

Acquisition, IT Jobs are Agencies' Insourcing Priorities

By Tom Spoth | April 26, 2010

Government insourcing efforts likely mean more acquisition and information technology jobs will move in-house, Office of Federal Procurement Policy Administrator Dan Gordon said Monday.

Agencies cited those two areas most often in response to inquiries from his office, Gordon told attendees at a joint meeting of the American Bar Association Committee on Privatization, Outsourcing and Financing Transactions and the Professional Services Council.

Gordon's office, part of the Office of Management and Budget, issued draft guidance for government insourcing March 31, in response to President Obama's March 2009 memo calling for contracting reforms.

The guidance lays out three categories of positions that could be insourced:

- Inherently governmental positions that should never be contracted out.
- Jobs "closely associated" with those inherently governmental positions, which can sometimes be filled with contractors.
- "Critical functions," which also can be performed by contractors to some extent.

Gordon said Monday that critical functions will vary from agency to agency and "it's perfectly all right to be using contractors if the agency retains control" over its operations and mission. Agencies are most in danger of losing that internal capability in the acquisition field, and IT is the second most common area of concern, Gordon said.

"The acquisition workforce is going to take a long time to rebuild," he said. "That's my office's No. 1 priority."

Gordon lamented the government's drift toward outsourcing. He said jobs were shifted without careful consideration of the consequences, and contractors are now responsible for "things we'd never have imagined outsourcing 15 years ago."

He added that he hopes insourcing efforts will not fall victim to the same lack of planning, and his office's policy letter is intended to bring clarity as the government attempts to "rebalance the relationship" with contractors.

Gordon emphasized that OFPP's guidance is only a draft and that public comments are encouraged.

"We in OFPP are in listening mode," he said.