

## **GSA Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee Meeting**

**March 7, 2023**

The General Service Administration (GSA) Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Committee (GAP FAC) Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee convened for the seventh public meeting at 3:00 PM on March 7, 2023, virtually via Zoom, with Nicole Darnall, Chair, and Anne Rung, Co-Chair presiding.

In accordance with FACA, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App 2, the meeting was open to the public from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST

**Committee Members Present:**

Nicole Darnall, Chairperson	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Anne Rung, Co-Chair	<i>Varis, LLC</i>
Gail Bassette	<i>Bowie State University</i>
Mark Hayden	<i>New Mexico General Services Department</i>
Kristin Seaver	<i>General Dynamics Information Technology</i>
Clyde Thompson	<i>GovStrive, LLC</i>
David Malone	<i>Director, Procurement &amp; Supply Management</i>
Steven Schooner	<i>George Washington University</i>
Darryl Daniels	<i>Jacobsen Daniels Assoc.</i>

**Absent:** None

**Guest Speakers & Presenters:**

Federal Acquisition Service:

Carlos Barrera	<i>Commodity Standardization Specialist, Integrated Workplace Acquisition Center</i>
Denitra Bynum	<i>Procurement Analyst, Office of IT Category</i>

Public Building Service:

Greg Kimberling	<i>Contract Specialist, Center for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure</i>
Patrick Chapman	<i>Senior Contracting Officer, Energy Acquisition Support Branch</i>
Johanna Nieves	<i>Supervisory Contract Specialist, Office of the</i>

Michael Alosi  
Adam Carlson

Chief of Staff  
*Asset Manager*  
*Supervisory Contract Specialist, Operations  
and Maintenance Center*

Matt Dobson  
Jessica Campbell  
Kim Johnson

*Leasing Project Manager, Leasing Branch*  
*Procurement Analyst, Service Contracts Team*  
*Senior Contract Specialist, Acquisition  
Management Division*

**GSA Staff Present:**

Boris Arratia  
Stephanie Hardison  
David Cochennic  
Skylar Holloway  
Jamie Pelligrino  
Rachel McGarry Owens  
Jill Lamoreaux

*Designated Deputy Federal Officer*  
*Deputy Designated Federal Officer*  
*GAP FAC Support*  
*GAP FAC Support Team*  
*Closed Captioner*  
*ASL Interpreters*  
*ASL Interpreters*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Boris Arratia, Designated Federal Officer, opened the public meeting by welcoming the group before reminding the public that there would be time for comments and statements at the end of the meeting. Boris then performed a roll call to confirm attendance and a quorum. After meeting the quorum, he turned the meeting over to Chairman Nicole Darnall.

**WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

Chairman Nicole Darnall welcomed the committee and thanked the GSA guests for being here today to give the group further knowledge.

Co-Chair Anne Rung reminded the subcommittee to keep in mind the recommendations the group is coalescing around: creating a team of acquisition and sustainability experts, upskilling all acquisition professionals, and employing change management strategies.

## **GUEST SPEAKER Q & A**

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – How many of you are aware that the Financial Alignment Initiative (FAI) has sustainability training in place, and have any of you taken it? What is your impression of that training?

**A:** Matt Dobson, Michael Alosi, & Greg Kimberling were unaware of the sustainability training, while Kimberly Johnson received training on the SFTool and was made aware of the FAI training.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – What are the gaps in sustainability training, and what areas do you want to receive training on?

**A:** Michael Alosi – People need to know how sustainability connects to their job.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall - Are you connecting with individuals that aren't as knowledgeable and need to scale up? How are they scaling up?

**A:** Michael Alosi - There's a big emphasis on the Office of Financial Management (OFM) energy and sustainability team. I put the asset managers into talking with those needing more knowledge to write their scopes more appropriately.

**Q:** Anne Rung - How do you stay current with the latest sustainability best practices?

**A:** Matt Dobson – We have a program called Red Vector, a third party that has a lot of training. They have net zero training, and they have pretty much anything you need. GSA, on the design and construction side, has a lot of licenses, and they offer them to the leasing side, which I've taken advantage of.

**A:** Patrick Chapman – The Department of Energy and SAM gives a lot of virtual training annually. Those that work within energy are required to take the training to stay abreast. We are consistently receiving training and being hands-on with sustainability. There are many directions you can drill down with sustainability.

**Q:** Anne Rung - How frequent is the training?

**A:** Patrick Chapman – every six months.

**A:** Carlos Barrera - Technology with building materials and furniture has gone forward with environmental standards and things like that, whether they be lead standards or level certifications. There are a lot of third-party certificates that we can request within our Request for Quote (RFQ) documents or statements of work. We're ensuring that all our products meet certain environmental standards. We put the specifications within

the documents and when the quotes come back for evaluation, we are looking to make sure those products meet those specifications. There are some products we deal with that don't run through those certifications. For those we look to see what they are doing and if they are using recyclable material.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall - How did you go about getting upskilled in this area?

**A:** Carlos Barrera – A lot of this was getting educated by the vendors themselves. It was up to us to do the due diligence to see if the certification was what we needed. It's a lot of self-learning and a lot of what they are teaching us.

**Q:** Anne Rung - Do you engage in this industry through request for information (RFIs)?

**A:** Carlos Barrera - We do engage through RFIs. We have a Quality Partnership Council (QPC) group, so we can deal with industry partners directly to get ideas on where things are headed.

**Q:** Anne Rung – Are there gaps you see despite the learning you have?

**A:** Carlos Barrera – There's always more to learn especially as new products come to market. We try to attend as many conferences as possible to learn what's out there and the direction things are going in. American National Standards Institute/Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association (ANSI/BIFMA) is an organization that is good at instructing and runs the lead partnership and level certification. They are the touchstone that we go to when we have a question.

**A:** Denitra Bynum – We offer a class on GSA Online that talks about green. There's not a lot of training out there that's available, but we do have some requirements or suggestions that we can take in reference to green.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – When did you receive your SFTool training and what did you think of that training?

**A:** Kimberly Johnson – SFTool was presented through our national office in the fall. It came over as sustainable facilities. We have an environmental branch, and we just hired a sustainability program manager which is a new role. The training was brought in to help us navigate the SFTool and how we could find policy requirements related to P100, green building council and other agencies and their requirements. It's critical right now when we are navigating sustainable materials and emerging technologies. SFTool.com is open to federal and non-federal partners. I also completed the FAI training.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – What was your opinion on the FAI training?

**A:** Kimberly Johnson – For someone that is being introduced to our program, it was great. It helped me to understand our scope and information within the Procurement Data Standard (PDS) reviews. Early engagement hasn't been a strong suit within our organization and now it is due to these training sessions. The sharing of information is where the learning occurs.

**Q:** Steven Schooner – Are there ways you've seen in practice that you can make it relatively easy to see and buy green products?

**A:** Michael Alosi – It was easy when we had key sustainable products (KSPs) because it was simple. Things like Safer Choice labels and Energy Star make things easier for people. I am reading into this in my own time and teaching my building managers about it. It's in the best interest of the government. It's overwhelming to look in SFTool and see the number of options for a product. Anything you all could do on a software end to narrow things down would be huge.

**Q:** David Malone – In federal acquisition is standardization a thing? If so, is standardization of sustainable products being enforced broadly across GSA's acquisition team and is it incorporated in your solicitations?

**A:** Michael Alosi – One of the things I took on as a project was standardizing our scope template. I ended up doing it for all the other programs as well. We got it into the scope to have something to point to if the contract isn't complying.

**Q:** David Malone – If you have it in standard templates, are the suppliers able to ask for a waiver if they can't provide it?

**A:** Dentira Bynum – We have standardized templates that when they do provide a bid or quote, they would have to fill out. The green stand of sustainability is one of the areas within that. There is a question about being waived out. The agency would either say they will accept an alternative, but most of the time they require them to follow that standard.

**Q:** Darryl Daniels – Is there something similar on the leasing side? Does the agency put in those kinds of requests or are those guidelines set for them?

**A:** Matt Dobson – The agency has agency specific requirements and sometimes in their requirements they have sustainability stuff in them, but typically they rely on GSA to have it in their lease.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – If there were two areas you could learn more about, what would they be?

**A:** Adam Carlson – We respond to the government's needs and then we buy it. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) clauses and provisions that concern green purchasing aren't impressive unless we're buying something with refrigerant. We don't have specialized training to tell the person that has the government need to replace a product with something else. The first step would be to beef up the clauses.

**A:** Johanna Nieves – In terms of scope development, we rely heavily on our project managers. I don't attend numerous trainings during the year, but I take an annual training that is a brief overview of FAR clauses and goes over the program. There might be an opportunity to be more consistent and ensure the right requirements, the right clauses and questions are being asked during the scope development stage.

**Q:** Anne Rung – Who issues the training?

**A:** Johanna Nieves – GSA.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – Do you think there are specific sustainability issues that you would think would be beneficial to learn more about?

**A:** Gregory Kimberling – Standardization across scopes is something that would be valuable. We are leaving it to task order contracting officers to determine whether to follow some of those sustainability procedures. We also get concerns about pricing in whether sustainable materials are going to be more expensive than regular materials.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – What do you think is the most effective way to learn and acquire knowledge?

**A:** Johanna Nieves – I like the in-person training. Learning about others also helps to understand the requirements and see how my role plays into the program.

**A:** Denitra Bynum – I'm a visual/engaging learner and would like to click through the process to see and be able to ask if I have a question.

**Q:** Johanna Nieves – In terms of scope development are there a set of questions you can refer to as you're meeting with the customer to make sure the right questions are being asked? Some folks may not know what questions to ask.

**A:** Carlos Barrera –I'm not sure if there is a one stop shop for training. I don't know if a standard that would work for me would work for everyone else. Some training is better in person. Others are better as one on one. I look to third party training from other

green organizations to learn what I need to in terms of my job. You have to dedicate your time at work, but also your free time to keep up on these topics.

**A:** Michael Alosi – I don't think there's a one stop shop for training. I think people think that sustainability doesn't work with their job, and they don't realize how much it impacts their job. We have a Sustainability Council on a national level and now it's being spread out to each region to help with sustainability guidance.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – What other types of training would be beneficial to sustainability? What techniques did they use that made it effective?

**A:** Denitra Bynum – Participation. When you participate, you are getting responses from others, and you can see other's viewpoints.

**A:** Kimberly Johnson – I learned a lot through the Learning for Our Legacy workshop, and it also connected me to other contracting officers in other regions. Best practices in sustainable projects that were successful would be a huge benefit.

**A:** Patrick Chapman – Problem solving and scenarios are effective. If you can act those out and have break out sessions you give people a chance to be hands on which is how I learn best.

**Q:** Kristin Seaver – Is there joint training relative to the interaction between the program and the procurement? Relative to sustainability and climate risk, would you see any value in that?

**A:** Kimberly Johnson – Joint training would be beneficial. Early engagement is where it all starts and if we don't use the correct strategy to buy it, it could be bad. Having project managers, program managers, etc. all at the same table when building that initial requirement is helpful.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – Recognizing you have credentialing related to your work, what is the process you underwent to get it? Is there a continuous learning component associated with it that might be useful to this particular setting related to sustainability?

**A:** Matt Dobson – I received my credentialing through my last employer and while I don't use it as much, it allows me to have the knowledge and be a local subject matter expert. Through Vector Solutions I'm able to maintain those certifications, but it would be crucial and useful to have more training. The federal government pays for the training, but not the exam.

**Q:** Anne Rung - What are the core components of certifications?

**A:** Michael Alosi - You read the book and materials, participate in a project and get the certifications.

**A:** Dentira Bynum – Since I’m a contracting officer, we had to go through Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) 1, 2, and 3 and maintain certification every 2 years. When you get to the higher-level training, those are in person training that may last 2-3 weeks. In those trainings, you are part of a team where you have to do a presentation and at the end you have to pass an exam.

**A:** Kimberly Johnson – The training can be intense depending on who your teammates are and the projects that present themselves in region ten.

**Q:** David Malone – Do you feel equipped to tell the story of why this is important? If not, maybe that should also be a component of training.

**A:** Patrick Chapman – Absolutely, especially if you’re a contracting officer.

**A:** Denitra Bynum – Because I’m on the IT side of things, I wouldn’t feel comfortable telling the story as much as I would be if I were on the construction or leasing side of things that deal with energy. If it’s going to be part of the acquisition period, I think we need to learn the story so we can be prepared to tell it if we need to.

**Q:** Nicole Darnall – What stage of the acquisition process do you think credentialing would have the greatest impact?

**A:** Patrick Chapman – During the planning phase. Before you do anything, you have to have an acquisition plan and that is where you want to plant your seed.

**A:** Gregory Kimberling – The pre-solicitation stage would get the most benefit.

**A:** Michael Alosi – We need to talk to people earlier on in the project planning phase and get regional leadership buy-in.

**A:** Carlos Barrera – The earlier to implement this the better since time is limited.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Nicole Darnall opened the discussion up to the public, but there were no questions or comments.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REFLECTIONS**



Nicole Darnall transitioned into the Jamboard to talk about key takeaways they heard related to this session that stuck out and would help form recommendations. The group took the time to focus on three items that stuck out to them.

Nicole and Anne will group some of the takeaways and will come together during the administrative meeting to see how these groupings map into the recommendation areas. They will also start looking for individuals to volunteer with respect to contributing key pieces within their timeline.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Nicole Darnall thanked the subcommittee for their participation in today's meeting and is looking forward to aggregating the comments for their discussion next week.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

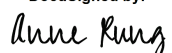
Boris Arratia, DFO, adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM EST.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

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Nicole Darnall  
Chairperson  
GAP FAC Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee

7/12/2023

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Anne Rung  
Co-Chairperson  
GAP FAC Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee

7/10/2023