ACQUISITION POLICY MEMORANDUM 2009 – 03

To: Executive Officers
               Heads of Contracting Activity

From: Nancy J. Gunderson / Signed /
               Acting Senior Procurement Executive

Subject: HHS Interim Acquisition Guidance – Federal Acquisition
               Certification – Program/Project Managers Program

Effective Date: June 30, 2009

1. Purpose: This memorandum (a) represents HHS' implementation of the Federal
Acquisition Certification – Program/Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) program; (b) establishes
FAC-P/PM certification as a prerequisite for serving as a program or project manager within
HHS; (c) transmits the HHS Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project
Managers Handbook (attached); and (d) promulgates interim HHS Acquisition Regulation
(HHSAR) coverage (attached).

2. Background: The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA), Public Law 108-136,
expanded the definition and scope of acquisition to include activities, such as requirements
development and performance management, that are performed by program and project
managers. Building on SARA's broader definition of the acquisition workforce, the Federal
Acquisition Institute (FAI) led an interagency working group to develop common, essential
competencies and a framework for the FAC-P/PM program. As a result of that effort, the Office
of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued a memorandum entitled, "The Federal Acquisition
Certification for Program and Project Managers," dated April 25, 2007, which established the
certification program's requirements – see http://www.fai.gov/.

3. FAC-P/PM Certification Levels and Requirements: The FAC-P/PM program specifies three
different levels of certification, depending on the core competency, training, and experience
required to manage different types of acquisitions:

- Entry/Apprentice – Level I
- Mid-level/Journeyman – Level II
- Senior/Expert – Level III.[1]

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[1] Please note that HHS University, in collaboration with ASRT/OCIO and ASAM/OAMP, has developed a fast-
track 3-week course to meet the training requirements for FAC-P/PM Level III certification. Candidates will have
an opportunity to take this FAC-P/PM Level III certification course in August 2009, or choose from two alternate
course delivery dates in FY2010.

Each FAC-P/PM certification level is independent of the others – i.e., applicants for the Senior/Expert level need not have been certified at the Mid-level/Journeyman or Entry/Apprentice levels. General and specific core competencies, training, and experience required vary by certification level. (See Chapter 2, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – Requirements and Performance Accountability, in the Handbook for additional information.)

In addition to meeting the general competency and experience standards for FAC-P/PM certification, individuals serving as information technology (IT) program or project managers should attain IT-specific requirements for certification as program or project managers. (See Appendix C, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – Information Technology Technical Competencies, in the Handbook for additional information.)

Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) may issue supplemental guidance and requirements for selection and assignment of program and project managers and require additional skills and competencies to meet organizational or mission needs. However, OPDIVs may not reduce the requirements specified in the Handbook.

4. Applicability: Initially, mandatory certification is being limited to major and non-major IT and construction capital investments. However, we expect the FAC-P/PM program and the types of acquisitions that require program and project managers to be FAC-P/PM certified to evolve over time and will update the Handbook accordingly. (Note: Contractors and their employees are not eligible to be certified or to serve as HHS program or project managers.)

For its initial implementation of the FAC-P/PM program and consistent with OFPP guidance, HHS is requiring FAC-P/PM Level III certification for program and project managers responsible for major IT and construction capital investments – i.e., those capital investments that require preparation of an OMB Exhibit 300, HHS Form 300, or equivalent. An individual must obtain FAC-P/PM Level III certification within 1 year from the date of being assigned to a major IT or construction capital investment. Also, HHS is requiring that an individual obtain FAC-P/PM Level II or I certification within 2 years from the date of being assigned to a non-major – i.e., tactical or supporting, IT or construction capital investment, respectively. (See Appendix A, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – HHS Programs and Projects with Associated Certification Levels, in the Handbook for additional information regarding the criteria for classifying IT and construction projects as major or non-major capital investments.) FAC-P/PM certification for other types of investments (e.g., advanced research and development) is encouraged, but, at this time, is not required.

5. Effective Date: HHS' FAC-P/PM certification program is effective immediately. Applications for each of the certification levels from existing program and project managers are due 3 months from the issuance of this interim acquisition guidance. IT program and project managers who obtained Level III waivers on August 22, 2008, must meet certification requirements by July 31, 2010.

6. <u>Waivers</u>: For current program/project managers and future candidates, waivers for additional time to complete certification requirements are not necessary for the first year following an assignment[2] to a major IT or construction capital investment and for 2 years following an assignment to a non-major IT or construction capital investment. OPDIVs may not circumvent the FAC-P/PM certification process by rotating program/project managers.

See Chapter 3, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – Application and Certification Procedures, in the Handbook for information on waivers beyond those periods. However, approval of a waiver request does not relieve the individual from meeting the certification requirements. Also, unlike FAC-P/PM certifications, HHS does not recognize waivers issued by other federal departments and agencies, since a waiver is agency-specific.

7. <u>Certification Transfer</u>: HHS recognizes and accepts FAC-P/PM certifications issued by other federal departments and agencies. In addition, HHS complies with FAI determinations as to which certifications by organizations outside the federal government are eligible for full or partial consideration under FAC-P/PM. (See Chapter 3, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – Application and Certification Procedures, in the Handbook for additional information.)

8. <u>Maintenance of FAC-P/PM Certification</u>: FAC-P/PM certification lasts for 2 years. To maintain FAC-P/PM certification, HHS program and project managers are required to earn 80 Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) of skills currency every 2 years, starting from the date of their initial certification or recertification, and document completion of all training. If the required CLPs are not earned within each 2-year period, a FAC-P/PM certification will lapse. Lapsed certifications may be reinstated when 80 CLPs have been accumulated within 2 years following the lapse. (See Appendix F, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers - Guidance on Meeting Requirements for Continuous Learning Points, in the Handbook for additional information.)

9. <u>FAC-P/PM Application Process</u>: The Handbook contains application procedures and forms to be completed for the following types of certification actions: (i) basic certification, (ii) certification transfer, (iii) certification through fulfillment, (iv) recertification, and (v) certification waiver. Applicants for HHS FAC-P/PM certification actions must comply with the requirements and procedures specified in the Handbook and refer any questions to their OPDIV Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) for resolution.

10. <u>Input and Maintenance of FAC-P/PM Information</u>: The FAI's Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) is HHS' future system of record for the FAC-P/PM program. Program and project manager candidates and certified program and project managers will be responsible for entering, maintaining, and updating their FAC-P/PM training and CLP data in ACMIS. OPDIV ACMs will periodically review ACMIS records for quality assurance purposes.

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[2] For current program/project managers, "assignment" means the effective date of this FAC-P/PM guidance.

11. Governance: The Departmental ACM, in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management, Office of Acquisition Management and Policy, (ASAM/OAMP), serves as the Departmental FAC-P/PM program manager and is responsible for administering the program. To support the overall management of the FAC-P/PM certification program at the OPDIV level, Executive Officers and their HCAs may either use their existing ACM or designate an additional ACM, whose professional background includes program and project management. (See Appendix B, Federal Acquisition Certification – Program and Project Managers – Roles and Responsibilities, of the Handbook for additional information.)

12. Impact on the HHSAR: The interim acquisition guidance in Attachment B modifies the HHSAR, as follows:

i. *HHSAR 301.607*, *Certification of Program and Project Managers:* This is a new section that has been added to cover the various aspects of the HHS FAC-P/PM certification program. It includes sub-sections dealing with (a) applicability of the program; (b) a description of the certification program and its competency, training, and experience requirements; (c) certification applications, transfers, and waivers; (d) maintenance of FAC-P/PM certifications; (e) input of FAC-P/PM certification in ACMIS; and (f) responsibilities of various officials for managing the certification program at the HHS and OPDIV levels.

ii. *HHSAR 302.101, Definitions:* This revision adds two new paragraphs, "(*e*) *Program Manager*" and "(*f*) *Project Manager*," to Section 302.101, Definitions, to define the terms Program Manager and Project Manager. The revision also redesignates paragraph "(*e*) *Project Officer*" as paragraph (g).

Attachments

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