

## **PBS Needs to Strengthen Its Training and Warranting Programs for Contracting Officers - GSA Office of Inspector General**

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### **Why We Performed This Audit**

This audit was included in our [Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Plan](#) because of contract management deficiencies identified in prior GSA Office of Inspector General audit reports. Our audit objective was to determine if the GSA Public Buildings Service's (PBS's) method and oversight of training and warranting contracting officers are effective in developing a qualified acquisition workforce that meets GSA's contracting needs, policy, and mission.

### **What We Found**

While GSA has an acquisition career management program in place to meet its acquisition training needs, we identified a number of opportunities to improve its effectiveness. We found that PBS is not providing its contracting officers with adequate specialized training necessary to perform their jobs. We also found that PBS does not have a standardized process for qualifying and appointing contracting officers. Additionally, we found that PBS is not effectively managing warrant authority risk, warrant records for some contracting personnel are missing, and acquisition career managers are not properly designated.

### **What We Recommend**

We recommend that the PBS Commissioner takes appropriate action to address the deficiencies described in this report by:

1. Ensuring that the training and development needs of contracting officers at the GS-12 level and above are adequately addressed to foster PBS's operational success in achieving GSA's mission.
2. Implementing a national policy to establish a standardized process for evaluating and verifying the contracting experience and qualifications of warrant applicants.
3. Implementing controls to mitigate warrant authority risks created by the limitations of the Federal Acquisition Institute Cornerstone OnDemand system.
4. Ensuring that:
  - a. Key warranting records for the PBS acquisition workforce are properly maintained; and
  - b. Heads of Contracting Activity formally appoint acquisition career managers via delegation appointment memos and communicate their duties and responsibilities.

The PBS Commissioner agreed with our recommendations. PBS's written comments are included in their entirety in **Appendix F**.

Business Line  
Public Buildings Service

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