



Director, Acquisition Career Management Office

NEWS

The Army DACM Office is responsible for talent management, career/leader development, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification, policy, and advocating for the professionals who are members of the Army Acquisition Workforce.

FROM THE DACM:

A MORE AGILE APPROACH TO TRAINING THE AAW

Rob Richardson Jr., Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM)



By now the workforce is familiar with the changes that impacted the defense acquisition workforce as part of “Back-to-Basics.” Back-to-Basics was the first major overhaul to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) in 30 years, and it was long overdue. The Army successfully implemented this

framework in February 2022. But a lot has happened since we began that transition in the fall of 2020.

We experienced a pandemic. New DOD Instructions 5000.66 and 5000.02 were published. International conflicts. After only a few years we were already asking ourselves if the adjusted requirements from Back-to-Basics still meet the mark. The word agile is used to describe continuous transformation and the need for agile testing, agile development and agile processes; allowing for rapid development, timely adaptation and accelerating delivery, which is important in training and keeping our workforce relevant too.

The previous DAWIA framework, as acknowledged by DOD leaders, was a “one size fits all” construct, and requirements ballooned over time to include excessive requirements and limited flexibility. The desired outcome with Back-to-Basics, as outlined by the Honorable Ellen M. Lord, the former undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment, was that “each Functional Area includes achieving streamlined and restructured certification requirements, identifying prioritized credentials and providing for continuous learning.”

Bottom line: There’s increased commitment to experiential learning; flexibility to add, remove and tailor training opportunities based on current and evolving needs; and recognition that acquisition leaders, supervisors and their employees are empowered to choose the training path that meets their individual, team and organizational needs.

At the DOD level and across the services, acquisition functional area leaders are leveraging this autonomy to ensure required training is fundamental to each and every acquisition position regardless of grade or project, and that a wide variety of continuous learning is available based on the uniqueness of each objective.

EMPLOYING COMPETENCIES

Competencies are sets of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that individuals need to perform jobs within their acquisition functional area. It’s important that the training we take time to develop, and ultimately require, is based on identified needs that are reviewed and validated.

To accomplish this, we have functional integrated teams (FITs) that execute a periodic review of functional competencies. The FITs circulate the competency model for comment and often go line-by-line to ensure viewpoints are heard from service and 4th Estate representatives—all the agencies and field activities in DOD that are not affiliated with a military branch or combatant command.

This collaboration is critical in providing each service and the 4th Estate the opportunity to comment on the validation process, and ultimately ensures the competencies are applicable across DOD.

The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is also a big part of this process, ensuring functional area certification training aligns with these competencies.

DAWIA certification training requirements contain competencies that are core competency elements across each functional area, while competencies deemed to be “specialty” are often left for continuous learning, credentials or assignment specific training.



While the DAWIA required training provides for a strong baseline, it is incumbent upon each workforce member to work with their supervisor to identify additional training that may be needed taking into account new acquisition authorities, pathways, agile methodology, digital transformation and real-world events.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to look at how we manage and share information, and also how we contingently plan for supply chain issues.

The **DoD Instruction 5000.02—updated in 2022**—implemented the Adaptive Acquisition Framework, which enables us to deliver effective, suitable, survivable, sustainable and affordable solutions to the end user in a timely manner. This framework impacts everyone across the acquisition community and necessitates broad understanding.

The recent conflicts, such as the one in Ukraine, are another example of our workforce needing to pivot. Within a year, the Army provided thousands of pieces of equipment to Ukraine and, in turn, had to quickly replace those items. These lessons learned demonstrate our need to train the workforce how to accelerate the purchasing and delivery of systems.

We're also looking to incorporate more systems and digital engineering training across functional areas. What we've seen over just the last few years are the rapid changes to system integration, testing, etc., and it impacts all acquisition positions in some way. It's important that all Army Acquisition Workforce members are competent in these areas; not necessarily a certified expert but to have a basic level of understanding.



DID YOU KNOW?

The competencies for each Acquisition Functional Area are listed on the USAASC website at

<https://asc.army.mil/web/dacm-office/functional-areas/#functionalareas>.

CONCLUSION

Thankfully, we have an agile, adaptive process in place with the FITs that allows our acquisition functional leaders to discuss and make critical updates so that our workforce can remain trained and ready. While DAWIA certification remains your bus ticket, it's not the final stop at your destination.

As I've mentioned in previous DACM columns, the best person to develop your career is you, in collaboration with

your supervisor. My office will make sure you have the basic skills required to do any job within your functional area, but self-awareness and taking advantage of additional training and education opportunities are what will make you successful in that job. **DAU Credentials** and the **various leader development programs** available to you can take you from the fundamentals to expert. Read the original article in AL&T Magazine at <https://asc.army.mil/web/altmag-news-a-more-agile-approach-to-training-the-aaw/>.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

ARMY ACQUISITION HALL OF FAME WELCOMES 2024 INDUCTEES

Four exemplary Army Acquisition professionals were honored at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting & Exposition in Washington, as they were inducted into the 2024 Army Acquisition Hall of Fame on October 15, 2024. The distinguished inductees were Maureen Cross, Cathy Dickens, Gary Winkler and Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Joseph Yakovac.

"These individuals embody the most sought-after traits among our military and civilian professionals and those who lead them: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage," said Hon. Douglas R. Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology (ASA(ALT)), and the Army acquisition executive, during his opening remarks.



“They are being recognized for their significant and enduring contributions to the Army acquisition community’s historic and ongoing mission.”

Bush emphasized that these inductees represent the pinnacle of commitment, having devoted their careers to equipping the warfighter with capabilities that deter adversaries. “Our inductees exemplify the highest standards of the Army Acquisition Workforce,” he added.

Before presenting the awards, Bush noted, “The individuals we honor have been sought after through the years for their problem-solving abilities, change agent approaches and collaborative abilities, which they used wisely and effectively to embrace and further the Army acquisition’s mission.”

Bush and Hon. Gabe Camarillo, under secretary of the Army, presented the awards to each inductee. First to be honored was Maureen Cross, who served as director of the Army Systems Acquisition Review Council Secretariat and led the Plans Branch at Army Futures Command (AFC) prior to her retirement. “She was instrumental in building strong and enduring relationships between AFC’s requirements community and our acquisition community,” Bush highlighted.

Next, Cathy Dickens was inducted. Bush described her 37-year civil service career, culminating as the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command’s deputy commander. “Her connection with Soldiers in the field and firsthand understanding of their needs drove her efforts in providing critical equipment needed,” he said.

Gary Winkler, who concluded his more than 20-year civil service career as program executive officer for Enterprise Information Systems, followed. Bush praised Winkler’s leadership: “His role as a leader was to focus, develop and unleash the collective power of the workforce.” The final inductee was Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Joseph Yakovac, who served as military deputy to the ASA(ALT) and director of the Army Acquisition Corps. “He was an early advocate for Army transformation and his vision helped pave the way for

our achievements today,” Bush remarked.

The Army Acquisition Hall of Fame, established in 2022, honors former members of the Army Acquisition Workforce who have made lasting contributions to the Army’s mission in support of the Army acquisition community. Bush reiterated the significance of this recognition: “Our inductees represent the very best of the Army Acquisition Corps, having dedicated their lives to ensuring our warfighters are equipped with the capabilities that safeguard our nation. Our inductees exemplify the highest standards of the Army Acquisition Workforce.”

This year’s inductees—Maureen Cross, Cathy Dickens, Gary Winkler, and Joseph Yakovac—leave a legacy of leadership, dedication and impact that has profoundly shaped the Army’s acquisition mission and continues to ensure our Soldiers have the equipment they need to defend the nation.

A recording of the 2024 Army Acquisition Hall of Fame ceremony is available at www.dvidshub.net/webcast/35272. For more information on the Army Acquisition Hall of Fame, along with biographies of the recipients, go to <https://asc.army.mil/web/hall-of-fame>.



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES: The Class of 2024 Army Acquisition Hall of Fame inductees are honored at the Army Acquisition Hall of Fame ceremony after receiving their medals. From left, Maureen Cross, Cathy Dickens, Gary Winkler and Joseph Yakovac. (Photo by Rachel Longarzo, USAASC)

CALL FOR PAPERS

2025 DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE WRITING AWARDS

Submissions for the 2025 Defense Acquisition Workforce Writing Awards are open, and the deadline is Feb. 3. Award categories include:

- Innovations in Overcoming Obstacles
- Innovations in Implementing Acquisition Flexibilities



In its second year since inception in 2024 and administered by Defense Acquisition University, this writing competition was established to encourage innovation and persistence in overcoming obstacles in defense acquisition. Award recipients will have the opportunity present their papers in various public defense acquisition forums and events at future dates.

Award winners receive a \$5,000 cash prize; there were a total of six award recipients in 2024. More details about the call for papers can be found at www.dau.edu/writing-awards.

DAU

2025 Defense Acquisition Workforce WRITING AWARDS

NOW ACCEPTING
SUBMISSIONS

Award: \$5,000 Cash Prize
The deadline for submission is
Feb. 3, 2025. For more information,
visit the website below.

www.DAU.edu/writing-awards



TRAINING WITH INDUSTRY

INITIAL TOUCHPOINT



On Sept. 19, the Training with Industry (TWI) FY24 fellows had the pleasure of attending the initial touchpoint at Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), an aerospace, security and defense company located in Herndon, Virginia. At the event, graciously hosted by SNC, TWI participants had the opportunity to share best practices and experiences,

as well as discuss how to best navigate and integrate with industry partners. Additionally, the Acquisition Management Branch of the U.S. Army Human Resources Command

provided a brief on career development, and SNC gave an informative demonstration – a most enlightening and valuable experience for all attendees.

TWI is a one year work experience program intended to give top-performing, competitively selected Functional Area 51 (FA51) acquisition officers extended exposure to innovative industry management techniques, procedures, best practices, technological innovations, cultures, and perspectives from industry partners. For more on TWI, visit <https://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/programs/aac-training-with-industry/>.



Sept. 19, 2024, participants of the Training with Industry program attend an Initial Touchpoint event at Sierra Nevada Corporation, in Herndon, Virginia

BREAKING NEW GROUND:

CHRIS YOUNG'S HISTORIC DIRECT COMMISSION INTO ARMY ACQUISITION



On August 16, 2024, Chris Young made history by becoming the first civilian to receive a direct commission into the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC). This landmark achievement not only represents a personal milestone for Young but also signals a transformative shift in how the Army is expanding its talent pool.

The commissioning ceremony, held at Fort Moore, Georgia, was a momentous occasion conducted by 3rd Battalion 11th Infantry Regiment commander, Lt. Col. Wilford Garvin, who commissioned Young alongside his class of 105 direct commission candidates. Young's direct commission is part of an innovative initiative by the Army to create specialized pathways for commissioning in various job fields. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, signed into law on August 13, 2018, empowers the DOD with enhanced authority to grant constructive service credit. This authority facilitates the direct commissioning of officers up to the rank of colonel, across all branches and functional areas, reinforcing the Army's commitment to attracting top-tier, civilian talent.

The direct commission program is a highly selective and rigorous process. Young will embark on a rigorous training path that includes the Direct Commission Course, the Signal Basic Officer Course and the Signal Captain Career Course. After completing this training, he will transition to a Functional Area 51, where he will likely take on an acquisition

program manager role within a Program Executive Office.

Young's impressive background spans over 20 years of diverse experience in the civilian sector, where he excelled in various roles, including manufacturing engineer, operations manager and even a company CEO. This multifaceted background equips Young with a unique perspective that will undoubtedly enhance the Army Acquisition Workforce.

He is eager to bring industry experience to the Army and committed to remaining at the forefront of innovation and operational excellence. Outside of his professional commitments, Young resides in Arizona with his wife and four children. His journey serves as an inspiration to other civilians considering this noble path. For more information on the Army direct commissioning program, visit <https://talent.army.mil/direct-commissioning/>.



THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY: Chris Young, alongside his class of 105 direct commission candidates at Fort Moore, Georgia



TIME TO HIRE IMPROVES WITH USE OF ACQUISITION CODING TOOL

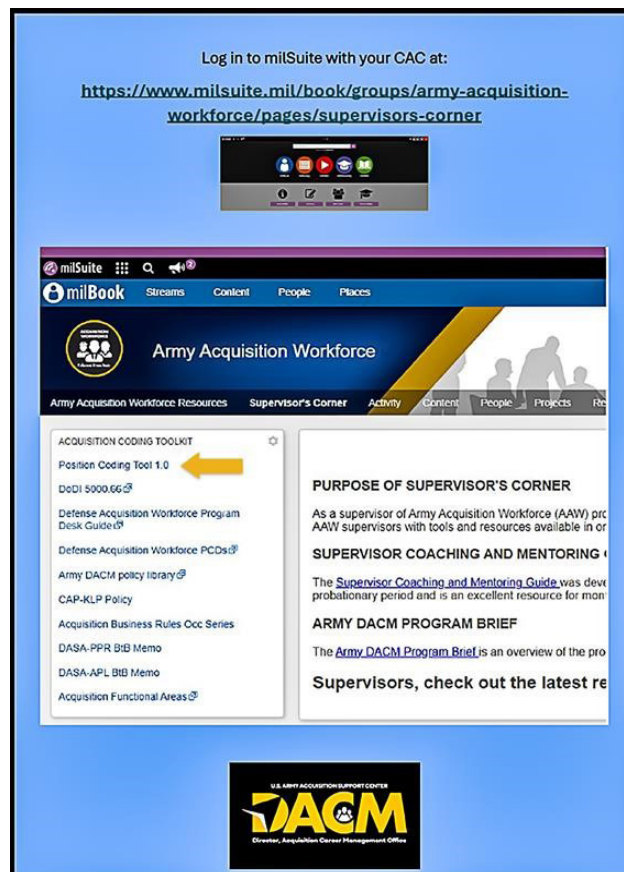
The acquisition coding tool is a supervisory tool that can be used by hiring managers and human resources professionals to ensure accurate acquisition coding information is entered into AUTNOA for a position, which will ultimately improve time to hire.

The Army DACM office recently developed an Acquisition **Position Coding Tool**. The tool is excel based and contains all of the mandatory acquisition fields that must be entered into AUTNOA and DCPDS to code an acquisition position. The coding tool has many benefits to include:

- Career Level options that align to each Acquisition Functional Area
- Critical Acquisition Position and Key Leadership Position logic based on policy requirements
- Occupational series, organization, and functional area business rules that are implemented in DCPDS built into the tool. If an invalid combination of information is entered than an error message will populate – providing immediate feedback to the user.

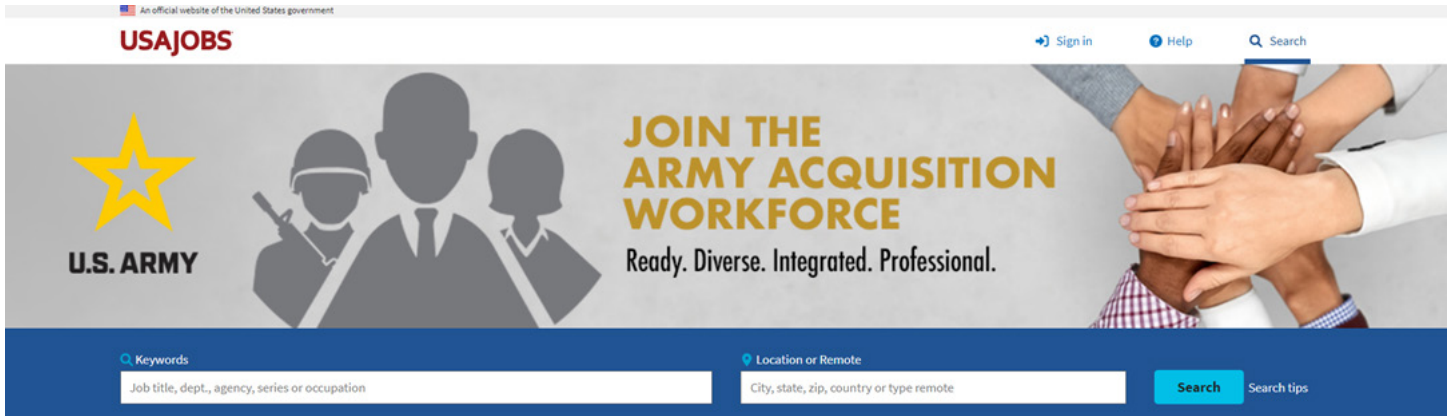
For more information on how to determine if a position is to be coded as an acquisition position, see the Acquisition Workforce Desk Guide (DoDI5000_66DeskGuide) at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/500066p.PDF?ver=8uLQi55jR6NBmosp1dirzg%3D%3D> .

To access the coding tool, log into milSuite with your CAC at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/army-acquisition-workforce/pages/supervisors-corner>.





JOIN THE ARMY ACQUISITION WORKFORCE



The Army DACM Office has partnered with CHRA G-3 to establish a new USAJOBS branded search page for acquisition coded positions: <https://armyacquisition.usajobs.gov/>

This page is a one-stop shop for all open AAW-coded positions. Take a look and share!



Meet Christa Radford, a contract specialist with the Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions Division, Program Executive Office Missiles and Space at Redstone Arsenal in Alabama. Christa is a vital part of enabling U.S. warfighters and our allies and partners in defeating the threats of today and tomorrow through a modern culture of rapid acquisition that provides integrated, multi-domain solutions. She holds a master's degree in business administration from Strayer University. She is DAWIA certified Contracting professional and has worked for the Army as a contract specialist for over

seven years. Christa recently participated in the Army DACM-sponsored [Student Loan Repayment Program](#) and she shared her experience:

How do you think being in the Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) helped your career?

College education helped my career by providing the skills, techniques, training and knowledge that can be applied to my career development.



Did SLRP impact your personal circumstances in a positive way? How?

SLRP provides relief to my student loan financial debt. It lowers my debt-to-income ratio resulting in lower interest payments and my student loans being paid off faster.

Did SLRP have an influence whether you felt valued and invested in as an Army Acquisition Workforce employee?

The SLRP program supports my education and acquisition training. The incentive/funds encourage me to continue to strive to be the best version of myself and shows that my hard work to continue my education is valued, appreciated and didn't go unseen.

Would you recommend SLRP to other acquisition employees?

Yes. The SLRP provides funds directly to your federal leading institution to help pay off your unsubsidized student loans. The program offers up to \$10,000 maximum per calendar

year and doesn't exceed the maximum amount of \$60,000 per employee.

Any words of wisdom or advice to people who are newly hired into the Army Acquisition Workforce?

- Don't limit yourself because of unknown outcomes.
- Never be afraid to ask questions.
- Treat every day like a new day.
- Always remember to have fun and take pride in your work.