

From Personnel Administration to Talent Strategy

Why the Acquisition Transformation Strategy Demands a Chief Human Capital Officer, Talent Teams, and a Strategic Approach to the Three Rs of Talent

DISCUSSION BRIEF

April 2026

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Executive Summary

THE PROBLEM

The Acquisition Transformation Strategy demands a workforce that exercises judgment, appropriately balances risks, negotiates at speed, and manages complexity across the acquisition portfolio. The current system produces a workforce optimized for compliance, credentialed through knowledge-based certification, and managed through distributed accountability structures that no single leader owns. Research confirms: the military tracks *capacity* (bodies in billets) when the mission requires *capability* (skilled professionals matched to the right roles). The acquisition workforce problem starts with talent management followed by fit-for-purpose upskilling and training.

THREE STRUCTURAL PROPOSALS

1

Chief Human Capital Officer for Acquisition

A senior leader in OUSW(A&S) selected for world-class talent management expertise, not defense acquisition pedigree. Owns competency architecture, talent analytics, succession planning, workforce intelligence, and government-industry rotations. First 180 days: listen and diagnose (1–60), architecture and quick wins (61–120), deliver the Workforce Transformation Plan (121–180).

2

Talent Teams

Modeled on the Deal Team and BOND program, not a traditional commission. Senior private-sector human capital experts and highly regarded cross-functional practitioners from critical acquisition disciplines, such as contracts strategy and execution, cost estimation, digital engineering, supply chain risk, systems engineering, embedded in OUSW(A&S) and dispatched to Military Departments and PAE organizations. Cross-functional members are selected not for seniority but for the creative, action-oriented, innovative, and critical-thinking profile the ATS demands; they represent the next generation of talent the Department is trying to attract and retain. Authorized to make real-time recommendations to Department of War leadership rather than study and report.

3

Strategic Three Rs Overhaul

RECRUIT through competency-based selection and person-job matching—not billet-filling. **RETAIN** through meaningful work, modern tools, autonomy, and organizational trust—not just bonuses. **REPLACE** through succession architecture that preserves institutional knowledge—not emergency backfill.

GROUNDED IN...

- Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) research comparing military readiness and industry HCM (Stoneberger & Forrester, 2023)
- Deal Team competency framework for munitions acceleration negotiations (Guinto & Finkenstadt, 2026)
- Acquisition Transformation Strategy, E.O. 14265 (2025)
- NCMA and Wolf Stake practitioner workforce and AI leadership curricula (2026)

HOW TO READ THIS PAPER: Sections 1–6 build the evidence case. Section 7 is a panel protocol for further study. Section 8 has seven **IF / THEN** legislative proposals: **IF** a finding is confirmed, **THEN** advance the proposal with each citing the U.S. Code section to consider in the NDAA.

Abstract

The Department of War (DoW) Acquisition Transformation Strategy (ATS), released in response to Executive Order 14265, identifies five pillars for overhauling defense acquisition. Pillar Two, *Elevate and Empower the Acquisition Workforce to Rapidly Deliver Capability*, calls for recruiting top talent, creating the Warfighting Acquisition University (WAU), incentivizing risk-taking, and empowering Portfolio Acquisition Executives. Yet the strategy defers workforce transformation details to a forthcoming plan, leaving the most consequential element of acquisition reform (the human capital dimension) underspecified. This paper argues that the ATS workforce pillar will fail without three structural innovations: (1) establishment of a Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) function embedded in the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment, selected for world-class talent management expertise rather than defense acquisition pedigree; (2) embedded Acquisition Talent Teams modeled on the Deal Team and Business Operations for National Defense (BOND) program, staffed with senior private-sector human capital leaders and cross-functional practitioners who represent the next generation of acquisition talent the Department seeks to recruit and retain; and (3) a strategic overhaul of how the Department recruits, retains, and replaces its acquisition professionals. Drawing on research comparing military readiness and industry human capital management (Stoneberger & Forrester, 2023), the Deal Team competency framework (Guinto & Finkenstadt, 2026), and practitioner workforce development curricula, the paper demonstrates that the acquisition workforce problem is fundamentally a talent management problem. The paper includes a panel interview protocol for gleaning insights from senior acquisition leaders and industry talent executives, and a legislative proposal framework mapping potential findings to specific amendments to 10 U.S.C. Chapter 87 and related authorities.

1. Introduction: The Workforce Is the Strategy

The Acquisition Transformation Strategy opens with an unmistakable declaration: the Department of War is on a wartime footing. The document articulates three overarching outcomes centered on outpacing adversaries in fielding technology, increasing production capacity, and shifting from a culture of compliance to one of speed and execution. Five pillars organize the effort. Pillar One addresses the Defense Industrial Base. Pillar Three targets regulatory reduction. Pillars Four and Five address technical execution excellence and lifecycle risk management. Pillar Two, the workforce pillar, is the connective tissue. Without a transformed workforce, no regulation can be reduced intelligently, no Deal Team can negotiate at speed, no Portfolio Acquisition Executive can exercise expanded authorities, and no Warfighting Acquisition University can train what does not yet exist.

The ATS acknowledges this centrality. It states that the workforce must possess the “trinity of command: authority, responsibility, and accountability, along with flexibility, incentives, and resources, to rapidly meet the needs of the warfighter.” It calls for government-industry rotations, blended career paths, and active recruitment. It promises a separate Acquisition Workforce Transformation Plan. But the strategy’s own logic reveals a deeper structural gap: nowhere in the ATS, nor in precedent Department of Defense workforce reform efforts, is there a senior leader whose sole mandate is talent strategy for the acquisition enterprise. The current workforce management apparatus is distributed across the DAWIA certification framework, Career Field Managers, Service Acquisition Executives, and the Human Capital Operating Plans of individual military departments. This distributed model has produced a workforce that, by the ATS’s own admission, has allowed organizations to “slip into a compliance-based, checklist mentality.”

This paper proposes three structural interventions to close the gap between the ATS’s ambition and its workforce execution capacity.

2. The Human Capital Deficit: What Research Tells Us

A. Readiness Is Misunderstood Because Talent Management Is Absent

Research conducted at NPS (Stoneberger & Forrester, 2023) investigated Air Force readiness from a human capital management perspective, interviewing 16 government officials and 11 industry leaders. The study’s validated problem statement: “The Air Force has a problem with how readiness is understood by the force. There is room for improvement in how the Air Force manages Human Capital to achieve readiness by

changing the culture, educating personnel on readiness, and managing capability versus capacity.”

Capacity is not capability. Persistent conflation of having enough personnel with having adequately skilled personnel. In acquisition, this manifests as fully staffed program offices with insufficient expertise in cost estimation, supply chain risk, negotiation, or digital engineering.

Readiness understanding varies by experience level. Junior personnel equated readiness with compliance status; senior leaders understood it as holistic preparedness. The acquisition parallel: many contracting officers equate readiness with DAWIA certification; the ATS demands professionals who exercise judgment and negotiate complex deals.

Industry uses organizational agility, not readiness. Industry achieves agility through talent management systems matching individual capabilities to organizational needs, not purely through compliance-based certification.

The zero-sum assumption is false. Organizations can simultaneously achieve high readiness and high satisfaction of individual needs. This challenges the implicit assumption that mission urgency requires sacrificing talent development.

B. The Deal Team Model Exposes the Competency Gap

The Deal Team concept utilized by the DoW for Munitions Acceleration (Guinto & Finkenstadt, 2026) distinguishes between competencies that must be screened for during selection (agility, resilience, strategic patience, risk tolerance calibration) and competencies developed after assignment. DAWIA certifications measure knowledge completion, not behavioral attributes like agility under pressure or tolerance for ambiguity. The Deal Team identifies “Talent Dissolution” as a common pitfall, mitigated by monitoring team health and right-sizing teams. This is talent management language, not training language.

3. The Chief Human Capital Officer: Selection, Start-to-Role, and Strategic Mandate

A. Why Training Alone Will Not Suffice

The ATS proposes transitioning DAU to the WAU as a centerpiece of workforce transformation. Training is one component of a comprehensive talent management system

but will not elevate and empower the acquisition workforce on its own. No entity in the current acquisition enterprise is resourced or mandated to perform the full spectrum of talent management at scale. Accountability is spread across Service Acquisition Executives, Career Field Managers, the WAU, and OUSW(A&S) staff.

B. The Ideal Candidate: A Top-Tier Talent Leader, Not a Career Acquisition Official

The instinct within the defense establishment will be to appoint a senior acquisition professional who “understands the system.” This instinct should be resisted. The system is what requires transformation. Appointing someone steeped in its assumptions as the chief architect of talent reform is less likely to result in meaningful reform.

The ideal CHCO candidate profile:

- **Demonstrated success leading talent transformation at scale** in a large, regulated enterprise (healthcare, financial services, aerospace, technology) with 10,000+ knowledge workers across multiple geographies and functional disciplines.
- **Deep expertise in competency-based workforce architecture:** the DAWIA-to-competency transition is the CHCO’s most consequential deliverable. A candidate who has not executed a comparable transition will be learning on the job.
- **Talent analytics and workforce intelligence capability:** the ability to build systems tracking competency gaps, attrition risk, succession health, and person-job fit at the enterprise level.
- **Credibility with both the C-suite and the front line:** must operate at the USW(A&S) level while remaining credible to GS-12 contracting officers and mid-grade military program managers.
- **Defense acquisition experience is welcome but not required.** When forced to choose, prioritize talent management mastery. The acquisition domain can be learned well enough to assist in talent management while competency architecture is hard to improvise.

C. Start-to-Role: The First 180 Days

Phase 1: Listen, Map, and Diagnose (Days 1–60)

Structured listening sessions with PAEs, CPEs, program managers, contracting officers, cost analysts, and systems engineers across all Military Departments. Map actual talent management processes, tools, and decision points. Gap analysis comparing ATS

requirements against current competency distribution. Rapid assessment of existing talent data infrastructure.

Phase 2: Architecture and Quick Wins (Days 61–120)

Develop competency architecture for the transformed workforce using the Deal Team matrix as template. Specify screen-for vs. develop-after competencies for each critical role. Identify 3–5 quick wins deployable under existing authorities: apply Deal Team screening to next cohort, implement structured knowledge transfer for PEO rotations, launch pilot competency assessment for a single career field.

Phase 3: Strategy, Systems, and Authorities (Days 121–180)

Deliver the Acquisition Workforce Transformation Plan grounded in diagnostic evidence and tested through quick wins. Specify competency framework rollout, talent analytics system requirements, redesigned recruitment processes, government-industry rotation design, incentive architecture, and succession planning. Identify where 10 U.S.C. Chapter 87 authorities suffice and where NDAA proposals are needed.

D. Congressional Priorities

The Armed Services Committees should require:

- **Annual competency gap reporting** by career field, Military Department, and portfolio—not certification rates.
- **Attrition causation analysis** distinguishing compensation-driven, culture-driven, and career-path-driven departures.
- **Return on talent investment metrics** measuring whether DAWDA investments produce capability improvements, not just training completions.
- **Time-to-competency benchmarking** against industry for equivalent-complexity roles.
- **Rotation program impact data** including competency gains and retention rates at 1, 3, and 5 years post-rotation.

E. Five Strategic Objectives (First Three Years)

1. **Close the competency gap for Deal Teams and PAEs** with screened teams within 18 months.
2. **Transition DAWIA to competency-based qualification**, moving from credentials to demonstrated behavioral and technical competency. This transition will take

time. It will need to be a layered approach of maintaining credentialing processes while testing and building more robust competency development processes.

3. **Reduce time-to-fill for critical positions** through direct hire authorities, competency-based position descriptions, and proactive sourcing.
4. **Measurably improve retention of high performers** through culture, career design, and targeted incentives—not uniform bonuses.
5. **Meaningfully increase government-industry rotations per year** with structured learning objectives and reintegration protocols.

4. Talent Teams: Embedded Expertise Over Study Commissions

The workforce dimension of the ATS demands action at the speed the strategy itself requires. A traditional commission does not match the timeline given that it is legislated, stood up, staffed, studied, reported (usually late), then requires additional legislation to implement. The PPBE Reform Commission (FY 2022 NDAA § 1004) was the right model for that problem. This is a different problem. The Department is already making talent decisions at speed without the infrastructure to make them well.

The alternative: Talent Teams modeled on the Deal Team and BOND program. The Deal Team concept demonstrated that high-performing, cross-functional teams staffed through rigorous screening and embedded in the problem can accelerate outcomes that traditional organizational structures cannot. Talent Teams apply the same logic to human capital.

Composition. Each Talent Team includes two tiers:

- 1) First, senior private-sector human capital leaders recruited through the BOND program, CHCOs, heads of talent acquisition and workforce transformation from large, regulated enterprises. Minimum 60% of each team's senior advisory membership comes from individuals that have credible experience outside the defense acquisition establishment.
- 2) Second, cross-functional subject matter experts drawn from the fields where talent gaps are most acute; contract strategy, negotiation, cost estimation, digital engineering, supply chain risk, systems engineering. These are not senior reviewers. They represent the next generation of acquisition talent: professionals selected for creative problem-solving, action orientation, innovation, and critical thinking. Their role is to pressure-test recommendations against the reality of the work, ensure

competency frameworks reflect what the mission actually demands, and serve as exemplars of the talent profile the Department is trying to recruit and retain.

If the Talent Teams are composed only of senior government civilians and general officers, the recommendations will reflect what leadership thinks the workforce needs. Including practitioners who embody the ATS's aspirational workforce profile grounds the recommendations in what the work actually requires and what high performers actually value. Academic representation in organizational behavior and talent management provides methodological rigor.

Employment. Talent Teams are not study groups. They are embedded in OUSW(A&S) and dispatched to Military Departments and deep into PAE organizations where the preponderance of acquisition is executed. They observe, diagnose, and make immediate competency, staffing & other talent management recommendations to senior DoW leadership for action. They operate on Deal Team timelines that are weeks and months, not years.

Mandate. Competency architecture (reform vs. replace DAWIA), talent management infrastructure requirements, compensation reform recommendations, government-industry rotation design, and CHCO authorities and resourcing.

Legislative option. If congressional mandate is needed, codify as a statutory Acquisition Talent Task Force rather than a commission. Shorter timeline, action-oriented charter, initial deployment within 120 days of enactment, semi-annual reporting to Armed Services Committees. This preserves congressional oversight without the multi-year delay of a traditional commission model.

5. The Three Rs as Strategic Talent Architecture

Talent management operates through three interdependent functions. Each is currently underperforming.

A. Recruit: From Filling Billets to Strategic Talent Acquisition

Current acquisition recruitment filters for tolerance of bureaucracy rather than the agility, resilience, and intelligent solutioning the Deal Team framework demands. The typical hiring cycle exceeds 100 days. Vacancy announcements repel industry candidates. Person-job fit research (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) shows compatibility between

capabilities and role demands directly affects satisfaction, performance, and retention. Strategic recruitment requires:

- competency-based position descriptions
- structured behavioral assessment (simulation exercises, not certification lists)
- proactive talent sourcing through professional networks and university partnerships, and
- employer brand management articulating mission significance and modern tools.

B. Retain: From Retention Bonuses to Organizational Commitment

Person-organization fit, as the alignment of individual values and organizational culture, is a stronger retention predictor than person-job fit (Hur & Hawley, 2020). Professionals leave because culture doesn't match their values. The ATS identifies compliance mentality as part of the problem. Professionals who value judgment, speed, and impact will not remain where initiative is punished. Compensation under 10 U.S.C. § 1701b is underutilized but insufficient alone given the "hygiene" factor. Commitment comes from meaningful work, professional growth, autonomy, and organizational trust.

Tools that make work valuable: If the Department recruits an industry negotiator but provides 1990s-era systems, no contractor data access, and 47-step approval processes, the recruitment has failed. Modern AI-enabled tools, digitized workflows, and reduced administrative burden signal to recruits that the Department is serious about execution. The tools must make work valuable to both the customer (warfighter receiving capability faster) and the employee (expertise translating into outcomes, not paperwork).

C. Replace: From Emergency Backfill to Succession Architecture

The Deal Team framework identifies "Continuity and Succession" as critical: "mechanisms for preserving institutional knowledge when team members rotate." When a program manager rotates after 18 months, relationships, tacit knowledge, negotiating history, and institutional memory depart. The CHCO owns succession planning as strategic capability. This includes talent pipelines with identified successors, structured knowledge transfer protocols, overlap assignments during transitions, and competency-matched replacement prioritizing fit over administrative convenience.

6. The AI Dimension

The ATS calls for AI to reduce administrative burden and accelerate acquisition.

The integration of AI into Department of War human resource management offers a transformative opportunity to accelerate mission-critical objectives called for in the ATS. Lengthy hiring timelines, poor job-person fit, and labor-intensive screening all hinder the agility and ability of the DOW to meet its acquisition personnel demands. AI-driven tools can streamline the position classification process, generate duty statements that attract specialized talent, improve the speed and precision of recruitment, and enhance workforce analytics. AI serves as a force multiplier, taking over the role of repetitive, labor-intensive tasks – thereby allowing HR professionals to focus on competency, culture, and job-person fit rather than basic compliance. Recent research by the RAND National Security Research Division (Crosby, Thompson, Harrington, Ginsberg, 2025) concluded that the use of AI can improve multiple aspects of DOW human resource management, including talent acquisition, job classification, workforce analytics, and administrative automation.

AI-Enabled Skills Matching and Competency-Based Selection

One of the most consequential applications of AI to acquisition talent management is skills-based matching replacing credential-filtered vacancy announcements with competency inference engines that identify qualified candidates based on demonstrated knowledge, skills, and behavioral attributes. Modern talent intelligence platforms, including those already operating inside DoW, use deep-learning models trained on large career trajectory datasets to surface candidates whose actual competency profiles fit a role's requirements, not merely those whose résumés contain the right certification codes.

Predictive Workforce Analytics and Attrition Risk

AI-powered workforce analytics can shift talent management from reactive backfill to proactive pipeline management by modeling attrition risk, succession gaps, and competency degradation before they become program failures. Machine learning models ingesting personnel, performance, compensation, and career-trajectory data can generate attrition-probability estimates years into the future, enabling targeted retention interventions for high-value professionals rather than uniform bonus programs that neither diagnose nor address root causes.

Skills Intelligence and Continuous Competency Development

Beyond hiring and retention, AI enables a continuous skills-intelligence capability with real-time visibility into the competency distribution of the workforce, identification of

emerging gaps, and personalized learning pathways that close those gaps faster than fixed training curricula can. Rather than measuring completion of required courses, a skills-intelligence platform measures actual demonstrated competency and surfaces the specific gaps between an individual's current profile and the requirements of the roles they are approaching.

7. Panel Interview Protocol

Event Concept

90-minute moderated panel. Senior acquisition leaders and commercial talent executives in facilitated dialogue. Goal: surface divergent perspectives, identify actionable recommendations and legislative proposals.

Panel Composition

- 2 senior acquisition leaders (PAE/PEO level)
- 2 commercial Chief Human Resource Officers/CHCOs from transformation-experienced firms
- 1 organizational behavior academic
- 1 moderator with acquisition and talent management expertise

Question Set (12 Questions)

Top 4 marked **[PRIORITY]**

1. **[PRIORITY]** The ATS says shift from compliance to speed. What specific talent management practices other than training have driven cultural transformation in your organization? What broke first?
2. **[PRIORITY]** The Deal Team framework distinguishes screen-for vs. develop-after competencies. Does the acquisition system have any mechanism for screening behavioral competencies rather than credentials? What would it take to build one?
3. NPS research: junior personnel equate readiness with 'being green.' How do you ensure the workforce's understanding evolves beyond compliance? Commercial equivalent?
4. **[PRIORITY]** This paper proposes a CHCO selected for talent management expertise, not acquisition pedigree. Industry: what does your CHCO own that your training function does not? Government: who owns talent strategy end-to-end, and what falls through the cracks?

5. 10 U.S.C. § 1701b already permits enhanced compensation. Why aren't these authorities used at scale? Missing: authority, funding, or leadership will?
6. When you lose a critical negotiator or program leader, what do the first 30 days look like? How much institutional knowledge walks out? Government: any equivalent mechanism?
7. Rather than a traditional commission, this paper proposes embedded Talent Teams modeled on Deal Teams and BOND, including next-generation cross-functional practitioners, not just senior advisors. What makes embedded advisory more effective than study-and-report? How do you ensure workforce transformation recommendations reflect what the next generation of talent actually values, not just what senior leaders assume they value? Where could the Talent Team model fail?"
8. **[PRIORITY]** Beyond compensation: what tools, systems, or conditions make the difference between a high performer who stays and one who leaves? What does your organization provide that government acquisition does not?
9. Government-industry rotations: industry panelists, would you accept a government professional for 6–12 months? What preparation needed? What should they bring back?
10. DAWIA since 1990: replace with competency model, reform it, or supplement it? Transition without creating a qualification gap?
11. Person-org fit predicts retention more than person-job fit. One cultural change you'd advise the Secretary of War to make?
12. One legislative change to Congress for acquisition workforce transformation. What and why?

8. If/Then Legislative Proposal Support

Each proposal follows the same structure: IF the panel or research confirms a specific finding, THEN the corresponding legislative work could advance, citing the U.S. Code provision to consider. It is designed as an information support guide in NDAA section work and Congressional staff briefings.

1. Acquisition Chief Human Capital Officer Authority

IF no single leader owns acquisition talent strategy end-to-end,

THEN focus on 10 U.S.C. § 1702 to require the USW(A&S) to designate an acquisition CHCO with statutory responsibility for competency architecture, talent analytics, succession planning, and rotations. Resourced through the DAWDA (10 U.S.C. § 1705).

2. Talent Teams

IF insider reform has recycled the same recommendations and traditional commission timelines cannot match the ATS's urgency,

THEN direct the Secretary of War to establish Acquisition Talent Teams under existing BOND authorities or codify as a statutory Acquisition Talent Task Force if legislation is needed. Staffing: 60%+ senior advisory membership from private-sector human capital leadership, supplemented by cross-functional practitioners from critical acquisition disciplines selected for creative problem-solving, innovation, and critical thinking rather than positional authority. Charter: embedded advisory to OUSW(A&S) and Military Departments, not study-and-report. Initial deployment within 120 days of enactment. Semi-annual reporting to Armed Services Committees.

3. Competency-Based Framework

IF DAWIA's certification cannot accommodate behavioral competency screening,

THEN focus on 10 U.S.C. § 1701a to require competency-based qualification within 24 months with validated behavioral assessment. Codifies Section 809 Panel Recommendation 59.

4. Enhanced Pay Deployment

IF 10 U.S.C. § 1701b enhanced pay is underutilized,

THEN expand position cap commensurate with CHCO-identified critical roles; establish Acquisition Workforce Incentive Pilot under DAWDA (§ 1705) tying awards to portfolio outcomes with 3-year reporting.

5. Talent Exchange Program

IF ad hoc rotations lack structure and industry needs IP/liability or financial conflict of interest protections,

THEN focus on 10 U.S.C. § 1741 to establish Defense Acquisition Talent Exchange modeled on IPA (5 U.S.C. §§ 3371-3376). Minimum 50 professionals/year within 3 years.

6. Workforce Data Modernization

IF current systems track certifications, not competencies or succession risk,

THEN direct DAWDA (§ 1705) funding for modern talent management system within 24 months tracking competencies, succession pipeline, attrition risk, person-job fit. Annual Armed Services Committee reporting.

7. Cross-Functional Qualification Waivers

IF PAE roles demand cross-functional authority DAWIA career fields cannot support,

THEN focus on 10 U.S.C. §§ 1724 and 1732 to permit CHCO-granted cross-functional waivers for portfolio roles based on validated competency assessment rather than sequential certification.

9. Conclusion

The ATS articulates an ambitious vision for a workforce that is empowered, accountable, skilled, and fast. But vision without structure is aspiration. The three interventions proposed here are necessary conditions for the workforce pillar to succeed:

- an acquisition CHCO selected for talent management mastery rather than acquisition pedigree
- embedded Talent Teams staffed with private-sector human capital leaders and next-generation cross-functional practitioners, operating at the speed the ATS demands, and
- a strategic Three Rs overhaul.

The NPS research demonstrated readiness and individual needs are not zero-sum. The Deal Team framework demonstrated critical competencies must be screened for, not just trained. The practitioner curricula demonstrated talent management is a discipline with its own body of knowledge. The acquisition workforce transformation requires talent management as a core organizational capability, led by a senior leader who knows how to build talent systems, informed by external expertise, and executed with the urgency the ATS demands for every other element of reform.

The warfighter cannot wait for another workforce study that recycles the same recommendations from the same insiders. The Talent Teams must bring fresh eyes — including the voices of the next generation of talent the Department is trying to attract — and operate at the speed the ATS demands. The CHCO must come from outside the system they are charged to transform. And the Department must recognize that its most critical acquisition system is not a regulation, a pathway, or a university. It is the people who operate all of them.

About

National Contract Management Association (NCMA)

Since its founding on May 19, 1959, NCMA has grown into a thriving community of over 100,000 contract management professionals. Dedicated to fostering a globally recognized contract management profession and strengthening its connections with related acquisition communities, NCMA serves a diverse membership spanning both the public and private sectors. Through its steadfast commitment to facilitating the growth, advancement, and impact of practitioners, NCMA provides a platform for the open exchange of ideas in neutral forums, driving innovation and excellence in commercial and contract management. www.ncmahq.org

Acquisition Efficiency Working Group (AEWG)

Convened by the NCMA, the group serves as a non-lobbying forum for collaboration on reform efforts. It aims to serve as a trusted resource to policymakers, including the Executive Branch, Congress, and the acquisition community at large.

This effort builds on NCMA's longstanding commitment to advancing the profession through education, standards, and community-building. It reflects our belief that transformation in acquisition requires cross-functional collaboration, shared data, and practical solutions grounded in the realities of day-to-day mission execution.

AEWG brings together leaders across government and industry to develop actionable, data-driven recommendations that improve acquisition processes, empower the workforce, and support mission delivery.

Working Group Objectives

- **Efficiency:** Recommend actions to support the streamlined Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and other acquisition reforms
- **Workforce Empowerment:** Promote training and culture change that enables smarter, faster decisions
- **Research-Backed Agility:** Share outcome-based practices supported by real-world insights

www.ncmahq.org/aewg

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