



United States Department of the Interior
Office of Aviation Services
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DOI OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) – 17

Subject: Aviation Acquisition Planning

Effective Date: September 27, 2025

Last Updated: September 25, 2024

Expiration Date: December 31, 2025

- 1. Summary of Changes.** The Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS) reviewed and concurred with the following changes.
 - Added 5.G - The use of purchase cards as a method of payment is authorized when the cardholder has been appointed by AQD as an authorized ordering official under established Blanket Purchase Agreements and approved by the Bureau National Aviation Manager.
- 2. Purpose.** The purpose of this OPM is to establish policy, procedures, and acquisition planning milestones for the development of specifications, procurement, and inspection of aircraft and aircraft related services in support of Departmental programs.
- 3. Authority.** This policy is established by the Director, Department of the Interior, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) in accordance with the provisions of Departmental Manual 112 DM 12, 350 DM 1; and Secretarial Order 3322 dated August 23, 2012.
- 4. Background.** National Business Center, Aviation Management Directorate (NBC-AMD) as listed in 353 DM 1 no longer exists. On August 23, 2012, NBC-AMD was realigned under Deputy Assistant Secretary Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services (DAS-PRE) and named Office of Aviation Services (OAS), and aviation contracting services were re-assigned under the Interior Business Center (IBC) Acquisition Services Directorate (AQD). The aviation technical services requirements remained with OAS. This OPM addresses this organizational change and identifies the new processes and responsibilities for DOI Aviation Procurement between AQD, OAS and the Bureaus.

5. **Roles and Responsibilities:** The estimated timelines and processes outlined in this OPM will meet critical bureau operational requirements. A description of roles and responsibilities is provided as Appendix 1.

- Prescribed timelines for OAS to review and assure standard and specialized specifications for aircraft and crew are appropriate for the missions.
- Prescribed timelines for AQD to prepare the acquisition plan, develop the solicitation and other pre-award documents, solicit bids, lead the evaluation of offers, conduct negotiations, make the award, and prepare all the necessary supporting documentation.
- Prescribed timelines for OAS to provide post-award inspections.

This will allow for a fair interval for the vendors to procure additional required equipment and allow vendor pilots to gain proficiency for highly complex missions. Coordination and collaboration throughout this process is critical for all parties to be successful.

- A. Bureaus are responsible for submitting a Request for Contract Services (AQD-13) as per the attached Appendix 2 regarding acquisition planning timeline. The bureaus will also submit an AQD-13A, AQD-13H, or AQD-13U for the specific type of aircraft desired. This will ensure adequate time to complete the entire specification review, procurement, and inspection processes. See Appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities.
- B. Bureaus, OAS, and AQD should meet annually to ensure all upcoming contract renewals are known and planning can occur. Late submissions for AQD-13's will be accepted within the 225-day period, although priority will be given to AQD-13's already in process unless an urgent operational need warrants otherwise. See Appendix 2, as this details contracts valued between \$5M and \$50M.
- C. OAS is responsible for providing technical specifications for all Bureau aviation procurement requests within the timeframes outlined in the acquisition planning timeline. OAS also maintains the responsibility of inspecting all contract aircraft and aircrew performing under the contract. See Appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities.
- D. The Office of Acquisition and Property Management (PAM) is responsible for all DOI acquisition policy. AQD is responsible for ensuring all Federal Acquisition Regulations and applicable departmental acquisition policies are satisfied. AQD will collaborate with both OAS and the Bureaus to ensure acquisition documentation accurately reflects both the procurement request and applicable technical aviation specifications. See Appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities.
- E. Tracking progress of each requirement from specification development through the procurement process to inspection will be achieved by collaboration between the Bureaus, AQD and OAS.
- F. AQD is the contracting office responsible for the acquisition of all Bureau aviation procurement requests in accordance with the acquisition time planning document

timeframes unless the conditions in 5.G below are met. See Appendix 2 for timeline requirements.

- G. The use of purchase cards as a method of payment is authorized when the cardholder has been appointed by AQD as an authorized ordering official under established Blanket Purchase Agreements and approved by the bureau National Aviation Manager.
- H. Other Departmental contracting entities may be considered to provide aviation contracting services similar to AQD under the following requirements:
 - 1) The respective EAS member obtains unanimous approval from all EAS members.
 - 2) A formal (signed) agreement between the contracting office, OAS Director and Bureau EAC member identifying roles and responsibilities.

Susan E. Bates
Director, Office of Aviation Services

Attachments:

Appendix 1: Aviation Acquisition - Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Acquisition Planning Timeline

Appendix 1
Aviation Acquisition - Roles and Responsibilities

| I. Government Owned/Government Operated Leased Aircraft Program | Exercises Primary Responsibility | Exercises Secondary Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| A. General Functions | | |
| 1. Establish policy and procedures to ensure operation and maintenance of aircraft to achieve maximum safety at minimum cost. | OAS | Bureau |
| 2. Operate and maintain aircraft to achieve maximum safety at minimum cost. | OAS / Bureau | |
| B. Specific Functions | | |
| 1. Establish criteria for DOI aircraft ownership or agency operations of leased aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 2. Approve DOI aircraft ownership or agency operations of leased aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 3. Establish pilot and crew requirements. | OAS | Bureau |
| 4. Establish standards and procedures for operation and maintenance of DOI aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 5. Flight check and qualify all DOI pilots and crewmembers. | OAS / Bureau | |
| 6. Inspect and approve all DOI owned/operated aircraft and their supporting maintenance facilities. | OAS | |
| 7. Establish decision criteria for the acquisition, replacement, and disposal of DOI-owned aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 8. Approve the acquisition, replacement, and disposal of DOI-owned aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 9. Assign aircraft to bureaus for their exclusive use. | OAS | |
| 10. Operate aircraft. | Bureau / OAS | |
| 11. Maintain DOI owned/operated aircraft. | OAS / Bureau | |
| 12. Perform the financial management of all DOI aircraft. | OAS | Bureau |
| 13. Contract for aircraft maintenance and service. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| 14. Administer aircraft maintenance and service contracts. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| 15. Report unsafe and inefficient aircraft operations, conditions, and situations to OAS. | Bureau / OAS | |

| II. Contract Aircraft Program | Exercises Primary Responsibility | Exercises Secondary Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| A. General Functions | | |
| 1. Procure aircraft and aircraft services by contract. | AQD | |
| 2. Manage and control contract aircraft. | Bureau / OAS | |
| B. Specific Functions | | |
| 1. Prepare and submit program requirements to OAS. | Bureau | |
| 2. Review Bureau requirements and determine the most appropriate terms and conditions of contracts. | OAS / AQD | Bureau |
| 3. Prepare solicitations. | AQD | |
| 4. Review solicitations. | Bureau / OAS | |
| 5. Issue and amend solicitations. | AQD | |
| 6. Review offers and make pre-award evaluations. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| 7. Award contracts and handle protests. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| 8. Perform acceptance inspections of contractor's pilots and aircraft and issue qualification and data cards. | OAS | Bureau |
| 9. Manage contract aircraft. | Bureau / OAS | |
| 10. Provide aircrew orientation for specific missions. | Bureau | OAS |
| 11. Control (dispatch) and assign contract aircraft within the scope of contracts. | Bureau | |
| 12. Administer contract. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| a. Report significant contract and operational problems to AQD / OAS. | Bureau | |
| b. Perform initial and periodic compliance inspections. | OAS | Bureau |
| c. Perform aviation program evaluations. | OAS / Bureau | |
| 13. Enforce mandatory DOI standards and procedures. | OAS / Bureau | |
| 14. Mediate and/or adjudicate contractor-bureau disputes. | AQD | OAS / Bureau |
| 15. Coordinate contract litigation. | AQD | Bureau |
| 16. Make contract payments. | AQD | Bureau |
| 17. Perform post-evaluation of flight crew proficiency and pilot techniques. | OAS | Bureau |

Appendix 2 Acquisition Planning Timeline

Task Order/BPA Call up to \$250K

| ACTION | DAYS | CUMULATIVE DAYS | TIMELINE EXAMPLE |
|---|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| AQD-91 Submitted | 0 | 0 | 1 January |
| Review AQD-91 | 3 | 3 | 4 January |
| PR Created/Submitted | 3 | 6 | 7 January |
| Award Summary and other Award Documents Review and Approval | 3 | 9 | 10 January |
| Award Execution and Distribution | 1 | 10 | 11 January |
| Total | | 10 Maximum* | |

Modifications

| Action | Days | Timeline Example |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Contracting Officer Engagement | 0 | 1 January |
| Simple Modifications | Up to 20 | 21 January |
| Complex Modification | Up to 120 | 21 May |

- Simple Modifications Include: Exercising Options, Change in Contracting Officer, Change in Contracting Officers Representative (COR/COTR), or Funding Change.
- Complex Modifications Include: Ratifications, Vendor Claims, Terminations, and Increases in Contract Ceilings.
- In most cases, modification will be completed ahead of the timeline indicated, coordination and early AQD engagement is an important factor in contract modification.

Contracts up to \$5 Million

| ACTION | DAYS | CUMULATIVE DAYS | TIMELINE EXAMPLE |
|---|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| AQD 13 Submitted | 0 | 0 | 1 January |
| Specification and Solicitation Complete | 45 | 45 | 15 February |
| Solicitation Closed | 30 | 75 | 17 March |
| Source Selection Evaluation Board Complete | 30 | 105 | 16 April |
| Award Summary and other Award Documents Review and Approval | 15 | 120 | 1 May |
| Total | | 120 Maximum* | |

Contracts Between \$5 million and \$50 Million

| ACTION | DAYS | CUMULATIVE DAYS | TIMELINE EXAMPLE |
|---|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| AQD-13 Submitted | 0 | 0 | 1 January |
| Specification Complete | 30 | 30 | 31 January |
| Solicitation Draft Complete | 30 | 60 | 2 March |
| Solicitation and Supporting Documentation Review and Approval | 45 | 105 | 16 April |
| Solicitation Closed | 30 | 135 | 16 May |
| Source Selection Evaluation Board Complete | 30 | 165 | 15 June |
| Award Summary and other Award Documents Review and Approval | 60 | 225 | 14 August |
| Total | | 225 Maximum* | |
| <i>Additional Days to Consider</i> | | | |
| Protest Period | 120 | 345 | 12 December |
| Vendor Prep | 30 | 375 | 11 January (Year 2) |
| Inspection and Carding | 60 | 435 | 12 March (Year 2) |

Contracts Over \$50 Million

| ACTION | DAYS | CUMULATIVE DAYS | TIMELINE EXAMPLE |
|---|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| AQD-13 Submitted | 0 | 0 | 1 January |
| Specification Complete | 60 | 60 | 2 March |
| Solicitation Draft Complete | 60 | 120 | 1 May |
| Pre-Solicitation APAC and Solicitation & Supporting Documentation Review and Approval | 90 | 210 | 30 July |
| Solicitation Closed | 30 | 240 | 29 August |
| Source Selection Evaluation Board Complete | 30 | 270 | 28 September |
| Pre-Award APAC, Award Summary, and other Award Documents Review & Approval | 90 | 360 | 27 December |
| Total | | 360 Maximum * | |
| <i>Additional Days to Consider</i> | | | |
| Protest Period | 120 | 480 | 26 April (Year 2) |
| Vendor Prep | 30 | 510 | 26 May (Year 2) |
| Inspection and Carding | 60 | 570 | 25 July (Year 2) |

* The number of cumulative days is the target maximum number of days. However, all parties in the process - Bureaus, OAS, and AQD - must do their part to achieve this target.

Communication is critical and if more days are needed then planned, the responsible party shall notify the rest of the team to ensure a coordinated effort.