

# **FEDERAL ACQUISITION CIRCULAR**

May 2, 2001

Number 97-25

Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 97-25 is issued under the authority of the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of General Services, and the Administrator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Unless otherwise specified, all Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and other directive material contained in FAC 97-25 are effective May 2, 2001.



## FAC 97-25 SUMMARY of ITEMS

Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 97-25 amends the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) as specified below:

### **Item I—Preference for Performance-Based Contracting (FAR Case 2000-307)**

This interim rule amends FAR 2.101, Definitions, and 37.102, Policy, to implement Section 821 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Pub. L. 106-398). The rule affects contracting officers that buy services by explicitly establishing a preference for performance-based contracts or task orders.

**Replacement pages:** 2-3 and 2-4; and 37-1 and 37-2.

### **Item II—Contractor Personnel in the Procurement of Information Technology Services (FAR Case 2000-609)**

This interim rule adds FAR 39.104 to implement Section 813 of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Pub. L. 106-398). Section 813 prohibits the use of minimum experience or education requirements for contractor personnel in solicitations for the acquisition of information technology services, unless—

1. The contracting officer first determines that the needs of the agency cannot be met without such requirement; or

2. The needs of the agency require the use of a type of contract other than a performance-based contract.

**Replacement pages:** 39-1 thru 39-3.

## FAC 97-25 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

### Remove Pages

2-3 and 2-4

37-1 and 37-2

39-1 thru 39-3

### Insert Pages

2-3 and 2-4

37-1 and 37-2

39-1 thru 39-3



31 U.S.C. 6301, *et seq.* For discussion of various types of contracts, see Part 16.

“Contract administration office” means an office that performs—

(a) Assigned postaward functions related to the administration of contracts; and

(b) Assigned preaward functions.

“Contracting” means purchasing, renting, leasing, or otherwise obtaining supplies or services from nonfederal sources. Contracting includes description (but not determination) of supplies and services required, selection and solicitation of sources, preparation and award of contracts, and all phases of contract administration. It does not include making grants or cooperative agreements.

“Contracting activity” means an element of an agency designated by the agency head and delegated broad authority regarding acquisition functions.

“Contracting office” means an office that awards or executes a contract for supplies or services and performs postaward functions not assigned to a contract administration office.

“Contracting officer” means a person with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts and make related determinations and findings. The term includes certain authorized representatives of the contracting officer acting within the limits of their authority as delegated by the contracting officer. “Administrative contracting officer (ACO)” refers to a contracting officer who is administering contracts. “Termination contracting officer (TCO)” refers to a contracting officer who is settling terminated contracts. A single contracting officer may be responsible for duties in any or all of these areas. Reference in this regulation to administrative contracting officer or termination contracting officer does not—

(a) Require that a duty be performed at a particular office or activity; or

(b) Restrict in any way a contracting officer in the performance of any duty properly assigned.

“Day” means, unless otherwise specified, a calendar day.

“Delivery order” means an order for supplies placed against an established contract or with Government sources.

“Electronic commerce” means electronic techniques for accomplishing business transactions including electronic mail or messaging, World Wide Web technology, electronic bulletin boards, purchase cards, electronic funds transfer, and electronic data interchange.

“End product” means supplies delivered under a line item of a Government contract.

“Energy-efficient product” means a product in the upper 25 percent of efficiency for all similar products or, if there are applicable Federal appliance or equipment efficiency standards, a product that is at least 10 percent more efficient than the minimum Federal standard.

“Environmentally preferable” means products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.

“Executive agency” means an executive department, a military department, or any independent establishment within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 101, 102, and 104(1), respectively, and any wholly owned Government corporation within the meaning of 31 U.S.C. 9101.

“Facsimile” means electronic equipment that communicates and reproduces both printed and handwritten material. If used in conjunction with a reference to a document; *e.g.*, facsimile bid, the term refers to a document (in the example given, a bid) that has been transmitted to and received by the Government via facsimile.

“Federal Acquisition Computer Network (FACNET) Architecture” is a Governmentwide system that provides universal user access, employs nationally and internationally recognized data formats, and allows the electronic data interchange of acquisition information between the private sector and the Federal Government. FACNET qualifies as the single, Governmentwide point of entry pending designation by the Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP).

“Federal agency” means any executive agency or any independent establishment in the legislative or judicial branch of the Government (except the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Architect of the Capitol, and any activities under the Architect’s direction).

“Head of the agency” (also called “agency head”) means the Secretary, Attorney General, Administrator, Governor, Chairperson, or other chief official of an executive agency, unless otherwise indicated, including any deputy or assistant chief official of an executive agency; and the term “authorized representative” means any person, persons, or, board (other than the contracting officer) authorized to act for the head of the agency or Secretary.

“Head of the contracting activity” includes the official who has overall responsibility for managing the contracting activity.

“In writing” or “written” means any worded or numbered expression which can be read, reproduced, and later communicated, and includes electronically transmitted and stored information.

“Information technology” means any equipment, or interconnected system(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment, that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information by the agency.

(a) For purposes of this definition, equipment is used by an agency if the equipment is used by the agency directly or is used by a contractor under a contract with the agency which—

- (1) Requires the use of such equipment; or
- (2) Requires the use, to a significant extent, of such equipment in the performance of a service or the furnishing of a product.

(b) The term “information technology” includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

(c) The term “information technology” does not include—

- (1) Any equipment that is acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract; or
- (2) Any equipment that contains imbedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. For example, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) equipment such as thermostats or temperature control devices, and medical equipment where information technology is integral to its operation, are not information technology.

“Major system” means that combination of elements that will function together to produce the capabilities required to fulfill a mission need. The elements may include hardware, equipment, software, or any combination thereof, but exclude construction or other improvements to real property. A system shall be considered a major system if—

- (a) The Department of Defense is responsible for the system and the total expenditures for research, development, test, and evaluation for the system are estimated to be more than \$115,000,000 (based on fiscal year 1990 constant dollars) or the eventual total expenditure for the acquisition exceeds \$540,000,000 (based on fiscal year 1990 constant dollars);
- (b) A civilian agency is responsible for the system and total expenditures for the system are estimated to exceed \$750,000 (based on fiscal year 1980 constant dollars) or the dollar threshold for a “major system” established by the agency pursuant to Office of Management and Budget Circular A-109, entitled “Major System Acquisitions,” whichever is greater; or
- (c) The system is designated a “major system” by the head of the agency responsible for the system (10 U.S.C. 2302 and 41 U.S.C. 403).

“Market research” means collecting and analyzing information about capabilities within the market to satisfy agency needs.

“May” denotes the permissive. However, the words “no person may . . .” mean that no person is required, authorized, or permitted to do the act described.

“Micro-purchase” means an acquisition of supplies or services (except construction), the aggregate amount of which does not exceed \$2,500, except that in the case of construction, the limit is \$2,000.

“Micro-purchase threshold” means \$2,500.

“National defense” means any activity related to programs for military or atomic energy production or construction, military assistance to any foreign nation, stockpiling, or space.

“Nondevelopmental item” means—

- (a) Any previously developed item of supply used exclusively for governmental purposes by a Federal agency, a State or local government, or a foreign government with which the United States has a mutual defense cooperation agreement;
- (b) Any item described in paragraph (a) of this definition that requires only minor modification or modifications of a type customarily available in the commercial marketplace in order to meet the requirements of the procuring department or agency; or

(c) Any item of supply being produced that does not meet the requirements of paragraphs (a) or (b) solely because the item is not yet in use.

“Offer” means a response to a solicitation that, if accepted, would bind the offeror to perform the resultant contract. Responses to invitations for bids (sealed bidding) are offers called “bids” or “sealed bids;” responses to requests for proposals (negotiation) are offers called “proposals;” responses to requests for quotations (negotiation) are not offers and are called “quotes.” For unsolicited proposals, see Subpart 15.6.

“Performance-based contracting” means structuring all aspects of an acquisition around the purpose of the work to be performed with the contract requirements set forth in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes as opposed to either the manner by which the work is to be performed or broad and imprecise statements of work.

“Pollution prevention” means any practice that—

- (a)(1) Reduces the amount of any hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant entering any waste stream or otherwise released into the environment (including fugitive emissions) prior to recycling, treatment, or disposal; and
- (2) Reduces the hazards to public health and the environment associated with the release of such substances, pollutants, and contaminants;
- (b) Reduces or eliminates the creation of pollutants through increased efficiency in the use of raw materials, energy, water, or other resources; or
- (c) Protects natural resources by conservation.

“Possessions” include the Virgin Islands, Johnston Island, American Samoa, Guam, Wake Island, Midway Island, and the Guano Islands, but does not include Puerto Rico, leased bases, or trust territories.

PART 37—SERVICE CONTRACTING

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**37.000 Scope of part.**

This part prescribes policy and procedures that are specific to the acquisition and management of services by contract. This part applies to all contracts for services regardless of the type of contract or kind of service being acquired. This part requires the use of performance-based contracting to the maximum extent practicable and prescribes policies and procedures for use of performance-based contracting methods (see Subpart 37.6). Additional guidance for research and development services is in Part 35; architect-engineering services is in Part 36; information technology is in Part 39; and transportation services is in Part 47. Parts 35, 36, 39, and 47 take precedence over this part in the event of inconsistencies. This part includes, but is not limited to, contracts for services to which the Service Contract Act of 1965, as amended, applies (see Subpart 22.10).

**Subpart 37.1—Service Contracts—General**

**37.101 Definitions.**

“Child care services” means child protective services (including the investigation of child abuse and neglect reports), social services, health and mental health care, child (day) care, education (whether or not directly involved in teaching), foster care, residential care, recreational or rehabilitative programs, and detention, correctional, or treatment services.

“Nonpersonal services contract” means a contract under which the personnel rendering the services are not subject, either by the contract’s terms or by the manner of its administration, to the supervision and control usually prevailing in relationships between the Government and its employees.

“Personal services contract” means a contract that, by its express terms or as administered, makes the contractor personnel appear, in effect, Government employees (see 37.104).

“Service contract” means a contract that directly engages the time and effort of a contractor whose primary purpose is to perform an identifiable task rather than to furnish an end item of supply. A service contract may be either a nonpersonal or personal contract. It can also cover services performed by either professional or nonprofessional personnel whether on an individual or organizational basis. Some of the areas in which service contracts are found include the following:

(a) Maintenance, overhaul, repair, servicing, rehabilitation, salvage, modernization, or modification of supplies, systems, or equipment.

(b) Routine recurring maintenance of real property.

(c) Housekeeping and base services.

(d) Advisory and assistance services.

(e) Operation of Government-owned equipment facilities, and systems.

(f) Communications services.

(g) Architect-Engineering (see Subpart 36.6).

(h) Transportation and related services (see Part 47).

(i) Research and development (see Part 35).

### 37.102 Policy.

(a) Performance-based contracting (see Subpart 37.6) is the preferred method for acquiring services (Public Law 106-398, section 821). When acquiring services, including those acquired under supply contracts, agencies must—

(1) Use performance-based contracting methods to the maximum extent practicable, except for—

(i) Architect-engineer services acquired in accordance with 40 U.S.C. 541-544 (see Part 36);

(ii) Construction (see Part 36);

(iii) Utility services (see Part 41); or

(iv) Services that are incidental to supply purchases; and

(2) Use the following order of precedence (Public Law 106-398, section 821(a));

(i) A firm-fixed price performance-based contract or task order.

(ii) A performance-based contract or task order that is not firm-fixed price.

(iii) A contract or task order that is not performance-based.

(b) Agencies shall generally rely on the private sector for commercial services (see OMB Circular No. A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities and Subpart 7.3).

(c) Agencies shall not award a contract for the performance of an inherently governmental function (see Subpart 7.5).

(d) Non-personal service contracts are proper under general contracting authority.

(e) Agency program officials are responsible for accurately describing the need to be filled, or problem to be resolved, through service contracting in a manner that ensures full understanding and responsive performance by contractors and, in so doing, should obtain assistance from contracting officials, as needed.

(f) Agencies shall establish effective management practices in accordance with Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 93-1, Management Oversight of Service Contracting, to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in service contracting.

(g) Services are to be obtained in the most cost-effective manner, without barriers to full and open competition, and free of any potential conflicts of interest.

(h) Agencies shall ensure that sufficiently trained and experienced officials are available within the agency to manage and oversee the contract administration function.

### 37.103 Contracting officer responsibility.

(a) The contracting officer is responsible for ensuring that a proposed contract for services is proper. For this purpose the contracting officer shall—

(1) Determine whether the proposed service is for a personal or nonpersonal services contract using the definitions in 37.101 and the guidelines in 37.104;

(2) In doubtful cases, obtain the review of legal counsel; and

(3) Document the file (except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section) with—

(i) The opinion of legal counsel, if any,

(ii) A memorandum of the facts and rationale supporting the conclusion that the contract does not violate the provisions in 37.104(b), and

(iii) Any further documentation that the contracting agency may require.

(b) Nonpersonal services contracts are exempt from the requirements of paragraph (a)(3) of this section.

(c) Ensure that performance-based contracting methods are used to the maximum extent practicable when acquiring services.

(d) Ensure that contracts for child care services include requirements for criminal history background checks on employees who will perform child care services under the contract in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 13041, as amended, and agency procedures.

### 37.104 Personal services contracts.

(a) As indicated in 37.101, a personal services contract is characterized by the employer-employee relationship it creates between the Government and the contractor's personnel. The Government is normally required to obtain its employees by direct hire under competitive appointment or other procedures required by the civil service laws. Obtaining personal services by contract, rather than by direct hire, circumvents those laws unless Congress has specifically authorized acquisition of the services by contract.

(b) Agencies shall not award personal services contracts unless specifically authorized by statute (*e.g.*, 5 U.S.C. 3109) to do so.

(c)(1) An employer-employee relationship under a service contract occurs when, as a result of (i) the contract's terms or (ii) the manner of its administration during performance, contractor personnel are subject to the relatively

**PART 39—ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

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**Subpart 39.1—General**

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**39.000 Scope of part.**

This part prescribes acquisition policies and procedures for use in acquiring information technology, including financial management systems, consistent with other parts of this regulation, OMB Circular No. A-127, Financial Management Systems and OMB Circular No. A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources.

**39.001 Applicability.**

This part applies to the acquisition of information technology by or for the use of agencies except for acquisitions of information technology for national security systems. However, acquisitions of information technology for national security systems shall be conducted in accordance with 40 U.S.C. 1412 with regard to requirements for performance and results-based management; the role of the agency Chief Information Officer in acquisitions; and accountability. These requirements are addressed in OMB Circular No. A-130.

**39.002 Definitions.**

“Modular contracting,” as used in this part, means use of one or more contracts to acquire information technology systems in successive, interoperable increments.

“National security system,” as used in this part, means any telecommunications or information system operated by the United States Government, the function, operation, or use of which—

- (a) Involves intelligence activities;
- (b) Involves cryptologic activities related to national security;
- (c) Involves command and control of military forces;
- (d) Involves equipment that is an integral part of a weapon or weapons system; or
- (e) Is critical to the direct fulfillment of military or intelligence missions. This does not include a system that is to be used for routine administrative and business applications, such as payroll, finance, logistics, and personnel management applications.

“Year 2000 compliant,” as used in this part, means, with respect to information technology, that the information technology accurately processes date/time data (including, but not limited to, calculating, comparing, and sequencing) from, into, and between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and the years 1999 and 2000 and leap year calculations, to the extent that other information technology, used in combination with the information technology being acquired, properly exchanges date/time data with it.

**Subpart 39.1—General**

**39.101 Policy.**

(a) Division A, Section 101(h), Title VI, Section 622 of the Omnibus Appropriations and Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Pub. L. 105-277) requires that agencies may not use appropriated funds to acquire information technology that does not comply with 39.106, unless the agency’s Chief Information Officer determines that non-compliance with 39.106 is necessary to the function and operation of the agency or the acquisition is required by a contract in effect before October 21, 1998. The Chief Information Officer must send to the Office of Management and Budget a copy of all waivers for forwarding to Congress.

(b) In acquiring information technology, agencies shall identify their requirements pursuant to OMB Circular A-130, including consideration of security of resources, protection of privacy, national security and emergency preparedness, accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and energy efficiency. When developing an acquisition strategy, contracting officers should consider the rapidly changing nature of information technology through market research (see Part 10) and the application of technology refreshment techniques.

(c) Agencies must follow OMB Circular A-127, Financial Management Systems, when acquiring financial management systems. Agencies may acquire only core financial management software certified by the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program.

**39.102 Management of risk.**

(a) Prior to entering into a contract for information technology, an agency should analyze risks, benefits, and costs. (See Part 7 for additional information regarding requirements definition.) Reasonable risk taking is appropriate as long as risks are controlled and mitigated. Contracting and program office officials are jointly responsible for assessing, monitoring and controlling risk when selecting projects for investment and during program implementation.

(b) Types of risk may include schedule risk, risk of technical obsolescence, cost risk, risk implicit in a particular contract type, technical feasibility, dependencies between a

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new project and other projects or systems, the number of simultaneous high risk projects to be monitored, funding availability, and program management risk.

(c) Appropriate techniques should be applied to manage and mitigate risk during the acquisition of information technology. Techniques include, but are not limited to: prudent project management; use of modular contracting; thorough acquisition planning tied to budget planning by the program, finance and contracting offices; continuous collection and evaluation of risk-based assessment data; prototyping prior to implementation; post implementation reviews to determine actual project cost, benefits and returns; and focusing on risks and returns using quantifiable measures.

**39.103 Modular contracting.**

(a) This section implements Section 5202, Incremental Acquisition of Information Technology, of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-106). Modular contracting is intended to reduce program risk and to incentivize contractor performance while meeting the Government's need for timely access to rapidly changing technology. Consistent with the agency's information technology architecture, agencies should, to the maximum extent practicable, use modular contracting to acquire major systems (see 2.101) of information technology. Agencies may also use modular contracting to acquire non-major systems of information technology.

(b) When using modular contracting, an acquisition of a system of information technology may be divided into several smaller acquisition increments that—

(1) Are easier to manage individually than would be possible in one comprehensive acquisition;

(2) Address complex information technology objectives incrementally in order to enhance the likelihood of achieving workable systems or solutions for attainment of those objectives;

(3) Provide for delivery, implementation, and testing of workable systems or solutions in discrete increments, each of which comprises a system or solution that is not dependent on any subsequent increment in order to perform its principal functions;

(4) Provide an opportunity for subsequent increments to take advantage of any evolution in technology or needs that occur during implementation and use of the earlier increments; and

(5) Reduce risk of potential adverse consequences on the overall project by isolating and avoiding custom-designed components of the system.

(c) The characteristics of an increment may vary depending upon the type of information technology being acquired and the nature of the system being developed. The following factors may be considered:

(1) To promote compatibility, the information technology acquired through modular contracting for each increment should comply with common or commercially acceptable information technology standards when available and appropriate, and shall conform to the agency's master information technology architecture.

(2) The performance requirements of each increment should be consistent with the performance requirements of the completed, overall system within which the information technology will function and should address interface requirements with succeeding increments.

(d) For each increment, contracting officers shall choose an appropriate contracting technique that facilitates the acquisition of subsequent increments. Pursuant to Parts 16 and 17 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, contracting officers shall select the contract type and method appropriate to the circumstances (*e.g.*, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts, single contract with options, successive contracts, multiple awards, task order contracts). Contract(s) shall be structured to ensure that the Government is not required to procure additional increments.

(e) To avoid obsolescence, a modular contract for information technology should, to the maximum extent practicable, be awarded within 180 days after the date on which the solicitation is issued. If award cannot be made within 180 days, agencies should consider cancellation of the solicitation in accordance with 14.209 or 15.206(e). To the maximum extent practicable, deliveries under the contract should be scheduled to occur within 18 months after issuance of the solicitation.

**39.104 Information technology services.**

When acquiring information technology services, solicitations must not describe any minimum experience or educational requirement for proposed contractor personnel unless the contracting officer determines that the needs of the agency—

(a) Cannot be met without that requirement; or

(b) Require the use of other than a performance-based contract (see Subpart 37.6).

**39.105 Privacy.**

Agencies shall ensure that contracts for information technology address protection of privacy in accordance with the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and Part 24. In addition, each agency shall ensure that contracts for the design, development, or operation of a system of records using commercial information technology services or information technology support services include the following:

(a) Agency rules of conduct that the contractor and the contractor's employees shall be required to follow.

(b) A list of the anticipated threats and hazards that the contractor must guard against.

(c) A description of the safeguards that the contractor must specifically provide.

(d) Requirements for a program of Government inspection during performance of the contract that will ensure the continued efficacy and efficiency of safeguards and the discovery and countering of new threats and hazards.

**39.106 Year 2000 compliance.**

When acquiring information technology that will be required to perform date/time processing involving dates subsequent to December 31, 1999, agencies shall ensure that solicitations and contracts—

(a)(1) Require the information technology to be Year 2000 compliant; or

(2) Require that non-compliant information technology be upgraded to be Year 2000 compliant prior to the earlier of—

(i) The earliest date on which the information technology may be required to perform date/time processing involving dates later than December 31, 1999, or

(ii) December 31, 1999; and

(b) As appropriate, describe existing information technology that will be used with the information technology to be acquired and identify whether the existing information technology is Year 2000 compliant.

**39.107 Contract clause.**

The contracting officer shall insert a clause substantially the same as the clause at 52.239-1, Privacy or Security Safeguards, in solicitations and contracts for information technology which require security of information technology, and/or are for the design, development, or operation of a system of records using commercial information technology services or support services.

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