

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

December 6, 2022

The General Services Administration (GSA) Acquisition Policy Federal Advisory Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee convened for its first public meeting at 3:00 PM on December 6, 2022, virtually via Zoom, with Darryl Daniels, Chairperson, and Nicole Darnall, Co-Chairperson, 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

Subcommittee Members Present:

Darryl Daniels, Chairperson	<i>Jacobsen Daniels Assoc.</i>
Nicole Darnall, Co-Chairperson	<i>Arizona State University</i>
Gail Bassette	<i>Bowie State University</i>
Mark Hayden	<i>New Mexico General Services Department</i>
Anne Rung	<i>Varis, LLC</i>
Kristin Seaver	<i>General Dynamics Information Technology</i>
Clyde Thompson	<i>GovStrive, LLC</i>

Absent: David Malone and Steven Schooner

Guest Speakers & Presenters:

Leslie Field	<i>Acting Administrator, Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget</i>
Katy Newhouse	<i>Director, Sustainable Operations – Supply Chain, Office of the Federal Chief Sustainability Officer, Council on Environmental Quality</i>

GSA Staff Present:

Boris Arratia	<i>Designated Federal Officer</i>
Stephanie Hardison	<i>Deputy Designated Federal Officer</i>
David Cochenic	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Adam Sheldrick	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>
Skyler Holloway	<i>GAP FAC Support Team</i>

Chelsea Courson
Daniel Swartz
Andrea Stermin

Closed Captioner
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ASL Interpreters

CALL TO ORDER

Boris Arratia, Designated Federal Officer, opened the public meeting by welcoming the group and reviewing the GAP FAC full committee and subcommittee background. He then performed a roll call to confirm attendance and a quorum. After meeting the quorum, he reviewed the ground rules for public comment.

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Subcommittee Chairperson Darryl Daniels welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for their participation before going over the agenda. He stated that the subcommittee's purpose is to look at best practices in the U.S. and evaluate how the workforce can use clear objectives and criteria when making procurement decisions. He stressed the work ahead for the subcommittee. He mentioned several speakers would present to the subcommittee to inform them so they can make independent decisions and recommendations to the full committee that will be forwarded to the GSA Administrator. Chairperson Daniels then turned it over to subcommittee co-Chair Nicole Darnall for her opening remarks.

Subcommittee co-Chairperson Darnall expressed her excitement to work on the federal acquisition workforce. She stated that over the next two years, thinking about transitioning this workforce towards embedding sustainability and environmental considerations in federal acquisition is a tall task. But judging by the credentials of those serving on this committee, she thought it could be tackled head-on. She then yielded to Anne Rung to introduce the first speaker.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Anne Rung introduced Leslie Field, the Acting Administrator Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), Office of Management and Budget. She provided a deep dive into Ms. Field's career background and expressed her appreciation for her speaking to the Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee.

Leslie reflected on her 22 years with OFPP and explained the evolution of the acquisition workforce space over time and how their focus is to better provide them with the necessary tools and resources to continue to aid them in doing their jobs better. She mentioned that OFPP created the federal acquisition certification programs, they have gotten organized, they have got funding, they have got leadership, an associate administrator position dedicated to the workforce, and how that has been incredibly important. So everything they do at OFPP focuses on how this helps the acquisition professional, what kind of resources, and what kind of tools they can

provide them to help do their jobs better. She also stated that when you talk about sustainability, economic competitiveness, and all the things the administration is interested in, the workforce is the backbone.

She explained what the federal workforce looks like today. In FY21, agencies spent over \$350 billion on goods and services. Our contracting officers awarded multi-millions of contracts in more than 3,000 buying offices. She also stated that this was not just about the 1102 contracting series but about everybody in that ecosystem supporting them. Less than 7 percent of the acquisition workforce is under 30, which illustrates a recruitment issue. As of last September, there were 41,011 contractors; 66 percent came from DoD, and 34 percent came from civilian agencies. 54 percent are women, and 40 percent are minorities. Since 2017 they have increased contractors by about 8 percent. To support the workforce, they are aligning with the DoD contract certification program to allow parity between DoD and civilian agencies. With this program, between 86 percent and 92 percent of contractors were certified. This program has been widely successful. The new program, which will be a modernized version of the contract certification program and has yet to be rolled out, will remedy how the federal government develops its workforce. It will shift the government from a talent management system to one that reflects better practices in modern learning, training agility, and continuous professional growth. In the modern world, this is designed to help attract internal candidates from other functions such as financial management or other business functions and state and local government.

She stated that they work closely with the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) at GSA to provide more workforce tools and inspire them to be more creative and less compliant. Tools are being built in the environmental space so people can use and reuse them and connect with others using them. Focusing on connecting with the community is one of the most important jobs they have done, which helps a multitude of groups come together. With these groups coming together, they have launched a crowd-sourcing platform called OFPP Innovates to obtain new perspectives. There has been lots of engagement, and it has allowed them to hear from the people on the front line. With all the new priorities and perspectives, they want to ensure they continue to hear from them, get tools for them, and evaluate how they are doing and how they will create effective leaders in this space. A lot is going on in the environmental space to make sure our program managers understand the environmental considerations. She ended her discussion by opening up for questions.

Ms. Rung thanked her for the great summary before yielding to questions from the subcommittee members.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE OVERVIEW: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Chair Daniels: How do you get them to be more creative and less compliant oriented?

A: The Department of Homeland Security has a procurement innovation lab with an annual report that lists all the innovative techniques they have tried. It lists what has worked and what has not. She also provided two examples: Two-step Down Select, the Oral Proposal, and the Sample Task. She mentioned that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) took the next step and created boot camp training for the industry.

Q: Co-Chair Darnall: Are the resources mentioned, such as the boot camp training, the American decision tool, and the periodic table acquisition innovation, part of the FAI, and would the committee be able to access a summary of these resources?

A: FAI.gov lists these resources, and she will provide the information.

Q: Co-Chair Darnall: What do you think the key pain points subcommittee should focus on to be most effective?

A: She recommended connecting the subcommittee to some contracting officers to ask what they feel would be the pain points or blind spots to focus on.

WORKFORCE & SUSTAINABILITY DISCUSSION

Ms. Rung introduced Katy Newhouse, Director, Sustainable Operations – Supply Chain, Office of the Federal Chief Sustainability Officer, Council on Environmental Quality. Ms. Rung provided a detailed background on Katy's career before yielding to Ms. Newhouses' opening remarks.

Ms. Newhouse thanked Ms. Rung for her introduction. She said she was looking forward to talking more about the federal sustainability plan and workforce development, stable procurement, and the intersection between all those spaces. She stated that the executive order (EO) that her office is under is EO 14057. Ms. Newhouse began by sharing the different pillars that make up the federal sustainability plan. Ms. Newhouses' organization has long-term targets (2050) to work toward (carbon-free electricity, zero-emission vehicles, buildings, etc.) as well as some in 2035. Net-zero emissions procurement by 2050 is one of those. She explained that to reach these goals, everyone involved must understand how to do procurement. Therefore, procurement is integrated throughout the federal sustainability plan. Achieving net zero emissions procurement by 2050 will require action across all the federal government supply chains.

She expressed another key message that recognized many long-term goals, stating that the 2020s are the decade for action. And moving forward in this decade, we have some near-term things we need to do now. They are working towards having all

light-duty purchases of zero-emission vehicles by 2027, a 65 percent goal by 2030. She mentioned two areas she would highlight in the procurement area, supplier disclosure and buy clean. One strategic framework they have begun discussing is how we buy, who we buy from, and what we buy. Within those three areas, they need to figure out what the levers are: the regulations, guidance, pilots, tools/resources, and training. Each area has a strategy, and the levers are being pulled.

- **Who we buy:** The current proposed rule, which is around a supplier climate risk and resilience rule, requires major federal suppliers to disclose their greenhouse gas emissions, and depending on how much money they get from the federal government in contracts, they will have to report different amounts. The top tier is required to report TCFD climate risk disclosure and set science-based emissions reduction targets. The workforce will need to know what to do with that and how to incorporate that into the procurement processes. So, does the workforce acquisition workforce need to understand the ins and outs? Think about the roles, what they need to know and why and how to get the right people the right information as it relates to who we buy from.
- **What we buy:** The federal government has developed different initiatives and programs to consider climate and sustainability. An ongoing Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) case looks at sustainable products and services. They are expanding Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recommended specifications, standards, and ecolabels. There is also a buy clean initiative to prioritize lower embodied carbon construction materials. Currently in the process of reviewing the best-in-class solutions for sustainability requirements and then partnering with the best-in-class contract owners to ensure that the right sustainable procurement clauses are in there to ensure the maximum impact possible.
- **How we buy:** There is another FAR case to minimize climate change risk in federal acquisitions. Under this umbrella is the potential to use the social costs of greenhouse gasses in procurement. The number one concern is a lack of workforce readiness when it comes to this. Regarding how we buy, we need to think about who we buy from and if there is more than one supplier. We also must consider the major climate risks when going with any major acquisition and minimize those risks. Leslie mentioned that program managers are trained to think about climate risks as they go through acquisition planning. DOD, has an RFP out right now, and they are thinking they are planning to bring in a strategic climate sustainability and resilience contractor to help them

Federal agencies are taking action to achieve the Federal Net Zero Emissions goal since the publishing of the Executive Order (EO) in 2021.

There is a section in EO 14057 on engaging, educating, and training the federal workforce. There are many different things to be educated on to meet the challenges of climate change and achieve all of these goals.

She conducted fifteen interviews to better understand the workforce and the customers on the front lines of the workforce. She understood what they do on a day-to-day basis, what their priorities are, how they find out about new procurement policies and resources, and what is difficult about incorporating those sustainability priorities into their daily activities.

There is an opportunity/challenge around us looking at the contracting officers and putting all the compliance requirements on them. Many groups and roles are involved in the acquisition and procurement processes. The people writing the requirements and the program managers are often the ones that need to be trained, and there needs to be a way to measure the success of this.

There is a federal center resource on sustainable acquisition training. Katy will be sharing that resource with Boris Arratia. To do workforce development for the entire workforce, they are doing a federal sustainability event with various leaders across the economy to speak to the federal workforce.

Finally, there is an online federal sustainability plan, and the executive order implementing instructions. Ms. Newhouse was thanked for her great information before addressing questions from the subcommittee members.

WORKFORCE & SUSTAINABILITY: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Katy Newhouse opened the floor for members to ask questions

Q: Anne Rung: Does one pillar have a bigger impact than the others?

A: The most important pillar is the "what we buy" pillar. The needs in that pillar are more incremental.

Q: Co-Chair Darnall: Have you seen levers pulled in certain places that may not require retraining but will be vital moving forward with their work?

A: The levers focus on what people in the workforce need to know. Furthermore, something to think about is optional versus required training. Sustainability training is optional however is one of the top training taken.

Q: Chair Daniels: If it's not enough to train the procurement managers and other people, how can we be more impactful with the broader community who need climate literacy?

A: There is a term called integrated project team that is used frequently within the government. The contracting officers and specialists are part of this team, along with the program managers, and the team is being trained instead of a certain group of people.

Q: Co-Chair Darnall: Are there standards for suppliers when it comes to climate risk and resilience plans, and how will they be monitored?

A: This is in GSA's climate action plan, which is public. There is also a link to several suppliers that created a risk management plan. It is still an ongoing situation that GSA is working on.

Chair Daniels and Anne Rung expressed appreciation to Ms. Newhouse for the discussion.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT DISCUSSION

The task was to think of a statement at the full committee level. There were four different mission statements received that were advanced that we will be discussing. The Federal Register also provides language that applies to the committee. Nicole opened the discussion to review each suggestion for the mission statement, and below was the new mission statement created that still needs to be tweaked in the upcoming meeting.

- Statement: To help the federal acquisition workforce to embed environmental and sustainability considerations into Federal acquisition decisions to reduce negative impacts on the environment and promote sustainability

Chair Daniels suggested that for the interest of time, to move on and revisit this further in meetings. He suggested we review Clyde's new goals/mission statement in the next administration meeting.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT/COMMENTS

Chair Daniels opened the floor to the public for questions, but there were no comments. He then turned the discussion to Nicole Darnall to review the Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee Priorities.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE PRIORITIES DISCUSSION

Co-Chair Darnall addressed the subcommittee by reminding them of the brainstorming session conducted to determine priorities for each GAP FAC subcommittee. For the Acquisition Workforce subcommittee, there are seven priorities considered. She posed three questions to the members regarding the priorities:

- Are there certain priorities that take precedence over others?
- Are we missing a priority after hearing from the speakers?
- Something to consider is the mechanism of the acquisition workforce. Who needs to know what and when based on this continuum of efforts going on around climate and sustainability?

She also added that members should think in terms of an action plan, considering time constraints and based upon what is achievable on the list. Some priorities are immediate, and some are second-tier priorities. It was suggested to search for the second-tier priorities and also to integrate some priorities.

CLOSING REMARKS

Co-Chair Darnall thanked everyone and the speakers for providing information and discussion for the meeting. Boris Arratia, DFO, welcomed the full committee Chair Troy Cribbs to offer some closing remarks.

Chairperson Troy Cribb spoke about how this was a great kickoff to all the other subcommittee meetings. She appreciated members and speakers for contributing their time today to the acquisition workforce subcommittee.


Subcommittee co-Chair Darnall said they would discuss how to line up speakers for the new year in the upcoming administrative meeting.

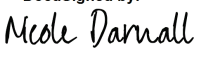
ADJOURNMENT

Boris Arratia adjourned the meeting and reminded everyone that subcommittee meetings would be every other week.

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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Darryl Daniels
Chairperson
GAP FAC Acquisition Workforce Subcommittee

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