

Second Cohort – Digital Service Contracting Professional

Training and Development Program

***NOTE: There will be a 3-week stand down period at the end of September to accommodate fiscal year end activities.***

***OVERVIEW***

Strengthening digital services expertise in the Government is a key component of being able to reduce the risk of failed acquisitions and systems, and save taxpayer dollars. Today’s acquisition professionals need to combine technical execution with strong leadership skills to achieve agency missions and fully leverage digital services for citizens. In response to this need, the Digital Service Contracting Professional Training and Development Program was launched in FY2015 with 29 Contracting Officers from across the federal government. The program is an experiential blended learning 6 month training and development program that is designed for exceptional mid-level acquisition professionals. Graduates of the program receive a Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Digital Services specialization, and more importantly, bring a new mindset and new skills to federal acquisition.

This comprehensive training and development program for federal contracting professionals will enable them to understand and apply strategic thinking, industry best practices, and marketplace conditions and help them develop appropriate acquisition strategies for procuring digital supplies and services.

***BACKGROUND***

One of the Administration’s key initiatives is to improve IT acquisition. On December 4, 2014, Anne Rung, Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, issued a memorandum entitled Transforming the Marketplace: Simplifying Federal Procurement to Improve Performance, Drive Innovation, and Increase Savings.[[1]](#footnote-1) In this memorandum, Administrator Rung lays out several initiatives for driving greater innovation and strengthening Federal acquisition practices, one of which is building digital information technology (IT) acquisition expertise.

The U.S Digital Service and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, both housed within the Office of Management and Budget, collaborated on a challenge and conducted a pilot to build a program that [will develop contracting officers who can be successful in the era of digital government.](https://www.challenge.gov/challenge/digital-service-contracting-professional-training-and-development-program-challenge-2/) OFPP and USDS are working with FAI to institutionalize this program.

On March 9, 2016, Ms. Rung and Tony Scott, the Federal CIO, issued a memorandum titled Acquisition Innovation Labs & Pilot for Digital Acquisition Innovation Lab, to further drive innovation in acquisition through the use of acquisition innovation labs at the agencies.[[2]](#footnote-2) The graduates from the first cohort of the Digital Service Contracting Professional Training and Development Program will be critical members of digital service teams or acquisition innovation labs to help drive innovation within agencies.

***RESULTS***

Participants will:

* Become digital service procurement experts and qualified business advisors.
* Be equipped with the knowledge necessary to be embedded within an agency digital services team or acquisition innovation lab to serve as a business advisor to the team, its customers, and its stakeholders.
* Gain the knowledge to lead agency training workshops and provide consultations in order to expand digital service procurement expertise within an agency and across the government.

***PROGRAM BENEFITS***

Participants will:

* Understand how to successfully procure digital services solutions for agency requirements.
* Engage with subject matter experts from across the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors.
* Participate in a real-life government digital services challenge via a capstone project.
* Gain access to resources, information, and best practices on digital services procurement.
* Upon graduation, join the Digital Services Alumni Network with continued access to resources and leading practices in digital services.
* Become ambassadors of change within their agencies to foster improvements in IT acquisition.

***PROGRAM DETAILS***

*Who Should Apply*: The Digital Service Contracting Professional Training and Development Program is open to mid-level high-performing contracting professionals. The second cohort will have a maximum of 30 participants. At a minimum, applicants should possess a FAC-C or DAWIA Level II certification in contracting and have at least three years of federal contracting experience. IT or digital services contracting experience is a plus. Successful applicants are self-starters who enjoy overcoming challenges, thinking creatively about ways to approach issues, and solving complex government issues all with a collaborative approach.

*Location*: All in-person sessions will take place in Washington, DC. Agencies are responsible for paying for travel for their participants.

*Program Composition*: Because typical classroom training cannot achieve the results we desire, the program comprises a blended learning concept with both online and in-person components. Participants begin the program with an online self-assessment that results in an Individual Development Plan (IDP) tailored to each individual containing learning pathways and target development focus areas. The program consists of online learning through a learning portal, discussion boards, badging, office hours during which facilitators and mentors are available for questions/support, interactive assignments to demonstrate learning, collaborative in-person classroom sessions, and a live digital assignment. Topics covered in the program include all aspects of digital services, including what they are, understanding the marketplace, identifying acquisition strategies, and best practices to buy them.

*Time Commitment*: During the 6 month program, participants remain at their agencies in their regular jobs with the understanding that this is an intensive program that requires a significant time commitment. Much of the learning is online and self-directed via IDP and learning portal or is work with a team on the live digital assignment. The online and teamwork portion requires a commitment of approximately 8 to 12 hours per week on average. Participants meet in person every two months and spend approximately 16 days in a classroom setting during the program. All classroom sessions are mandatory. Supervisory support allowing participants sufficient time to engage fully in all program components is critical for successful completion of the program.

*Certification and Continuous Learning Points*: Participants will receive a FAC-C Digital Services specialization following the completion of 90% of all required course elements and a passing grade on the final capstone evaluation. Participants will receive 80 continuous learning points upon completing the program.

*Program Milestones*: This second cohort of the program will kick off in early June, 2016 and end mid-December 2016. There will be a 3-week stand down period at the end of September to accommodate fiscal year end activities.

***APPLICATION PROCESS***

The application package consists of the following:

* Nomination Form
* Candidate Interest Statement – a concise description of the candidate’s reason for wanting to participate in this program and how the skills learned will impact the candidate’s career path - limited to one page or a five-minute video.
* Candidate Experience Statement – a concise description of the candidate’s experience in being a change agent for innovative acquisition methods, especially in IT or digital services acquisitions. Detail specific examples related to innovation in acquisition, including the results and impact of the examples – limited to two pages or a ten-minute video.
* Approval from both Supervisor and either Agency Senior Procurement Executive (CFO Act agency) or senior acquisition official (small agency).

Applications must be submitted to [challenge@omb.eop.gov](mailto:challenge@omb.eop.gov) no later than April 29, 2016. Please submit questions to [challenge@omb.eop.gov](mailto:challenge@omb.eop.gov) as well.

***DIGITAL SERVICE CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES***

This list of digital services categories/types and current examples are provided to help candidates understand the types of digital services they may encounter in the program.

* + Agile Methodologies
    - Scrum
    - Kanban
  + Collaboration
    - Wikis (e.g., Confluence, Twiki)
    - Portals (for document versioning, workflow, e.g., SharePoint, SalesForce)
    - Q&A sites (e.g., OSQA, [QHub,](http://qhub.com/) [AnswerHub,](http://dzonesoftware.com/solutions/custom-question-answer-websites/) [AnswerBase,](http://answerbase.com/) [AskBot](https://askbot.com/))
    - Blogs
  + Content Management Systems
    - Wordpress
    - Drupal
  + Enterprise Integration (related to API development)
    - Camel
    - Spring Integration
    - Messaging (JMS, RabbitMQ, ActiveMQ)
    - Kafka
  + Open Source Software
    - Drupal
    - Ruby on Rails
    - GitHub
  + Scripting
    - Shell/batch scripts
    - Scripting languages (Ruby, Python, Groovy, Scala)
  + Security
    - Encryption
    - PKI
    - Certificates
    - Digital signatures
    - Authentication and authorization/access control
  + Software engineering
    - Version control (Git, Subversion, Mercurial, etc.)
    - Issue tracker (Jira, Trello, etc.)
    - Wiki or other collaboration tool (Confluence, SharePoint, etc.)
  + Social Media
    - Facebook Twitter
    - Vine Pinterest
  + Virtualization
    - VMWare
    - Oracle VirtualBox

1. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/simplifying-federal-procurement-to-improve-performance-drive-innovation-increase-savings.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/acquisition-innovation-labs-and-pilot-for-digital-acquisition-innovation-lab-memorandum.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)