

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
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**Part 302 Contracting Officers**

**Chapter 1 Contracting Officer's Certification of Appointment**

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## **OVERVIEW**

**1.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter provides guidance to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) acquisition workforce and their managers as it relates to the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) program and the acquisition Certificate of Appointment (COA) program.

**1.2 What are the objectives of this chapter?** Our objectives are to:

- A.** Supplement the Department of the Interior's (Department) FAC-C and acquisition COA program policy, and
- B.** Describe the Service's requirements and procedures for FAC-C certification and appointment as a Contracting Officer (CO).

**1.3 What is the scope of this chapter?** This chapter applies to all Service employees who are responsible for the acquisition of supplies and services for amounts above the micro-purchase thresholds. The current micro-purchase thresholds are:

- A.** \$10,000 for supplies or services using simplified acquisition procedures,
- B.** \$2,500 for services subject to Service contract labor standards, and
- C.** \$2,000 for construction subject to wage rate requirements.

**1.4 What are the authorities for this chapter?**

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- A. Department of the Interior's [Federal Acquisition Certification and Appointment Programs Policy](#).
- B. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#) Subpart 1.6, Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibilities (48 CFR).
- C. Office of Federal Procurement Policy ([OFPP Memorandum](#), "Revisions to the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting;" May 7, 2014).
- D. [OFPP Policy Letter 05-01](#), "Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce;" April 15, 2005.
- E. [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Memorandum](#); "The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program;" January 20, 2006.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1.5 Who is responsible for the FAC-C and COA programs in the Service? See Table 1-1.**

**Table 1-1: Responsibilities for the FAC-C and COA programs**

<b>This employee...</b>	<b>Is responsible for...</b>
<b>A. The Director</b>	Approving or declining to approve Servicewide policy.
<b>B. The Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations</b>	Ensuring there is up-to-date policy in place for managing the Service's acquisition programs.
<b>C. The Chief, Division of Contracting and General Services, Headquarters (CGS/HQ)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Serving as the Bureau Procurement Chief;</li> <li>(2) Recommending FAC-C certifications for approval to the Department's Acquisition Career Manager;</li> <li>(3) Providing the final approval or disapproval for COA applications for the Service;</li> <li>(4) Providing the final approval or disapproval for FAC-C and COA renewal applications;</li> <li>(5) Changing, suspending, or terminating COAs;</li> <li>(6) Assigning a member of his/her staff to be the Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator; and</li> <li>(7) Keeping this policy up-to-date.</li> </ul>
<b>D. The Regional CGS Chiefs</b>	Recommending approval or disapproval of applications for the Regions.
<b>E. The Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator (in CGS/HQ)</b>	Making recommendations to the Bureau Procurement Chief on actions for FAC-C certification and COA applications.

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## **STEPS FOR APPLYING AND THRESHOLDS**

**1.6 What is the FAC-C program?** The FAC-C program describes the minimum education, experience, and training standards for contracting professionals and others in the acquisition workforce.

### **1.7 What are the steps for applying for and obtaining a FAC-C?**

**A.** The employee must:

**(1)** Meet the education, experience, and training requirements in the FAC-C program (see the [Federal Acquisition Institute's website](#));

**(2)** Complete the Ethics training requirement; and

**(3)** Complete and submit the FAC-C application for review and approval through the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System ([FAITAS](#)).

**B.** The employee's supervisor must:

**(1)** Review the application and supporting documentation for completeness and to ensure the employee is qualified, and

**(2)** Provide approval or disapproval of the FAC-C application for certification.

**C.** The Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator must:

**(1)** Review the application to ensure the employee meets the qualifications, and

**(2)** When the application is acceptable, endorse it and send it to the Bureau Procurement Chief.

**D.** The Bureau Procurement Chief reviews the application, and, if acceptable, endorses it and sends it to the Department's Office of Acquisition and Property Management.

**E.** The Office of Acquisition and Property Management provides the final approval or disapproval of the initial FAC-C application in FAITAS.

### **1.8 What are the steps for maintaining the FAC-C certification?**

**A.** The FAC-C certification is valid for 2 years. During those 2 years, the employee must complete 80 hours of maintenance training, which must include 1 hour of green procurement training. In addition, the employee must take 1 hour of Ethics training annually, which they may include in the 80-hour total.

**B.** The training to maintain the FAC-C certification:

**(1)** Must be job-related and meet the [technical competencies](#) of the FAC-C program;

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- (2) Must provide a certificate showing successful completion and number of hours for each course;
- (3) May have as a sponsor the Service, another bureau, the Department, another Federal agency, or an approved non-government training vendor; and
- (4) May be completed in a classroom setting or through approved online sources. Continuous Learning Points (CLP) may be earned through approved activities such as formal or informal training, participation in professional organizations or events, publishing, or at-work experiences designed to enhance and improve agency acquisition delivery. (See the Federal Acquisition Institute's website.)

**C.** Employees may not retake the same training within a 4-year period.

**1.9 What is the acquisition COA, or warrant, program?** This program provides the authority and procedures for appointing COs and granting them a COA, also known as a warrant. An applicant must be certified under the FAC-C program before receiving a COA.

**1.10 What are the steps for applying for and obtaining a COA?** All COA requests must be processed through FAITAS. The Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator must invite employees to submit a warrant request. Employees cannot initiate a warrant request until they receive a warrant invitation through FAITAS.

**A.** The employee must:

- (1) Meet the qualifications in the Department's [acquisition COA policy](#);
- (2) Complete a minimum of 1 hour of green procurement training. Evidence of completion, such as a training certification, must be included in new or renewal warrant requests. Employees may take FAC 038, which is available through the [online Defense Acquisition University](#), to meet this requirement;
- (3) Complete and file the Office of Government Ethics Form 450, Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, with his/her servicing Assistant Ethics Counselor (see [212 FW 2](#)); and
- (4) Complete and submit a warrant request in FAITAS after receiving a warrant invitation.

**B.** The Regional CGS Chief (or his/her designee) determines the number of CO appointments the Region needs (for HQ, the Chief, CGS/HQ performs this role).

(1) Following are the general guidelines:

- (a) Consider the complexity, volume, and dollar value of the acquisitions to be assigned, internal controls, and organizational alignment; and
- (b) Consider receiving support from other components in the Service before requesting a new warrant.

(2) If a new warrant is necessary, the Regional CGS Chief or his/her designee sends the Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator an email with the recommended employee name, warrant level, and dollar thresholds to initiate a warrant request.

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**(3)** The Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator reviews the Regional CGS Chief's request and issues an invitation via FAITAS to the employee to apply for a warrant.

**C.** After the employee completes and submits the warrant request and gets the required approval from his/her Regional CGS Chief (or designee), the Bureau Acquisition Career Coordinator and the Bureau Procurement Chief:

- (1)** Review the warrant request, and
- (2)** Approve it or take other appropriate action.

**1.11 What are the levels of authority for COs?** Depending on the needs of the office and the experience and qualifications of the employee, COs have different levels of authority. They are only allowed to issue awards with a total value up to their authorized dollar threshold. Table 1-2 shows the levels of authority for COs.

**Table 1-2: CO Levels of Authority**

<b>COA Level I</b>	<b>Series<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Required FAC-C Level</b>	<b>Open Market (Up to a maximum of)</b>	<b>Interagency Agreements<sup>3</sup> (Up to a maximum of)</b>	<b>Ordering from Established Sources (Up to a maximum of)</b>
Level I <sup>1</sup>	1102 & 1105	Level I	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$500,000
Level II <sup>1</sup>	1102	Level II	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
Level III <sup>1</sup>	1102	Level III	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup> These appointments may only be made to individuals who report to a major acquisition buying office within the Service that is supervised and under the direction of an equal or higher FAC-C-certified GS-1102.  
<sup>2</sup> Appointments may only be made to Federal employees.  
<sup>3</sup> COs are only required to sign obligations, i.e., funding we are transferring to another agency, not agreements under which the Department receives funds.

**1.12 Will a COA that the Service issues be recognized throughout the Regional offices?** Yes. There is no distinction among COAs issued to employees throughout the Regional offices.

**1.13 What are the requirements for emergency COAs?**

**A.** An emergency may require us to issue an [emergency COA](#). An emergency involves activities in support of contingency operations, defense, or recovery from certain attacks; response to disasters or other incidents declared by the President; or other emergencies, such as a fire incident.

**(1)** When a Regional CGS Chief identifies a need for an emergency COA beyond the Region's boundaries or in another Region, he/she must send a request to the Bureau Procurement Chief for

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authorization for an employee with an existing COA to exercise his/her authority at another location (see section 1.12D).

**(2)** If a Regional CGS Chief needs a new COA to cover an emergency, he/she must request a new COA that does not specify a location. The request must:

- (a)** Explain the nature of the emergency, and
- (b)** Specify the length of time that he/she needs the COA.

**B.** The Bureau Procurement Chief may issue an emergency acquisition COA to a Federal employee who does not have a FAC-C certification.

/sgd/ Stephen Guertin  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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