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**JOINT APPLIED PROJECT REPORT**

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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES  
INTERNAL TO THE CONTRACTING AGENCY  
FACILITATING MISSION REQUIREMENTS AND  
CAREER PATH DEVELOPMENT**

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**June 2021**

**By: Patricia A. Blackwood  
Coretta F. Campbell**

**Advisor: Janie L. Maddox  
Co-Advisor: Robert J. Eger**

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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES INTERNAL TO THE  
CONTRACTING AGENCY FACILITATING MISSION REQUIREMENTS AND  
CAREER PATH DEVELOPMENT**

Patricia A. Blackwood, Civilian, Department of the Navy  
Coretta F. Campbell, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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June 2021**

Approved by: Janie L. Maddox  
Advisor

Robert J. Eger  
Co-Advisor

Rene G. Rendon  
Academic Associate, Graduate School of Defense Management

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# **AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES INTERNAL TO THE CONTRACTING AGENCY FACILITATING MISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CAREER PATH DEVELOPMENT**

## **ABSTRACT**

The Department of Defense (DOD) relies significantly on the private sector to carry out aspects of the DOD's mission. Since 1997, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has listed the DOD contract management capabilities as a high-risk area. The DOD Inspector General identified contract management oversight as a major challenge in 2019. This thesis explores the variations leveraged by the Army and the Navy to execute the contract management process to meet the mission requirements in the United States Army Regional Health Contracting Office (RHCO) and the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP). This project examines how staff members are developed professionally in the field and how talent management is executed. The methodology includes a comparative analysis of how the RHCO, and NAVSUP utilize the DOD competency model for professional development. We look at the future DOD model for developing the DOD acquisition workforce. This thesis analyzes the current DOD competency model and the National Contract Management Association (NCMA) model to recommend the competency model that is most likely to produce the most appropriately trained DOD acquisition workforce to meet the needs of future DOD Contract Management requirements.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMEDD	Army Medical Department
BtB	Back to Basics
CLP	Continuous Learning Points
CM	Contract Management
CMBOK	Case Management Body of Knowledge
CONUS	Continental United States
DA	Department of the Army
DAWDF	Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund
DAWIA	Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act
DFAR	Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation
DOD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
EDA	Electronic Data Access
EDACM	Electronic Director, Acquisition Workforce Management
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FLC	Fleet Logistics Center
GAO	United States Government Accountability Office
GS	General Schedule
HR	Human Resources Department
KO	Contract Officer
KS	Contract Specialist
MEDCOM	Medical Command
OCONUS	Outside Continental United States
PCF	Paperless Contract Folders
NAVSUP	Naval Supply Systems Command
NCMA	National Contract Management Association
NMCARS	Navy Marine Corps Acquisition Regulation Supplement
RHCO	Regional Health Contracting Office
SPS PD2	Standard Procurement System Procurement Desktop Defense

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In spring 2020, the country was hit with a devastating crisis. Millions of lives were lost globally, and the way we knew life changed drastically. We all experienced an unprecedented and unpredictable change in how we worked, interacted with one another, and coped with day-to-day life. The pandemic, COVID-19, changed everyone and will leave a lasting impression for decades to come. To say it was a trying time is understating the magnitude of stress, anxiety, and discomfort living through this has caused and continues to manifest. Undoubtedly, if it were not for the support, encouragement, and trust of so many family members, friends, and colleagues, getting this far in the program and completing this joint applied project would not have been possible.

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Sincerely,

Patricia Blackwood & Coretta F. Campbell

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

The Department of Defense (DOD) relies heavily on the acquisition of supplies and services to support the multitude of missions both stateside and overseas. Contracts are essential in the procurement of supplies and services. Over the years, the DOD obligates approximately \$300 billion annually (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2015) on various mission essential requirements. The contract management processes follow a relatively standard course; however, most DOD components must follow the DOD acquisition competency model and design and implement the experience and advance training the staff require to execute the contract management process properly. The main objective for every contract is to acquire supplies or services that meet the needs of the requirements generator so they can successfully execute an organization's mission. The DOD has established policies and regulations to facilitate the acquisition team's ability to support the various acquisitions of services and supplies required. The acquisition team is a group of experts from many fields working together to guide an acquisition through the many phases of the Contract Management process. The team of experts range from "contracting specialists, contracting officer representatives, program managers, and others working together to achieve performance results" (DOD Guidebook for the Acquisition of Services, 2011, p. 5). As noted by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), the acquisition process is a shared "team responsibility" (FAR 1.1, 2021).

According to the Acquisition Advisory Panel to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and the U.S. Congress, "Even though there are now available a variety of simplified acquisition techniques, the demands on the workforce, both in terms of the complexity of the federal acquisition system as a whole as well as the volume and nature of what is bought, have markedly increased since the 1980s". (Acquisition Advisory Panel, 2007, p.18). The Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations states, "The Army's acquisition workforce is not adequately staffed, trained, structured, or empowered to meet the Army needs of the

21st Century deployed warfighters” (Gansler, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, the Gansler Commission determined that, “Contract management is the essential post-award contracting function to ensure mission accomplishment, and to ensure that the government obtains the required work on time and at the quality level called for by the contract. It is also an important control over fraud, waste, and abuse.” (Gansler, 2007, p. 27).

As identified by Dina Jeffers (Jeffers, 2009) GAO reported to Congress in 2009 an update on high-risk areas (GAO, 2009) which included DOD Contract Management (CM). The DOD CM area has been “identified as ‘high risk’ and vulnerable every year since 1992” (GAO, 2009, p. 73). The report identified areas of vulnerabilities that lead to “fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement of the operations” (GAO, 2009, p. 6). GAO utilizes the “high-risk designation to bring attention to areas associated with broad-based transformations needed to achieve greater economy, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability” (GAO, 2009, p. 6). In the report, GAO identified areas DOD will need to address to reduce risk:

To improve outcomes on the billions of dollars DOD spends annually on goods and services, DOD needs to:

- adopt a more proactive approach to managing service acquisitions;
- assess the risks that its reliance on contractors poses and take action to mitigate such risks;
- determine the appropriate mix, roles, and responsibilities of contractor, civilian, and military personnel;
- ensure that recent guidance to address contracting weaknesses is consistently reflected in decisions made on individual transactions; and
- ensure that its acquisition workforce is adequately sized, trained, and equipped to meet the department’s needs. (GAO, 2009, p. 73)

The team plays an integral role in completing this process. Therefore, ensuring an acquisition team is trained, planned, and attentive throughout the method is an elemental key to effectively attaining the mission outcomes desired. Both the Army and the Navy rely heavily on contracts to support their unique requirements. For both Commands, the contract management function is integral to ensuring contracts are put in place on time to ensure no mission failures.

## **B. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

As Jeffers concluded in 2009 (Jeffers, 2009) not only did the Gansler Commission determine that “contract management is the essential to ensure that the government obtains the required work” and to “control fraud, waste, and abuse” (Gansler, 2007, p. 27). The DOD Competency Model until late 2020 still relied on a bureaucratic, waterfall approach to acquisition and planning in the traditional acquisition process and had not fully addressed the contract management process that could effectively reduce these risks. Clark and Feldman (2019) argue that a radical change to the process to a more progressive, iterative process of systematic repetition, integration, and interaction of job tasks and competencies will streamline the acquisition process.

This research may assist and inform the DOD acquisition workforce to better understand how the profession has evolved over the last forty years. Encouraging the workforce to utilize all flexibility within the current regulations and policies to adapt to the future DOD competency model. The results could be a DOD contracting workforce that are more effective and efficient while embracing streamlining and rapid acquisition practices, to meet the DOD’s future mission.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To meet the objectives of the research, we answer the following questions:

1. What is the current DOD Contract Management Competency model?
2. What are the milestones for developing the staff (future Contract Managers) and how can the developmental objectives be met?
3. What is the future of DOD Contract Management development?

4. Are the Army and the Navy leveraging to the maximum extent practicable the training available to optimally develop competencies, processes, and skills?
5. Are there potential areas for improvement?

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

For this Joint Applied Project (JAP), the team researched and reviewed current and past literature related to the contract management process, training, and the relative success or failures of the DOD Contract Management Process. In addition, we looked at the training and contract management process within the U.S. Army Health Contracting Activity and the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP).

#### **E. ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

The JAP consists of four chapters, including the background, the relative importance of the acquisition function within all the DOD, but specifically the Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) and the NAVSUP field contracting activities. The introduction is followed by the research questions which help focus the research project. The team's methodology, how the report was organized, and the benefits and limitations of the research round out chapter one.

Chapter II is the literature review of current research on DOD contract management competency model, GAO, and DOD Inspector General (IG) reports, the National Contract Management Association Contract Management Body of Knowledge (NCMA CMBOK) competency model. A brief introduction to the United States Army Regional Health Contracting Office (RHCO) and NAVSUP organizations is provided in Chapter III. Chapter IV will provide sustainment and improvement recommendations and contains the summary and the team's conclusion, in addition to addressing any further areas for research.

## **F. SUMMARY**

This project provides an overview of the research that was conducted that provides a brief background of contract management and comparison of the Army RHCO and Navy NAVSUP commands. Included is a literature review on the development of the acquisition workforce and an overview of contract management, discussing the DOD Competency model and the NCMA's CMBOK. The paper provides the purpose of the research, research questions to be answered, and the research methodology that supports the conclusion and recommendations.

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## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This literature review examines the challenges with supporting operations necessary to meet mission requirements while also developing the staff professionally in Contract Management (CM). Policies, processes, and procedures drive the operations. Professional development encompasses both on-the-job training as well as educational platforms. To manage an effective acquisition operation, examining the development of the acquisition workforce to maintain a competent and talented workforce that is prepared to engage with the market is pivotal. We provide an overview of contract management and explore several definitions that address post-award activities, a business function, and the entire contracting process. We examine both the DOD Contract Management Competency Model and the NCMA Contract Management Model. In addition, we look at the NCMA CMBOK.

#### **1. Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act**

In November 1990, the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) (PUB. L. 101-510, div. A. title XII, Nov. 5, 1990) was signed into law. This included issuance of Public Law 101-510 and now Chapter 87 of Title 10, U.S. Code. DAWIA was in response to the Package Commission Report titled: A Formula for Action: A Report to the President on Defense Acquisition (1986). The report found that the acquisition workforce was not adequately trained, was not as well educated, and was inexperienced when compared to their peers in the private industry. The Commission also recognized that the critical role of the acquisition workforce played and the complexity of the work, requiring extensive knowledge of regulations, policy, contract law, cost analysis, and negotiation techniques. Even though the position of an 1102 Contract Specialist required extensive knowledge and expertise, the series was not a professional series under the Civil Service Title VIII (1986, p. 29). DAWIA became the foundation of the last major reform of the DOD acquisition workforce. DAWIA required DOD to create education and training standards, requirements, and courses for civilian and military

workforces (DAWIA, 1990). DAWIA was reported to be the result of a 1985 DOD review of the education and training provided to both DOD acquisition workforce and private sector acquisition staff, although no published report was located.

DAWIA was structured to include fourteen career fields that comprise of Business, Auditing, Facilities Engineering, Information Technology, Property Management, Life Cycle Logistics, Production, Quality and Manufacturing, Program Management, and others (PUB. L, 101-520, 1990). To obtain an educated and trained workforce, the Defense Acquisition University was established to structure and advance acquisition training and development.

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA, 1990) has changed over time, but the mission of DAWIA remains as originally described in Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 1701. There have been numerous changes from establishing the DOD Acquisition Corps in 2004, an extension of the Acquisition Demonstration Project, the establishment of the DAWDF, adding expedited hiring authority within DAWDF, mandating key leadership positions as mandatory, and incorporating new standards and requirements for training and education. The establishment of DAWIA, the Defense Acquisition University, DAWDF, and the Acquisition Corps supported the DOD commitment to the education, training, and increasing professionalism of the DOD acquisition workforce. The DOD Competency model provides a road map for training and experience that form the basis of the DOD Competency model.

## **2. DOD INSTRUCTION 5000.66: Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program**

DOD Instruction 5000.66 was issued on July 27, 2017 and revised on September 13, 2019. This instruction generates guidelines, “assigns responsibilities, provides procedures for the conduct of the Defense Acquisition Workforce (AWF) education, training, experience, and career development” (DODI 5000.66, 2019, p. 1). The DODI 5000.66 applies to all DOD acquisition workforce positions within DOD (DODI 5000.66, 2019, p. 5). Section 3.4.c.2 of this instruction provides DOD components the flexibility to “assign additional position requirements for the acquisition workforce in terms of task-

specific instruction, preparation, or knowledge for each AWF position, when applicable” (DODI 5000.66, 2019, p. 12).

### **3. Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund**

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Subtitle D— Acquisition Workforce Matters Sec. 834 authorizes the founding of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF), a sustainable funding model to support the hiring, training, progress of members of the acquisition workforce. Through subsequent amendments, the DAWDF fund was reauthorized through fiscal year 2020. DAWDF fund provides funds for training, recruitment, retention, development, and hiring of acquisition positions. The fund can also be used to conduct studies, provide tools, or conduct analysis at the echelon I, II, and III level (GAO, 2010).

According to the FY2019 Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund 2019 annual report (DAWDF, 2019):

DOD has increased the acquisition workforce size since 2008, rebuilding capacity by 39 percent from 126,000 to 180,000, including increasing the program management workforce by 42 percent, engineering by 30 percent, contracting by 22 percent, and Information Technology (IT) by 105 percent. Enabled by DAWDF, DOD mitigated long term workforce readiness risk by eliminating the severe “bathtub” of low civilian early and mid-career year groups. DOD also leveraged DAWDF to increase education levels – those in the workforce with a bachelors or graduate degree increased from 29 percent to 40 percent. In addition, in parallel with rebuilding the workforce, the cumulative cost over runs for major DOD acquisition programs since 2010 decreased from \$110 billion to \$13 billion. (DAWDF, 2019, p. 2)

Additionally, according to DAWDF 2019 report, the DOD components used 58 percent of the \$471.82M DAWDF funds in FY19 to train and develop the acquisition workforce, including 912,300 training events in FY19. The top three functional areas receiving training supported by DAWDF were Contracting 36.6 percent, Engineering 22.6 percent, and Life Cycle Logistics 8.1 percent (DAWDF, 2019). Figure 1 is the FY19 DAWDF training and development spends.

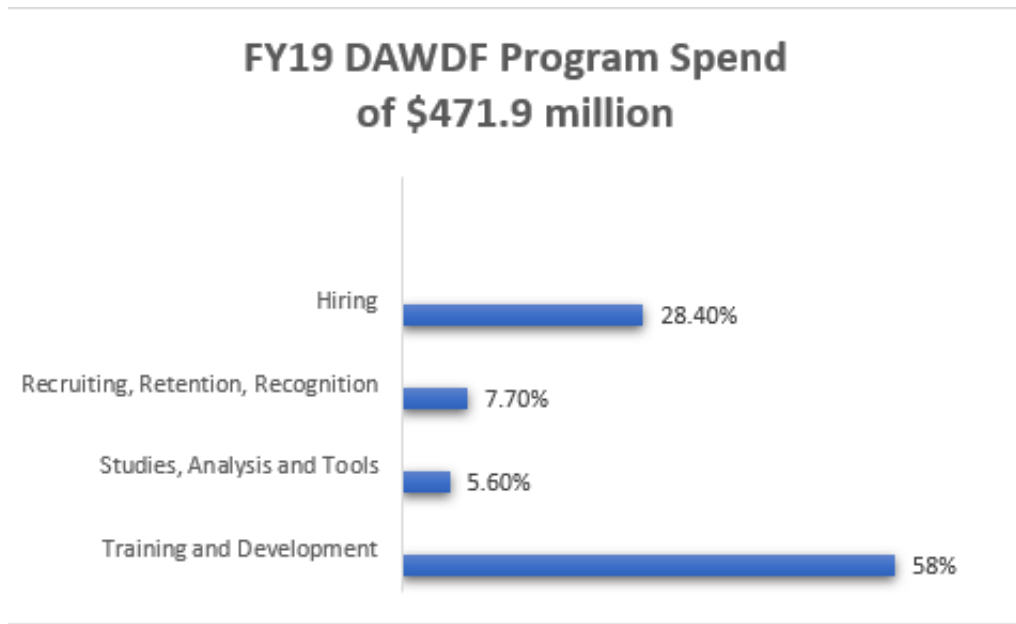


Figure 1. DOD Annual Report to Congress. Source: DAWDF (2019).

Based upon the data in the DOD DAWDF 2019 Annual Reports to Congress (DAWDF, 2019), the fund obligated \$3.09 billion of the DAWDF funds between 2008 and 2015. Most of these funds went to recruitment and hiring, followed by training, development, and retention. (Porter, 2016)

**B. DOD CONTRACT MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY MODEL**

According to Rene Rendon (2019) the DODI 5000.66 established the framework for the DOD acquisition workforce contracting competency model. Additionally, according to Rendon, the “model is used to assess the DOD acquisition workforces contract management competencies, identify gaps in knowledge and skills, and identify training opportunities to close those gaps (Rendon, 2019, p. 89). A DOD Competency Model (Contract Management Standard) was developed in 2020.

Developed by the Contracting Certification Taskforce and approved on April 3, 2020, by the Contracting Senior Procurement Executives and other senior leaders of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Contract Management Agency, Missile Defense Agency, and the Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, who is the

Functional Leader for the Department of Defense Contracting Community (DOD, 2020, p.1).

The DOD Contracting Competency model contains both buyer and seller competencies with technical competencies and professional elements and is “based on the National Contract Management Association Contract Management Standard”. (DOD Contracting Competency Model, 2020, p. 2). From February 2021 forward the new DOD Contracting Competency Model will apply to all DOD Contracting Workforce that are not currently certified at level III in Contracting. The “model describes contract management in terms of “processes created through integration and interaction of job” task (DOD, p. 2, 2020). The report defines competency as a “measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics” (DOD Contracting Competency Model, 2020, p. 2) that a buyer (1102) or seller (contractor) needs to perform contract management successfully.

The concept of contract management is easiest to understand if one defines contract management as a post-award activity. As defined by Garrett & Rendon, contract management is “the art and science of managing a contractual agreement(s) throughout the contracting process” (Garrett & Rendon, 2005a, p. 48). The DOD Competency Model goes further to include selection of candidates for positions, assessing performance, workforce planning, training, and development (DOD, p. 2). The NCMA CMBOK provides a listing of the top 11 competencies, the associated 28 technical competencies, and 10 professional competencies that are associated with the DOD Buyer role (NCMA, 2019). Figure 2 defines contract management in the DOD Competency Model:

<b>The DOD Contracting Competency Model 2019</b>		
<b>Units of Competence</b>	<b>Competencies</b>	
<b>Pre-Award and Award</b>	Determination of how best to Satisfy Requirements	
	Consider Socioeconomic Requirements	
	Promote Competition	
	Source Selection Planning	
	Solicitation of Offers	
	Responsibility Determination	
	Bid Evaluation (Sealed Bidding)	
	Proposal Evaluation (Contracting by Negotiation)	
	Source Selection	
	Contract Award	
Process Protest		
<b>Develop and or Negotiate Positions</b>	Justification of Other than Full and Open Competition	
	Terms and Conditions	
<b>Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis</b>	Preparation and Negotiation	
	Advance Cost and/or Price Analysis	
<b>Contract Administration</b>	Initiation of Work	
	Contract Performance Management	
	Issue Changes and Modifications	
	Approve Payment Requests	
	Close Out Contracts	
<b>Small Business-Socioeconomic Programs</b>	Addressing Small Business Concerns	
<b>Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards</b>	Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards	
<b>Contract Termination</b>	Contract Termination	
<b>Procurement Policy</b>	Procurement Analysis	
<b>Other Competencies</b>	E-Business and Automated Tools	
	Activity Program Coordinator for Purchase Card	
	Construction/Architect and Engineering	
<b>Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment</b>	Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment	
<b>Professional Competency</b>	Problem Solving	Customer Service
	Oral Communication	Written Communication
	Interpersonal Skills	Decisiveness
	Technical Credibility	Flexibility
	Resilience	Accountability

Figure 2. DOD Competency Model. Source: DOD Contracting Competency Model (2020).

The National Contract Management Association’s Contract Standards provides the foundation for the DOD’s Contracting Competency Model. Section 861 of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act is satisfied when the standards are met. The DOD Competency Model “applies to the entire DOD Contracting Community of 1102 civilian contracting professionals and military equivalents” (DOD, 2020, p. 2).

The newly established DOD Contracting Competency Model is comprised of five components:

Guiding Principles—For contract management, these principles apply to all contract managers in all phases of the contract life cycle.

Contract Life Cycle Phases—The phases of a contract: pre-award, award, and post award.

Domains—The areas within a contract life cycle phase that produce significant contract management outcomes.

Competencies—The processes utilized to produce the expected contract management outcomes of the domains. These processes involve the ability to perform multiple job tasks, both simultaneously and sequentially, while achieving meaningful results.

- Contracting Common Competencies—The foundational competencies that every Contracting workforce member should be aware of and understand, regardless of the organization or specialty area, and are the basis of the Contracting training.
- Contracting Specialty Competencies—Unique competencies associated with a specific skill, function, or position.

Job Tasks—The tasks performed on a routine basis by contract managers. Contract managers systematically process the job tasks to achieve the expected results of the competencies. (DOD, 2020, p. 3)

**1. GAO Report, Defense Acquisition Workforce, Action Needed to Guide Planning Efforts and Improve Capability, GAO Report 2015, 16-80**

The GAO Report, Defense Acquisition Workforce, Action Needed to Guide Planning Efforts and Improve Workforce Capability report (GAO 2015) states:

A skilled acquisition workforce is vital to maintaining military readiness, increasing the department’s buying power, and achieving substantial long-term savings through systems engineering and contracting activities (GAO, 2015, p. 4).

According to the GAO, in the 1990s, DOD had significant budgetary pressures, which reduced the size of the civilian acquisition workforce and “by the early 2000s began to rely more heavily on contractors” (GAO 2015, p. 1). The report further reflects that with the increase in service contracting in the 2000s, DOD’s acquisition workforce fell “14 percent from 146,000 to 126,000 personnel (GAO, 2015, p. 1). By 2015 DOD’s plan was to add “more than 20,000 military and civilians” (GAO, 2015, p.1), but with a

growing skills gap within the acquisition workforce “training was paramount to rebuilding the workforce” (GAO, 2015, p.1). DOD’s commitment to utilizing human capital strategic planning continues the work to identify and resolve underlying issues that impact the DOD’s efforts. The DOD encountered “a lack of accurate, assessable, and current workforce data; mature models to forecast workforce requirements; and a link between planning and the budget process” (GAO, 2015, p. 4). The report concluded that DOD had focused attention on rebuilding the acquisition workforce, utilizing the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund but had fallen short specifically in the contracting and engineering fields (GAO ,2015, p. 28), both high priority career fields as seen in Figure 3.

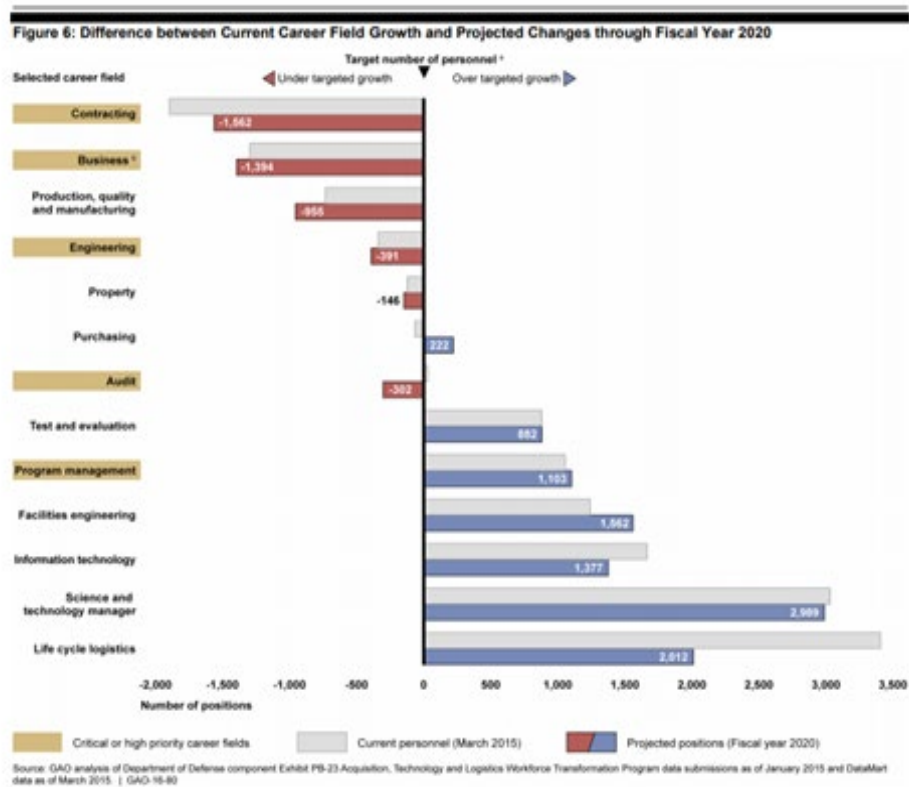


Figure 3. Difference between Current Career Field Growth and Projected Changes through Fiscal Year 2020. Source: GAO (2015).

In the coming years, the focus will shift to the reshaping of the acquisition workforce, especially those focused on the most critical acquisitions. While the DOD made progress in identifying competencies, more work is needed with three of the 13 career fields not completing initial assessments of competencies (GAO, 2015, p. 22). Additionally, according to the GAO report, DOD must establish time frames for completion of the assessments that are essential in effective management of human capital. The GAO report further adds that the DOD has used about \$500 million in planned DAWDF funds annually to hire, train, for salaries, other related benefits, and workforce improvement efforts.

**2. The Office of Management and Budget’s Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan for Civilian Agencies and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010**

According to GAO the “President acknowledged that the acquisition workforce is insufficient to safeguard the interest of the American taxpayer and that the government needs to ensure that it has the workforce needed to carry out robust and thorough management and oversight of contracts to achieve programmatic goals, avoid significant overcharges, and curb wasteful spending” (GAO, 2010, p.1). The memorandum acknowledges the capacity and capability of the acquisition workforce to conduct contract management as it relates to post-award has not kept pace with the increase in spending.

Rendon and Winn suggest the CMBOK capability outline may deliver a healthier method than the DOD Competency Model for emerging the DOD acquisition workforce. CMBO may provide an additional thorough approach to the contract life cycle and increases the emphasis on each phase and task which may help improve DOD’s contract management practices (Rendon & Winn, 2017, p. 80). They go on to suggest that the CMBOK process emphasizes a continuous learning approach, expands to include the seller contract management competencies, and includes other management related functions such as business and financial management.

**C. DOD CONTRACT MANAGEMENT STANDARD (2020)**

On October 1, 2020 DOD adopted the National Contract Management Association’s Contract Management Standard, which are identical to the NCMA Contract Management Competencies, see Table 1.

**D. NATIONAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION’S CONTRACT MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY MODEL**

The NCMA CMBOK was first published in 2002 and is currently in its sixth edition. The resolution of the CMBOK is to deliver a shared understanding of the “terminology, practices, policies, and procedures used in contract management: by equally the buyer and the sell” (Rendon & Winn, 2017, p. 72). The CMBOK further utilizes seven primary competencies and 30 process competencies as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Contract Management Body of Knowledge Outline of Competencies. Adapted from Rendon (2015, p.75).

<b>Contract Management Body of Knowledge (CMBOK) Outline of Competencies</b>						
1. Leadership	2. Management	3. Guiding Principles	4. Pre-Award	5. Award	6. Post-Award	7. Learn
Competence	Business Management	Skills and Roles	Acquisition Planning	Cost or Price Analysis	Administer Contract	Continuous Learning
Character	Financial Management	Contract Principles	Requesting Offers	Conduct Negotiations	Ensure Quality	Individual Competencies
Collaboration	Project Management	Standards of Conduct	Business Development	Source Selection	Subcontract Management	Organization Capability
Vision	Risk Management	Regulatory Compliance	Develop Win Strategy	Manage Legal Conformity	Manage Changes	
	Supply Chain Management	Situational Assessment			Contract Closeout	
		Team Dynamics				

**E. SUMMARY**

The DAWIA is the cornerstone for the DOD acquisition workforce required standards. Regulations and instructions are continually updated and provided to direct the workforce on what is required. The DAU was integrated to address shortfalls and provides the necessary training and requirements to facilitate a competent and trained workforce. Additionally, the NDAA further sets expectations for the DOD acquisition

mission. Several models have evolved over the years to facilitate a career map for the acquisition workforce. The CMBOK is an example of a map that was created and still utilized today to guide the acquisition workforce. In addition to DOD mandates, each service has been given limited flexibility to establish developmental tools for the acquisition workforce as necessary for their unique mission sets.

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### **III. DOD ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION OF DOD ACQUISITION AND DAWDF ESTABLISHES THE BASIC LEVEL OF COMPETENCIES**

To develop the DOD acquisition workforce, DOD provides a general framework and funding, through the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF). This framework allows for slight differences between the services while ensuring DOD's acquisition workforce has minimum certification requirements for each position. DOD used a comprehensive, competency-based process to establish the basic certification standards (training, education, experience) for the acquisition workforce.

According to the Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund, 2018 Annual Report, DOD acquisition workforce certification rates were at a record high level. From FY 2008 through FY 2018, acquisition workforce certification levels increased from 85.8 percent to 97.4 percent. The similarities and differences for the Army and Navy revolve around the DAWDF funding.

#### **B. ARMY- REGIONAL HEALTH CONTRACTING OFFICE (RHCO)**

##### **1. Introduction**

The U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM) directly reports to the U.S. Army (Department of Army [DA], 2017). Additionally, per the regulation, it formerly provided command and control of the medical support operations for medical fixed facilities and medical field operations. According to the Civilian External Peer Review Program, Buck A.S. et al. (1992), the quality-of-care equivalences are positively related with that of civilian health administrations, when measured by civilian values.

Since fall 2019, the U.S. Army medical mission is being migrated to the Defense Health Agency (Defense Health Agency, n.d.). The Defense Health Agency is taking over operations from the Army, Navy and Air Force for all military hospitals and clinics. Per NDAA, Congress started this alteration in management because they saw a need for a more elastic, adjustable, operative, and combined system to manage DOD medical

facilities. However, as of 2021, the medical contract support mission are still supported by the Army contract operations offices.

U.S. Army Health Contracting Activity (USAHCA) is located at Joint Base San Antonio. USAHCA primarily contracts for health care services in support of the Army Medical Command (U.S. Army Health Contracting Activity, n.d.). According to the U.S. Army Health Contracting Activity, the entity awards and manages contracts for a diversity of amenities. Additionally, according to USAHCA, the organization contracts for other health care related service industries in support of the Army health care mission. Moreover, USAHCA serves as a secondary contracting source to the MEDCOM for services and supplies. The activity is comprised of four Regional Health Contracting Offices (RHCO): RHCO Pacific, RHCO Europe, RHCO Central, and RHCO Atlantic. While each activity provides contracting support by using a similar contract life cycle, each office has separate internal review and contract execution processes. Each office uses internally created systems and processes to achieve the same end goal. This allows and supports flexibility for each office to execute their mission.

## **2. Contracting Overview**

The RHCO primarily utilizes two systems to support the acquisition process: Standard Procurement System (SPS) Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD2) and the Paperless Contract Files. Both systems are automated and allow for digital and remote capabilities through DOD landline or DOD virtual private network (VPN) with proper credentials.

The PD2 is used to draft DOD contracts. PD2 also uploads contract data into the Wide Area Workflow (WAWF) which allows for proper invoicing, payment, document retrieval, etc. The Standard Procurement System (SPS) Program is the cornerstone for the Department of Defense (DOD) paperless acquisition initiative (Army, 2018). Additionally, according to the SPS manual:

The directing of available funds to mission-critical purchases is essential and Procurement Desktop-Defense (PD<sup>2</sup>) is the solution that provides automated, strategic, streamlined contract management support for the procurement professional i.e., contract specialist and contract officer (CO).

SPS PD2 utilizes three information/data types referenced from NIST SP 800-60 Vol. II. Personal Identity and Authentication Information Type (C.2.8.9) which includes that information necessary to ensure that all persons who are potentially entitled to receive any federal benefit are enumerated and identified so that Federal agencies can have reasonable assurance that they are paying or communicating with the right individuals. Reporting and Information Type (C.3.2.2) that provides financial information, reporting and analysis of financial transactions. Lastly, Services Acquisition Information Type (C.3.4.4) which involves the oversight and/or management of contractors and service providers from the private sector. (Army, 2018)

The PCF application is a contract file management tool. PCF is used to establish, view, manage, review, and archive all official contract files. PCF creates “cabinets” for each new contract, order and modification awarded and for all open contracts. It ultimately replaced the hard copy system to a digitized system.

For RHCO, the primary mechanisms for tracking the status of contracts during the planning, developmental and the execution phases is PCF and internal excel spreadsheets via the shared drive. The customer, contracting office, contract specialist and budget analyst are able to share, update and annotate the status of documents on PD2. The RHCO’s are able to pull the information and conduct data comparisons utilizing PD2. However, for command briefs, data is extracted from PD2 and presented via PowerPoint to the headquarters. The excel spreadsheet format facilitates building clean, precise, and presentable information. All information extracted from PD2, created on excel spreadsheets or presented to the higher headquarters USACHA is then saved to a shared drive for historical reference.

Another valuable tracking system is the System for Award Management (SAM). The RHCO, like other government entities, uses this portal to upload the solicitations. RHCO and the contractors must ensure necessary information is input to establish an account. After the solicitation is uploaded, information on the status of the solicitation is updated and closed as required. The agency, RHCO, and the contractors are able to view the status of the solicitation. This information is maintained in this portal for historical reference as well.

USACHA has a policy team within the contracting directorate at the headquarters that provides the RHCOs instructions and policy interpretation of the FAR. USACHA policies section continually distributes updated regulations and guidelines that are then leveraged by the section contracting officers to build processes internally. The contracting officer uses the mandated guidance alongside the inherent flexibility to establish processes that are then utilized by the contract specialist and procurement analyst. Each RHCO is comprised of, at minimum, five contracting officers; therefore, based on personal interpretation of the guidelines, the contracting officer utilizes their discretion to mandate what is deemed as essential documentation required during each of the acquisition phases.

### **3. Building the Acquisition Workforce**

The Army utilizes two internship opportunities, one for military members and another for civilians. Additionally, the Army utilizes the DOD platforms to announce opportunities, identify potential candidates and hire personnel. The mechanisms that are available offer unique ways to ensure the right candidates are in place to support the mission requirements.

For RHCO, military members are able to apply, compete and participate in a long-term health education program for two years. Once meeting the DOD educational requirements, both officer and enlisted candidates are assigned to an Army Contracting office for two years to complete the DOD training requirements and attain hands on training as a contract specialist. After the two-year internship, they are sent to serve as the chief of a contracting office.

Civilians who are interesting in becoming a contract specialist may apply to the Pathways Program internship. The “Pathways recent graduate program is for individuals who have recently received degrees or certificates from qualifying educational institutions or programs” (USAJobs, n.d.). Upon graduation and being accepted into the Internship, the interns are assigned to an Army contracting office where they are able learn and progress in the field of acquisitions.

The public sector may also apply and compete to serve as Department of Army acquisition employees. The RHCO utilizes the applicable human resources platform USA jobs to announce and recruit for vacant positions. This platform allows for many potential candidates to apply, compete, and be hired to serve in the federal service as an acquisition workforce professional.

## **C. NAVAL SUPPLY SYSTEMS COMMAND (NAVSUP)**

### **1. Introduction**

The Naval Supply Systems Command is a material agency of the United States Department of the Navy. Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) is in Mechanicsburg, PA with eight fleet logistics centers around the world to support the United States Navy by providing warfighters supplies and services needed to accomplish their mission. This support is primarily provided through the seven Fleet Logistic Centers that can be found around the globe, from Mechanicsburg, PA heading east to Italy, Bahrain, Japan, and four locations in the continental U.S. At the headquarters resides the contracting directorate, with the seven field contracting offices, and the Weapons Systems Support located near the warfighter. NAVSUP FLCs acquire supplies and services that range from material for Navy aircraft, surface ships, submarines and their associated weapon systems, base operating and waterfront logistics support services, and husbanding services for Naval vessels in non-navy ports around the world.

NAVSUP's contracting authority is exercised through its Fleet Logistics Centers (FLC) (Norfolk, Jacksonville, San Diego, Puget Sound, Hawaii, Yokosuka, Bahrain, Signorelli) and Weapons Systems Support (WSS) group which primarily contract for supplies and services to support the Navy and joint warfighter. In addition, the FLCs provide a wide range of base operating, waterfront support services, mess services, ship repair and husbanding services for all USS naval vessels worldwide. NAVSUP is also supporting the repair and maintenance of all Military Sealift Command ships located Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) through three OCONUS FLCs and one Continental United States, FLS FLC Puget Sound.

## **2. Contract Overview**

NAVSUP's primary mechanism for tracking the status of contracts during the planning, developmental and the execution phases is the POAM feature within SPS, internal excel spreadsheets, customer meetings, SAM, Electronic Data Access (EDA), and the use of ProTrack. The ProTrack application is a custom designed acquisition tracking tool built for use by our FLC Jacksonville to manage the entire procurement cycle from receipt of the requirement, through the procurement process right through to closeout. This tool is designed around an access data basis platform and takes the place the providing status via spreadsheets.

Naval ship information contained within the NAVSUP integrated contract files is often of a sensitive nature as it may relate to the schedule, location, or condition of a particular ship. Therefore, access is restricted to the contractor's sensitive information that requires applicable approved permissions. NAVSUP treats the contracting writing system and the digital contract files as information that is "need to know" and does not allow access to PD2 by customer or other departments due to the sensitive or restricted information that could be contained within the systems.

## **3. Building the Acquisition Workforce**

The NAVSUP has a similar program for recruiting interns into the acquisition workforce as RHCO. The Department of Navy (DON), Navy Acquisition Development Program (NADP), and the Naval Acquisition Career Center (NACC) mission is to "provide the DON's acquisition workforce with development tools and programs" (NADP, 2016, p. 7), which will better facilitate the delivery of the products and services to the war fighter. The NADP vision is to have an effective, innovative, and empowered acquisition workforce capable of delivering the supplies and services to the warfighter on time with no gap between what they need and what is delivered. To assist with achieving the NADP mission and vision, the NACC provides professional development and promotes growth of entry-level professions in acquisition. For the contracting department, the positions eligible for NADP internships are 1102, contract specialist positions. The NACC is established in support of the DOD and DON plans for

acquisition professionals, human investment strategy, and other goals. The NACC embodies the goals set forth by the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act of 1990 (USC 10, Chapter 87) and is intended to progress professionalism and develop business and procedural services for acquisition professionals. The Navy acquisition contracting officer intern program is for military members at the 03 and 04 level which combines practical experience and advanced graduate education in contract management and prepared officers at the 05 and 06 level for future assignments in acquisition.

The Department of the Navy (DON) provides an operating guide to assist the DON acquisition workforce to facilitate planning and accomplishment of career goals. (DON 2019) Mr. W. Mark Deskins, Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) stated in the foreword:

Successfully acquiring complex weapon systems takes a highly educated acquisition professionals and strong teams. It is not a simple process. There are no fixed rules that apply to all situations- our acquisition professionals must have a deeper level of comprehension to understand how to make good decisions about such issues a technical risk mitigation, incentives that will best improve performance, or what it will take to ensure a product is mature enough to enter production. It takes education, training, and years of development to become a member of the Acquisition “Special Forces” that has mastered professional and technical excellence. Having a highly educated and experienced acquisition workforce is the single-most important requirement in achieving strong, repeatable performance in Defense acquisitions. (DON 2019)

The DON asked the RAND Corporation to characterize the DON civilian acquisition workforce. The report, published by the RAND Corporation in 2009, focused on exact workforce organization subjects of preservation, professional growth, and management. (Gates et al., 2009). The report concluded that DON acquisition workforce have a higher level of education than non-acquisition workforce and are more likely to be scientist and engineers. Acquisition is the primary function of many of the systems commands and that there are consistently lower attrition rates than the non-acquisition workforce within DON (Gates et al., 2009, p. xii). According to Gates, the data suggests “that the DON acquisition workforce has a harder time retaining new hires into the contracting career field compared with those in the engineering field” (Gates et al., 2009,

p. xii). The Navy has placed a higher emphasis on attracting and retaining interns and new acquisition workforce members. It should be noted DON interns are a full time entry-level paid position. The DON acquisition intern program has two main objectives: preparation of new hires for mid- and senior-level positions and maintaining new hires. (Gates et al., 2009, p. 21). Interns that graduate a three-year training program are qualified for GS level 12 positions within the acquisition workforce. The DON has committed significant resources to ensure the Navy has sufficient highly skilled acquisition workforce for future leadership positions.

DON acquisition workforce interns are elevated to positions of higher grade and responsibility; however, this does not attribute to their retention rates, (Gates et al., 2009, p. 29). Larger percentages of interns had been promoted to mid-level positions by FY 2002 compared to non-interns as seen in Figure 4:

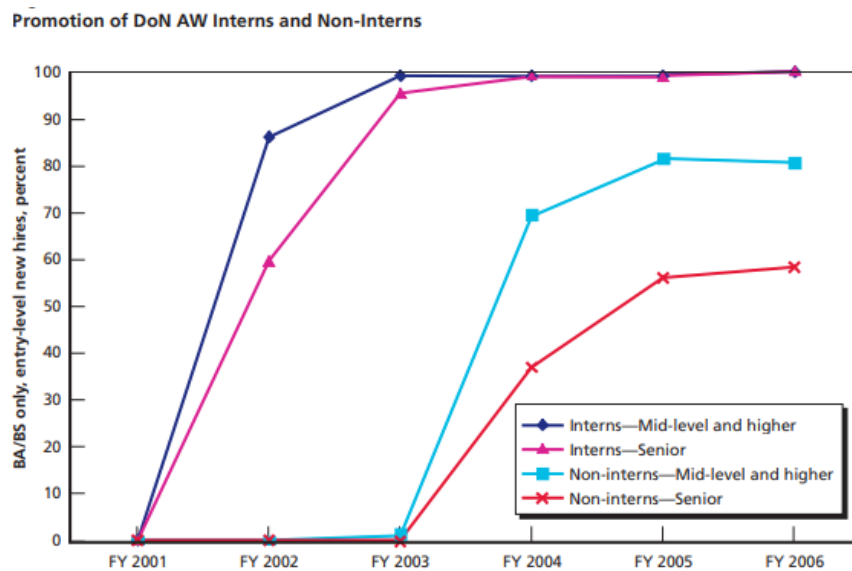


Figure 4. Promotion of DON AW Interns and Non-Interns. Source. Gates et al. (2009).

NAVSUP and FLCPS provides the following training opportunities above the basic DAU required training for acquisition interns by providing NACC interns a challenging environment with opportunities to become certified in a designated career field.

Additional training can include additional specialized technical and leadership training and advanced education for the following opportunities as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Department of Navy Leadership Development. Adapted from Department of Navy (2019).

Leadership development programs provide the Department of the Navy (DoN) with a pipeline of highly qualified individuals with proven leadership skills and an enhanced enterprise perspective.		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	AUDIENCE
<u><i>Bridging the GAP Leadership Development Program (BTG)</i></u>	This program focuses on connecting the senior workforce with the competencies, knowledge and skills that lead to becoming a member of the Executive Corps (SES, SISES, DISL, SL, ST).	GS 14-15 or equivalent
<u><i>Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP)</i></u>	Provides participants extensive exposure to the roles and mission of DoD and appreciation of what war fighters refer to as being "at the tip of the spear."	GS 12-14; mil O3-O4 or equivalent
Dwight D. Eisenhower School	Prepares military and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing our national security strategy.	GS 14-15 or equivalent
Capitol Hill Fellowship Program	Designed for executives and managers who require a high-level working knowledge of Congress.	GS 13 or equivalent
White House Leadership Development Program	This program aims to strengthen enterprise leadership across the government to address challenges facing the civil service.	GS 15 or equivalent
Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCELP)	Recruits and develops the next generation of innovative leaders with technical competence to meet the future needs of the Department	GS 7-12 or equivalent
Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP)	Competency-based approach to the deliberate development of senior civilian leaders with the enterprise-wide perspective needed to lead organizations and programs.	GS 15 or equivalent

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## **IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the research is to help inform the DOD acquisition workforce and encouraged those to use the flexibility within the current regulations and policies and adapt to the future certification process to find methods that help the acquisition workforce embrace streamlining and rapid acquisition practices. Current and past literature related to the contract management process, training, and the relative success or failures of the DOD contract management process were reviewed. In addition, the training and contract management process within the U.S. Army Health Contracting Activity and the Naval Supply Systems Command were examined. With the collection and examination of the data, the four primary questions answered were as follows:

1. What is the current DOD Contract Management Competency model?
2. What are the milestones for developing the staff (future contract managers) and how can the developmental objectives be met?
3. What is the future of DOD contract management development?
4. Are the Army and the Navy leveraging to the maximum extent practicable the training available to optimally develop competencies, processes, and skills?
5. Are there potential areas for improvement?

### **B. WHAT IS THE CURRENT DOD CONTRACT MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY MODEL?**

The DAWIA is the keystone for the DOD acquisition workforce obligatory standards. Regulations and instructions are repeatedly updated and provided to direct the workforce on what is required. The DAU addresses the shortfalls and provides the necessary training and requirements to facilitate a competent and skilled workforce. Additionally, the NDAA further sets the goals and standards for the DOD acquisition mission. The DOD Competency model and other models, like the NCMA CMBOK

model, have evolved over the years to facilitate a career map for the acquisition workforce. These models provide a roadmap used to guide the acquisition workforce. The DOD competency model applies to the entire “DOD Contracting Community (1102 civilian contracting professionals and military equivalents)” (DOD 2020, p. 2). The FY20 NDAA states

The Secretary of Defense shall implement a certification program to provide for a professional certification requirement for all members of the acquisition workforce. The certification requirement for any career field of the acquisition workforce shall be based on nationally or internationally recognized standards developed by a third-party entity. (FY2020 NDAA, 2019, SEC. 861)

The FY20 NDAA eliminated the statutory requirement for completion of 24 semester credit hours and provides that an appropriate career path is identified for each acquisition workforce career field, not later than two years after the enactment of the NDAA. (FY2020 NDAA, 2019, SEC. 861). These changes may impact the competency model for different career paths within the contracting competency.

**C. WHAT ARE THE MILESTONES FOR DEVELOPING THE STAFF (FUTURE CONTRACT MANAGERS) AND HOW CAN THE DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES BE MET?**

As suggested by Rendon and Winn, the CMBOK model outline delivers a clear method for measuring the competencies of the acquisition workforce (Rendon & Winn, 2017). This model places emphasis on each phase and task in developing the acquisition professionals’ skills. This model establishes milestones to improve DOD’s contract management practices. With the CMBOK model emphasizing a continuous learning approach to includes other management related functions, this model can be utilized to set, examine, and reestablish milestones for individual acquisition professionals.

“Additionally, there will no longer be a requirement for a baccalaureate degree as part of the DoD Contracting Professional Certification; however, 10 U.S. Code § 1724 requires a baccalaureate degree for 1102 series positions and similar military positions” (Tenaglia, 2021).

#### **D. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF DOD CONTRACT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT?**

As seen in Figure 5, the Defense Acquisition Workforce Certification Strategy is being revamped as of October 2020 and is planned to be integrated in a Back to Basics (BtB) talent framework during Fall 2021(Tenaglia, 2021). According to Tenaglia, there will be a legacy program for those previously certified and a new program integrated for the upcoming acquisition workforce. Additionally, according to Tenaglia:

The BtB initiative transforms how the workforce will be managed and trained to better align the acquisition and delivery of goods and services to support the Warfighter. The twenty A&S Acquisition Workforce career fields and paths have been restructured to six functional areas, which includes Contracting. Mr. John Tenaglia, Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting stated that as the DOD Contracting functional leader:

I am announcing the new Contracting Professional Certification Program for the Contracting Functional Area, effective 1 October 2021. Under the new structure, mandatory training for Contracting certification has been significantly reduced from approximately 650 hours to 200 hours. Beginning on 1 October 2021, the new training courses for certification will be:

CON 1100 Contract Fundamentals;

CON 1200 Contract Pre-Award;

CON 1300 Contract Award; and

CON 1400 Contract Post-Award. (Tenaglia, 2021)

Attachment

## Contracting Certification

DoD Contracting Professional Certification Requirements	
Education	No degree requirement for certification (10 U.S. Code § 1724 requires Baccalaureate Degree for 1102 series positions and similar military positions)
Training	Contracting Common Competencies (does not include Mission Focused or Specialty Competencies)
Experience	12 months full time experience applying a representative sample of the contracting competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equivalent experience may be considered in government or industry (must be documented and presented in detail)</li> <li>Representative sample of contracting competencies determined by the Component</li> </ul>
Assessment	Comprehensive Exam on Contracting Common Competencies
Validation	<b>Agency/organization validates that all of the above is completed and provides official DoD Contracting Professional Certification</b>
Certification Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80 hours of Continuous Learning (CL)/2 years – DoDI 5000.66.</li> <li>CL hours may be completed in technical, professional, and specialty competencies.</li> <li>A certain amount of CL hours, as determined by supervisor, shall directly map to professional competencies.</li> <li>Consequences of currency lapse are to be determined and will be addressed in an update to DoDI 5000.66.</li> </ul>

**Transition Plan – Workforce members currently DAWIA certified in Contracting at any level will be certified under the new framework.**

Figure 5. Restructured DOD Contracting Professional Certification Requirements. Source: Tenaglia (2021).

**E. ARE THE ARMY AND THE NAVY LEVERAGING TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PRACTICABLE THE TRAINING AVAILABLE TO OPTIMALLY DEVELOP COMPETENCIES, PROCESSES, AND SKILLS?**

The Department of Navy and Department of Army continue to leverage the training and platforms made available to secure a competent and ready workforce. The challenges continue as the environment and conditions evolve. With the new BtB initiatives at the forefront, both services will have to adjust accordingly. Leveraging preexisting training platforms, introducing new platforms and establish mission specific platforms necessary to support the unique mission sets will be paramount is responding to the DOD needs and requirements.

**F. ARE THERE POTENTIAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

DON and DA could improve retention of acquisition workforce members. The RAND study found that the acquisition workforce had a “harder time retaining new hires in the contracting career field than other career fields” (Gates et al., 2009, p. 40). In the

RAND study published in 2014, it suggested that “retention is higher for people who enter the workforce with a bachelor’s or master’s degree” (Gup et al., 2014, p. 24). The Navy and Army currently required a bachelor’s degree or higher for all 1102 positions after 2000. With the changes expected in fiscal year 2022, the requirement for a degree will no longer be required. To ensure retention of the highly skilled 1102 workforce is maintained, both USACHA and NAVSUP could improve retention by emphasizing advanced education in its hiring strategies.

Preparing for future changes, the NAVSUP and USACHA could better ensure there are sufficient future leaders for senior level acquisition positions or senior executive level acquisition positions by ensuring the organizations maintains an organic pool of individuals of highly trained and educated 1102s to fill future senior level positions. This can be achieved by providing specific training on skills that are used to better manage a project such as communication, data analytics, time management, and project management training. Additionally, organizations can greatly benefit from modernizing its underlying acquisition system and streamline its contract management processes to improve its ability to engage staff and retain a highly educated and motivated acquisition workforce.

#### **G. POTENTIAL AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As DOD moves through the BtB changes associated with the DOD acquisition workforce and future policy, regulation, and system changes, the researchers recommend the following research possibilities.

Research on the skill set required for the future Contracting workforce is essential to classify the position description correctly, recruit potential new hires that are capable of accomplishing the work at the level crucial for mission success, and retaining the staff after we have invested years of training both on-the-job and through DAU.

DOD should conduct research on the assignment of responsibilities within the DOD acquisition workforce.

Is the DOD contracting workforce adequately resourced and sized for the current duties, responsibilities, and oversight of the current DOD acquisition environment?

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