

Fact Sheet: Building Our Best: Recruitment and Retention of the Contracting Workforce

Summary:

Today, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) is releasing a blueprint for building our best contracting workforce - the most important element of a successful federal acquisition system. Last year, the Federal Government purchased over \$750 billion goods and services through contracts awarded by thousands of contracting professionals whose business acumen, analytic and research skills, and judgment are critical to the success of agencies' missions. To ensure we deliver high quality services to the American people and meet the challenges of the future, our contracting workforce requires a robust pipeline of acquisition talent at all levels, and continuous investment in their skills development.

Two months ago, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) released M-24-16, "[Improving the Federal Hiring Experience](#)," which details a comprehensive set of policy, operational, and technical initiatives related to talent. This memo, "Building Our Best: Recruitment and Retention of the Contracting Workforce," focuses on the contracting workforce to ensure that agencies continue to excel in the elements articulated by the [Better Contracting Initiative](#) and other good government efforts.

Acknowledging the rapidly-changing acquisition environment, this blueprint defines a new era in collaboration, data-driven human capital decision-making, and support for these important, frontline workforce members. OFPP started this journey over a year ago by [modernizing the contracting certification framework](#) for the civilian agencies, which focused on a more targeted learning model, and by obtaining [parity with DoD's contracting certification](#), which is providing greater workforce mobility for over 40,000 contracting professionals.

With this blueprint, OFPP is establishing four new focus areas to build on these previous efforts:

- *Acquisition Workforce Advisory Committee*: A cross-agency Acquisition Workforce Advisory Committee will be established to guide OFPP and agencies in their recruitment and retention initiatives. This group will comprise thought leaders to guide the community's efforts and share best practices.

- *Strategic Workforce Planning:* The acquisition community will collaborate with agency Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs) in strategic workforce planning for contracting professionals. Agencies will be encouraged to leverage talent teams and hiring actions across the federal enterprise.
- *Leadership Skills:* Recognizing that leadership skills are important to their success, agencies will be required to promote leadership training for all levels of their contracting professionals and particularly for their contracting office team leads and supervisors.
- *Retention Program:* Agencies will be required to establish a retention program targeted to contracting professionals at all levels which includes programs for their growth and development. Agencies shall share best practices including such initiatives as experiential assignments, cohort-based learning, shadowing, networking opportunities, among others.

Taken together, these steps will support agencies as they continue to build and develop their acquisition workforce to meet the critical needs of agencies now and in the future.