



OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKFORCE

Maximizing NGA's acquisition system for NGA/NSG Mission

NGA Colleagues:

The timely acquisition of the right technologies, data, and services from industry, academe, non-profits and other government agency partners is essential to our operation.

Mission must always come first; the mission does not wait. American national security requires that our national security bureaucracy outperforms the pace of the threats our nation and our allies face. Our enemies do not pause to accommodate inefficient processes. It is our responsibility to keep abreast of new acquisition processes and find ways to leverage innovation to accelerate the accomplishment of our mission.

Customers require rapid delivery of solutions and services to realize their mission outcomes. Their needs and requirements continuously evolve; we must build speed and flexibility (agility) into our acquisition processes to respond to those evolutions. It is our job to acquire the technologies, data and services that NGA and the NSG need to execute our mission in the most effective, efficient and timely manner possible.

Our acquisition process follows the NGA Acquisition Regulation Implementation (NARI), the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation (DFAR). Although these acquisition regulations and policies contain explicit and statutorily required provisions, they also offer significant flexibilities. Sometimes, opportunities associated with these flexibilities are lost or, worse, ignored due to our agency's misinterpretation, reliance on past practices, or competing priorities (i.e., the drive for contract consolidations to ease workload or centralize management).

I urge you to challenge the status quo, to leverage best practices and develop tools and guidance that emphasize flexibilities in the FAR and DFAR. Doing so will drive outcomes and accountability and allow people to do their best work.

The Tech FAR Handbook and Digital Services Playbook highlight flexibilities in authorities that enable acquisition agility. NSG's Acquisition Strategy provides an overarching framework to enable NGA to drive efficiency as well. All acquisition personnel should complete NGA courses Agile 101 and Agency Orientation toward Agility.

To be clear, while we incorporate agility into NGA's acquisition guidance, all acquisition personnel should assume that if a specific strategy, practice, policy or procedure is in the best interest of NGA and is not specifically addressed or prohibited (by law, Executive Order, regulation or local policy) then that strategy, practice, policy or procedure is a permissible exercise of authority. We must discover and embrace best practices to achieve more effective, efficient and timely means of meeting mission owners' needs. NGA leadership establishes the vision for agency success, and our portfolio managers (PfMs) and acquisition experts translate that vision into action. As a foundation for improvement, I have identified rules, included on the next page, for using the flexibilities within our acquisition process to bring agility and efficiency to our acquisitions.

Innovation in the acquisition process continues across the enterprise. We must take full advantage of existing acquisition flexibilities, embrace new acquisition methods and reduce our acquisition cycle. I challenge the NGA workforce to build flexibility into all acquisitions so that we can provide services and capabilities to customers that are timely, offer the best value and are more effective than ever before.

Susan M. Gordon
Deputy Director

Rules for capitalizing on acquisition flexibilities

- ❖ The level of paperwork, governance, and scrutiny applied to acquisition efforts must be commensurate with mission timelines, funding, and technical complexity. The process should not overburden missions; we need quick timelines when executing relatively small, noncomplex requirements.
- ❖ We must be effective in our acquisition planning and contract execution. As missions are defined by portfolio managers (PfMs), program managers (PMs) and contracting officers (COs), execute acquisition strategies and develop flexible and adaptable contracts. PfMs must know their available resources, establish execution priorities and understand impacts if priorities are not executed. Our contracts must continue only if performance and mission needs are satisfied. PMs and COs must clearly define and communicate success parameters, and take immediate and definitive action should performance not be satisfied or mission needs change.
- ❖ NGA may acquire the technology, data and services it needs to perform its mission via interagency acquisitions, to include assisted acquisitions (Economy Act) and direct acquisitions, which maximize the use of pre-competed contract vehicles such as GSA schedules. GSA and other government-wide contracts offer a broad range of goods and services, prenegotiated line items, and special terms and conditions promoting lower costs for supplies and services.
- ❖ When a Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding is required to support a Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request, it must be appropriately and expeditiously coordinated with and approved by the receiving party and NGA's senior leadership. Understanding the signature authorities in advance would eliminate much of the bureaucracy that occurs today.
- ❖ We must maximize the use of Enterprise Licensing Agreements to make technologies readily available across contracts and within NGA.
- ❖ We must maximize streamlined competition processes, flexible contract types and ordering period flexibilities available through Multiple Award Task and Delivery Order Contracts.
- ❖ We must leverage the Small Business Administration's socioeconomic programs when possible to award contracts to eligible small businesses on a sole source or competitive basis.
- ❖ NGA will hold the clearances and provide physical access and IT accounts for NGA contractors. NGA should not unreasonably or without cause withhold security access or IT accounts for contractors contributing to the NGA enterprise. We will leverage our IC partners' existing security clearance information, to include accepting other agencies' clearance adjudications when appropriate.
- ❖ Any NGA employee with a concrete idea to streamline acquisition processes has the responsibility to notify the Component Acquisition Executive of potential concrete steps that could be taken to unburden the process.