courses:

Advanced Contract Pricing (CON 204)

Facilitation training

Source selection

Appropriation law

Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act

Past performance

Service Contract Act

Protests

Related college business courses

Leadership and teambuilding

Writing skills

Computer applications (including spreadsheets)

Project management

Presentation skills

Decision-making

Managing change

Customer focus

Alternative dispute resolution

Analytical skills

Problem solving

Level III (Advanced Level, GS-1102-13 and above) Career Path—Continued

On-the-Job Training Activities:

Respond to congressional issues
Serve on panels outside DOC
Lead and/or participate in interagency committees
Plan and/or conduct conferences

Rotational Assignments:

Serve on source selection boards
Serve on career management panels
Be team leader on special projects
Work with cross-functional teams on special issues
Serve on panels outside DOC
Plan and/or conduct conferences
Serve in other offices within Commerce or other Civilian agencies

Other Recommended Activities (Voluntary):

Serve as role model or mentor
Conduct training sessions on particular topics
Write and publish articles for in-house newsletter and/or professional magazines
Attend conferences, workshops, and seminars
Be a speaker at other agencies' conferences
Be a member of a panel on special acquisition subjects

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTION OF MANDATORY TRAINING COURSES FOR CONTRACT SPECIALISTS (GS-1102)

The Department of Commerce will use courses that are equivalent to the courses developed and taught by the Defense Acquisition University to provide standardized, consistent training that is accepted throughout the federal government.

Level I (Entry level, GS-1102-05 through -07)

CON 101 Fundamentals of Contracting

Course Description:

Fundamentals of Contracting is a survey course encompassing the entire contracting process from receipt of a purchase request through contract completion including closeout. Students are introduced to the organization and utilization of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the DoD Supplement to the FAR (DFARS), as well as ethics and basic contract law. Application of the information is reinforced through a series of practical exercises that emphasize commercial practices including simplified acquisition procedures.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Determine contracting need and analyze contracting requirements.
- Plan competition and source selection.
- Draft contract solicitations.
- Evaluate offers.
- Negotiate and award contracts.
- Plan contract administration.
- Monitor quality of and administer payment for contracts.
- Modify, terminate and close out contracts.

Who Should Attend: GS-5 and above. The course is designed for contracting personnel new to the contracting workforce, either entry-level personnel or crossovers from other career fields.

Prerequisites: None.

Length: 20 Class Days

CON 104 Fundamentals of Contract Pricing

Course Description:

Fundamentals of Contract Pricing is designed to provide entry-level contracting personnel with a solid foundation for the practice of price analysis, cost analysis, and negotiation techniques. This course provides essential fundamentals for the study and practice of price, cost, and proposal analysis. It also provides a discussion and demonstration of applicable estimating techniques used to support these analyses. Topics include a review of the contracting environment, use and importance of market research, sources of data for cost and price analysis, application of price-related factors in the determination of reasonableness, methods for analyzing direct and indirect costs, methods for performing profit analysis, ethics in contract pricing, and a selection of current pricing topics. Various case scenarios and an actual cost analysis are used to illustrate and integrate the various concepts and techniques covered in the course. Individual and group negotiation workshops address the fundamentals of the negotiation process, including essential techniques, strategies, and tactics.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
Understand the general environment of contract pricing.

Determine the sources and means of acquiring data for cost and price analysis.

Analyze direct and indirect costs.

Perform a profit analysis, including the appropriate use and application of requirements relative to cost of money.

Integrate and apply the various concepts and methods learned to a real-time cost analysis in the form of an integrating exercise.

Apply selected techniques of cost of money and profit analysis.

Apply the essential techniques, strategies, and tactics of the negotiation process, individually, and in small groups.

Who Should Attend: GS-5 and above. The course is designed for contracting personnel new to the contracting workforce, either entry-level personnel or crossovers from other career fields.

Prerequisite: None

Length: 21 Class Days

Level II (Intermediate level, GS-1102-09 through -12)

CON 202 Intermediate Contracting
(Formerly CON 211 Con. Admin. and CON 221 Intermediate Con. Admin.)

Course Description:

Intermediate Contracting presents experienced, intermediate-level contracting personnel with an intensive examination of the life cycle phases of contracting, including the pre-award phase of contracting (acquisition planning, solicitation, evaluation and award), and post award contract administration, plus contracting problem analysis and resolution. Case studies, along with group and individual exercises, expose students to contracting problems, and challenge students to apply ethical principles, statutes, regulations, and sound business judgment toward the resolution of contracting problems. Major course topics include acquisition planning, contracting methods with an emphasis on formal source selection and noncommercial acquisitions, and contract administration including contract surveillance and quality assurance, financial management, terminations, and disputes resolution.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Perform acquisition planning to include the analysis of market research and requirements documents and consideration of recurring requirements, Government property, competition, contract type, and contract financing.

Develop a formal source selection plan.

Prepare a written formal source selection Request for Proposal for a noncommercial acquisition to include instructions for oral presentations.

Analyze and evaluate price related and non-price related factors to include performance risk assessment.

Determine the necessity for discussions, and where necessary, establish competitive range, conduct discussions and process a request for final proposal revisions. Prepare an award decision for a competitive negotiated acquisition, conduct debriefings, and take steps to mitigate and/or resolve protests.

Construct an administration plan and conduct a post-award orientation.

Implement contract changes via contract modification, and perform Government property administration.

Perform contract price or fee adjustments and process various contract payments.

Perform contract surveillance and quality assurance functions prescribed by the contract to include problem resolution through the application of contract remedies.

Determine when termination actions are appropriate.

Analyze and apply the various procedures for resolving disputes and claims.

Prerequisite: CON 101 and CON 104

Length: 21 Class Days

CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing (Formerly CON 231, Intermediate Contract Pricing)

Course Description:

Intermediate Contract Pricing both reinforces pricing skills taught in CON 104 and develops skills in price analysis, advanced pre-award pricing decisions, post-award pricing decisions, and general contract pricing issues. The first week of the course is primarily quantitative in nature, focusing on statistical and economic analysis tools. Students are expected to bring to class and be capable of using a calculator with an exponential and reciprocal function. Public domain software is used in applying quantitative theory and in pricing situations. The second week focuses primarily on application of quantitative techniques and advanced contracting concepts. Students are encouraged to call on their unique experiences to provide a basis for discussion and analyses of relevant contract pricing topics, the application of appropriate pricing principles and development of workable solutions.

Course Objectives. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Use statistical and regression techniques in contract pricing situations.

Determine when to use either a single or a double moving average.

Better understand the improvement curve theory.

Understand the time value of money.

Develop pre-negotiation positions on proposed indirect cost rates.

Develop skills in estimating cost-to-complete.

Develop skills to price equitable adjustments (with exercises related to claims and contract modifications).

Understand defective pricing, cost realism analysis, contract types, and financial analysis with emphasis on contract financing considerations.

Who Should Attend: This course is designed for personnel who have completed all Level I requirements and are working to complete their Level II requirements.

Prerequisites: CON 104 (2 years contracting experience in acquisition positions of increasing complexity and responsibility is recommended).

Length: 10 Class Days

CON 210 Government Contract Law (Formerly CON 201, Government Contract Law)

Course Description:

Government Contract Law provides an understanding of the impact of Government Contract Law on daily decision making in acquisition. It introduces basic legal principles and sources of contract law as they apply to the Government's acquisition of supplies and services, as well as construction services. Court cases and administrative decisions (General Accounting Office, Boards of Contract Appeals) are discussed with emphasis on how the law affects the Government/contractor interface and how to avoid legal disputes and maintain ethical business relationships.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Discriminate between statutory, regulatory, and ethical restrictions applicable to government contracts.

Analyze and determine the manner in which the various pieces of federal legislation and judicial and administrative decisions impact the formation of government contracts.

Compare and contrast the different procedures and remedies available to an adversely affected bidder or offeror in the forums available in which to protest a government acquisition.

Given different types and forms of property, summarize the government's rights in such property and the remedies available to both the government and the contractor resulting from the improper use of such property.

Distinguish those situations in which the government has properly and improperly obligated federal monies.

Identify actionable fraud and summarize possible options for remedying such conduct.

Given different types of contracts, identify and select the government's rights with respect to delivery, and/or any express or implied warranties, and make a determination about when acceptance takes place.

Given various situations in which a contractor has performed additional work not required by the original contract, (1) differentiate those situations in which the contractor is entitled to an equitable adjustment from those in which the contractor is not, and (2) if so entitled, determine the elements of the equitable adjustment.

Provided the facts underlying a pending dispute, propose the probable course of the litigation, to include the nature of government employees' participation in such litigation.

Determine the availability of and the circumstances necessary to terminate a government contract, given different factual situations.

Who Should Attend: Intermediate level personnel who have some experience with Government contracting and are responsible for contract formation or management.

Prerequisites: Level I Contracting Courses (CON 202 is recommended).

Length: 10 Class Days

Course Description:

This course is designed for first line supervisors assigned to acquisition/contracting positions within the Federal Government. The course concentrates on numerous management issues formulated within a variety of pre-award and post-award risk management scenarios that challenge acquisition professionals. Participants utilize the integrated case study method, critical incidents, small group interaction and other teaching methods to assess and interpret the variables that affect contract performance and successful mission accomplishment. Case scenarios are supplemented and reinforced by other techniques and issues that may be raised during the class by students. Participants are encouraged to apply their experience and expertise to the course, and to share/expand their knowledge of acquisition, procurement and management techniques. Participants are also encouraged to exchange visionary ideas on ways to continuously improve mission accomplishment.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Improve understanding of the entire acquisition process from the acquisition planning cycle, through the various steps such as budgeting, lead times, acceptance, payment and close-out.

Develop and maintain better communications between all multifunctional team members.

Develop a process for managing external interactions between contracting personnel and their customers.

Processes such as empowerment, value-added time management, and Integrated Product Teaming will be discussed.

Understand the competing interests of the various agencies and principal players such as customer requirements, requiring activities, oversight activities, the contractor, and the general public.

Encourage early interaction without giving an advantage to any particular contractor.

Develop procurement planning skills, which will help identify major problems, analyze facts/data, synthesize this information in terms of contracting and management disciplines, develop risk management techniques, create alternate managerial solutions, and justify the appropriate course of action.

Who Should Attend: GS-1102 grades 11/12. First line supervisors, branch chiefs, team leaders or those about to be first line supervisors, branch chief or team leader assigned to acquisition and/or contracting functions. This course is also appropriate for contracting personnel responsible for the management of contracts and requires a development of leadership, management and organizational skills.

Prerequisites: Level I and II requirements

Length: 5 Class days

Level III (Advanced level, GS-1102-13 and above)

CON 301 Executive Contracting

Course Description:

Executive Contracting is a unique forum for senior personnel in the contracting career field to examine a wide range of acquisition issues. Through guest speaker lectures, discussions, workshops, and a Capitol Hill visit to observe Congressional activities, this course provides an intensive executive level view of current issues and events in acquisition and in particular, contracting. Topic areas cover: contracting policy [DAR Council, Office of Procurement Policy (OFPP), current and proposed changes, and changing technologies], external forces (SBA, GAO, OIG, and legislative statutes), and work environment (contracting innovations, change, ethics, etc.).

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Discuss the current, relevant, and projected DoD contracting and management issues as they relate to contracting.

Identify and discuss the impact on present acquisition and contracting practices of recently established or proposed policies, regulations, directives, or studies.

Understand how legislation and procurement policy makers operate and work with issues, problems, and the community at large.

Network with other contracting personnel on various approaches as a means of understanding and, if appropriate, implement ideas presented in the course.

Who Should Attend: This course is required as a refresher every 3-5 years to keep current in contracting policy.

Prerequisites: Level II courses (recommended minimum 4 years contracting experience in acquisition positions of increasing complexity)

Precourse Material: Prior to attending the course, participants must prepare a paper describing: (a) contracting issues of importance to their activity and (b) a contracting improvement paper to be shared in the class.

Length: 5 Class Days

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF OPM ACQUISITION WORKFORCE QUALIFICATION STANDARD

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Procurement Executive

THROUGH: Bureau Senior Procurement Official

FROM: Head of Contracting Office

SUBJECT: Request for Waiver of OPM Acquisition Workforce Standards

It is requested that a waiver be granted for: ***Insert Name, Position, Series, Grade, Organization, and Address.***

This request is to waive the _____ 24 semester hours of business-related courses, _____ four years of college leading to a degree, _____ experience requirements, and/or _____ training requirements. ***Specifically identify the portion of the standard that the individual does not meet (e.g., lacks 10 or the 24 credit hours in the required business related fields, has 24 semester credit hours, but lacks the degree, has completed all but one of the mandatory training requirements, etc).***

The applicant has been determined to be the best-qualified individual for the position. In accordance with CAM 1301.6 (c) the following narrative is provided. ***Provide a narrative that describes the potential of the applicant for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance and qualifying experience.***

In accordance with CAM 1301.6 (e) the following justification is also provided. ***Provide justification for requesting the waiver that relates the applicant's background and experience to the performance requirements of the position to be filled. Address why the individual was selected in lieu of candidates who fully met the requirements of the GS-1102 OPM Qualification Standard (if any). Include a discussion of any impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization.***

If there are questions or if assistance is needed please contact _____ ***insert name of contact*** on _____ ***insert phone number for contact.***

Attachments (***See CAM 1301.6 paragraph 3.8, Waivers***)

Position Description
Vacancy Announcement
Description of recruiting efforts
Tentative selectee's application/resume
Plan for meeting the Qualification Standard

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)
AND
BLANK IDP FORM

SAMPLE
Acquisition Career Management Program--Individual Development Plan

NAME J. Sample		CURRENT POSITION, SERIES, GRADE AND ORGANIZATION Contract Specialist GS-1102-09, Department of Commerce			FOR FY xx	
SHORT-RANGE GOALS (1 year)		To develop knowledge, skills, and abilities for career advancement				
LONG-RANGE GOALS (3-5 years)		To become supervisory contracting officer				
DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES/FORMAL TRAINING						
ACTIVITY/COURSE TITLE		PURPOSE		DURATION	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE AND ESTIMATED COST	
(1) Obtain appropriate training, education, and experience for developing strong procurement skills and leadership qualities. Take Intermediate Contracting (CON 202) course. Take class in Interpersonal Communication.		To increase knowledge and broaden contracting skills and to take core training course		160 hours	11/98	\$1,000.00
				8 hours	1/99	\$ 250.00
(2) Participate in government-wide procurement conferences, workshops, seminars, and outside professional organizations.		To broaden perspective and keep current by interacting with Government-wide personnel on acquisition topics.		24 hours	5/99	
(3) Obtain a procurement role model or mentor.		To obtain advice and guidance on career matters.		Ongoing		
(4) Request developmental assignment with senior level CO.		To assist in high-level acquisition for experience.		90 days	3/99	
(5) Learn to use spreadsheet applications.		To support contract projects and presentations.		24 hours	10/98	
(6) Join a professional organization.		To stay abreast of current acquisition issues.		Ongoing	10/98	
EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE	DATE	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE	SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE		DATE

Acquisition Career Management Program--Individual Development Plan

NAME		CURRENT POSITION, SERIES, GRADE AND ORGANIZATION			FOR FY xx		
SHORT-RANGE GOALS (1 year)							
LONG-RANGE GOALS (3-5 years)							
DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES/FORMAL TRAINING							
ACTIVITY/COURSE TITLE		PURPOSE		DURATION	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE AND ESTIMATED COST		
EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE		DATE	SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE		DATE	SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	

APPENDIX G
SAMPLE
REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTING OFFICER

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Bureau Procurement Official*

FROM: Head of Contracting Office*

SUBJECT: Request for Appointment of Contracting Officer

1. There is a clear and convincing need to appoint (name of nominee) as a Level (warrant level) Contracting Officer. This need is evidenced by (discuss factors which necessitate contracting authority).
2. The nominee is employed in the following organizational position: (Job title, series, grade, Office, Branch/Division and complete address).
3. The nominee meets the education, training and experience requirements established by Paragraph 3.5, CAM Chapter 1 and the warrant level requested is commensurate with the nominee's qualifications. The attached SF 171 (or resume) is current and specifically identifies the nominee's education, procurement related training, and procurement experience. The nominee's education is clearly identified as to the type of degree held and/or the number of credit hours completed within the fields designated in Paragraph 3.5, CAM Chapter 1. Procurement training is identified as to course titles, dates, number of hours, and training provider. Procurement experience is identified which relates the nominee's background and experience to the types of contract actions that the nominee will be responsible for as a Contracting Officer.
4. The nominee's conflict of interest disclosure statement is on file in the Human Resources Office.
5. The nominee's recent performance appraisal(s) rating is fully successful or higher (or equivalent).
6. The level of authority requested per contract action is _____.
7. Other comments.

Attachment

*In those instances where the request is for the appointment of a Senior Bureau Procurement Official, the request should be addressed to the Senior Procurement Executive from the HCA.

END OF DOCUMENT
END OF CAM 1301.6