



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA ACQUISITION ACADEMY

Training and professional
development for the
VA workforce.





VA ACQUISITION ACADEMY

- Advance Your Career
- Build a Stronger Workforce
- Create Your Future

At the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we recognize the value of training and are committed to developing a world-class acquisition workforce through our award-winning VA Acquisition Academy (VAAA), located in Frederick, MD.

Acquisition is a mission-critical asset that is integral to the execution of all federal agency programs. Done well, it results in the proper exercise of the federal government's fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayer and better mission outcomes for the American people. Discretionary contract spend across the entire federal government continues to grow. Each year the VA spends more than \$20 billion on goods and services in support of our Nation's Veterans. With so many dollars at stake, not to mention critical products and services for the public, federal agencies must ensure they have a well-trained acquisition workforce to carry out this mission-critical function.



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ABOUT THE VA ACQUISITION ACADEMY

Established in 2008, VAAA develops and delivers acquisition training to meet the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Federal Acquisition Certification requirements for contracting personnel, program/project managers, and contracting officer representatives (CORs). In addition, we offer training for the supply chain and facilities management workforces—integral members of the acquisition team. While meeting OMB certification requirements is a critical component of our training, it is our holistic approach to career development that goes far beyond “check-the-box” training. VAAA's unique training offerings and customized delivery result in our students being well qualified to carry out the acquisition function.

ABOUT OUR COURSES & TRAINING

We design all our offerings to deliver high quality learning programs with consideration to organizational budget constraints, the need to minimize time away from the office, and travel restrictions.

Through our strategically-sourced contracting vehicles for curriculum design/development and course delivery, as well as our own in-house contracting, program management, and instructional systems design expertise, we can build customized training and tailor “best value” solutions for VA employees and other federal agencies. With students coming from multiple agencies, our model promotes information sharing to enrich the learning experience for all.

OUR COURSES AND PROGRAMS:

Are available to other government agencies

Are offered on an open-enrollment basis to individuals or groups

Can be tailored and delivered to organizations anywhere throughout the U.S.

Are offered in a variety of learning modalities to meet the different learning needs of students, including:

- facilitated virtual delivery where participants are connected from remote locations
- face-to-face instruction
- online self-paced learning



ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

VAAA’s five schools provide much more than certification training. We train the entire acquisition team to include contracting professionals, program and project managers, contracting officer’s representatives, facilities managers, and supply chain managers and logisticians.

Using a competency-based, experiential learning model, the academy provides a consistent approach and methodology.

OUR SCHOOLS INCLUDE:

- Acquisition Internship School (AIS)
- Contracting Professional School (CPS)
- Facilities Management School (FMS)
- Program Management School (PMS)
- Supply Chain Management School (SCMS)

Through well-established stakeholder engagement approaches and our learning standards and evaluation framework, all our offerings are

developed, delivered, and evaluated to ensure they deliver results that improve the acquisition system.

While traditional acquisition training programs often target specific audiences only, we continue to expand our offerings to include more team-based developmental opportunities where contracting, program, legal, finance, and even industry will participate in learning experiences together. We have found that developing a common understanding of the process, an appreciation and respect for each other’s roles, and the lines of demarcation between each to maintain the integrity of the process, makes the acquisition system work better. Look for these new cross-training as well as a significant expansion of curricula in all schools including continuous learning point (CLP) classes.



Acquisition Internship School

The Acquisition Internship School (AIS) offers two programs to train contract specialists for VA and other federal agencies. The cohort-based models focus on entry-level interns, create strong-lasting networks, and lay a solid foundation for what it takes to be successful in the acquisition business.

This approach allows interns to leverage and share the vast knowledge and expertise within the federal government acquisition community and apply innovative practices to help perform the acquisition function more effectively and efficiently.

Both programs, the Acquisition Internship Program (AIP) and Warriors to Workforce Program (W2W) are competency-based and include a holistic curriculum focused not only on technical contracting, but also skills including communication, program management, writing, leadership, creative thinking, risk management, and interpersonal competencies. AIS has received multiple awards including the prestigious Chief Acquisition Officers

Council (CAOC) Team Acquisition Excellence Award which recognizes teams or individuals that have demonstrated excellence in federal acquisition management.

ACQUISITION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (AIP)

This approximately two-year program is an accelerated and highly selective career development and professional training program aimed at developing future contract specialists to serve the mission-critical needs of the Department of Veteran Affairs. The program includes formal certification-required contracting courses, unique experiential learning laboratory skill-building workshops, and business competency development. Additionally, on-the-job training is interspersed throughout the program and accounts for approximately 70 percent of the program time. Other elements of the program include industry off-site visits to view the acquisition process from the vendor aspect, guest speakers who share career and acquisition expertise and insights, and mission service projects to increase employee engagement, sense of purpose and connection with the mission. Interns graduating from the program satisfy all training requirements necessary to be eligible for Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Levels I and II.



**WARRIORS TO WORKFORCE
PROGRAM (W2W)**

The W2W Program offers Veterans with a service-connected disability an opportunity to transition into a new career in the Federal government by applying military skills and experiences to the contract specialist career field. The program focuses on transitional support, mentoring, professional development, and foundational career training activities. The curriculum includes four main components: business education, professional development, peak performance training and mission service. The business education component includes instructor-led college business courses from an accredited academic institution. The professional development component includes foundational acquisition and general business training. Peak performance training provides critical mental skills to enhance personal resilience, self-confidence, adaptability and mental agility. Mission service projects allow participants to understand and connect to the VA mission.

Participants complete the program as a cohort, fortified by a built-in support system that mirrors the team environment and camaraderie they experienced in the military. These relationships create a foundation for a lasting professional network throughout their career. After successful completion of the program, participants advance to the two-year Acquisition Intern Program (AIP) which equips them with the skills and experiences needed to become successful full-time contract specialists. Through AIP and W2W programs, Veterans are taught in-demand skills and competencies which allows participants to continue serving their country as civil servants.



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Contracting Professional School

The Contracting Professional School (CPS) provides training opportunities for contracting professionals to move beyond certification to qualification through innovative, practical training and best in-class educational experiences.

Its comprehensive curricula and engaging programs enable government contracting professionals to obtain the expertise to achieve and maintain Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Levels I, II, and III. The goal is to meet the needs of today's acquisition professionals, developing certified and qualified contracting professionals who will become future contracting leaders. The curriculum focuses on technical contracting training, professional business competencies, and strategic business operating skills. CPS also offers customized and dedicated courses to meet targeted training needs. The school incorporates civilian case studies and examples in training to increase relevance and strengthen the theory-to-practice connection. CPS staff members have significant operational contracting experience, enabling the VAAA to offer high quality training for less cost than what agencies would otherwise typically incur.

CPS continues to develop new courses that will provide significant career development opportunities for the acquisition workforce to include cross-functional training opportunities and classes focused on helping develop the business and operational skills needed to mature organizational capability. In other words, training will focus on what it takes to more efficiently and effectively manage and

lead world-class acquisition organizations. CPS has developed a procurement-focused leadership program for senior-level contracting professionals and is committed to continue delivering engaging and innovative training to the workforce.

**SENIOR ACQUISITION LEADERSHIP
TRAINING (SALT) PROGRAM**

This cohort-based development program for supervisory 1102s is designed to move the emphasis from technical to leadership competencies, creating leaders who are agile, understand themselves and others, think critically and strategically to get results, effectively communicate, can manage and lead change, and can lead from where they are now while readying themselves for the future. The program provides a multimodal experience of instructor-led courses, web-based training, social learning platforms, interactive real-world application, and culminates in a capstone project centered on applying program content and developmental learning skills to address an existent senior leader-sponsored, contracting challenge. Throughout the SALT Program, there are also numerous opportunities for cross-organizational information exchange, peer relationship-building, direct engagement with senior leaders as teachers, and ongoing collaboration and innovation.



Facilities Management School

The Facilities Management School (FMS) serves as the primary learning and development resource for the VA federal facility community and other government agencies. FMS trains personnel on the entire facilities management lifecycle including program planning, construction, operations and maintenance, and disposal.

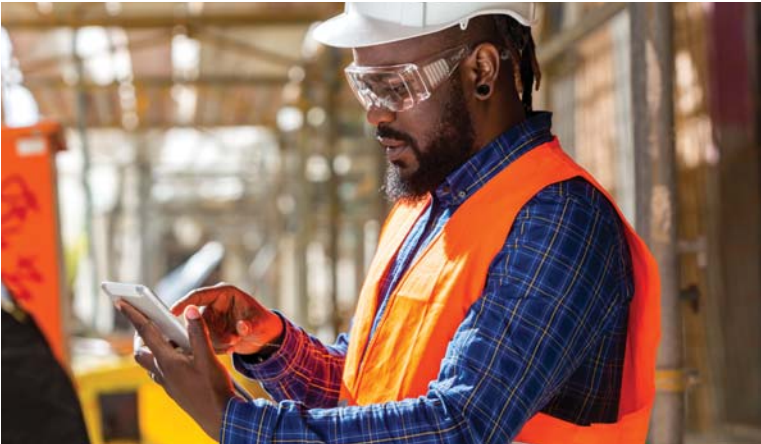
From a facility life-cycle perspective, FMS offers courses, workshops, seminars, and online resources to help achieve better results in requirements planning, project design and delivery, construction, project activations, facility operations and maintenance, and leadership and innovation. FMS also offers training to enhance employee and workplace safety, infection control risk mitigation, sustainability, external accreditation and code compliance, and training tailored for the biomedical program.

In compliance with the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act (FBPTA), Public Law 111-308, and the VA Mission Act of 2018, Public Law 115-182, FMS offerings focus on the following core competencies: building operations and maintenance, energy management, sustainability, water efficiency, safety (including electrical safety), and building performance measures. The FBPTA imposes training and reporting requirements on agencies to ensure that the federal government has a well-trained and competent facilities management workforce.

Using the same competency-based, theory-to-practice training model employed across the VAAA enterprise, FMS provides training that addresses both technical and business competencies needed to perform

the facilities management function. Occupational disciplines included in the VA's facilities management workforce include: chief engineer, energy engineer, biomedical engineer, safety specialist, environmental engineer, fire protection engineer, project manager, planner, construction manager, and design manager.

Training is conducted primarily at the VAAA, but can be delivered in multiple locations throughout the U.S., as well as via virtual or online delivery. Open to other federal agencies, FMS offerings can help ensure FBPTA compliance but more importantly, ensures that the facilities management workforce has the proficiency and skill necessary to effectively manage and operate federal facilities.



Supply Chain Management School

The Supply Chain Management School (SCMS) provides competency-based training and development for the supply chain workforce by addressing gaps in skills and providing learning solutions that align with VA strategic goals.

Supply chain and logistics account for the second largest expense in VA. A well-trained supply chain management workforce can reduce discretionary contract spend, minimize administrative operating costs to the agency, and deliver what the Veteran, dependent, or other end-user needs when they need it.

The Supply Chain Management School (SCMS) trains and prepares the supply chain and logistics workforce in a graduated curriculum from the entry level logistician to mid-level professionals to the senior supply chain executive.

SCMS offers students an innovative and high-quality academic environment with emphasis on translating theory, fundamentals, and concepts to practical applications. The school is committed to the education and professional development of supply chain managers and logisticians in support of our Veterans.

The SCMS curriculum is designed to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the supply chain and logistics workforce. The curriculum supports the school's vision to provide training that creates a more standardized, cost-effective, and streamlined federal supply chain resulting in measurable return on investment.

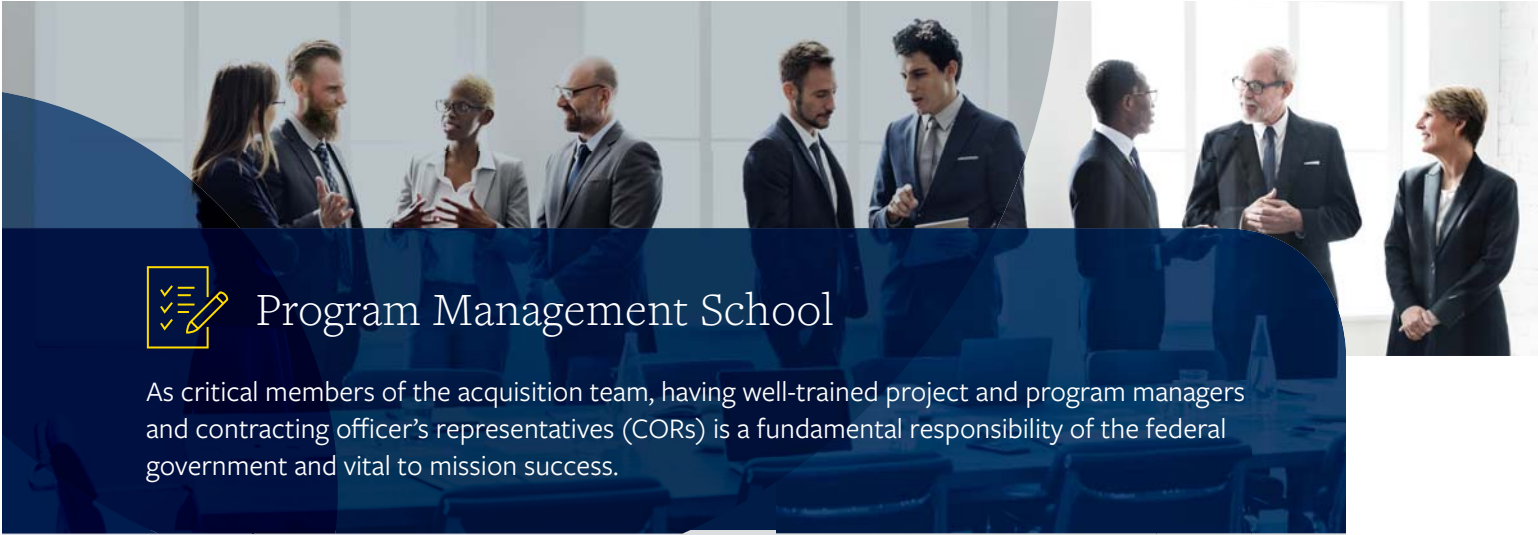
This is accomplished through a comprehensive and structured approach using a competency-based training model designed to enhance the skills of the logistics workforce across three supply chain professional levels.

The school provides core courses that address the general and technical competencies, VA specific functional areas and core activities of VA logistics professionals.

The SCMS comprehensive curriculum roadmap is designed to standardize training by supporting five general competencies and fourteen technical competencies within three professional levels:

- Professional Level I (GS 1-6/WG 6 and below)
- Professional Level II (GS 7-11/WG 7 and above, All WS/WL grades)
- Professional Level III (GS 12-15)

Each professional level provides a combination of Instructor-led (face to face) and virtual classroom (synchronous and asynchronous) training. SCMS methods of instruction are designed to support a blended learning environment by integrating VA-centric scenarios and industry best practices to strengthen relevance and improve supply chain performance at all professional levels.



Program Management School

As critical members of the acquisition team, having well-trained project and program managers and contracting officer's representatives (CORs) is a fundamental responsibility of the federal government and vital to mission success.

The ability to deliver projects on time and within budget demands specialized training and skill development based on best practices. The Program Management School (PMS) delivers training that satisfies OMB's Federal Acquisition Certification in Program/Project Management (FAC-P/PM) and Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR) initial and re-certification requirement, and helps mature this capability so that agencies can achieve better mission outcomes. PMS has trained thousands of students, including employees from other government agencies. PMS-trained students have contributed to significant cost savings across government programs.

While our FAC-P/PM and FAC-COR offerings are helping VA meet OMB-mandated certification requirements and mature the Department's PM capability, it is all of the services we provide that distinguish us from other training institutions. The school takes modular and blended learning approaches that reduce travel and time away from the office while maintaining high quality training and career development for agency program/project managers and CORs.

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION FOR PROGRAM/PROJECT MANAGERS (FAC-P/PM) TRAINING

Satisfying training requirements for Entry, Mid, and Senior FAC-P/PM Levels, the FAC-P/PM curriculum

is designed around an agency/organization-neutral best practice program management framework—the Acquisition Program Management Framework (APMF). This approach allows a trainee to learn best practices formulated into the VA process that will lead to success in any organization. The curriculum includes competency assessment, classroom and online learning, coaching and mentoring, and on-the-job qualification development. The training is designed so participants can apply knowledge and new skills to their work immediately, resulting in immediate impact on program and project performance.

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION FOR CONTRACTING OFFICER'S REPRESENTATIVE (FAC-COR) TRAINING

The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Representatives (FAC-COR) Levels I and II virtual courses are designed to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to properly execute the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) responsibilities such as acquisition planning, market research, and contract performance management. The Level I training consists of an eight-hour computer-based training (CBT) session and the Level II training consist of a 32-hour virtual online course. The Level II course consists of several modes of instruction to include lecture, webinar, individual, and group exercises and discussion, taking elements from both instructor-led

and web-based training. The training is centered on a toolkit for everyday use to support future COR tasks and responsibilities. Students gain necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to apply COR practices in real-world situations. At the completion of the course, students have a clear understanding of how to fulfill obligations as a Level II COR and receive a certificate of completion. The student can apply for COR Level II certification by providing the certification document and fulfilling one year of COR experience.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TEAM WORKSHOPS

Program Management (PM) Team Workshops are a unique training initiative, custom designed for program leaders and project managers overseeing mission-critical programs and/or project investments.

The workshops isolate and address program management impediments that are negatively impacting cost, schedule, performance, or customer satisfaction; develop artifacts in support of the program/project; and develop a plan to revitalize the program/project and get it back on track. Areas of focus include: work breakdown structure, program requirements, integrated master schedule, acquisition package, risk management plan, and other critical management disciplines. After each workshop, which range from one to four days in length, program managers receive the actual artifacts for their specific program developed by the team with expert guidance and hands-on assistance from VAAA program management practitioners.

The value to the government includes:

- consistent management disciplines/processes/artifacts that have been learned, applied and implemented wholly by an entire program/project team that directly and immediately improves a performance impediment;
- a sustainable process improvement that is repeatable across other programs and program teams; and,
- an improved management framework for federal leadership to enhance transparency and oversight of program management performance.

If your program or project has at least 10 members on the team and needs an assessment or a kick-start, consider the Program Management Team Workshop.

THE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Program Management (PM) Fellows Program is a selective professional development initiative for aspiring mission critical project managers. Fellows experience in-classroom training, guided application through exercises and simulations, and directed self-paced development. Additionally, fellows are exposed to different P/PM functional areas within their career field through specialty track curriculum and job rotation opportunities.

To provide a meaningful support structure for all students, fellows are matched with a mentor to serve as a resource before, during, and after the program. This mentoring component provides a network of experts who stand behind the student as a support system throughout his or her career. The network of mentors plays a key role in establishing an ongoing program management community within VA.

The program consists of a foundational curriculum, skill building workshops, self-paced learning and application informed by an individual development plan and action plan, and directed job rotation periods. These elements are reinforced by an online knowledge collaboration site, mission service activities, coaching, mentoring, and development of a cohort team and community of practice.





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