



Closer Management Can Rein in Agency Contractor Ranks OFPP Chief Says

Agencies can balance their relationships with contractors with additional resources going to management, says the president's top procurement policy official

By Matthew Weigelt

May 21, 2010

Insourcing federal work isn't the only means to reaching an appropriate number of federal workers and contractors who handle a federal agency's work, according to a prepared statement from the president's chief procurement policy official.

"In many cases, overreliance on contractors may be corrected by allocating additional resources to contract management," Daniel Gordon, administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, told a Senate subcommittee on May 20.

To find the suitable ratio of employee types, he said agencies can hire, retrain or even reassign a sufficient number of government employees who have the proper skills to manage contractors so the agency officials maintain control of their work. He told Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee that he has heard numerous times during his six months at OFPP that the number of contractors is out of control.

The Obama administration wants to give agencies the resources to manage their contractors well and also make agency officials recruit and keep skilled employees, particularly in areas where the agency lacks people, Gordon said. President Barack Obama proposed \$158 million in his fiscal 2011 budget for civilian agencies to build up their acquisition workforces.

Nevertheless, insourcing may be the answer, Gordon also said, and his office is working with agencies to help them understand when it's the right approach.

Gordon issued a policy proposal in March that helps agencies determine when insourcing is appropriate. It offers agency officials the questions to ask themselves when considering whether a job should be done by federal employees.

Gordon said he doesn't expect the policy, in its current form, to lead to a widespread shift away from contractors.

"However, we do expect every agency to work actively to identify if and where rebalancing is needed and to take appropriate actions to fix any identified imbalances," he said.

