

***** Please share these Notes within your agency! *****

Notes from the Administrator November 2011

As many of you who read these Notes already know, I will be leaving my position at the end of the year to become the associate dean for government contracts law at the George Washington University Law School. The decision comes with mixed emotions, and this is especially true with respect to the acquisition workforce. Throughout the time that I've served as Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, it has been my honor to work with you to find ways to reduce waste, operate more efficiently, leverage the government's buying power, and protect the taxpayers' dollar. I've often said that many of my favorite parts of this position involved hearing from you – whether through institutions such as the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, on monthly calls with the Senior Procurement Executives, meetings of the Front Line Forum, through email responses to this newsletter, or by meeting you when I had the opportunity to visit your agencies. Now, looking back now over the past two years, I want to offer you my gratitude for all that you've done by sharing your ideas, your encouragement regarding things that are working well (and frustrations with things that could be improved), and your dedication. Thank you.

Beginning in January, Lesley Field has agreed to serve as the Acting Administrator. She and the rest of our colleagues in OFPP look forward to continuing to work with you on all of our ongoing efforts.

Suspension and Debarment

The suspension and debarment function is a tool that some agencies use regularly and well, and others have not yet devoted adequate attention to. To correct that unevenness, OMB recently issued a memorandum directing agencies to take certain actions to strengthen their suspension and debarment programs, including appointing a senior accountable official, and reviewing internal policies, procedures, and guidance. The memorandum also instructs agencies to ensure that they are active participants on the Interagency Suspension and Debarment Committee (ISDC), which will enable the ISDC to more effectively serve as a support structure for helping agencies build and maintain their suspension and debarment programs. The memo is available here: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2012/m-12-02.pdf>.

Also, I am pleased to announce that David Sims of the Department of the Interior has been named as the Chair of the ISDC. Dave has a strong track record, including as acting chair for several months, and I am confident that he will do a great job leading the ISDC to more actively address the issues facing us. I should also mention that, on November 16th, I appeared before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to discuss the role of suspension and debarment in the federal acquisition system, and to address whether additional tools were necessary. While I made clear to the Committee that I do not believe that new legislative tools are needed, I very much agreed with the members of the Committee that we need to ensure that our existing tools are used effectively and appropriately to protect the

government from contractors that do not demonstrate the responsibility necessary to earn our trust as a business partner.

Acquisition Workforce Hearing

On the afternoon of November 16, I testified before the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and Procurement Reform of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. This hearing focused on the acquisition workforce, and offered an opportunity for me to highlight many of the recent accomplishments that would not have been possible without all of your dedication and effort. In addition, the hearing provided an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the role that the acquisition workforce plays, and the importance of supporting a workforce that is the right size and properly trained and equipped. I was joined at the hearing by Donna Jenkins and Katrina McFarland, the leaders of the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), respectively. In a time of increased political tension, it was heartening to see bipartisan support and cooperation on this issue, and we are grateful to Subcommittee Chairman Lankford and Ranking Member Connolly for their leadership and continued efforts in this area.

Data Quality

- **Small Business Data Quality**

One area where we're making substantial progress based on feedback from the workforce involves small business reporting and data quality. OFPP and the Small Business Administration (SBA) are working with the interagency procurement data quality working group to address challenges with data quality and anomaly reporting as well as reduce burden on you. To this end, SBA Administrator Karen Mills and I recently issued a memorandum that will implement some of these changes. By aligning and integrating what are currently several distinct processes, we can improve efforts to achieve small business goals, reduce the burden on the workforce, and improve the quality of our small business award data. The memo also contains a link to a MAX community of practice where you can share data quality best practices and get tips from others. For more details, the memo is available here:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/small-business-data-quality-improvement.pdf>.

- **Sustainable Acquisition Data Quality**

In October 2011, we kicked off another effort aimed at reducing your workload and improving access to information – focused on sustainable acquisitions. In addition to an update to the Product Service Code (PSC) Manual (the first in many years), changes to the Federal Procurement Data System were implemented to better capture information on sustainable purchases. The experts at the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) led the updates to the PSCs and the changes to FPDS. The first set of changes provides you more choices to collect information on agency purchase of recycled content, energy efficient, biobased, and environmentally preferable products and services. Future changes include developing a standard report for extracting this information.

The memo I signed on October 5, 2011 can be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement_green/improving-sustainable-acquisition-and-reporting.pdf, and details on the changes to the PSC, including a summary crosswalk that can be used to quickly identify the changes, can be found at www.acquisition.gov.

Outreach

- Front Line Forum
Our seventh meeting of the Front Line Forum took place on November 17th, providing an excellent opportunity for direct feedback about some “hot topics” in acquisition. This month we discussed training and certification requirements and the use of small business set-asides when placing orders under task- or delivery-order contracts. As always, the interaction with the members of the FLF was both useful and enjoyable.
- FAI Web Events
On November 3rd, OFPP and FAI sponsored a webinar on the Contracting Officer’s Representative Certification, FAC-COR. The purpose of the webinar was to answer questions concerning the FAC-COR program and to add insight into the roles and responsibilities of a COR, as well as to provide information on a new tool to assist in developing solid requirements (the tool is now available at DAU’s Services Acquisition Mall). The webinar was conducted utilizing a new tool that allows for much more participation than has been possible in the past – this event drew more than 5,000 participants! They’re working now to develop additional outreach sessions on topics of broad interest, so keep your eyes open for these opportunities, and if you have suggestions for topics that would be appropriate, please contact Joanie Newhart at OFPP.
- Chief Acquisition Officers Council Acquisition Excellence Awards
As a reminder, nominations are now open for the Chief Acquisition Officers Council’s 2012 Acquisition Excellence Awards. The awards this year will be for federal employees engaged in team or individual activities that led to excellent results in FY 11 in any of the following three acquisition categories: Buying Smarter, Effective Vendor Communication, and Strategic Sourcing. Additionally, this year we are partnering with the Small Business Procurement Advisory Council to add an award for small business excellence. For this award, we are seeking nominations for those federal employees engaged in collaboration between their Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the acquisition community that led to awards that were successful from both a small business and an acquisition perspective. Nominations are being accepted through January 17, 2012. For questions or a copy of the nomination forms, please contact Joanie Newhart at OFPP. Please submit completed nominations for the Acquisition Excellence Awards to John Andre at the Federal Acquisition Institute. Please submit completed nominations for the Small Business Excellence Award to Susan Truslow at the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP).

That's all for this month. I hope that you were able to relax with friends and family over the Thanksgiving weekend, and are returning, refreshed, to the important work that you do to safeguard the public trust. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan".

Daniel I. Gordon
Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy

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