

# Subpart 501.6 - Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibilities

**Parent topic:** [Part 501 - General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation System](#)

## 501.601 General.

### (a) Definitions.

“Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent” means the Director of the GSA Acquisition Workforce Division (AWD) within the Office of Acquisition Policy.

“Contracting Officer Warrant Board (COWB)” means a group of senior-level acquisition professionals within a contracting activity who receive, evaluate, and process warrant requests for selection of contracting officers at the basic, simplified, intermediate, and senior levels.

“Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP)” means the standardized process which establishes the criteria for qualifying, appointing and terminating warrants of GSA contracting officers based on an organization’s needs for contracting authority.

### (b) *Contracting and other Acquisition Officials.*

#### (1) *The Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA).*

(i) *General.* The HCA is ultimately responsible for managing all aspects of their respective contracting activity. Additional roles are identified throughout the FAR and GSAM to support HCAs in their responsibilities, including the Contracting Director, Contracting Activity Advocate for Competition, and Acquisition Career Navigator (ACN), and Acquisition Subject Matter Experts (A-SMEs) in key acquisition areas such as small business, labor, and cybersecurity. The HCA may also designate a Contracting Executive by making the appointment in writing and transmitting a copy to the Senior Procurement Executive. Additional resources for HCAs, Contracting Executives, Contracting Directors, Advocates for and A-SMEs can be found on the Acquisition Contacts and Offices page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsagov/acquisitionportal>.

(ii) Contracting officer designation and authority. HCAs are designated contracting officers with senior level warrants by virtue of their position. The SPE may suspend or terminate an HCA’s contracting officer authority (see [501.603-4\(a\)](#)) or take any other action deemed necessary (*e.g.*, change their warrant level).

(A) *Limitation.* If the HCA has not satisfied all of the requirements to hold a senior level warrant, HCAs will only use their contracting officer authority in exceptional circumstances. Due to this limited scope, the requirements of [501.603-1\(b\)](#) and (c), [501.603-2](#), and [501.603-3](#) do not apply. When an HCA uses their authority as a contracting officer pursuant to this limitation they must write a memo-to-file to document the exceptional circumstances supporting such use. A copy of the memo-to-file must be submitted to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov) within 5 days of use.

(B) *Exception.* Paragraph (b)(1)(ii)(A) of this section does not apply to HCAs who obtain and maintain a permanent or a temporary warrant as described in [501.603-3](#).

(2) *HCA responsibilities.* A summary of HCA responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

(i) *Executive oversight.*

(A) Establishing and maintaining internal controls to achieve the objectives of effective and efficient operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations;

(B) Monitoring the performance of assigned acquisition activities and acquisition programs, collecting review results, and adjusting processes with the aim of continuous improvement;

(C) Establishing infrastructure, as necessary, to support acquisition management and oversight for their workforce members, including systems required to effectively manage contract and workforce data;

(D) Managing, overseeing and integrating all members of the acquisition workforce ( *e.g.*, Leasing Specialists, Contract Specialists, Lease Contracting Officers, Contracting Officers, Contracting Officer's Representative, Program Managers, Contracting Directors, Contracting Executives, Advocates for Competition, ACNs, A-SMEs, and other applicable positions) to ensure members are working effectively and efficiently as a productive team.

(ii) *Operational matters.*

(A) Procuring solutions, services, supplies, acquiring and divesting real property and personal property.

(1) For PBS only, also acquiring and divesting real property (including leases, site acquisition, design and construction), public utilities and real property disposal.

(2) For FAS only, also personal property disposal.

(3) *Construction-related procurements.*

(i) FAS contracting activities may award contracts that include ancillary commercial construction-related products and services as discussed in GSAM [512.203\(c\)](#);

(ii) FAS contracting activities shall not award contracts for architect-engineering services as defined in 40 U.S.C. § 1102;

(iii) FAS and PBS shall maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) published on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal> setting forth agreed-upon terms, conditions and limitations to support the acquisition of ancillary commercial construction-related products and services, including the FAS governmentwide procurement vehicles and the FSS Program;

(iv) FAS, in consultation with PBS, shall maintain an Ordering Guide published on the MAS Buyer Resources page at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov), or successor location, that will give specific guidance to ordering activities procuring ancillary commercial construction-related products and services through the FSS Program.

(B) Reviewing and approving procurement actions, determinations and decisions.

(C) Reviewing and approving interagency acquisitions.

(iii) *Policy matters.*

(A) *Internal acquisition procedures.* Establishing internal acquisition and lease procurement procedures and guidance for assigned acquisition activities and acquisition programs in accordance with subpart [501.3](#);

(B) *Acquisition review.* Establishing internal acquisition and lease procurement procedures, and guidance concerning acquisition reviews in accordance with [504.7103](#);

(C) *External acquisition policy.* Collaborating with the Service-level policy organization (e.g., FAS's Office of Policy and Compliance, PBS's Office of Acquisition Management and OIA's Acquisition Policy and Workforce Division) and the Office of Acquisition Policy for acquisition and lease procurement policies, procedures, and guidance with external impact, as necessary, see subparts [501.3](#), [501.4](#) and [501.5](#).

(iv) *Workforce career management.*

(A) Implementing a Contracting Officer Warrant Program in accordance with subpart [501.6](#), including establishing additional limits on contracting officer warrant authorities as needed;

(B) Ensuring the acquisition workforce obtains and maintains applicable certifications and/or specialized credentials to perform the work of their position, including timely completion of continuous learning and mandatory training requirements;

(C) Ensuring adequate organizational workforce training, staffing, and career development opportunities to promote recruitment, retention and succession planning.

(v) *Redelegations.*

HCA authority redelegations are limited pursuant to [502.101](#) and the following conditions:

(A) The SPE shall be consulted prior to a redelegation;

(B) Redelegations shall be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov); and

(C) Redelegations shall include, as applicable, the following information:

(1) HCA responsibilities being redelegated ( *i.e.*, operational matters, policy matters, workforce career management);

(2) HCA responsibilities being retained; and

(3) Limitations on the authority or responsibilities being redelegated.

(3) *Contracting Executive.*

(i) Some GSA contracting activities are so complex that there may be a GSA executive responsible for contracting operations. In those cases, the HCA may appoint a contracting executive in addition to or in lieu of a contracting director.

(ii) Contracting Executives may be appointed or rescinded by the HCA and serve within the limits of their appointed authority.

(iii) Appointments must be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov).

(4) *Contracting Director*.

(i) A summary of contracting director responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

(A) Coordinating with the HCA or Contracting Executive as appropriate on contracting matters;

(B) Providing oversight of contracting officers within their acquisition program;

(C) Managing, reviewing, and evaluating their associated acquisition program;

(D) Developing, coordinating, and integrating overall plans for their acquisition program to support agency goals and objectives;

(E) Coordinating with assigned legal counsel for contracting matters as necessary; and

(F) Serving as an advisor on acquisition related matters to senior management and other offices.

(ii) *Appointment*. Contracting Directors may be appointed or rescinded by the HCA and serve within the limits of their appointed authority. Appointments must be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov).

(5) *Contracting Activity Advocate for Competition*. The duties and responsibilities for Advocates for Competition are identified in [FAR 6.502](#). Contracting Activity Advocate for Competition may be appointed or rescinded by the HCA and serve within the limits of their appointed authority. Appointments must be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov).

(6) *Acquisition Career Navigator (ACN)*.

(i) A summary of ACN responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following, and may vary by service:

(A) Support the HCA or Contracting Executive as appropriate by managing the workforce career management responsibilities set forth in paragraph (b)(2)(iv);

(B) Serve as the primary point of contact for inquiries from or to the acquisition workforce on matters related to acquisition career management within the contracting activity;

(C) Provide guidance for the acquisition workforce utilizing the official system of record for acquisition career management and ensure consistent data integrity within the system.

(ii) *Appointment*. Acquisition Career Navigators may be appointed or rescinded by the HCA and serve within the limits of their appointed authority. Appointments must be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov).

(7) *Acquisition Subject Matter Expert (A-SME)*.

(i) A summary of A-SME responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following and may vary by Service:

(A) Support the HCA by serving as advisors on matters related to their respective area of expertise; and

(B) Serve as the primary point of contact for inquiries from or to the acquisition workforce on matters related to their respective expertise in key acquisition areas within the contracting activity.

(ii) Key acquisition areas include small business, labor, and cybersecurity. HCAs may appoint A-SMEs in other areas as necessary.

(iii) Appointments of A-SMEs must be in writing with a copy sent to the SPE at [spe.request@gsa.gov](mailto:spe.request@gsa.gov).

(c) *Responsibilities of Acquisition Career Management Positions.*

(1) Acquisition Career Manager (ACM). The ACM is responsible for ensuring that the agency's acquisition workforce (AWF) meets the requirements established by the agency, OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), and other applicable authorities. The functions of the ACM role include, but are not limited to–

(i) Managing the identification and development of the AWF;

(ii) Providing recommendations on acquisition-related human capital strategic planning;

(iii) Ensuring that agency policies and procedures for acquisition workforce management are consistent with those established by OFPP;

(iv) Serving as the agency senior advisor for acquisition human capital matters; and

(v) Representing the agency in government-wide acquisition workforce forums, including, but not limited to the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee, Federal Acquisition Council on Training, and other government-wide groups, as applicable.

(2) Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent. The Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent will issue warrants centrally in the official government-wide career management system of record. The Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent is not an HCA and does not bear responsibility for any of the actions carried out by the contracting officer under the warrant. The HCA for a contracting activity shall retain authority and responsibility for acquisition career management, including but not limited to

(i) Managing the identification and development of the AWF;

(ii) Providing recommendations on acquisition-related human capital strategic planning;

(iii) Fulfilling the obligations established in GSAM [501.603](#).

(d) The Career Management System of Record. The Clinger-Cohen Act (Public Law 104-106 §4307) mandated federal agencies to have a database containing education, experience, training and other data about their AWF. The government-wide career management system is the official system of record for the federal civilian agency AWF and is maintained by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI).

(1) The AWF shall utilize the official government-wide career management system of record to conduct and maintain their career management activities for certifications, warrants, and acquisition training.

(2) Employees are responsible for maintaining the records needed to demonstrate that they have satisfied certification, warrant and training requirements for quality assurance purposes.

(3) Supervisors must ensure that AWF members are registered in the career management system of record and maintain data accuracy in the system for their direct reports.

(e) Required Continuous Learning.

(1) GSA-required training within the curricula of a certification or warrant may be assigned, upon issuance of a certification or warrant, as mandatory continuous learning with a specified deadline for completion.

(2) Failure to complete any required training within the specified time may result in the expiration or revocation of the certification or warrant.

(f) For additional information on any of the topics covered in GSAM [subpart 501.6](#), refer to the Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

## **501.602 Contracting officers.**

### **501.602-2 Responsibilities.**

(a) *Fund sufficiency.* A requisition or purchase request signed by an authorized individual is evidence that sufficient money for the purchase is available in the fund cited.

(b) *GSA revolving funds.* A requisition for indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts requiring a guaranteed minimum quantity must specify enough funds to pay for the guaranteed minimum.

(c) *GSA funds, other than revolving funds.*

(1) The requisitioning activity must certify that additional funds are available before contract or purchase order award if the purchase exceeds the dollar amount on the requisition by 10percent or \$50, whichever is greater.

(2) If a requisition is not used, e.g., lease of real property, the contracting officer must ensure funds are available before awarding the contract.

(d) *Other Federal agencies' funds.* A GSA buying activity must not exceed a fund limitation on a customer agency's purchase request unless authorized by supply support agreements. If a purchase request indicates insufficient funds to cover all costs, the customer agency must provide additional funds. Regardless of which Central Office or Regional buying activity will make the acquisition, the office initially receiving the requirement requests the additional funds.

### **501.602-3 Ratification of unauthorized commitments.**

(a) *Authority to ratify.* Under [FAR 1.602-3](#), the contracting officer may ratify unauthorized contractual commitments if the HCA approves the ratification action. An HCA may not redelegate approval authority.

(b) *Criminal investigation.* Generally, the Government is not bound by commitments made by persons with no contracting authority. Unauthorized commitments may violate laws or regulations.

They constitute serious employee misconduct and may warrant disciplinary action. If unauthorized commitments involve any type of misconduct that might be punishable as a criminal offense, either the contracting officer or the employee's supervisor must report the matter immediately to the Office of the Inspector General with a request for a complete investigation.

(c) *Documentation required for ratification.* The individual who made the unauthorized commitment gives the contracting director all records and documents about the commitment and a complete written statement of facts, including all the following:

- (1) Why normal acquisition procedures were not followed.
- (2) Why the contractor was selected.
- (3) Other sources considered.
- (4) Description of work or products.
- (5) Estimated or agreed-upon contract price.
- (6) Appropriation citation.
- (7) Status of contract performance.

(d) *Documentation waivers.* Under exceptional circumstances, a contracting director may waive the requirement that the individual who made the unauthorized commitment must initiate and document the request for ratification. In such a case, the individual who does initiate the request for ratification must provide a written determination stating that an unauthorized commitment was made and identifying the individual who made it. For example, an exceptional circumstance may occur when the person who made the unauthorized commitment is no longer available to attest to the circumstances.

(e) *Processing a ratification.*

(1) The contracting officer must process the request for ratification. Prepare a summary statement of facts addressing the limitations in [FAR 1.602-3\(c\)](#) and recommend whether or not the procurement should be ratified. Include a recommendation for other disposition if you advise against ratification.

(2) Submit to the HCA all the following:

- (i) Request for ratification,.
- (ii) The contracting officer's statement of facts and recommendation(s).
- (iii) Concurrence of assigned legal counsel (except when the contracting officer recommends payment based on quantum meruit or quantum valebant).
- (iv) If applicable, recommendation for payment on a quantum meruit or quantum valebant basis (see [501.602-3\(f\)](#)).
- (v) Recommendation for corrective action to prevent recurrence.



(f) *Payment based on quantum meruit or quantum valebant.*

(1) If ratification is not permissible due to legal improprieties, the contracting officer may recommend that payment be made under either:

- (i) Services rendered on a quantum meruit basis (the reasonable value of work or labor).
- (ii) Goods furnished on a quantum valebant basis (the reasonable value of goods sold and delivered).

(2) To base payment on either of these conditions, there must be a showing that the Government has received a benefit (See [FAR 1.602-3\(d\)](#)).

(3) The contracting officer must obtain the approval of assigned counsel before making any payment on a quantum meruit or quantum valebant basis.

(g) *HCA action.* The HCA either:

(1) Approves the ratification request in writing and sends the approval to the contracting officer for issuance of the necessary contractual documents.

(2) Forwards a recommendation for payment on a quantum meruit or quantum valebant basis to assigned counsel for approval.

(3) Returns an unjustified request or recommendation with a written explanation why the request or recommendation is denied.

(h) *Files.* The HCA maintains a separate file containing a copy of each request to ratify an unauthorized contractual commitment and the response. The HCA must make this file available for review by the Senior Procurement Executive and the Inspector General.

## **501.603 Selection, appointment, and termination of appointment for contracting officers.**

### **501.603-1 General.**

(a) *Definitions.* As used in this subsection:

“Contracting experience” means personal and substantial involvement in purchasing, renting, leasing, or otherwise obtaining goods or services from federal and non-federal sources and includes any of the following functions: preparing and issuing purchase orders, including issuing requests for quotations or solicitations, evaluating bids or proposals, selecting sources, price/cost analysis, participating in price negotiations, and contract award and administration.

“Lease amendment” includes the dollar value of Reimbursable Work Authorizations and is based on the absolute value of changes.

“Total lease contract value” means the entire lease award amount at initial award, including the dollar value of option periods and excluding the dollar value of Reimbursable Work Authorizations for tenant improvements that are above standard agency tenant improvement allowances.



(b) *Certifications.* All employees, regardless of series, must be certified at the designated level in the appropriate acquisition certification program pursuant to GSA policy and guidance in order to be considered for a contracting officer warrant.

(1) *Application Process:*

(i) Applicants are responsible for preparing an application package for submission electronically through the career management system of record. The electronic application must include all supporting documentation including transcripts, training certificates, resume, and any other supporting documents.

(2) *Waivers.* The SPE may waive the requirement for obtaining a certification prior to appointment as a contracting officer. Waivers will only be considered in compelling and well documented circumstances. This authority is non-delegable. Waivers are not transferable to other agencies.

(c) *Contracting Officer Warrant Board Procedures.*

(1) GSA contracting and leasing activities shall structure their COWB procedures in a manner that is consistent with 501.603-2.

(2) Guidance for preparation of written COWB procedures is provided on the GSA Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(3) Service-level policy organizations (*e.g.*, FAS's Office of Policy and Compliance, PBS's Office of Acquisition Management, PBS Office of Leasing, and Office of Internal Acquisition (OIA's) Acquisition Policy and Workforce Division) have the discretion to conduct additional reviews prior to warrant package submission to the Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent.

(d) *Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP).* GSA's COWP is administered by the Office of Acquisition Policy.

(1) *Factors in determination of need for warranted contracting officers.* The COWP ensures that a GSA organization has qualified individuals as contracting officers who meet the organization's needs for contracting authority. Factors considered in determining the number of contracting officers appropriate for a given organization include volume of actions, work complexity, and organizational structure.

(2) *Training, education and experience.* The COWP ensures warrant applicants meet all federal and agency requirements for training, education and experience.

(3) *Responsibilities.*

(i) GSA's SPE:

(A) Establishes the policies, procedures, and requirements that govern COWP.

(B) Approves/disapproves in writing, any deviations, waivers or exemptions from any of the COWP requirements.

(C) Minimum standards for GSA warrants are identified on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(D) Authorizes changes in warrant level thresholds (see paragraph (d)(5)(iv) of this subsection).

(ii) HCAs:

- (A) Establish and budget for training plans for contracting officers.
- (B) Monitor contracting officers' performance.
- (C) Establish controls to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, procedures, and good management practice with respect to warrant use by contracting officers.
- (D) Determine the number of contracting officer warrants necessary for a particular work unit and the grade levels at which the warrant authority will be granted.
- (E) Establish an infrastructure to support acquisition career management, including certifications and warrant programs, for workforce members.
- (F) Appoint the contracting activity's Contracting Officer Warrant Board (COWB) to process requests for contracting officer warrants.
- (G) Establish written procedures for the COWB to ensure the requirements of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 1.603 and this section [501.603](#) are met when appointing contracting officers.
- (H) Select and nominate through the COWB qualified candidates for appointment as contracting officers.
- (I) Certify that the candidate, based upon satisfaction of the warrant requirements, supervisor recommendation, and concurrence of the COWB, is eligible for a specific level of warrant.
- (J) Appoint contracting officers. The HCA may further limit warrant authorities at each warrant level.
- (K) May establish additional requirements beyond the minimum standards for training, education, experience and certifications prior to issuing a warrant.
- (L) Retain acquisition career management responsibilities for warrants, based on the contracting officer's organizational assignment..

(iii) ACM:

- (A) Ensures consistent implementation of the COWP across GSA.
- (B) Establishes minimum criteria for the contracting activity's COWB to use in the selection, appointment, and termination of appointment of GSA contracting officers.
- (4) *Applicability*. COWP applies to all contracting officers except those appointed under the Inspector General Act (Pub. L. 95-452). Contracting authority is not required to:
  - (i) Sign training authorizations for public course offerings.
  - (ii) Sign travel documents.
  - (iii) Order printing and duplicating services from Government sources.
  - (iv) Order supplies from GSA stock through GSA Advantage! or other electronic means.

(v) Sign Government Bills of Lading.

(vi) Sign system-generated orders for motor vehicles or for requisitions under the Federal Acquisition Service Special Order Program.

(vii) Authorize interagency transfers of funds.

(viii) Use the Government telephone systems for commercial long distance and local service and/or approving payments for such services.

(ix) Use the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) nationwide contract for express small package transportation services and/or approving payments for such services.

(x) Certify receipt and acceptance of goods or services. (This does not apply to certified invoices under [513.370](#).)

(xi) Approve system-generated authorizations or payments that do not exceed the micro-purchase threshold for motor vehicle maintenance service and/or repairs managed by the Electronic Maintenance and Repair Authorization System (EMRAS).

(5) *Warrant levels.*

(i) COWP warrant levels are based on the dollar value of individual transactions.

(ii) Individual transactions include the following:

(A) The dollar value of a contract at award or a total lease contract value at award, including the dollar value of option periods.

(B) The dollar value of a modification award or lease amendment award, individually, and not the aggregate contract dollar value of a contract or lease including the contract modification or lease amendment.

(C) The dollar value of a blanket purchase agreement award including the dollar value of option periods.

(D) The dollar value of a blanket purchase agreement modification award, and not the aggregate blanket purchase agreement dollar value.

(E) The dollar value of an order award against an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract (e.g. Federal Supply Schedules, Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts, Multi-agency Contracts, agency-specific indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts) including the dollar value of option periods, and not the aggregate contract dollar value.

(F) The dollar value of a modification award to an order against an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract, and not the aggregate order dollar value.

(G) The dollar value of a purchase order.

(H) The dollar value of a modification to a purchase order and not the aggregate purchase order dollar value.

(iii) If an individual transaction 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 individual

action that adds \$35,000 of work and deducts \$80,000 is \$115,000).

(iv) Warrant level thresholds.

Warrant Level	Threshold
Basic	\$25,000
Simplified	SAT (SLAT for Leasing)
Intermediate	\$10,000,000
Senior	Unlimited

<sup>1</sup> *SLAT Warrant Procurement Limit*. Lease procurement awards using a Simplified warrant shall not exceed a total lease contract value of \$10,000,000.

(v) GSA use of the Government purchase card for micro-purchases shall follow the instructions under GSA Order OAS 4200.1, Use of the GSA Purchase Card.

(e) *Contract administration office*. The HCA, per [542.302\(c\)](#) may establish a contract administration office. A contracting officer with an unlimited warrant may authorize contract administrative functions in accordance with [542.302\(d\)](#).

## **501.603-2 Selection.**

(a) *Contracting Officer Warrant Board (COWB)*.

(1) The COWB ensures that all of the applicable criteria have been met prior to granting any GSA contracting officer warrant.

(2) Composition of the COWB. The HCA appoints the Board members and the Chair. The COWB shall include, at a minimum, the following three voting members: COWB Chair, Supervisor and Senior Procurement Professional. Unanimous approval from Board members is required for the candidate to obtain a warrant.

(i) COWB Chair. The COWB Chair (e.g., Contracting Executive or Contracting Director, or Acquisition Career Navigator (ACN)) evaluates the business need for the candidate to hold a warrant (e.g., workload), the appropriate level (e.g., dollar threshold, scope of goods/services), and participates on the COWB to further evaluate the candidate's competency to hold the requested warrant.

(ii) Supervisor. The candidate's immediate supervisor or the individual acting in the role shall serve as a voting member of the COWB.

(iii) Senior Procurement Professional. The Senior Procurement Professional shall be a senior contracting officer, procurement policy analyst or subject matter expert with knowledge and experience to evaluate the candidate's competency to hold the requested warrant.

(iv) Other Designee. The contracting activity may designate additional acquisition personnel or non-acquisition personnel as appropriate.

(v) Limitation to Members. The same individual cannot serve in multiple roles (*e.g.*, serve as COWB Chair and Supervisor).

(b) *Nominations for appointment.* The candidate's supervisor of record will submit the nominations for appointment to the designated ACN. The designated ACN must coordinate with the candidate and COWB to facilitate approval by the HCA.

(c) *Required documentation for warrant package submission.* Incomplete warrant submission packages will be returned without processing. All the following documents must be completed and submitted to the Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent (see 501.601) in accordance with warrant information provided on the Acquisition Portal:

(1) GSA Form 3409, Personal Qualifications Statement for Appointment as Contracting Officer. A current resume may be used to supplement the GSA Form 3409 but cannot be used in lieu of this document.

(2) GSA Form 3410, Request for Review, Approval & Appointment. The GSA Form 3410 shall be used to document the COWB concurrences and HCA approval.

(3) College transcripts. Redacted unofficial college transcripts are acceptable.

(d) *Evaluation of candidates for contracting officer warrants.* All GSA warrants are valid across the agency and may be transferred pursuant to the organization's delegated procurement authority. The supervisor may, but is not required to, conduct a new COWB.

(1) *Experience requirements.* The COWB must conduct a rigorous review process which may consist of any combination of quality reviews of past contracts or lease actions, interviews, written and/or oral testing to assess and document the level of expertise for all candidates to verify the nominee's contracting experience as defined in [501.603-1\(a\)](#). This review shall be conducted at all warrant levels, for all warrant types.

#### **Warrant Level**

#### **Experience Required**

Basic	At least 1 year of current (within last 3 years) contracting experience with progressively broader assignments
Simplified	At least 2 years of current (within the last 5 years) contracting experience with progressively broader assignments
Intermediate	At least 3 years of current (within the last 7 years) contracting experience with progressively broader assignments
Senior	At least 4 years of current (within the last 10 years) contracting experience with progressively broader assignments

(2) *Training requirements.* Warrant candidates must complete specific training for the applicable

warrant type as a condition of being issued that warrant as identified on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(3) *Educational requirements.* Warrant candidates must complete specific educational requirements for the applicable warrant type as a condition of being issued that warrant as identified on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(4) *Credential requirements.* Candidates for warrants may be required to obtain Government-wide credentials through a recognized acquisition training curriculum (e.g., the Federal Acquisition Institute Cornerstone on Demand or Defense Acquisition University iCatalog) or GSA-specific credentials for professional or job-related business needs, as determined by the HCA and the candidate's supervisor.

(i) OMB requires contracting professionals involved in digital services acquisitions to obtain Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Core-Plus Specialization in Digital Services (FAC-C-DS) (See OFPP Memo dated May, 18 2018). GSA's IT Acquisition Credential (ITAC) is an acceptable alternative to FAC-C-DS (See <https://insite.gsa.gov/itac> )

(ii) Additional information on Government-wide and GSA-specific credentials can be found on the GSA Acquisition Career Management page on the Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(5) *Senior unlimited acquisition warrants.*

(i) *Qualifications.* Effective October 1, 2025, new candidates for senior unlimited acquisition warrants, must possess one of the following:

(A) Previously held a senior unlimited acquisition warrant within GSA or at another Federal agency;

(B) Previously completed all the training required by the legacy FAC-C Level III program; or

(C) Be FAC-C Professional certified and possess at least two credentials related to the work to be executed under the new warrant authority.

(ii) *Exceptions.* The HCA may grant an exception to the requirement to hold two credentials provided a plan and timeline to meet the requirement is established.

(iii) *Non-Compliance with Conditional Exception.* Failure of candidates for senior unlimited acquisition warrants to successfully complete and obtain credentials as outlined in any conditional exception may result in suspension or termination of the warrant.

(iv) *Exemptions.* Candidates for senior unlimited non-acquisition warrants (i.e., leasing, real property disposal, personal property disposal, and fleet sales) are exempt from the requirement to obtain two credentials. All other requirements (e.g., certification, training, experience, and education) must be satisfied before a warrant can be issued.

(6) *Additional guidance on warrant requirements.* Additional guidance on warrant requirements is provided on the GSA Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

## **501.603-3 Appointment.**

### *(a) Certificate of appointment.*

(1) HCAs approve warrants and appoint contracting officers, prior to issuance of the SF-1402.

*(b) Types of appointments.* Candidates are nominated for either a temporary or permanent appointment.

(1) *Temporary appointments.* Temporary appointments are for a specified period of time and are issued in support of an emergency or for a specific project. Candidates for a temporary warrant must satisfy all training, education, experience, certification, and continuous learning requirements to obtain and maintain the warrant.

(2) *Permanent appointments.* A permanent appointment may be made when a candidate meets all requirements for experience, education, and training at the time the appointment is made.

### *(c) Applicability of warrant authority.*

(1) Warrants are valid agency-wide within GSA, with noted exceptions. Operational guidance is available on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(2) Contracting officers that transfer to a new contracting activity maintain their existing active warrant in the new contracting activity upon HCA approval.

(3) *Exceptions.* Warrants will be administratively terminated upon employee transfer if:

(i) The contracting officer transfers to a non-contracting activity;

(ii) The warrant authority is specific (*e.g.*, Real Property Leasing, Real Property Disposal, Fleet Acquisition, Fleet Sales, Personal Property Disposal) and the receiving contracting activity does not have authority for execution of work associated with the requisite warrant;

(iii) The receiving contracting activity does not have an organizational need for the warrant; or,

(iv) The receiving contracting activity needs to increase or decrease the warrant threshold.

### *(d) Record maintenance and disposal.*

(1) HCAs are required to keep and maintain comprehensive files containing relevant information on all appointed contracting officers until such time as all warrant data is fully maintained in the career management system of record, and as determined by the ACM.

(2) HCAs are required to submit reports, at least on a quarterly basis, to the ACM with consistent and up to date information on the contracting officer warrants issued and terminated until such time as all warrant data is fully maintained in the career management system of record, and as determined by the ACM.

(3) Acquisition professionals are responsible for maintaining a copy of their acquisition training history and source documents used for certification requests.

(4) In accordance with GSA Order CIO 1820.2, GSA Records Management Program, dispose of



expired contracting officer files and warrants by placing the contracting officer records in an inactive file following reassignment, termination of employment or revocation of designation. The inactive file cutoff date is the end of the fiscal year. The files are to be destroyed two years after the cutoff.

#### **501.603-4 Termination.**

(a) The SPE has the authority to suspend or terminate any GSA contracting officer appointment in any organizational component of the agency. SPE suspensions or terminations of warrants may not be overridden by any other GSA appointing official.

(b) At any time, an HCA may terminate an appointment, change a permanent warrant to a temporary warrant, reduce the warrant level, or refuse to accept a warrant from another contracting activity.

(c)

(1) The supervisor of record must notify the designated Acquisition Career Management Point of Contact within the organization when a contracting officer does any of the following:

(i) Resigns.

(ii) Transfers to another agency.

(iii) Is reassigned to another office within GSA.

(iv) Is terminated, or otherwise disciplined, for malfeasance or incompetence.

(v) Does not need the appointment.

(vi) Fails to comply with experience, education or training requirements.

(2) The Acquisition Career Management Point of Contact must notify the Administrative Warrant Issuing Agent in accordance with the procedures identified on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(d) Managers within the supervisory chain-of-command may at any time, suspend a contracting officer's appointment for any of the following:

(1) There is reason to believe that the contracting officer failed to exercise sound business judgment.

(2) There is reason to believe that the contracting officer engaged in other improprieties in carrying out contracting officer responsibilities.

(3) Failure of the contracting officer to comply with continuous learning requirements.

## 501.604 Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).

(a) The COR's role is to develop proper requirements and ensure during contract administration the contractors meet the commitments of their contracts, including the timeliness and delivery of quality goods and services as required by the contract.

(b) *FAC-COR Certification.* When required and regardless of series, employees, must complete the GSA certification and training requirements to obtain and maintain an active Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR) at the appropriate level in the career management system of record. COs determine the certification level required for each delegation of contract administration as described in the COR appointment letter.

(1) *Timeframe.* CORs must be certified at the appropriate level no later than 6 months from the date of their appointment.; an approved SPE waiver is not required to exercise this flexibility.

(2) If an employee has been appointed to serve as a COR, but does not hold an active FAC-COR certification at the appropriate level within 6 months from the date of the appointment, a waiver request must be submitted and approved by the SPE (see paragraph (d)). The CO shall remove the employee from the appointment until the certification has been obtained. COs must confirm that an employee holds an active FAC-COR certification in the career management system of record. The CO must confirm throughout the period of performance that the COR certification remains active.

(3) If a CO and/or the employee's supervisor is notified that an employee serving on a COR delegation is not certified at the appropriate FAC-COR level, the CO shall designate a replacement COR within 30 calendar days.

(c) *COR Critical Elements.* Every fiscal year, supervisors are required to include the mandatory standard (acquisition-related) critical element in all performance plans for GSA employees who hold a FAC-COR certification and are under an active delegation. Once the standard element is included, supervisors may add additional duties and performance metrics specific to the responsibilities of the employee.

(1) This requirement applies to all GSA FAC-COR holders, regardless of the dollar threshold and/or scope of the contract(s) that they are assigned to support as a COR.

(2) *Exclusions.*

(i) This requirement does not apply to Contracting Officers who also serve as CORs.

(ii) This requirement does not apply to GS-1170s or Leasing Contracting Officers, of any job series.

(3) Additional information and guidance can be found on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(d) *Waivers.* The SPE may waive the requirements for FAC-COR certifications. Waivers will only be considered in compelling and well documented circumstances for a period not to exceed 6 months. This authority is non-delegable. FAC-COR waivers are not transferable to other agencies.

(e) *Contracting officer's responsibilities.*

(1) In appointing CORs under GSAM [542.2](#), the contracting officer must take into consideration the appropriate FAC-COR Level needed to protect the government's interest. The contracting officer

must consider the risk associated with the acquisition, including contract type, in order to determine the appropriate level of FAC-COR coverage.

(2) Contracting officers must provide appointment letters in writing to the contractor, outlining the COR's responsibilities under the contract and the limits of the COR's authority to the contractor. The contracting officer must also provide a copy to the COR and the COR supervisor, and maintain a copy in the official contract file, or a central file referenced in the contract file.

(3) The contracting officer is authorized to revoke a COR appointment. Any revoked COR appointment must be documented in writing and maintained in the official contract file or a central location referenced in the contract file. The CO must notify the COR, the COR's supervisor, the contractor and the designated Acquisition Career Management Point of Contact (ACM POC) within 7 calendar days of the revocation.

## **501.670 Category Managers.**

(a) Category managers are responsible for identifying inefficient purchasing behavior and crafting smarter buying strategies within specific areas of spend as described in Government-wide Category Management, Guidance Document issued by the Office of Management Budget, available at [https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/information/Gov-wide\\_CM\\_Guidance\\_V1.pdf](https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/information/Gov-wide_CM_Guidance_V1.pdf).

(b) *Transactional data.* Category managers should use transactional data collected via clauses [552.216-75](#) and [552.238-80](#) Alternate I in conjunction with commercial market benchmarks to identify potential areas for improvement in contracting methods, pricing, and terms or conditions.

## **501.671 Program and Project Managers (P/PM).**

(a) *General.* The Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) core certification program certifies program and project managers at three levels: Entry, Mid and Senior. This certification program is based upon a competency model of performance outcomes which measures the knowledge, skills and abilities gained by program and project managers through professional training, job experience and continuous learning. Program and Project Managers (P/PMs) are critical to project success, including developing accurate government requirements and managing life-cycle activities to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved. Information about FAC-P/PM is available at <https://www.fai.gov/> and GSA's Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(b) *FAC-P/PM Certification.* When required and regardless of series, employees must complete the GSA certification and training requirements to obtain and maintain an active Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) at the appropriate level in the career management system of record. Depending on the project, the FAC-P/PM IT Core-Plus specialty certification may also be required:

(1) *Timeframe.* The employee's supervisor must confirm that an employee holds an active FAC-P/PM certification or specialization at the appropriate level when assigning the employee as a program manager, project lead or integrated project team (IPT) lead; if not, PMs must be certified at the appropriate level no later than 12 months from the date of their assignment to a program, project or IPT; a waiver from the SPE is not required to exercise this flexibility.

(2) If an employee has been assigned to serve as a program manager, project lead or IPT, but does not hold an active FAC-P/PM certification at the appropriate level within 12 months from the date of their assignment, a waiver request must be submitted and approved by the SPE (see paragraph (d)).

(3) Any program manager for a major acquisition, including major programs as defined by OMB Circular A-11, must be FAC-P/PM Level III certified.

(c) *FAC-P/PM-IT Specialization.*

(1) *Applicability.* The FAC-P/PM-IT Specialization is required for all GSA P/PMs and IPT leads who support the following covered projects and programs:

(i) IT projects or programs included in the GSA IT Dashboard <https://itdashboard.gov/drupal/summary/023>, meaning they have been designated as major IT investments by the GSA Chief Information Officer;

(ii) IT projects or programs identified by GSA's IT Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) team as a major investment and shared with the Acquisition Career Manager; or

(iii) IT projects or programs designated by HCA as major or mission critical.

(2) *Certification requirements.* Any GSA employee pursuing the FAC-P/PM-IT must first hold a mid or senior level FAC-P/PM Certification (Levels II or III).

(3) *Timeframe.* Any GSA employee required to have a FAC-P/PM-IT Specialization must obtain the certification within 12 months of project assignment. If an employee has been assigned to serve as a PM for a major program, but does not hold an active FAC-P/PM-IT Specialization within 12 months from the date of their assignment, a waiver request must be submitted and approved by the SPE (see paragraph (d)).

(d) *Waivers.* The SPE may waive the requirements for FAC-P/PM and FAC-P/PM-IT certification. Waivers will only be considered in compelling and well documented circumstances for a period not to exceed 12 months. This authority is non-delegable. FAC-P/PM-IT waivers are not transferable to other agencies. Waiver requests shall be submitted by the ACM POC for the requesting organization to the OGP Acquisition Workforce Division for review and routing to the SPE.

## **501.672 Acquisition Certification Programs.**

(a) *Federal Acquisition Certification (FAC) programs.* GSA employees are required to obtain and maintain FACs as determined by the business and operational needs of their organization with emphasis upon the type of work they will perform. To obtain and maintain FACs, GSA employees shall comply with the requirements established by the OMB, OFPP, FAI, and GSA. Information about the FAC programs, including requirements for obtaining and maintaining certification, is available at <http://www.fai.gov> and on the Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA's Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

(b) *GSA specific certification programs.* The Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) has established agency-specific certification programs for acquisition workforce (AWF) members who perform under acquisition and contracting authorities that are unique to GSA. GSA employees, regardless of job series, may be required to obtain and maintain GSA specific certifications as determined by the business and operational needs of their organization with emphasis upon the type of work they will

perform. Information about the following GSA specific certification programs, including requirements for obtaining and maintaining certification, is available on the Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA's Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal> .

(1) *GSA Fleet Acquisition Certification (Fleet-C) Program*. As required by business and operational needs, GSA Fleet personnel, regardless of job series, are required to obtain and maintain the Fleet-C.

(i) *Warrant requirement*. In order to be eligible for a Fleet Acquisition warrant, GSA Fleet personnel must hold aFleet-C in “certified” status in the official governmentwide career management system of record.

(2) *GSA Real Property Leasing Certification Program (LCP)*. As required by business and operational needs, GSA Leasing, Lease Administration, Outleasing, and Site Acquisition contracting officers, regardless of job series, are required to obtain and maintain the LCP certification.

(i) *Warrant requirement*. In order to be eligible for a Leasing, Lease Administration, Outleasing, or Site Acquisition warrant, GSA Leasing, Lease Administration, Outleasing, and Site Acquisition personnel must hold aLCP certification in “certified” status in the official governmentwide career management system of record.

(3) *GSA Personal Property Disposal Certification (PPD-C) Program*. As required by business and operational needs, GSA personal property disposal personnel, regardless of job series, are required to obtain and maintain the PPD-C.

(i) *Warrant requirement*. In order to be eligible for a Personal Property Disposal warrant, GSA personal property disposal personnel must hold aPPD-C in “certified” status in the official governmentwide career management system of record.

(4) *GSA Fleet Sales Certification (FS-C) Program*. As required by business and operational needs, GSA Fleet sales personnel, regardless of job series, are required to obtain and maintain the FS-C.

(i) *Warrant requirement*. In order to be eligible for a Fleet Sales warrant, Fleet sales personnel must hold a FS-C in “certified” status in the official governmentwide career management system of record.

*GSA Real Property Disposal Certification (RPD-C) Program*. As required by business and operational needs, GSA Real Property Disposal contracting officers, regardless of job series, are required to obtain and maintain the RPD-C.

(i) *Warrant requirement*. In order to be eligible for an Real Property Disposal warrant, real property disposal personnel must hold a RPD-C in “certified” status in the official governmentwide career management system of record.

(c) *Certification self-revocation*. With supervisory approval, an employee may surrender a certification as long as the certification is not required based on the employee’s job series, position description, and/or delegated procurement authority or contracting administration delegations. For surrender eligibility criteria, please refer to the guidance on the Acquisition Career Management page on the Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal> .

(1)In instances where the certification being surrendered is the basis for an employee's warrant, the warrant must be terminated before the employee surrenders the certification.

(d) *Waivers*. The SPE may waive Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) (Professional) requirements to support the hiring or promotion of an employee to grade GS-13 or higher. Waivers will only be considered in compelling and well documented circumstances. This authority is non-delegable. Waivers are not transferable to other agencies.

(e) *Reciprocity of certification programs*. Pursuant to GSA policies and guidance, the applicant shall present evidence of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) or FAC certification for consideration to obtain a FAC or agency-specific certification through reciprocity. See the Acquisition Career Management page on the Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal> for guidance on reciprocity.

(1) *Reciprocity with DOD certification programs*. GSA may recognize DAWIA certifications (Public Law 101-510) issued by DOD.

(2) *Reciprocity between FAC programs*.

(i) *FAC-C (Professional) to FAC-COR*. Individuals certified as FAC-C (Professional) are considered to have met FAC-COR requirements for all levels per OMB Memo "Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Modernization" dated January 19, 2023". <https://www.fai.gov/>

(ii) *FAC-P/PM to FAC-COR*. Individuals certified as FAC-P/PM are considered to have met FAC-COR requirements per OMB Memo "Revisions to the FAC-COR" dated September 6, 2011 (see <https://www.fai.gov/>). Individuals certified as FAC-P/PM Level II or higher are considered to have met the FAC-COR requirements for that same level.