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**Department of Defense  
Contracting Workforce  
Competency Assessment  
Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

The Defense Acquisition Workforce provides critical capabilities in support of our Nation and its Warfighter. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Strategy outlines a competency assessment strategy for the acquisition workforce as a means to assess workforce capability using updated and validated enterprise-wide functional competency models, and to identify and close capability gaps. The Contracting Community, a segment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce, has made significant progress in implementing a competency-based workforce strategy. This report addresses the progress made in the following areas:

- Development of the DoD Contracting Competency Model and completion of the DoD-wide Contracting Competency Assessment;
- Identification of Capability Gaps in the Contracting Workforce; and
- Identification and Implementation of Gap Closure Strategies.

In March 2007, the Contracting Community completed development of the DoD Contracting Competency Model which identifies the technical and professional competencies that underlie superior job performance for the Contracting Workforce. The resulting model was developed through extensive subject matter expert participation; and provides detailed insight into the underlying behaviors and desired outcomes that yield success in the contracting career field and reflect the best interest of the Government. The Contracting Competency Model was the basis for the first-ever DoD-wide competency assessment which targeted over 20,000 members of the Contracting Workforce.

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**Table 1.** The DoD Contracting Competency Model (high level)

<b>DoD Contracting Competency Model</b> established March 2007	
Pre-Award and Award	Determination of How Best To Satisfy Requirements
	Considers Socio-economic 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 Protests
Develop and/or Negotiate Positions	Justification of Other than Full and Open Competition
	Terms and Conditions
	Preparation and Negotiation
Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis	Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis
Contract Administration	Initiation of work
	Contract Performance Management
	Issue Changes and Modifications
	Approve Payment Requests
	Close-out Contracts
Small Business/Socio-Economic Programs	Addressing Small Business Concerns
Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards	Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards
Contract Termination	Contract Termination
Procurement Policy	Procurement Analysis
Other Competencies	E-Business and Automated Tools
	Activity Program Coordinator for Purchase Card
	Construction/Architect and Engineering
Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment	Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment
Professional Competency	Problem Solving
	Customer Service
	Oral Communication
	Written Communication
	Interpersonal Skills
	Decisiveness
	Technical Credibility
	Flexibility
	Resilience
	Accountability

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The DoD Contracting Competency Assessment was conducted through a series of pilot and follow-on assessments ultimately reaching over 20,000 contracting professionals. The assessment asked employees and their supervisors to rate the employee's proficiency in the defined competency and to rate its criticality to the job. Employees were also asked to rate how frequently he/she used the defined competencies on the job. The assessment results provided a complete competency inventory of DoD Contracting professionals at all career levels (entry/journey/senior). The results of the assessment enabled senior Contracting leaders to understand their workforce's proficiency levels, identify capability gaps based on their current/future mission requirements and priorities, discuss and identify workforce planning strategies to close gaps, and share best practices.

Command/organizational level reports were provided to the Contracting senior leaders for each of the organizations participating in the assessment. These results provided leadership with valuable insights into proficiency levels of the technical and professional competencies of their workforce by career level and how important the competencies are to the job of contracting professionals. In addition, these reports provided a common language to facilitate discussions across the Department on commonalities and differences, but most importantly what to do about them.

Senior leaders from each command/organization participating in the Contracting Competency Assessment were asked to review their assessment data along with the challenges and demands their organizations face (i.e., mission changes/shifts, manpower needs, increasing number of contracting actions, privatization/regionalization initiatives, changes in technologies/tools, and customer requirements). Senior leaders then participated in Component-wide workshops to discuss their review results, competency and capability gaps that they identified within their workforce, and potential gap closure strategies. Gap areas unique to an organization and/or Component were captured at the organization/Component level and will be addressed as appropriate. The gap areas that follow were consistently identified across all DoD Components and are addressed in this report. These areas were also identified by the workforce assessment as highly critical to accomplishing the contracting mission.

- **Fundamental Contracting Skills** across entry and journey levels of the Contracting Workforce and currency, breadth and depth of knowledge across journey and senior levels. Leaders expressed the importance of not only mastering the “what”, but in being able to use critical thinking and sound judgment to apply the knowledge – thus mastering the “how”. In addition, leaders agreed that there is a gap in the currency, breadth, and

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depth of knowledge across journey and senior levels of the Contracting Workforce.

- **The Source Selection Process.** Senior leaders believe that more needs to be done to ensure consistency in DoD source selection processes and to define the framework and expectations to be used for competitive, negotiated acquisitions.
- **Cost and Price Analysis.** Leaders view the basics of cost and price analysis as a fundamental skill for all contracting professionals, and believe that more advanced pricing topics must be targeted to contracting professionals who specialize in pricing careers.
- **Contract Performance Management.** Senior leaders acknowledge that failure to focus on contractor performance has resulted in less than desirable outcomes for the Government. The effort at the back end of the process has to be as aggressive as the effort devoted to awarding the contract on the front end.
- **Integrated Acquisition Skills.** Leaders agree that there is a gap in how we develop key functional leaders to possess the integrated acquisition management competencies that cut across functional communities such as requirements, program management, logistics, science and engineering, legal, and financial management.

Contracting senior leaders are implementing initiatives in areas such as training; hiring; business process improvements; broadening and career development; mentoring; and, the development of communities of practice/centers of excellence to address these capability shortfalls. Specifically, this report highlights a number of initiatives and best practices to address each of the capability gaps. Global strategies such as re-evaluating certification standards for contracting professionals, standardizing source selection methodologies and processes, development of cost/pricing centers of expertise, and extensive revisions to current training content/methods are just a few of the wide range of strategies being implemented across the Contracting Community. And where it makes sense, the Contracting Community is engaging other acquisition communities to develop cross-functional initiatives that promote unified objectives.

By collaborating to implement the closure strategies identified, the Department can continue to identify opportunities to create efficiencies and share best practice across the workforce. The resources to implement the strategies are being provided through the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund

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(DAWDF) and the FY2010 Defense Budget. As Contracting senior leaders work to keep hiring initiatives on track and close capability gaps, they are also beginning to think through the next steps in ensuring the success of this effort. The next steps to building a highly qualified workforce include further applications of the current contracting model and development of sound methods and measures to assess the effectiveness of the workforce planning strategies being put in place.

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# I. Implementation of Competency-Based Management in the Department of Defense Contracting Community

The Defense Acquisition Workforce provides critical capabilities in support of our Nation and its Warfighter. It is essential that the Department maintain a diverse and knowledge-based workforce capable of meeting this mission. To accomplish this, the Department of Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L) Community developed an overarching Human Capital Strategic Plan that outlines a path for Components and Functional Leaders to build the Defense Acquisition Workforce of the future. The AT&L competency-based management initiative is a key component of this strategy. The goals of this initiative are to assess workforce capability using updated and validated enterprise-wide competency models across all AT&L functional areas and to close capability gaps with workforce training, development, and human capital planning.

The acquisition process has changed significantly over the past two decades and the growth and development of the Defense Acquisition Workforce has not kept pace with the increased complexity and demand. With workforce levels stagnant since the mid-1990s, and annual increases in spending and in the sheer number of contracting actions, the Defense Department finds itself at a critical juncture to initiate actions that build the workforce—in skill and size—and improve acquisition outcomes for the government.

In 2007, the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) joined with the Department's Senior Procurement Executives and AT&L's Director, Human Capital Initiatives to pursue a competency-based approach to workforce management for the DoD Contracting Workforce. The effort would help to address two major questions before the Department:

- 1) Are there enough people in the Contracting Workforce to perform their mission effectively, efficiently, and in a manner that assures the lawful operation of the federal acquisition system? and

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- 2) Does the Contracting Workforce have the collective capability to meet the needs of our Nation and its Warfighter?

The Contracting Community put in place a process to define the competencies required to deliver mission critical capabilities; to assess competencies resident in the Contracting Workforce and identify gaps for current and future requirements; and to align/adjust workforce planning strategies to address capability gaps and provide opportunities for training and development. These steps now lay the foundation for the Contracting Community's response to the President's March 4, 2009 mandate for the Federal Government to have sufficient capacity to manage and oversee its contracting process.

## **Developing the Contracting Competency Model**

In March 2007, with the support and participation of representatives from across the Department, the Contracting Community completed development of the DoD Contracting Competency Model. This comprehensive model identifies the observable and measurable technical and professional behaviors and associated knowledge that underlie superior job performance for the Contracting Workforce. It provides insight into the full spectrum of contracting processes and job requirements.

In the development process, the Department engaged senior Contracting leaders and 377 subject matter experts from across all Components and career levels. In phase one, an expert panel of senior Contracting leaders developed a framework of technical competencies needed by high performers in the Contracting Workforce and identified subject matter experts (SMEs). In developing the framework, senior leaders were asked to reflect on both current and future requirements, so that the forward-thinking model could capture needed and anticipated critical competencies. In phase two, the SMEs provided an in-depth view into what it takes to achieve successful outcomes on the job. They reviewed the technical competency framework (specifically, validation ratings for work functions/tasks, and associated knowledge items), and documented detailed job situations that describe tasks and the steps taken to achieve effective outcomes. This collection of 621 job situations contained some of the rich content needed to describe the wide range and depth of skill required to conduct analysis and make decisions that are cost effective and in the best interest of the government.

The professional competencies were defined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). A professional competency is defined as the relational, social, and interpersonal characteristics that are required for superior

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performance on the job. The SMEs started with OPM's list of 27 business and professional competencies (e.g., Interpersonal Skills, Oral and Written Communication, and Accountability) and were asked to rate how valuable each of these 27 competencies were in distinguishing effective from ineffective performance in the job situations they provided. The SMEs provided the highest ratings for 10 of the 27 competencies, indicating that they were the "difference-makers" in performance on the job.

The resulting competency model is provided in Table 1. The Contracting Competency Model includes 12 units of competence, 28 technical competencies, and 10 professional competencies.

- Units of Competence are high level functional areas that encompass all of the activities associated with a job and serve as the basic building blocks of the model.
- Competencies are observable and measurable patterns of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.<sup>1</sup>
- Competency elements are behavioral statements describing a task that results in an outcome of high value. An element statement typically consists of an action verb, an activity, and a specific result or outcome that represents superior performance.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition of competency is outlined by the Office of Personnel Management. (OPM) and was used as a guiding principle in the competency model development process.

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**Table 2.** The DoD Contracting Competency Model (detailed)

Unit of Competence	Competency	Competency Element
<b>Pre-Award and Award</b>	1. Determination of How Best to Satisfy Requirements for the Mission Area	Provide proactive business advice on requirements documentation based on analysis of requirements and performance-based approaches to find the best solution to satisfy mission requirements.
		Conduct market research using relevant resources prior to solicitation to understand the industry environment and determine availability of sources of supply and/or services.
		Perform acquisition planning by considering all available sources and methods of procurement to satisfy mission needs while appropriately allocating risk.
	2. Consider Socio Economic Requirements	Consider socio-economic requirements including small business, labor, environmental, foreign, and other socio-economic requirements to provide maximum practicable contracting and subcontracting opportunities.
	3. Promote Competition	Conduct pre-solicitation industry conferences and analyze responses to draft solicitation terms and conditions to promote full and open competition.
		Identify and facilitate joint ventures and partnering on solicitations and subcontracting opportunities to increase competition and/or small business participation.
	4. Source Selection Planning	Document a source selection plan that is consistent with public law, regulations, policy, and other guidelines.
	5. Solicitation of Offers	Conduct pre-bid or pre-proposal conference to inform offerors of the requirements of the acquisition.
		Publicize proposed procurements to promote competition.
		Issue a written solicitation consistent with the requirements documents, acquisition plan and source selection plan, that includes the appropriate provisions and clauses tailored to the requirement.
		Issue amendments or cancel solicitations when such actions are in the best interest of the Government and conform to law and regulations.
	6. Responsibility Determination	Respond to preaward inquiries by taking the appropriate action according to FAR/DFARS to resolve questions.
		Determine contractor responsibility by assessing past performance and financial stability to ensure that the contractor will be able to satisfy Government requirements.
	7. Bid Evaluation (Sealed Bidding)	Evaluate the sealed bids in a transparent manner to allow for fair evaluation of price, past-performance, and technical capability.
Perform price analysis to determine whether the lowest evaluated bid is reasonable and provides the best value to the Government.		
8. Proposal Evaluation (Contracting by Negotiation)	Evaluate proposals and quotes against evaluation criteria and request technical and pricing support, if needed, to identify offers that are acceptable or can be made acceptable.	
9. Source Selection	Decide whether to hold discussions based on results of the evaluation.	
	Establish the competitive range to determine which of the offers will be considered for the award.	
10. Contract Award	Select the awardee who in the Government's estimation provides the best value.	
	Award contract/ Issue task or delivery orders after ensuring fund availability and obtaining reviews and approvals.	
	Conducting pre/post award debriefings for all unsuccessful offerors when requested to ensure appropriate disclosure of information.	
11. Process Protests	Process protests to determine whether to withhold award or stop performance pending outcome of the protest.	

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<b>Develop and/or Negotiate Positions</b>	12. Justification of Other than Full and Open	Justify the need to negotiate or award the contract without full and open competition or, in a multiple award scenario, without providing for fair opportunity based on business strategies and market research.
	13. Terms and Conditions	Determine terms and conditions, including special contract requirements applicable to the acquisition, that are appropriate for the acquisition to comply with laws and regulations (e.g. method of financing, Government property, intellectual property, organizational conflict of interest (OCI), specialty metals).
	14. Preparation and Negotiation	Prepare for negotiations / discussions / awards by reviewing audit and technical reports, performing cost and/or price analysis (or reviewing price analysts reports), and developing pre-negotiation position to include identifying potential trade-offs. Negotiate terms and conditions (including price) based on the pre-negotiation objective and give-and-take with the offeror to establish a fair and reasonable price.
<b>Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis</b>	15. Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis	Evaluate the reasonableness of the contractor's proposed cost/price for use in preparing for complex negotiations.
		Develop positions on pricing-related contract terms and conditions to aid in developing the Government's position.
		Supports special cost, price, and finance efforts by researching, analyzing and providing recommended positions that are in the best interests of the Government.
		Evaluate Award Fee/Incentive Fee Plans and arrangements, for adherence to policy and guidance.
<b>Contract Administration</b>	16. Initiation of Work	Conduct post-award orientations to address customer concerns and contractor's responsibilities for performance on the contract.
		Plan for contract administration regarding delegating administrative functions; designating, training and managing CORs; and formally establishing all contract administration responsibilities.
	17. Contract Performance Management	Administer contract by monitoring contracting officer representative's feedback, contractor performance, and enforcing contractor-compliance with contract requirements.
		Ensure past performance evaluation is initiated to ensure documentation of performance including contracting officer input.
		Analyze, negotiate, and prepare claims file in order to issue final decisions.
		Resolve contract performance problems by gathering facts, determining remedies, and initiate remedial actions in order to find and provide a solution.
	18. Issue Changes & Modifications	Analyze the need for contract modifications and negotiate and issue contract modifications, as required.
19. Approve Payment Requests	Approve contractor request for payments to include final vouchers under cost reimbursement contracts, progress payments, performance-based payments, or commercial financing.	
20. Close-Out Contracts	Close-out contracts following proper procedure to ensure property disposition, final payments, and documents/clearances have been received.	
<b>Small Business/ Socio-Economic Programs</b>	21. Addressing Small Business Concerns	Assist small business concerns in understanding how to do business with the government, identifying contracting opportunities, and responding to small business inquiries regarding payment delays or problems.
		Serve as the contracting activity small business specialist and assist the Small Business Administration's assigned representative in conducting annual reviews of small business share, evaluation of contractors' subcontracting performance, and planning to maximize the use of small businesses.
		As the contracting activity small business specialist provide recommendations on acquisition documents as to whether a particular acquisition should be set aside for one of the Small Business programs.

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<b>Negotiate FPRAs &amp; Administer Cost Accounting Standards</b>	22. Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements and Administer Cost Accounting Standards	Negotiate forward pricing rate agreements (FPRAs) for billing purposes and administer cost accounting standards to ensure contractor's compliance.
<b>Contract Termination</b>	23. Contract Termination	Terminate contracts using applicable FAR requirements if it is in the best interest of the government (either termination for convenience or cause/default).
<b>Procurement Policy</b>	24. Procurement Analysis	Provide analysis to advise on procurement matters including contract documentation, legislation issues, and congressional inquiries impacting contracting matters.
		Develops procurement policy and changes in procedures through analysis of major procurements for statutory and regulatory compliance and a macro-analysis of contracting matters.
		Advise on high-level legislation and policy matters to recommend and/or lead change in the procurement process.
		Perform oversight and audits to review contract files, compile lessons learned, and ensure consistent policy application.
<b>E-Business Related</b>	25. E-Business and Automated Tools	Use e-business systems and automated tools to promote standardization, efficiency, and transparency.
	26. Activity Program Coordinator for Purchase Card	Performs oversight and execution for the Purchase Card Program.
<b>Construction/ Architect &amp; Engineering (A&amp;E)</b>	27. Construction/ Architecture & Engineering (A&E)	Develops acquisition strategies, issues notices and solicitations, conducts negotiations, selects sources, awards and administers contracts for construction and A&E in accordance with requirements and procedures associated with construction and A&E outlined in the FAR and supplemental policy and procedures (with particular attention to FAR Part 36).
<b>Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment</b>	28. Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment	Apply contracting expertise during deployments, contingency operations, or responses to natural disasters.
<b>Professional Competency</b>	1. Problem Solving	Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.
	2. Customer Service	Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services; is committed to continuous improvement.
	3. Oral Communication	Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively; clarifies information as needed.
	4. Written Communication	Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.
	5. Interpersonal Skills	Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different situations.
	6. Decisiveness	Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
	7. Technical Credibility	Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise.
	8. Flexibility	Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
	9. Resilience	Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.
	10. Accountability	Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.

## **Assessing the Capability of the Contracting Workforce**

Beginning in August 2007 and continuing through September 2008, the Department conducted a competency assessment of military and civilian members of the Contracting Workforce and their supervisors. The assessment was based on the Contracting Competency Model; and was designed to provide a complete inventory of competencies of DoD contracting professionals, regardless of their job title, function, and/or role in the Contracting Workforce. Results of the assessment would enable senior Contracting leaders to identify competency gaps based on their contracting mission, and guide workforce development in ways to best fit the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce and the needs of the contracting mission.

### **Assessment Methodology**

Senior leaders in the Contracting Community were actively engaged in the development of methodology and communications planning to facilitate the highest levels of participation across the workforce. The assessment was designed to collect data from both contracting employees and their supervisors (i.e., multi-rater approach). The communications and messaging that occurred prior to and during administration of the assessment was facilitated by the early and consistent engagement of senior Contracting leaders across the Department.

The assessment included both demographic questions and questions regarding the competency model. Demographic information was collected from contracting employees and supervisors to segment the workforce into subgroups for analysis and reporting. Each employee participant was asked about his/her job title, employment status, and years of experience. Each supervisor participant was asked to designate each employee's career level category (entry/journey/senior).

Ratings of the technical and professional competencies were collected from both employees and supervisors, and were equally weighted for analysis purposes. Specifically, employees and supervisors were asked to rate:

- Proficiency: What is your proficiency level of this competency? (0–No Awareness or Exposure, 1–Awareness, 2–Basic, 3–Intermediate, 4–Advanced, 5–Expert, N/A–Not Applicable/Not Needed in My Job)
- Criticality: How critical is this activity in your current job? (1–Not Critical, 2–Somewhat Critical, 3–Fairly Critical, 4–Very Critical, 5–Extremely Critical, NAA–Not Able to Assess).

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In addition, only employees were asked to rate:

- Frequency: How often is this competency used in performing work? (1–Almost Never, 2–Rarely, 3–Occasionally, 4–Frequently, 5–Very Frequently, N/A–Not Applicable/Not Needed in My Job)

These variables and subsequent results provide insight into workforce capabilities and views on the level of importance and amount of time spent on competencies described in the model. Combined with the demographic data, this critical competency information describes how competencies are distributed across the DoD Contracting Community.

## **Results and Next Steps for the Contracting Workforce**

The baseline results of the Contracting Competency Assessment reflect the combined data from over 60 contracting commands/organizations across the DoD Components (please see Appendix B for listing). The Contracting Competency Assessment findings provide key data for decision makers to understand the existing skill sets and gaps in the Contracting Workforce. The next sections of this report present the results and findings and describe how senior leaders are using these results to inform workforce planning decisions.

## II. Results of Contracting Competency Effort

These results of the Contracting Competency Assessment provide the competency inventory of DoD's contracting professionals. The results are an aggregate view of the findings from over 60 contracting commands/organizations in the Department (Appendix B). Specifically, this section provides an overview of survey respondent demographics; proficiency, criticality, and frequency data on the contracting competencies; and an overview of the capability gaps identified by Contracting senior leaders.

The Contracting Community contributed significant time and effort to this initiative – from championing and participating in model development and the competency assessment, to the recent activity of developing and implementing the most appropriate gap closure strategies. Using the assessment results and thinking through future requirements of their commands/organizations, Contracting senior leaders at the Department, Component, and organization level were able to discuss and reach consensus on capability gaps that must be addressed to meet the needs of our Nation and its Warfighter. Further, they were able to identify the appropriate mix of workforce strategies that will enable the Contracting Community to meet current and future mission and manpower needs.

### High Participation Rate from the Contracting Community

The assessment targeted 20,573 DoD contracting professionals across the Departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Agencies—and achieved a participation rate of over eighty-seven percent. A hallmark of this effort was the extensive involvement of senior leaders across the Contracting Community in ensuring participation in the assessment, and applying assessment results to the human capital planning process. The assessment was conducted in two phases – a series of pilot assessments and a second phase of assessments for a larger segment of the workforce.

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In this report, aggregated data from the second phase of assessments is provided.<sup>2</sup> After the pilot assessments, the Contracting Community incorporated lessons learned and made several improvements to the second phase of assessments. As a result, data from both phases could not be combined. Results from both phases were used by commands/organizations to assess their capabilities and gaps however. In addition, organizations from all phases of the assessment participated in DoD-wide workshops to review and develop gap closure strategies.

## Demographic Summary of Contracting Competency Assessment Participants<sup>3</sup>

The demographic variables collected from assessment participants enabled senior Contracting leaders to understand the distribution and trends which exist in the Contracting Workforce. These key workforce demographics include military/civilian status, career level, grade equivalence/rank, job title, mission area, years of contracting and acquisition experience, and years to retirement. This information was important to provide organizations with different ways to analyze/target results to their workforce/requirements. Overall:

- Eighty-seven percent of the respondents are civilian.
- Over 45 percent of the respondents are Grades 12 and 13 or equivalent.
- With respect to years of contracting experience, the two largest sub-groups are those with 20+ years of experience (over 36 percent) and those with 0-4 years (over 26 percent).
- Finally, almost 60 percent of respondents are Contract Specialists.

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<sup>2</sup> There was a total 87% combined participation rate from the pilot and the workforce assessment; however this report presents information on a statistically significant representative sample group totaling 12,139.

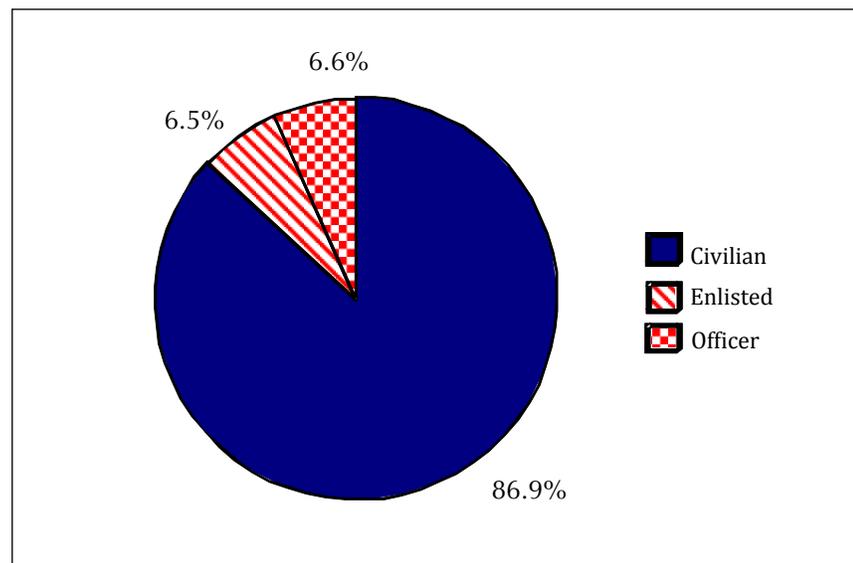
<sup>3</sup> In summarizing the demographic data, we observed a discrepancy between the percent of the Contracting Workforce who indicated military status and those who indicated military enlisted/officer levels. For this reason, we removed 331 respondents from the dataset, reducing the number to 11,808 on which demographic items are reported. Since competency data are not disaggregated by military/civilian status, we have reported demographics using the reduced dataset and competencies using the full dataset. There is a 99.59% or greater confidence level that the full and reduced dataset produce equivalent results.

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### Military/Civilian Status

Overall, the majority of the DoD participants—86.9 percent—were civilian compared with military participants (officer and enlisted), at 13.1 percent. The status of participants is highlighted in each of the demographic summaries of this section and will facilitate further studies of differences between military and civilian members of the Contracting Workforce.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1. Military/Civilian Status**



### Career Level of Assessment Participants

As part of the assessment, supervisors were asked to designate the appropriate career level for each employee. This was an important designation to segment the experience levels of the workforce. The following descriptive guidance was provided to supervisors to ensure that they were not guided solely by years of experience:

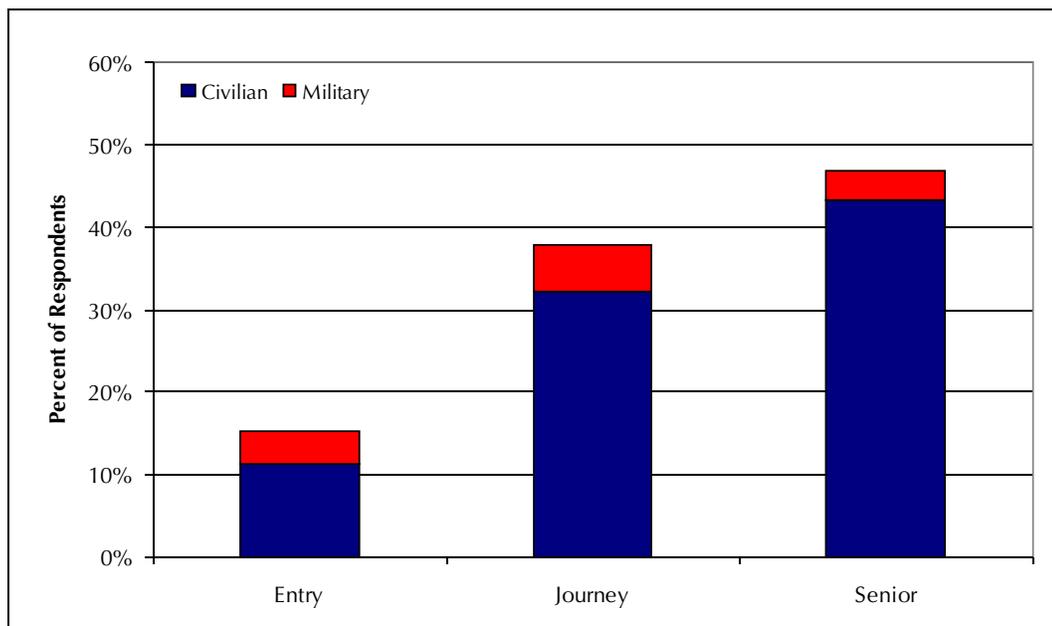
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<sup>4</sup> A number of participants selected grade or rank options that did not match the status choice. For the demographic results only, those participants were not included. However, the competency data from those participants was included in the competency results.

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- **Entry:** Employees at the entry-level generally understand the principles and can execute with guidance. Typical Years' Experience: 0–2 years contracting experience.
- **Journey:** Employees at the journey-level are able to perform on their own with some/limited guidance. At this level, they are gaining depth and different office/agency/mission perspectives. Typical Years' Experience: 3+ years contracting experience.
- **Senior:** Employees at the senior-level provide expert advice to management, have extensive practical application and experience across different offices/agencies/missions, and/or serve at the management/executive level. May lead teams and organizations composed of Entry and Journey levels. Typical Years' Experience: 7+ years contracting experience.

**Figure 2. Career Level**



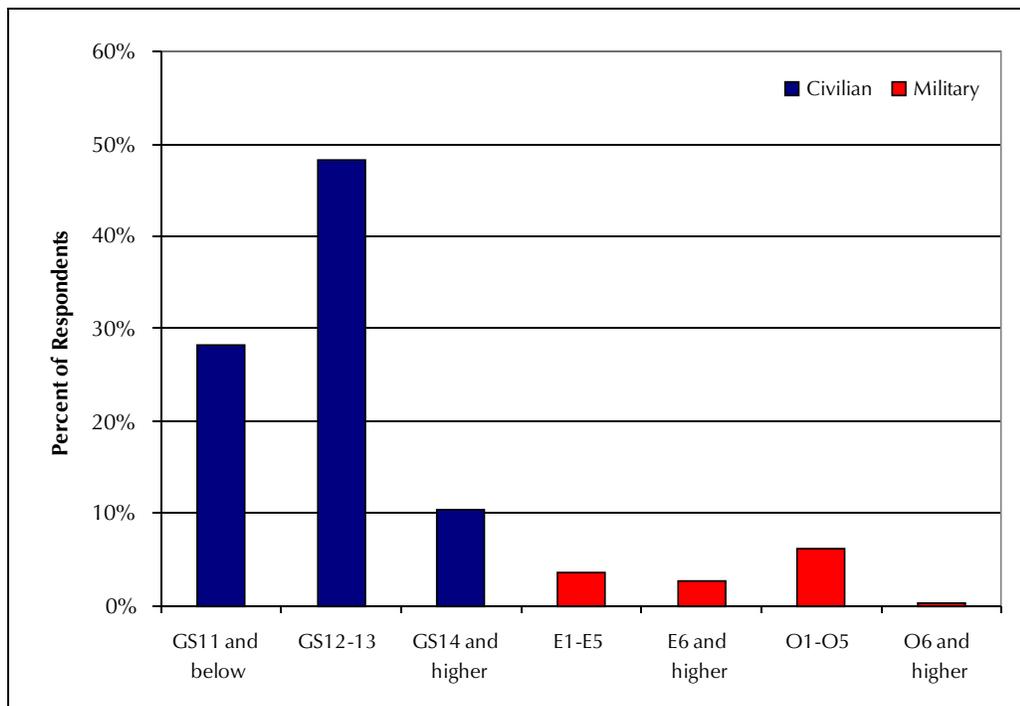
Career-level representation was as follows: 15.3 percent (1,805) Entry, 37.8 percent (4,466) Journey, and 46.9 percent (5,537) Senior (see Figure 2). The majority of the Contracting Workforce was categorized at the senior level, indicating that most contracting professionals have extensive experience and/or 7+ years in the contracting career field.

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### Grade Equivalence/Rank

Respondents were also asked to provide information about their grade equivalence and rank. Grades 12 and 13, the largest segment of the workforce, comprised over 48 percent of the assessment participants.

**Figure 3. Grade Equivalence/Rank**



In addition to this study, senior Contracting leaders will further examine the link between grade equivalence/rank and career level to gain a better understanding of how best to segment the workforce when addressing career development/management issues.

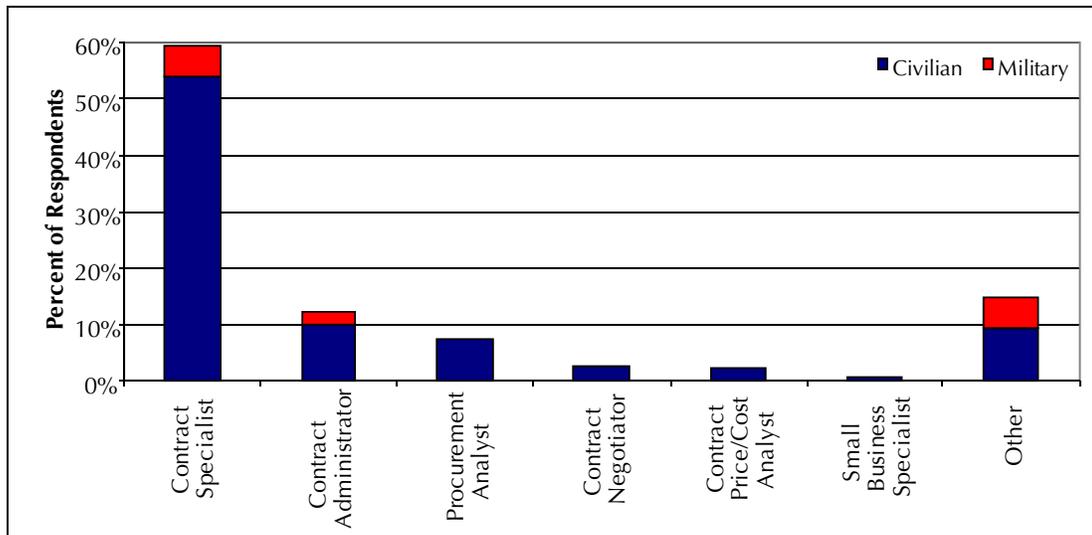
### Job Title

The Contracting Workforce consists of a number of different job titles/functions, which may impact the technical expertise that one is able to develop over time. Examples of the most common job titles within the Community include Contract Specialist (which includes Contracting Officers), Contract Administrator, Procurement Analyst, Contract Negotiator, and Contract Price/Cost Analyst. Contract Specialists comprise almost 60 percent of assessment participants. Over

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62 percent of civilian and 59 percent of enlisted contracting employees were Contract Specialists. In contrast, over 63 percent of Officers job titles were in the 'Other' category, to include titles such as Contract Policy, Agency Program Coordinator, and Project Manager. In total, over 15 percent of assessment respondents selected 'Other' for job title.

**Figure 4. Job Title**



## Mission Area

Senior leaders identified six major mission areas in an effort to differentiate the various contracting missions. Each assessment participant was categorized by Mission Area, shown in Figure 5. They include:

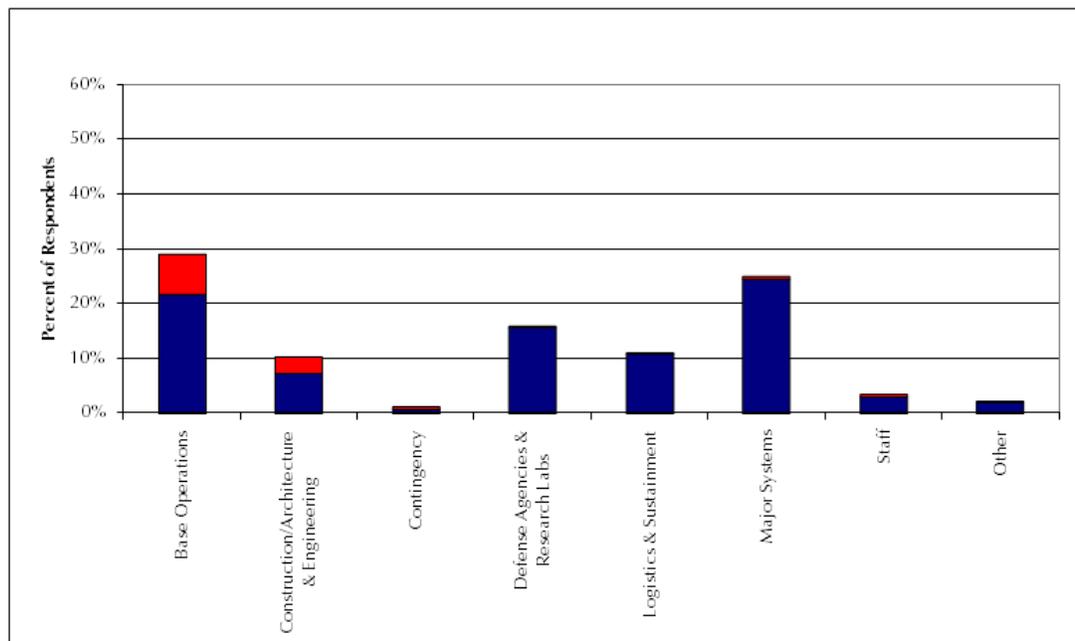
- **Base Operations:** contracting organizations that support base, post, camp and station operations, including fabrication, maintenance, repair and/or demolition of buildings, roads, etc., but not military construction.
- **Major Systems:** contracting organizations that support the development, procurement or sustainment of major weapon or IT systems.
- **Logistics and Sustainment Procurement:** contracting organizations in the military departments that contract for military construction, system repairables or perishables, or procurements other than base systems or base operations.

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- Defense Agencies and Research Labs: contracting organizations in defense agencies other than those categorized within other mission areas, and research labs.
- Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment: contracting organizations performing in a contingent or combat environment.
- Construction/Architecture and Engineering: contracting organizations that support these functions

The Staff mission area was added as a category by organizations that provide support (i.e., oversight and management) services to other contracting organizations. Using the data collected in this assessment, further analyses will be conducted to determine if there are any trends (strengths or gaps), or other variables that help to differentiate/categorize the type of work functions performed within a mission area.

**Figure 5. Mission Area**



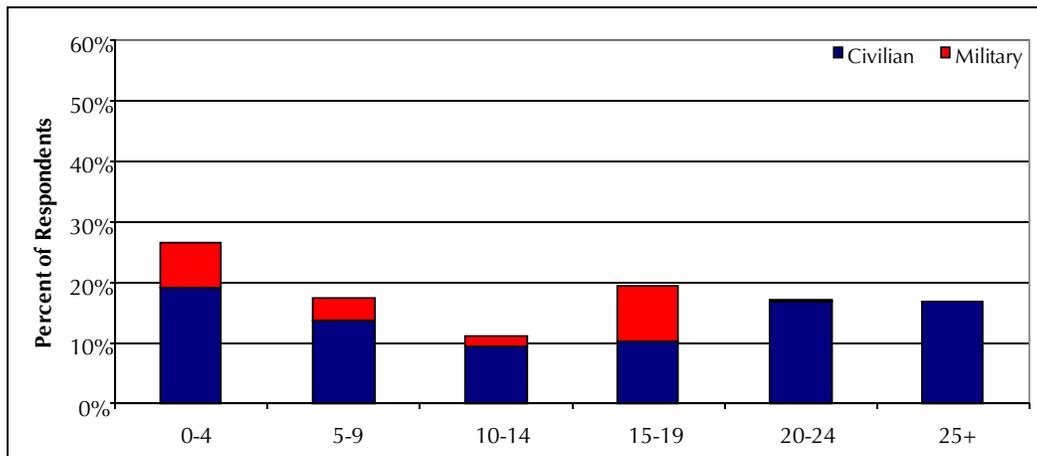
## Years of Contracting and Acquisition Experience

Participants were asked to provide years of contracting and acquisition experience separately. Contracting experience was defined as government or industry experience in a contracting position. Acquisition experience was defined as government or industry experience in a contracting position, or in any other

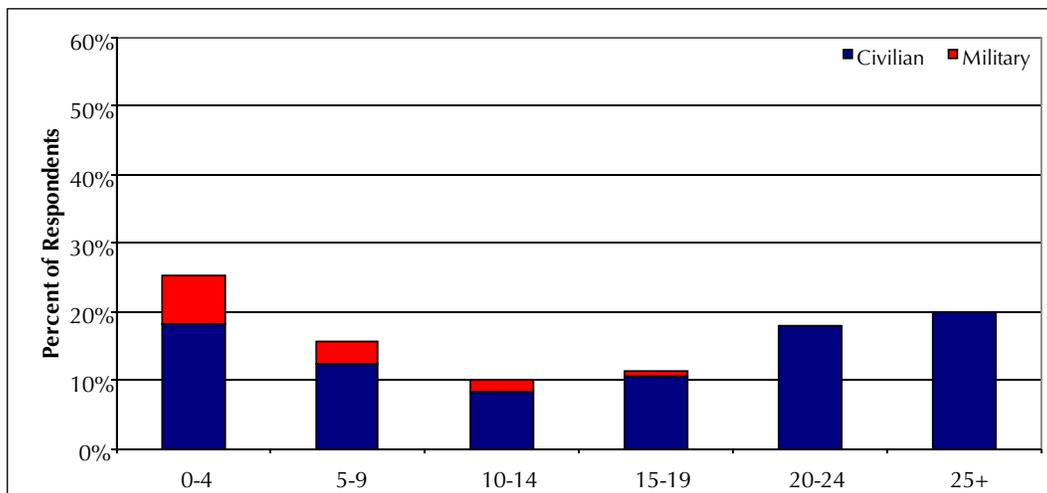
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acquisition position such as program management, purchasing, etc. DoD respondents have an average of 14.3 and 13.4 years of acquisition and contracting experience, respectively. The largest single-category percentage of DoD respondents (26.6 percent and 25.1 percent, respectively) indicated that their contracting and acquisition experience ranged from 0 to 4 years (seen in Figures 6 and 7). In addition, respondents with 20 or more years of contracting and/or acquisition experience are the majority of respondents – over 36 percent in both categories. Similarities between the acquisition and contracting years of experience indicate that contracting professionals at DoD gain acquisition experience primarily in the Contracting career field, and not in other fields (e.g., Program Management, Life-Cycle Logistics, or Financial Management).

**Figure 6. Years of Contracting Experience**



**Figure 7. Years of Acquisition Experience**



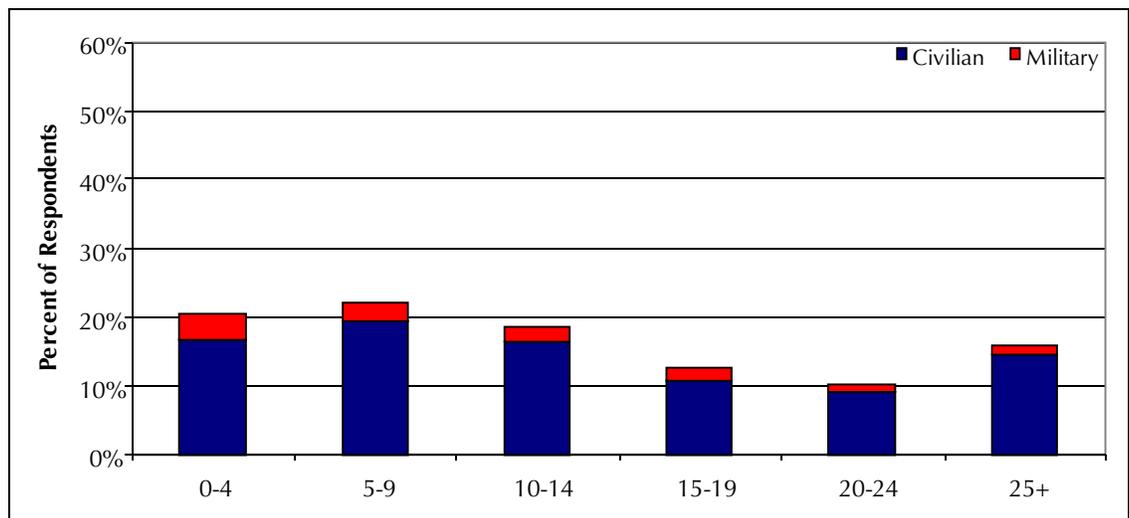
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When comparing civilian to military, over 70 percent of military participants had between 0 to 9 years of contracting or acquisition experience. The civilian population, however, was distributed across all year categories.

### Years to Retirement

Contracting professionals at DoD were also asked to provide the number of years they plan to work before retiring. On average, contracting professionals indicated that they were over 13 years from retirement. Within the next 15 years, over 60 percent of DoD contracting professionals have the potential to retire; over 20 percent indicated that they may retire in the next 4 years, as depicted in Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Years to Retirement**



Demographic data, such as military/civilian status, career level, job title, years of experience, mission areas, retirement eligibility, and others are necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the current state of the workforce. It helps to establish the existing landscape of the workforce. It can also be utilized to launch discussions, current and future, to narrow the focus to specific segments of the workforce in order to target capabilities for improvements.

## Current State of the Workforce - Competency Level Baseline of the Contracting Workforce

The results of the competency assessment provide an aggregate view of the competency levels of contracting professionals.<sup>5</sup> Each participating contracting command/organization (from both the pilot and the second phase of assessments) was also provided an organizational-level report of their results. Overall, the competency results provided insight into competency levels of the Contracting Workforce and a data-driven method to examine potential differences that exist between current proficiency levels and senior leaders' expectations of capabilities needed to meet future demands.

The baseline technical and professional competency results indicate that proficiency levels for the technical competencies were distinct by career level. Entry level respondents generally fell around the Awareness and Basic proficiency levels. As career level increases from journey to senior, the proficiency levels increase from Intermediate to Advanced proficiency level. When examining the frequency of use of the defined competencies, results varied by technical competency area for each of the career levels. Similarities were observed between journey and senior levels while frequency levels for the entry level respondents tended to be lowest. However, when examining professional competencies, frequency results were similar across career levels.

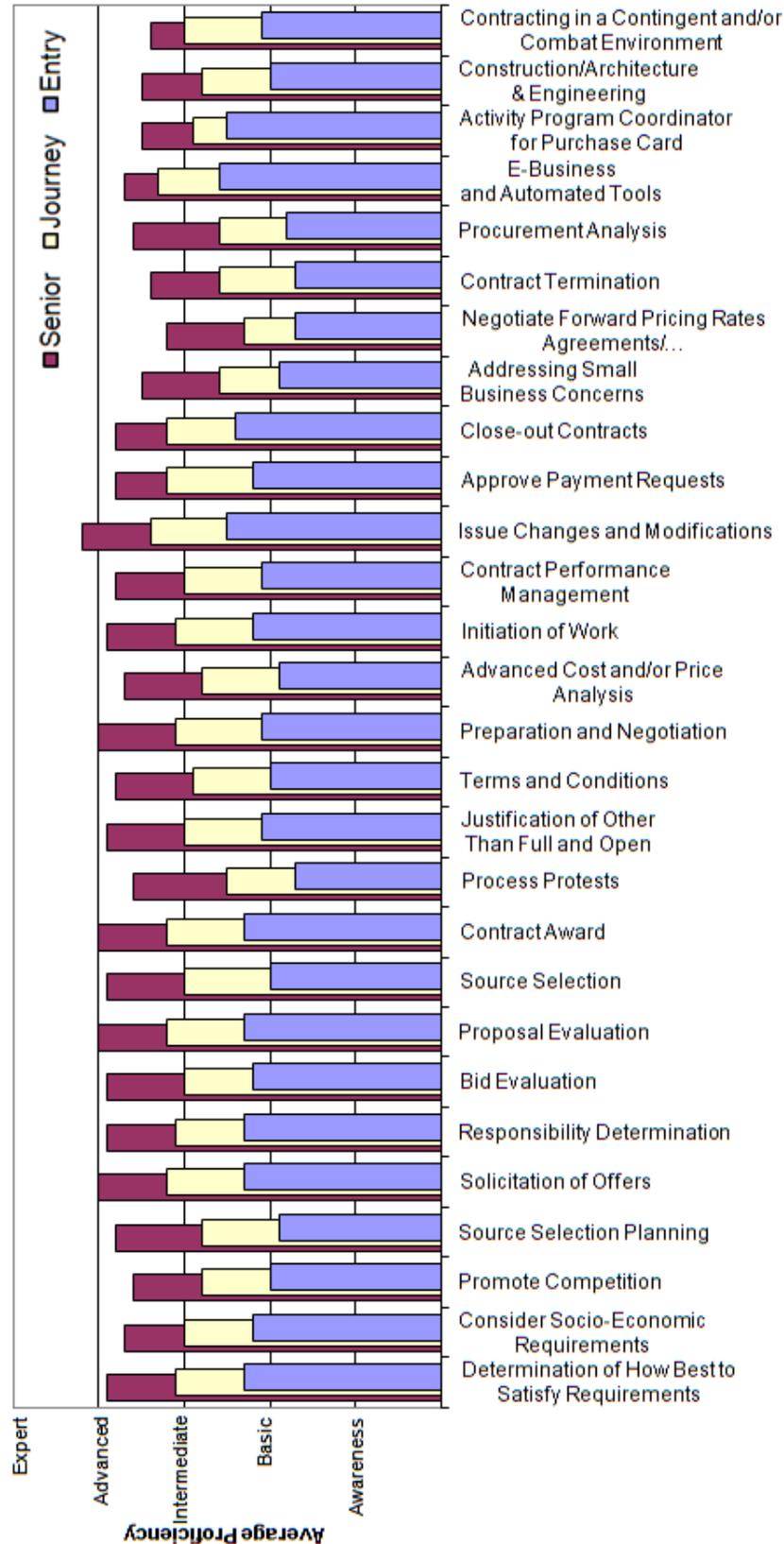
Views of how critical the technical competencies are to the job were similar regardless of career level. It is noteworthy to point out that for the frequency and criticality variables; there is an even closer alignment across all three career levels for the technical competencies near the 'Occasionally' and 'Fairly Critical' ratings. This is an indication that all three workforce segments consider the majority of the technical competencies as important to supporting the Nation and its Warfighter. Criticality results from the workforce were similar to views of the technical competencies held by Contracting senior leaders. These results are an important indicator of areas of focus to prepare the future workforce and future leaders. Overall, the competency results provided a substantial amount of quantitative data for senior leaders to consider in human capital planning efforts.

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<sup>5</sup> Assessment data results are provided in Appendix C.

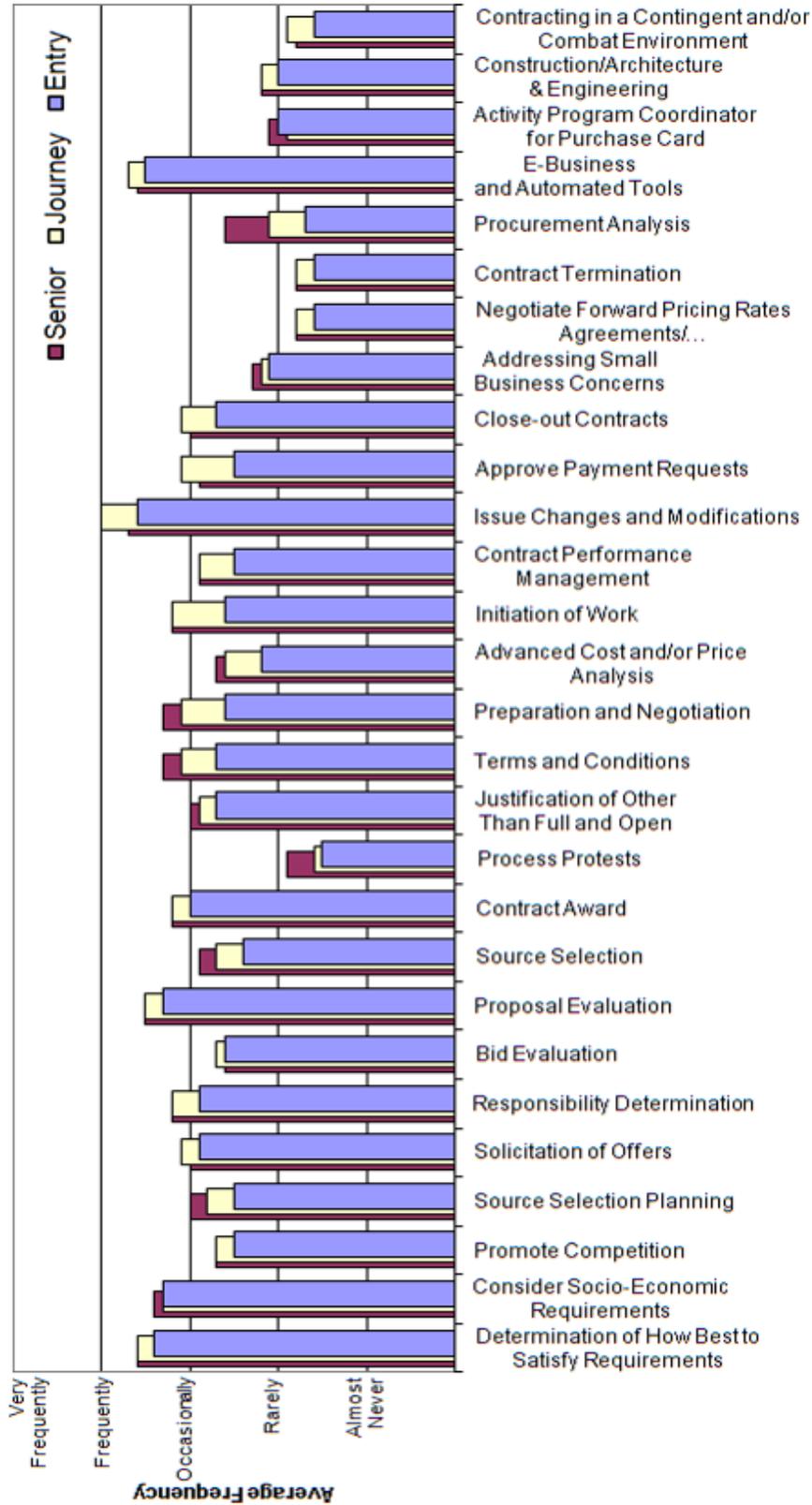
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Figure 9. Technical Competencies - Average Proficiency



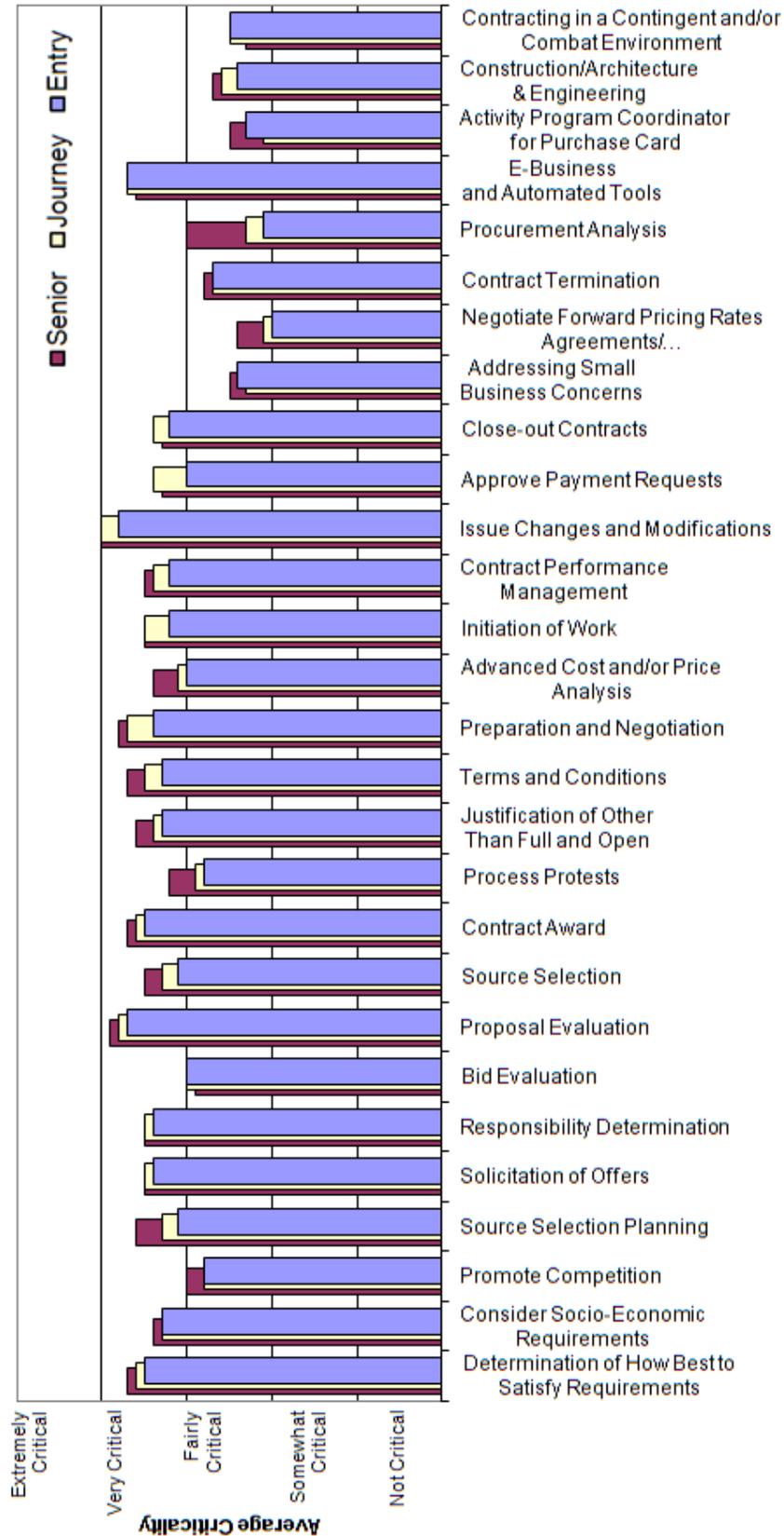
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Figure 10. Technical Competencies - Average Frequency



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Figure 11. Technical Competencies - Average Criticality

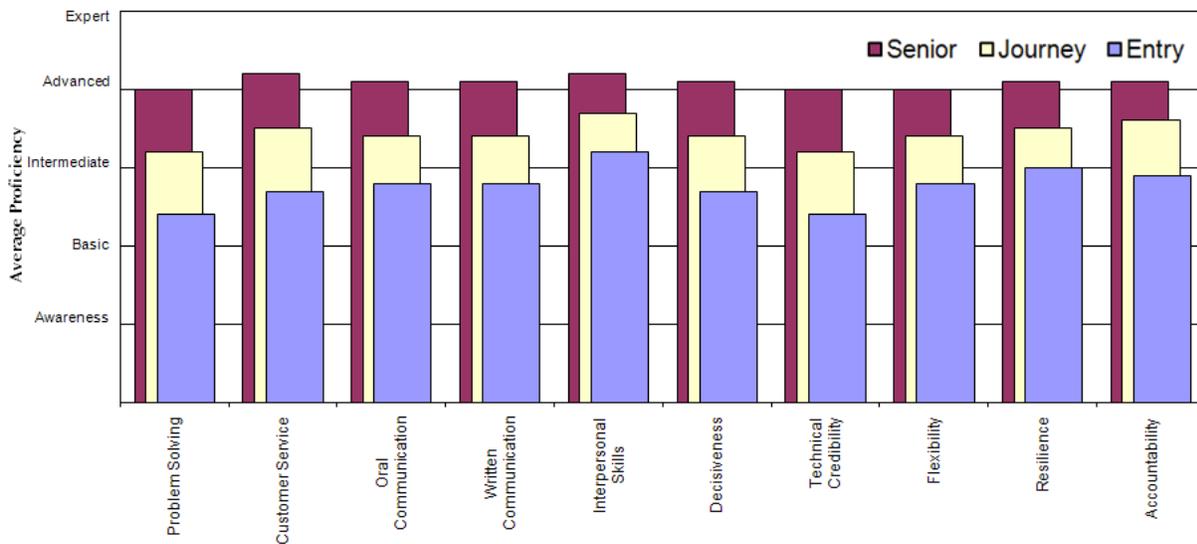


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The professional competencies revealed similar trends as the technical competencies. The proficiency level tended to increase as career level increased; and senior level employees typically rated the highest across all three variables for all of the professional competencies. Interpersonal Skills was rated highest by all three career levels for proficiency, criticality, and frequency within the professional competencies.

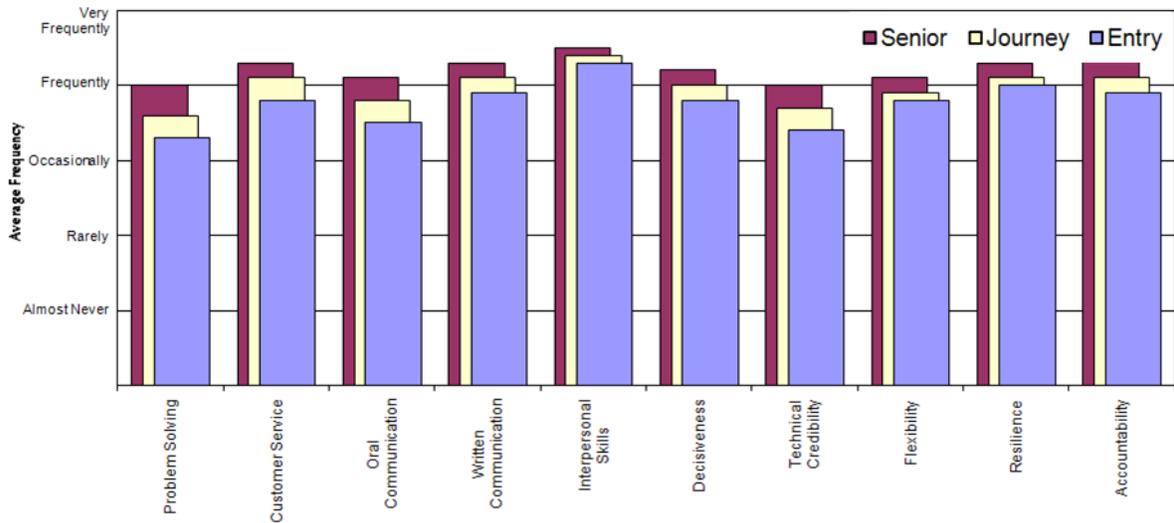
Proficiency results for both the technical and professional competencies appeared very similar in that there was a clear increase from Entry to Journey to Senior. In both the professional and technical categories, there were few respondents that fell below a Basic proficiency level. For professional competencies, senior contracting professionals showed very little difference in proficiency across the set of competencies – all were very close to the advanced proficiency level. The patterns of data were different for criticality and frequency across the technical and professional competencies; however, the same trend of climbing ratings surfaced as career level increased.

**Figure 12. Professional Competencies - Average Proficiency**

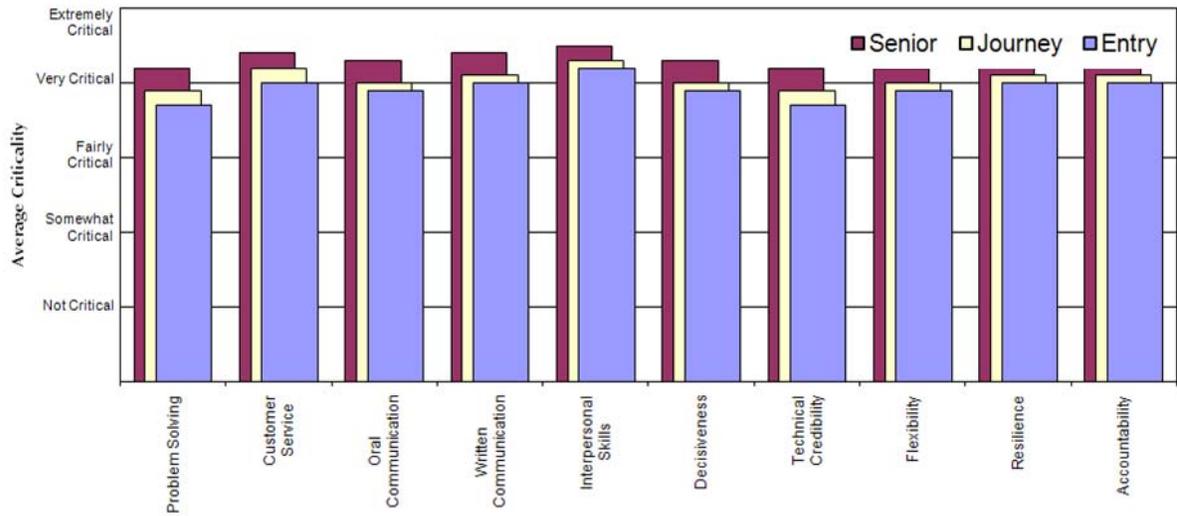


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**Figure 13. Professional Competencies - Average Frequency**



**Figure 14. Professional Competencies - Average Criticality**



## Identifying Competency Gaps in the Contracting Community

Organizational level results from the Contracting Competency Assessment were provided to the senior procurement executives and contracting leaders for each of the organizations participating in the assessment. These results provided leadership with valuable insights into proficiency levels of the technical and professional competencies of their workforce by career level and how important the competencies are to the job of contracting professionals.

Senior leaders were asked to review the assessment data along with the challenges and demands their organizations face (i.e., mission changes/shifts, manpower needs, increasing number of contracting actions, privatization/regionalization initiatives, changes in technologies/tools, and customer requirements. Next, they were asked to provide their individual list of capability gaps within each career level of their workforce; and, programs/initiatives/tools to address capability gaps identified in their workforce. In addition, they were asked to forecast any desired change in the composition of their Contracting Workforce over the next five years to meet mission requirements. Senior leaders from all phases of the assessment participated in Component-wide workshops to discuss the capability gaps submitted and to develop gap closure strategies. Gap areas unique to a command/organization and/or Component were captured at the organization/Component level. The capability gaps that follow capture those areas that were consistently identified across all DoD Components. The competencies associated with these gap areas were rated as high criticality by the DoD respondents at all career levels, which indicates that the workforce as well as senior leaders recognize the importance of maintaining adequate proficiency and experiences in these areas.

- **Fundamental contracting skills across entry and journey levels of the Contracting Workforce and currency, breadth and depth of knowledge across journey and senior levels.** Senior leaders from all organizations/Components agreed that there is a gap in fundamental contracting skills across entry and journey levels of the Contracting Workforce. Leaders expressed the importance of not only mastering the “what”, but in being able to use critical thinking and sound judgment to apply the knowledge – thus mastering the “how”. In addition, leaders agreed that there is a gap in the currency, breadth, and depth of knowledge across journey and senior levels of the Contracting Workforce.

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- **The Source Selection Process**, which includes four related technical competency areas that describe the skills and knowledge needed by contracting professionals to ensure DoD source selection processes deliver quality products to the Nation and its Warfighter and the best value to the taxpayers: *Source Selection Planning*, *Source Selection*, *Proposal Evaluation*, and *Contract Award*. Senior leaders believe that more needs to be done to ensure consistency in DoD source selection processes and to define the framework and expectations to be used for competitive, negotiated acquisitions.
- **Cost and Price Analysis**, which includes four related technical competency areas that describe the skills and knowledge needed by all contracting professionals to provide top-notch cost and pricing support to the acquisition enterprise: *Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis*, *Preparation and Negotiation*, *Bid Evaluation*, and *Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements*. Leaders view the basics of cost and price analysis as a fundamental skill for contracting professionals, and believe that more advanced pricing topics must be targeted to contracting professionals who specialize in pricing careers.
- **Contract Performance Management**, the *Contract Performance Management* competency that describes the skills and knowledge needed to monitor contractor performance, enforce contractor compliance, evaluate contractor performance, and resolve performance problems. Senior leaders acknowledged that failure to focus on contractor performance has resulted in less than desirable outcomes for the Government. The effort at the back end of the process has to be as aggressive as the effort devoted to awarding the contract on the front end.
- **Integrated Acquisition Skills**. The contracting function does not operate exclusive of other functional areas. Each of the Department's acquisition functional areas needs to be viewed in terms of how the work is accomplished to support our Nation and its Warfighter. Acquisition outcomes are the result of professionals from many functional areas working together – such as the requirements, program management, logistics, science and engineering, legal, and financial management communities. Leaders agree that there is a gap in the how we develop key functional leaders to possess the integrated acquisition management competencies that cut across these areas and are required for success.

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The competency assessment effort, and specifically, the process of identifying gap areas that exist across the Contracting Community, has provided senior leaders with the information they need to develop and implement gap closure strategies; to improve and grow the Contracting Workforce; and to lead the charge in response to the President's March 4, 2009 mandate for change with regard to government contracting. A summary of the gap closure strategies that have stemmed from and/or respond to this effort are discussed in the following section.

### **III. Improving Capability of the Contracting Workforce**

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF) and the FY2010 Defense Budget together provide senior leaders with the means to close workforce gaps - both in size and in capabilities - and to adjust human capital strategies according to the priorities articulated by senior leaders. Consistent with Secretary of Defense' intent to grow the acquisition workforce, there is no question that the size of the organic Defense Acquisition Workforce needs to and will increase. Today, Contracting senior leaders are working to keep hiring initiatives on track and to increase capacity to manage and oversee contracting processes. In addition, they are working to close competency gaps in the workforce to ensure that the Department has the skills needed to deliver mission critical capabilities. Specifically, Contracting senior leaders are implementing initiatives in the areas of training - to include content, methods, and delivery; improvements in policy, guidelines, and business processes that govern and regulate contracting actions; ways to broaden and deepen experience and increase career development opportunities; and resources - both manpower and dollars - to meet the mission. By working together to implement the closure strategies identified below, the Components can maintain a global perspective of needs and solutions, and continue to identify opportunities to create efficiencies and share best practices across the workforce.

Within the following lettered subsections of this report, there are Best Practices (blue shaded) and Highlights (yellow shaded) that reflect the contributions of participating organizations/commands to convey the capability improvement processes that are in place and/or being implemented.

#### **A. Fundamental Contracting Skills and Currency, Breadth, and Depth of Knowledge**

The gap in fundamental contracting skills across entry and journey levels, and in currency, breadth, and depth of knowledge across journey and senior levels, cuts across all of the technical contracting competencies. To address this gap, senior leaders agreed on a series of initiatives focused on the mastery of fundamental

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contracting skills *early* in a contracting professional’s career, followed by the *continuous* maintenance, enhancement and expansion of those skills as one enters the journey and senior levels:

- Reassess Level I, II, and III certification standards for the Contracting Career Field. The Contracting Functional Integrated Product Team (FIPT) <sup>6</sup> is leading the effort to evaluate training and experience requirements for certification and the best approach for assessing experience as a critical element in improving workforce quality and capability. Many in the Community believe that time-based experience standards alone do not demonstrate quality or level of performance for required competencies and that better alignment of experience with competency development may be required. Leadership across the Acquisition Community must balance the need for consistency with the need to address specific career field concerns.
- Examine/revise training methods to focus on fundamentals early in the careers of contracting professionals. In addition, reinforce development of critical thinking and judgment. Employees must master the “how” in addition to the “what” when it comes to contracting skills.
  - Establish intern programs, where needed, to train and certify contracting professionals with skills that are immediately useful to organizations and start them on a solid career path in contracting.
  - Establish “Boot Camps” to integrate certification and component-specific training requirements to help standardize fundamental training content for all contracting professionals.

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<sup>6</sup> For each acquisition career field, the FIPT serves as the subject matter expert body for their respective functional area for oversight and management of career development requirements. The Functional Leader of the FIPT establishes, oversees, and maintains the education, training, and experience requirements including competencies and certification standards; position category descriptions; and annually certifies that the content of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) courses are current, technically accurate, and consistent with DoD acquisition policies. Functional teams support the Functional Leader in executing these responsibilities for their respective functional area.

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### **Best Practices: Providing Fundamental Skills to Employees Early in Career**

- The Air Force Mission Ready Contracting Officers (MRCO) Course for Military and Civilian Contracting Professionals and Mission Ready Airman Course (MRAC) for Military Enlisted Contracting Professionals. MRCO is a course for new officer and civilian trainee accessions into the Contracting Career Field. It educates and prepares graduates to assume positions in Operational, Systems, Logistics, and Research and Development contracting. MRAC is a course for new enlisted accessions into the Contracting Career Field. It educates and prepares graduates to assume positions in Operational contracting. The curriculum for both courses includes the Air Force business environment, applicable laws and regulations, and hands-on exercises utilizing applicable automated data systems. Graduates are fully capable of accomplishing basic contracting functions in their unit.

- Dedicate more resources to on-the-job training and mentoring. Those in the Contracting Community ‘who grew up here’ remember a time when they had someone over their shoulder guiding them, correcting them, and challenging their thinking and logic. The Community has lost some of that over the years and needs to revisit these practices to improve performance.

### **Highlight: Panel on Contracting Integrity**

#### **On-the-Job Training (OJT) Team**

- The OJT team was chartered by the Panel on Contracting Integrity to develop a tool for supervisors and Entry – level personnel to track and document the demonstration and understanding of required contracting competencies (skill sets).
- The OJT Team will submit its recommendations to the Panel by December 2010.

- Improve training by re-examining and revising training content and delivery. Some training delivered online is better delivered and retained in a classroom setting. Other content that is less complex in nature can be offered online or via just-in-time methods that are web-based.
- Institute a 4-week classroom course for new hires which provides a total immersion into the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement. (See Highlight below)

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### Highlight: CON 090 Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Fundamentals

- The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) has developed a four week classroom course for new hires which provides a total immersion into the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS).
  - The most comprehensive basic contracting course developed in the last 20 years, CON 090 provides knowledge of contracting based on 28 technical competencies and 52 sub-elements deemed most important to the Contracting Community.
  - CON 090 also provides an opportunity for new contract professionals to build camaraderie/network across the Acquisition Community.
- Reassess learning opportunities to ensure that they adequately address the requirement to increase/maintain technical currency in the Contracting Workforce. Action plans should ensure that the Journey/Senior levels are leveraging all opportunities available to maintain depth, breadth and currency.

### Highlight: DoD Procurement Conference and Training Symposium

- The inaugural DoD Procurement Conference/Training Symposium was held in May 2010. The event provided over 1300 entry, journey, and senior level members of the Contracting Community, as well as industry procurement professionals, with the opportunity to obtain continuous learning in areas such as source selection, cost and price analysis, and performance-based acquisition. Due to the success of this inaugural event, the conference/training symposium will be held annually.
- Strengthen current job rotation/career development programs and opportunities to provide the range of experiences (within and outside of the Contracting career field) necessary to be more agile, to prepare the workforce for the next career level, and to step into managerial/leadership positions in the Contracting Community.
  - Specific to the competency Terms and Conditions, improve the understanding and impact of terms and conditions that are included in contracts so that they are sufficient and best reflect the interest of the Government. Improve training on clauses, case law, and case studies to better understand which terms and conditions apply and why they apply in different scenarios.

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- Develop contract writing and other electronic tools that facilitate the application of critical thinking/judgment in the creation of a written contract and other contracting actions through use of a question and answer interface. (See Best Practice below)

Best Practices: Contract Writing Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>The Army Contracting Command (ACC): Paperless Contract Files.</b> The ACC's Virtual Contracting Enterprise (VCE) is a suite of e-tools developed and managed by 1102 Contracting Professionals, and fielded throughout the ACC. VCE includes Paperless Contract Files (PCF), a secure website application with which acquisition professionals can store, edit, send for review and approval, and archive as official records the contractual files that they work with everyday. PCF's "Turbo Tax<sup>®</sup>"-like Wizard is a series of questions designed to identify the requirements of specific contract actions and present to the user the documents that must be completed prior to award.</li><li>▪ <b>The U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA): Paperless Contract System (UPAS).</b> UPAS is a secure website application that allows customers to submit acquisition documents through a portal which automatically creates an official paperless contract file which can be assigned throughout the contract award, administration, and closeout. UPAS was developed by the USAMRAA to support the medical R&amp;D and assistance agreement mission and is fielded in the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.</li></ul>

## B. The Source Selection Process

Gaps identified in the Department's source selection process span the competency areas of *Source Selection Planning*, *Source Selection*, *Proposal Evaluation*, and *Contract Award*. In order to address these gaps, senior leaders identified the following closure strategies, spanning from enhancing the training and development process to the addition of needed resources:

- Develop on-the-job and just-in-time training opportunities that occur at the point one will participate in the source selection process.
- Gather and share organization best practices and implement them across the Department, from business practices to training to selection of those who participate in source selection review committees. Successful practices must be replicated that help to achieve better outcomes for the Government.

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- Focus on transparency and clarity to improve communications with customers throughout the source selection process.
- Improve training on the debriefing process that involves all stakeholders in the acquisition career fields, including contracting, program management, and the requirements communities.
- Standardize the methodology and approach the Department uses to conduct source selections. (See highlight below)

### Highlight: Source Selection Joint Analysis Team (JAT)

- The Source Selection JAT was established on November 10, 2008. The objective of the JAT is to standardize the methodology and approach the Department uses to conduct source selections.
- An Executive Steering Committee and three sub-committees were formed: Understanding the Problem; Best Practices; and Service/Agency Source Selection guidance.
- The JAT has thoroughly examined the current source selection process, identified key elements of successful source selections, and drafted a set of source selection guidance to improve the source selection process and selection decisions.
- The JAT is currently working to incorporate comments received from the Components into a revised set of guidance.

### Best Practices: Source Selection

- **The Army Contracting Command (ACC): Acquisition Source Selection Interactive Support Tool (ASSIST).** Part of the Virtual Contracting Enterprise (VCE) suite of e-tools developed and managed by 1102 Contracting Professionals, and fielded throughout the Army Contracting Command, is a software tool used to aid Source Selection Evaluation boards (SSEBs) in conducting source selections at the unclassified level.  
It provides a means to electronically organize and manage complex, high dollar value, formal source selections.
- **The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA): Source Selection Training Class and Companion Desk Guide.** Using DAWDF dollars, DLA has created a source selection training class with a companion desk guide in order to sharpen and build skills in this area. This DLA context sensitive training is being presented agency wide.
- **The Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR): Apply Rigor to the Source Selection Process.** Consistent leadership and membership on Source Selection Advisory Councils (SSAC), mandatory training (or, appropriate experience) prior to selection for an SSAC, or as a Source Selection Authority (SSA), as well as standard processes ensure the necessary rigor is applied to the source selection process.

## C. Cost and Price Analysis

The gap in Cost and Price Analysis includes the technical competency areas of *Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis, Preparation and Negotiation, Bid Evaluation, and Negotiate Forward Pricing Rate Agreements*. Increasing the skills that these competencies define in order to determine and/or establish a fair and reasonable price for the Government is critical. Leaders identified the following strategies to close gaps in this area:

- Review/enhance existing training, especially in advanced skills. Provide basic cost/price analysis course for all 1102s/contract specialists and advanced pricing course targeted to senior contract specialists and price analysts. Both should emphasize understanding of how terms and conditions impact pricing, and judgment and critical thinking to arm individuals with the tools to handle the simplest to most complex negotiations.
- Improve training and policy for the program management and requirements communities on the importance of negotiating fair and reasonable prices. All stakeholders must understand and agree to the objectives of the pricing and negotiation processes.
- Establish sound and robust career ladders for Cost Estimating and Pricing Specialists to create a clear and easy-to-see path for advancement.
- Establish Advanced Cost/Pricing Centers of Excellence. (see Highlight below)

<b>Highlight: Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) Cost and Pricing Center</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In order to build capacity to provide top-notch and pricing support to the Acquisition Enterprise, DCMA will develop and sustain expertise in forward pricing and proposal analysis, recruit and train next generation of cost monitors and price analysts, develop and maintain accessible contractor cost performance information resources, and conduct special cost reviews for the DoD.</li><li>▪ The Center will provide DCMA customers with increased availability cost/ price analysts and technical personnel to support source selections and negotiated procurement; improved consistency and timeliness in handling complex cost issues at contractor locations; capability to conduct overhead should cost reviews for the acquisition enterprise; and continuous evaluation and in-depth analysis of overhead and direct labor rates through the reconstitution/staffing of Cost Monitoring program at DCMA field offices.</li></ul>

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<b>Best Practice: Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Center of Excellence for Pricing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In 2008, DLA established a Center of Excellence in Pricing and tasked its staff with reviewing contract prices across the Agency, detecting overpricing and conducting corrective action.</li><li>▪ Center of excellence analysts initially identified \$330,000 in overcharges that have been recouped from the responsible contractors, and recovered an additional \$400,000 in FY10.</li><li>▪ The center's analyses have also been responsible for pricing-related improvements in a number of DLA's prime-vendor programs that are expected to result in future savings of approximately \$1 million annually.</li></ul>

### D. Contract Performance Management

The gap in *Contract Performance Management* includes the skills and knowledge needed to monitor and evaluate contractor performance, enforce contractor compliance, and resolve performance problems. Leadership across the Components agree that in order to address this gap, the workforce needs to be retrained in and refocused on post award activities – they are just as critical pre-award activities. This includes monitoring the feedback by contracting officer representatives, enforcing contractor compliance, monitoring and documenting contractor performance, and resolving contract performance problems. Leaders identified the following strategies:

- Train/re-train Contracting Workforce in executing post-award activities, which include compliance enforcement, performance reviews, and problem solving.

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### **Highlight: Defense Contract Management Agency's (DCMA) Assessment of Contracting Administration Function**

- The Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) is working with Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy (DPAP) and the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) to develop/conduct a targeted competency model/assessment.
- The purpose of this effort is to build on the Contracting Competency Model to include DCMA's contract administration functions, to include functions listed in the FAR, and to target a workforce assessment to the DCMA population performing these functions.
- Assessment results will guide development of training courses specifically tailored to DCMA requirements and potential management controls for processes/functions where the lack of expertise could lead to unacceptable risks.

- Provide training for Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and COR supervisors so that they understand the importance of this support role. CORs are designated and authorized in writing by the contracting officer to perform specific technical or administrative functions on contracts or orders. These individuals serve a critical role in assuring contractors meet the performance requirements of contracts in terms of cost, quality, quantity, and schedule. Senior leaders across the Contracting Community agree that the Department must do a better job in managing the COR role and responsibilities, and provide better training for CORs.

### **Highlight: Panel on Contracting Integrity Initiative Sufficient Contract Surveillance**

- The Panel on Contracting Integrity Panel is pursuing an initiative to evaluate current COR training and to develop/implement a COR certification process.
- Training - DAU is converting its existing 5-day resident COR training course to an approximately 32 hour on-line course. This will allow CORs to take the course in residence or to take the course on-line. DAU is also developing a 2-4 hour Continuous Learning Module called COR in the Contingency Environment.
- Certification Process – A DoD standard has been drafted that will: specify roles, responsibilities, and authorities for the various offices and individuals involved with COR performance; establish procedures for identification, nomination, appointment and termination of appointment of CORs; establish minimum qualification requirements (i.e., training, agency experience, relevant technical experience, and general competencies) for individuals nominated to perform COR functions; and establish a requirement for a COR Management System.

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### Best Practices: Contract Performance Management

- **The Army Contracting Command (ACC): Contracting Officer's Representatives (COR) Application.** The COR Application, part of the Virtual Contracting Enterprise (VCE) suite of e-tools developed and managed by 1102 Contracting Professionals, and fielded throughout the ACC, allows the tracking and management of COR nominees, existing CORs, and COR contract management. The tool allows prospective CORs to self-nominate and their supervisors and contracting officers to approve the nominations. In addition, it supports the file upload of documents such as training certifications, monthly reports, and termination letters.
- **The U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA): Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and Grant Officer's Representative (GOR) Module.** USAMRAA's Paperless Contract System (UPAS) includes a COR and GOR module which provides for tracking, management, and reporting of CORs and GORs, including current and future training requirements and appropriate levels of certification.
- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Warrant Management System (WAMAS).** WAMAS automates the manual request and approval process for Contracting Officer Warrants to include modifications and maintenance to existing appointments. WAMAS is a web-based system which incorporates regulatory requirements with built-in functionalities to assist managers at all levels with the selection, appointment, termination of appointment, creation of warrant certificate and supporting memorandums. WAMAS also serves as a centralized data repository and support's the standardization among USACE's three regional Principle Assistant Responsible for Contracting (PARC) Offices.
- **Defense Logistics Agency (DLA): Policy Guidance for all Contracting Employees.** DLA has implemented policy guidance instructing all DLA contracting employees to acquire a minimum of 25% of their continuous learning points in the area of Contract Administration. The intent of this policy is to ensure that DLA's Contracting Workforce has depth of knowledge in this area.

## E. Integrated Acquisition Skills

Competency assessments and studies within all functional areas are highlighting gaps in current workforce development efforts in the area of cross-functional development. Senior Contracting leaders across the Components recommend that cross-functional initiatives be developed so that the objectives/roles of acquisition stakeholders are understood, and agreement on the acquisition objective is reached. The role of contracting professionals within the Acquisition Community

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cannot be overstated. While it is important that efforts to close contracting competency gaps are geared toward the Contracting Workforce, the Contracting Community has identified the need for training and policies that are geared to other stakeholders in the contracting process, including program management, logistics, legal, engineering, and requirements communities.

The similarities in the data on years of experience in contracting and acquisition (Figures 6 and 7) suggest that training and experiences that help to broaden the careers of contracting professionals should be considered when developing career paths, and workforce development and planning. Cross-functional initiatives such as those that follow will provide the types of experiential learning that will help to broaden knowledge and opportunities across the communities, and avoid stovepipes:

- Develop policies for all acquisition stakeholders that promote cross-functional engagement in achieving acquisition goals. The policies need to clearly outline roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.
- Develop cross-functional training that provides tools and insights into stakeholder's roles in achieving acquisition outcomes. All stakeholders – program management, logistics, legal, requirements – should understand each other's roles in an acquisition.

<b>Highlight: Acquisition Management Functional Group (AMFG) Initiative to Address the Development of Key Functional Leaders</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The AMFG is leading an effort to ensure that key functional leaders (including lead contracting officers) assigned to or selected for assignment to major programs are properly qualified.</li><li>▪ Initiatives being considered by the group include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Integrated Training: Executive level training for key acquisition functional leaders. Integrate all key functional leaders and provide leadership training, critical thinking development in common core competencies, and simulate a program office environment.</li><li>– Level IV Certification: Several career fields outside of the contracting functional area plan to pilot a level IV certification that establishes competency based experience requirements, training, and education.</li></ul></li></ul>

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## IV. Moving Forward - Where the Contracting Community Goes From Here

The competency-based management efforts summarized in this report have, for the first time, enabled the Department's Contracting Community to baseline the state of the Contracting Workforce and provide an inventory of capabilities, to identify gaps for current and future requirements, and to take the critical steps needed improve the performance of the Contracting Workforce. The strategies outlined in this report reflect only the beginning of a more collaborative and robust workforce planning strategy for the Contracting Community. Senior Contracting leaders stand committed to establish ownership and accountability to the improvement of the Contracting Workforce and to share lessons learned across the greater Acquisition Community. To this end, some near term planning will involve:

- Integrating competency-based management efforts for the Contracting Community into the The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Strategy and establishing a continuous process to update and maintain the competencies required for the Contracting Community to deliver mission critical capabilities. Efforts will include:
  - 1) Maintaining/updating the Contracting Competency Model to reflect lessons learned and future requirements;
  - 2) Tailoring/augmenting the Contracting Competency Model as required to reflect job-specific and organization-specific competencies in order to target specialty areas/centers of excellence for components/contracting organizations; and
  - 3) Pursuing the establishment a continuous competency/capability assessment strategy to: assess capability trends and shifts in mission requirements; understand requirements and needs of the Contracting Workforce; and refine and adjust workforce planning initiatives accordingly.

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- Developing/augmenting measures and methods to evaluate the effectiveness of strategic workforce initiatives and gap closure strategies.
- Investigating further applications of competencies into initiatives that support recruitment, hiring, and career development.

Efforts to improve the Contracting Workforce and performance outcomes will continue to advance. Senior leaders are taking steps to implement workforce planning and organizational development and learning strategies that will allow the workforce to grow, be adaptive, and maintain capability. The Contracting Competency Model provides insight into the skills and behaviors necessary for successful job performance. The assessment process enables the Contracting Community to both capture and track a complete inventory of capabilities in the Contracting Workforce. Finally – and crucial to the Community’s success - the Community has developed a cadre of senior Contracting leaders dedicated to develop and implement gap closure strategies to build a high-quality workforce with the right competencies and skill sets, at the right places, at the right time.

# Appendix A: Contracting Competency Model

The current Competency Model is composed of 12 Units of Competence, 28 technical competencies (with 52 technical elements), and 10 professional competencies.

## Unit 1: Pre Award and Award

### *Competency 1: Determination of How Best to Satisfy Requirements for the Mission Area*

Element 1. Provide proactive business advice on requirements documentation based on analysis of requirements and performance-based approaches to find the best solution to satisfy mission requirements.

Element 2. Conduct market research using relevant resources prior to solicitation to understand the industry environment and determine availability of sources of supply and/or services.

Element 3. Perform acquisition planning by considering all available sources and methods of procurement to satisfy mission needs while appropriately allocating risk.

### *Competency 2: Consider Socio-Economic Requirements*

Element 4. Consider socio-economic requirements including small business, labor, environmental, foreign, and other socio-economic requirements to provide maximum practicable contracting and subcontracting opportunities.

### *Competency 3: Promote Competition*

Element 5. Conduct pre-solicitation industry conferences and analyze responses to draft solicitation terms and conditions to promote full and open competition.

Element 6. Identify and facilitate joint ventures and partnering on solicitations and subcontracting opportunities to increase competition and/or small business participation.

### *Competency 4: Source Selection Planning*

Element 7. Document a source selection plan that is consistent with public law, regulations, policy, and other guidelines.

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### *Competency 5: Solicitation of Offers*

Element 8. Conduct pre-bid or pre-proposal conference to inform offerors of the requirements of the acquisition.

Element 9. Publicize proposed procurements to promote competition.

Element 10. Issue a written solicitation consistent with the requirements documents, acquisition plan and source selection plan, that includes the appropriate provisions and clauses tailored to the requirement.

Element 11. Issue amendments or cancel solicitations when such actions are in the best interest of the Government and conform to law and regulations.

Element 12. Respond to preaward inquiries by taking the appropriate action according to FAR/DFARS to resolve questions.

### *Competency 6: Responsibility Determination*

Element 13. Determine contractor responsibility by assessing past performance and financial stability to ensure that the contractor will be able to satisfy Government requirements.

### *Competency 7: Bid Evaluation (Sealed Bidding)*

Element 14. Evaluate the sealed bids in a transparent manner to allow for fair evaluation of price, past performance, and technical capability.

Element 15. Perform price analysis to determine whether the lowest evaluated bid is reasonable and provides the best value to the Government.

### *Competency 8: Proposal Evaluation (Contracting by Negotiation)*

Element 16. Evaluate proposals and quotes against evaluation criteria and request technical and pricing support, if needed, to identify offers that are acceptable or can be made acceptable.

### *Competency 9: Source Selection*

Element 17. Decide whether to hold discussions based on results of the evaluation.

Element 18. Establish the competitive range to determine which of the offers will not be considered for the award.

### *Competency 10: Contract Award*

Element 19. Select the awardee who in the Government's estimation provides the best value.

Element 20. Award contract/Issue task or delivery orders after ensuring fund availability and obtaining reviews and approvals.

Element 21. Conducting pre/post award debriefings for all unsuccessful offerors when requested to ensure appropriate disclosure of information.

### *Competency 11: Process Protests*

Element 22. Process protests to determine whether to withhold award or stop performance pending outcome of the protest.

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### Unit 2: Develop and/or Negotiate Positions

#### *Competency 12: Justification of Other than Full and Open*

Element 23. Justify the need to negotiate or award the contract without full and open competition or, in a multiple-award scenario, without providing for fair opportunity based on business strategies and market research.

#### *Competency 13: Terms and Conditions*

Element 24. Determine terms and conditions, including special contract requirements applicable to the acquisition, that are appropriate for the acquisition to comply with laws and regulations (e.g. method of financing, Government property, intellectual property, OCI, specialty metals).

#### *Competency 14: Preparation and Negotiation*

Element 25. Prepare for negotiations/discussions/awards by reviewing audit and technical reports, performing cost and/or price analysis (or reviewing price analysts reports), and developing pre-negotiation position to include identifying potential trade-offs.

Element 26. Negotiate terms and conditions (including price) based on the pre-negotiation objective and give-and-take with the offeror to establish a fair and reasonable price.

### Unit 3: Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis

#### *Competency 15: Advanced Cost and/or Price Analysis*

Element 27. Evaluate the reasonableness of the contractor's proposed cost/price for use in preparing for complex negotiations.

Element 28. Develop positions on pricing-related contract terms and conditions to aid in developing the Government's position.

Element 29. Supports special cost, price, and finance efforts by researching, analyzing and providing recommended positions that are in the best interests of the Government.

Element 30. Evaluate award-fee/incentive-fee plans and arrangements for adherence to policy and guidance.

### Unit 4: Contract Administration

#### *Competency 16: Initiation of Work*

Element 31. Conduct post-award orientations to address customer concerns and contractor's responsibilities for performance of the contract.

Element 32. Plan for contract administration regarding delegating administrative functions; designating, training, and managing CORs; and formally establishing all contract administration responsibilities.

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### *Competency 17: Contract Performance Management*

Element 33. Administer contract by monitoring contracting officer representative's feedback, contractor performance, and enforcing contractor compliance with contract requirements.

Element 34. Ensure past performance evaluation is initiated to ensure documentation of performance including contracting officer input.

Element 35. Analyze, negotiate, and prepare claims file in order to issue final decisions.

Element 36. Resolve contract performance problems by gathering facts, determining remedies, and initiate remedial actions in order to find and provide a solution.

### *Competency 18: Issue Changes and Modifications*

Element 37. Analyze the need for contract modifications and negotiate and issue contract modifications, as required.

### *Competency 19: Approve Payment Requests*

Element 38. Approve contractor request for payments to include final vouchers under cost reimbursement contracts, progress payments, performance-based payments, or commercial financing.

### *Competency 20: Close-Out Contracts*

Element 39. Close-out contracts following proper procedure to ensure property disposition, final payments, and documents/clearances have been received.

## **Unit 5: Small Business/Socio-Economic Programs**

### *Competency 21: Addressing Small Business Concerns*

Element 40. Assist small business concerns in understanding how to do business with the government, identifying contracting opportunities, and responding to small business inquiries regarding payment delays or problems.

Element 41. Serve as the contracting activity small business specialist and assist the Small Business Administration's assigned representative in conducting annual reviews of small business share, evaluation of contractors' subcontracting performance, and planning to maximize the use of small businesses.

Element 42. As the contracting activity small business specialist, provide recommendations on acquisition documents as to whether a particular acquisition should be set aside for one of the Small Business programs.

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### Unit 6: Negotiate FPRAs & Administer Cost Accounting Standards

*Competency 22: Negotiate Forward Pricing Rates Agreements & Administer Cost Accounting Standards*

Element 43. Negotiate forward pricing rate agreements (FPRAs) for billing purposes and administer cost accounting standards to ensure contractor's compliance.

### Unit 7: Contract Termination

*Competency 23: Contract Termination*

Element 44. Terminate contracts using applicable FAR if it is in the best interest of the Government (either termination for convenience or cause/default).

### Unit 8: Procurement Policy

*Competency 24: Procurement Analysis*

Element 45. Provide analysis to advise on procurement matters including contract documentation, legislation issues, and congressional inquiries impacting contracting matters.

Element 46. Develops procurement policy and changes in procedures through analysis of major procurements for statutory and regulatory compliance and a macro-analysis of contracting matters.

Element 47. Advise on high-level legislation and policy matters to recommend and/or lead change in the procurement process.

Element 48. Perform oversight and audits to review contract files, compile lessons learned, and ensure consistent policy application.

### Unit 9: E-Business Related

*Competency 25: E-Business and Automated Tools*

Element 49. Use e-business systems and automated tools to promote standardization, efficiency, and transparency.

*Competency 26: Activity Program Coordinator for Purchase Card*

Element 50. Performs oversight and execution for the Purchase Card Program.

### Unit 10: Construction/Architect & Engineering (A&E)

*Competency 27: Construction/Architect & Engineering (A&E)*

Element 51. Develops acquisition strategies, issues notices and solicitations, conducts negotiations, selects sources, awards and administers contracts for construction and A&E in accordance with requirements and procedures associated with construction and A&E outlined in the FAR and

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supplemental policy and procedures (with particular attention to FAP Part 36.).

### **Unit 11: Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment**

*Competency 28: Contracting in a Contingent and/or Combat Environment*

Element 52. Apply contracting expertise during deployments, contingency operations, or responses to natural disasters.

### **Unit 12: Professional Competency**

1. Problem Solving: Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevance and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.
2. Customer Service: Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services; is committed to continuous improvement.
3. Oral Communication: Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively; clarifies information as needed.
4. Written Communication: Writes in a clear, concise, organized, and convincing manner for the intended audience.
5. Interpersonal Skills: Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different situations
6. Decisiveness: Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
7. Technical Credibility: Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise
8. Flexibility: Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
9. Resilience: Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

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10. Accountability: Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results; determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work; accepts responsibility for mistakes; complies with established control systems and rules.

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## Appendix B: Participating Commands/ Organizations

This table reflects all of the contracting agencies and/or activities that participated in the Contracting Workforce Competency Assessment. Data in this report represents those that participated in the Second Phase of Assessments

Department of the Air Force Commands/Organizations	Pilot Assessments	Second Phase of Assessments
Air Force Bases – Hanscom, Robins, Peterson, Charleston	X	
Air Combat Command (ACC)		X
Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency (AFISR)		X
Air Education and Training Command (AETC)		X
Air Force District of Washington (AFDW)		X
Air Force Field Operating Activities		X
Air Force Headquarters (HQUSAF)		X
Air Force Material Command (AFMC)		X
Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE)		X
Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)		X
Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)		X
Air Force Space Command (AFSPC)		X
Air Force Mobility Command(AMC)		X
Pacific Air Forces(PACAF)		X
U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA)		X
Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC)		X
U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE)		X

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Department of the Army Commands/Organizations	Pilot Assessments	Second Phase of Assessments
Army Communications Electronics Command (CECOM)	X	
Army Contracting Agency (ACA)	X	X
Army AE/PEO Structure (AE)		X
Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM)		X
Army Acquisition Support Center (ASC)		X
Army Contracting Career Program (CP14HQACC)		X
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (DASA), Procurement		X
Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM)		X
Army Joint Munitions and Lethality Life Cycle Command (JMLLCMC)		X
Army Medical Command (MEDCOM)		X
Army National Guard Bureau (NGB)		X
Army Office of the Program Manager-Saudi Arabian National Guard (OPM-SANG)		X
Army Research, Development, and Engineering Command (RDECOM)		X
Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC)		X
Army Space and Missile Defense Command (SMDC)		X
Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM)		X
Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC)		X
Army Contingency	X	
Army Corps of Engineers	X	
Department of the Navy Commands/Organizations	Pilot Assessments	Second Phase of Assessments
Assistant for Administration Office of the Under Secretary of the Navy (AAUSN)		X
Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYS)		X
Military Sealift Command (MSC)		X
Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR)		X
Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC)		X
Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP)		X
Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA)		X
Navy Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP)		X

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Department of the Navy Commands/Organizations (Continued)	Pilot Assessments	Second Phase of Assessments
Office of Naval Research (ONR)		X
Navy Space and Naval Warfare Systems (SPAWAR)		X
Strategic Systems Programs (SSP)		X
U.S. Marine Corps Contingency	X	X
Other Defense Agencies/Organizations	Pilot Assessments	Second Phase of Assessments
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)		X
Defense Acquisition University(DAU)		X
Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)		X
Defense Commissary Agency (DECA)		X
Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)		X
Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)		X
Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)		X
Defense Logistics Agency	X	
Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)		X
Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)		X
Missile Defense Agency (MDA)		X
National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA)		X
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistic (USD(AT&L))		X
U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)		X
U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)		X
Washington Headquarters Services (WHS)		X

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