



Memorandum

Date: October 4, 2019

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | FAA's Acquisition Workforce Training, Certification, and Warrant Compliance | Project No. 18Z3004Z000
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Mary Kay Langan-Feirson
Assistant Inspector General for Acquisition and Procurement Audits

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

Between fiscal years 2013 and 2018, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) awarded over \$17 billion in contracts, representing 68 percent of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) total contracts.¹ FAA shares the Governmentwide challenge of attracting and retaining talented and trained individuals who can plan, manage, and oversee contracts to ensure that agencies obtain the best value for their mission-critical goods and services. Within FAA's acquisition workforce, the three key professions responsible for awarding and administering contracts include: Contracting Officers (COs), Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs), and Program/Project Managers (P/PMs).

In April 2005, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandated that certification requirements be established for the Federal acquisition workforce.² In response to this mandate, in January 2006, the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) developed a Federal acquisition certification program. While FAA has its own acquisition management system (AMS), in 2014, the Agency elected to follow the FAI certification program.³ This program includes various levels of certification to help ensure acquisition professionals (i.e., COs, CORs, and P/PMs) have training and experience commensurate with the size and complexity of the contracts they manage. COs are also granted varying levels of warrant authority

¹ Data based on action obligation totals from the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) from October 1, 2013, to August 31, 2018.

² OFPP Policy Letter O5-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, April 15, 2005.

³ In 1995, Congress enacted Pub. L. No. 104-50 (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 40110), which allows FAA to follow a different set of acquisition policies from the rest of the Government, and produce its own acquisition management system (AMS).

under agency procedures—based on dollar and scope limits⁴—authorizing them to enter into awards on the Government’s behalf. In 2016, the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act⁵ established requirements to improve P/PM practices within the Federal Government and ensure major programs are being managed effectively.⁶

Given the sustained Governmentwide focus on developing a high-performing acquisition workforce and the importance of this workforce to managing FAA’s multibillion-dollar contract budget, we are initiating an audit of FAA’s certification and warrant processes for COs, CORs, and P/PMs. Our objective for this self-initiated audit is to assess FAA’s oversight and compliance with Federal and Agency requirements for acquisition workforce training, certification, and warrants.

We plan to begin this audit in the coming weeks and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at DOT and FAA Headquarters in Washington, DC, as well as select field sites. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-5225 or Darren Murphy, Program Director, at 206-255-1929.

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100

⁴ FAA follows AMS in issuing its warrants, whereas the rest of DOT uses the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

⁵ Pub. L. No. 114-264.

⁶ OMB M-18-19: *Improving the Management of Federal Programs and Projects Through Implementing the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act*, June 25, 2018.