

3 acquisition planning

Law



Comparing and contrasting HHS, NASA and DHS acquisition planning and policies Inadequate planning has been a big problem in service acquisitions. This has subjected the budget, schedule and quality at a big risk. In 2010, GAO was directed by the federal government to examine how civilian agencies such as HHS, DHS, NASA and USAID conduct acquisition planning for services contracts. On its part, GAO reviewed the acquisition planning at these civilian agencies with the most spending on administration, professional and management support services. The GAO report stipulated that The Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have well established policies that determines the type of requirements and levels necessary for acquisition planning. However, there were still some vital elements of acquisition that were missing (National Archives & Rec. Admin, 2011). This calls for GAO to make some recommendations to help solve these problems. Acquisition planning elements recommended by GAO include: written acquisition plans, cost estimation, requirements developments and incorporation of lessons learned. These elements are not only necessary but critical for acquisition planning. NASA, DHS, HHS require written acquisition plans that align closely with elements stipulated in the FAR. In its 2010 report, GAO found that NASA, DHS and HHS faced challenges defining their needs, documented lessons learned to a limited extent, and documented cost estimates to varying degree. In response, GAO recommended several practices to help curb these limitations. The recommendations included hiring personnel who are specialized in procurement business issues and cost and price analysis and providing templates to help in preparing key documents. HHS

<https://assignbuster.com/3-acquisition-planning/>

Acquisition Regulation The Health and Human Services supplements and implements the Federal Acquisition Regulation. That is, it provides the regulatory framework for conducting acquisitions across the department. In HHS, each contracting activity shall prepare an annual Acquisition plan as far in advance with each fiscal year as possible. The policy memos give detailed information for contracting programs. HHSAR (Health and Human Services Acquisition Regulation) provides detailed instructions about policy procedure that are needed to meet the laws and policies requirements (Herz & Baller, 1971). The contracting officer, as stipulated in HHSAR part 307, is tasked with the responsibility of initiating discussions with the assigned Project Officer. However, the contracting officer has to perform this role in consultation with the OSDDBU SBS for each action that exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold. The designee or HCA is mandated to establish standard lead times for processing different types of acquisitions at the required time. That is, it has to ensure that he/she meets the deadline for the receipts of well-planned and timely rewards. Technical proposals are evaluated based upon the past factors such as performance and understanding (National Archives & Rec. Admin, 2011). When issuing a contract, whether in regard to technical or performance, the following evaluation aspects have to be considered: financial management, customer service, innovations and technology, and operational excellence. Homeland Security (DHS) acquisition planning The department of Homeland Security forecast of contract opportunities comprise of projections of the entire anticipated contract actions above \$150, 000 that small enterprises may be able to perform under direct contracts with DHS (Herz & Baller, 1971)..

Through a unified team approach involving small business personnel, senior

<https://assignbuster.com/3-acquisition-planning/>

management, technical staff and acquisition personnel, DHS supports the critical national mission and the vital public policy objective of small businesses. In situations where the federal government is initiating a new contracting action during the fiscal year, the DHS may choose to: Use existing government contracts in place at another agency, or a DHS-wide contract. use firms already listed as a part of the Federal Supply Schedule, (4) set-aside the opportunity for a specific category of firms (e. g., small businesses, service disabled veteran-owned small businesses, 8(a) small businesses, women-owned small business or HUB-Zone small businesses), Utilize a full and open competition technique wherein any interested firms may consider participating in the acquisition process (Herz & Baller, 1971). The procurements in the DHS are awarded by the Office of Procurement Operations (OPO) in consultation with the Component IT and Procurement communities and Chief Information Officer (CIO). In addition to the forecast information regarding both the range and the timing of estimated government's planning contracting costs, DHS is mandated to examine the elements of the forecast every 3-month quarter and make modifications where necessary (Rumbaugh, 2010). NASA acquisition planning The NASA Ames Acquisition forecast consolidates the anticipated procurements at each of NASA's centers and transforms it into an agency-wide report. The main aim of the forecast is to increase the industries advanced knowledge of NASA requirements. In NASA, requests for approval of proposed bundling must meet the threshold requirements as indicated in FAR 7. 107(b) before being sent to the Procurement Head Office (National Archives & Rec. Admin, 2011). The substantial bundling documentation requirement is applicable to every proposed bundling expected to exceed \$5, 000, 000 or more. The

contracting officer must accompany the bundling documentation with the measurable benefits as stated in FAR 7. 107(b) (Rumbaugh, 2010). This must be done in sufficient time to allow for review of the document. The NFS and FAR requirements for justification, review and approval of contracts requirements also apply in situations where orders are placed from a federal supply schedule contract. The NASA's responsibilities include: 1) Develop a yearly forecast and semiannual update of the expected contract opportunities 2) Make available such forecasts to the entire public 3) Include in the forecast contract opportunities that focus on small businesses or any other business owned and managed by economically and socially disadvantaged individuals in the society. Essential Factors in Acquisition Planning a) Market research-this is essential because it will help the agency in analyzing the current market trends and situations. The market factors may include the current micro and macroeconomic trends in the market such as demand, tax, supply etc. b) The contractors- this is the target demand or supplier. They are the backbone in which the acquisition planning is established. Without them no proper plans could be made for acquisition. c) Formal acquisition plan- a formal acquisition plan identifies all vital cost, technical and business issues of a requirements and gives certain or specific solutions to address any critical issue that might arise during the acquisition process (Herz & Baller, 1971). Acquisition Strategies Agency: Department of Health and Human Services Strategies: a) Update its acquisition plan framework to incorporate cost estimating functions and relevant required documentation. b) Develop a cost estimate tool to assist the acquisition workforce in the development of valid cost estimates These strategies will ensure improved competition because they give an equal opportunity to the interested

contractors. In addition, it will ensure that proper information is available for future references hence ensuring that barriers such as imperfect information are eliminated. Agency: National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Strategies: a) Revision of the NASA FAR supplement and plans to include a requirement for acquisition planners to specify any kind of lessons learned during the previous acquisitions. This will help in the consideration of follow-on efforts. b) Inclusion of the cost estimate rationale. The cost estimate rationale should include sources and assumptions for cost estimates used in the acquisition plans (Rumbaugh, 2010) Agency: Homeland Security (DHS)

Strategies: a) Utilize current federal government contracts in place at an extra agency, or a DHS-wide contract. b) Embrace a fully competitive scenario whereby any interested party can participate in the acquisition process Just like in NASA and HHS, DHS embraces the competitive market structure. Its strategies are fully meant to encourage any interested party or parties to participate in the acquisition process. References Herz, J. W., & Baller, C. H. (1971). Business acquisitions: planning and practice. New York: Practising Law Institute. National Archives & Rec. Admin. (2011). Code Of Federal Regulations: Cfr Index And Finding AIDS: Revised As of January 1, 2011. United States Govt Printing Office. Rumbaugh, M. G. (2010). Understanding government contract source selection. Vienna, VA: Management Concepts.