

NEXT SESSION

Steps to Building a More Innovative Acquisition Culture

Andrea Wilson

Arleen Wilson

Chief, Project Support Branch at NOAA

Founder, Principal Consultant of AW Enterprises & AWE Training School

This session will be
recorded.

University of Maryland
Project Management
Symposium



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department





Special Thanks

The "Federal Programs Track" was developed in collaboration with the Federal Program and Project Management Community of Practice

FedPM CoP

Federal Program and Project Management
Community of Practice



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department



Steps to Building a More Innovative Acquisition Culture

Presenter Andrea Wilson

Co-Presenter Arleen Wilson

2023 Project Management Symposium

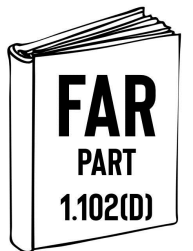
AGENDA

- FAR Guiding Principles
- Steps to Building an Innovative Acquisition Culture:
 - Risk Management
 - Industry Engagement
 - Innovative Acquisition Approaches
- Key Takeaways
- Q&A

FAR Guiding Principles

Contrary to popular belief the Federal Acquisition Regulation or FAR is extremely flexible allowing for innovation and sound business judgment. Many contracting professionals believe that if the regulations do not specifically state that something is allowed then it's prohibited. The truth is that the far says the exact opposite.

In fact the FAR guiding principles found at FAR Part 1.102 d specifically state “In exercising initiative Government members of the Acquisition Team may assume if a specific strategy, practice, policy or procedure is in the best interest of the government and is not addressed in the FAR nor prohibited by law that is (statute or case law) Executive Order or other regulation, that the strategy, practice, policy, or procedure IS a permissible exercise of authority.”



The FAR guiding principles provide the backbone for the acquisition process and are the key to providing the acquisition team with the ability to be innovative with its acquisitions. The basic tenets of the principles are as follows:

- Satisfy the customer in terms of cost, quality, and timeliness of the delivered product or service
- Minimize administrative operating costs
- Conduct business with integrity fairness and openness
- Fulfill public policy objectives



Acquisition Teams Should:

- Exercise Initiative
- Use Best Business Judgement
- Be Innovative



Risk Management

The focus of risk avoidance should be shifted to risk management and the cost to the taxpayer of trying to eliminate all risk is prohibitive. The executive branch will accept and manage the risk associated with empowering local procurement officials to take independent action based on their professional judgment.

RISK
MANAGEMENT



- Try New Processes
- Use Flexibilities
- Leverage Partnerships
- **DON'T BE AFRAID OF PROTESTS!**

Risk Management Continued

- In an attempt to avoid risk, the acquisition team often errs on the side of caution, perhaps avoiding innovative techniques and trying to protest proof their solicitations and contracts.

Very few contracts are actually protested. Just about one percent and of that small amount about 85 percent are dismissed by the Government accountability office.

Industry Engagement

The FAR guiding principles clearly state that the government should communicate with industry as early as possible in the acquisition cycle to determine the capabilities available in the commercial marketplace.



Industry Engagement Strategies

- **One on Ones**

The government team meets individually with vendors.

Market Research must be conducted thoroughly to ensure the right strategies, industry participants, and process are established to conduct an efficient, robust competition. Prior to issuance of the solicitation, government officials - including the program manager, users, or contracting officer - should meet with potential offerors to exchange general information and conduct market research related to an acquisition. While meeting with potential offerors, there is no requirement that the meetings include all possible offerors, **nor is there a prohibition on one-on-one meetings.**

- **Reverse Industry Day**

Industry presents its perspectives to the federal acquisition workforce.

- **Interactive Q&A**

Use of Q&A allows for more fruitful exchange of information with vendors.

Innovative Acquisition Approaches

- **Oral Presentations and Paperless Proposals**

Oral presentations (see FAR 15.102) allow the Government to hear directly from the vendor and their technical experts about their solutions and create a dialogue.

- **Technical and Product Demonstrations**

Product or technical demonstrations let buyers see, feel, and test solutions before buying. True capabilities can be revealed. Can be a stand-alone factor or an element of the oral presentation.

- **Down-Selects**

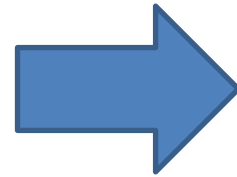
Use multiple phases with smaller numbers of companies proceeding to the next phase.

- **On-the-Spot Consensus**

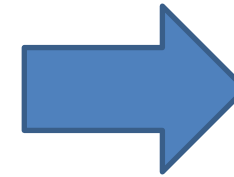


Other Innovative Contracting Practices

**Challenge.gov
Contests**



**Commercial
Solutions
Opening or
CSO pilots**



**Other
Transaction
Authority or
OTA**

innovation

Key Takeaways:

- Encourage Innovation
- Foster Collaboration
- Embrace Emerging Technologies
- Break Down Barriers
- Promote Diversity and Inclusion
- Measure and Evaluate

Resources

For More Detailed Information About Innovative Acquisition Practices, Please Visit:

- Innovation Hub on the Acquisition Gateway

<https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/app/gateway/acquisition-innovation>

- FAI's Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations

<https://www.fai.gov/periodic-table#>

- Procurement Innovation Lab Primer

<https://www.fai.gov/media-library/item/procurement-innovation-lab-pil-primer>

- Contact your Agency's Acquisition Innovation Advocate





Questions?

Evaluate Session

