



GSA Office of Governmentwide Policy

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Acquisition Alert AA-2021-01

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE GSA ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

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SUBJECT: Contractor Self-Assessments

### 1. What is the purpose of this Acquisition Alert?

The purpose of this Acquisition Alert (AA) is to provide guidance for contracting officers when requesting that contractors provide a self-assessment that can be used for reporting in the Contractor Performance Assessment System (CPARS).

### 2. What are some of the reasons why a contracting officer may request a self-assessment from a contractor?

If you have ever been a supervisor for a large number of employees you know the benefits of having employees provide self assessments prior to finalizing annual assessments. A contractor's self-assessment serves a similar purpose.

Contractor self-assessments can save time while allowing contractors the opportunity to make their case about their performance. Getting the contractor's point of view early on in the process may reduce the back and forth during the 60 day period contractors have to respond to a CPARS notification following the Assessing Official's evaluation in the system.

A contractor actively tracking its performance may have fewer performance

issues. If nothing else, editing someone else's work is much easier and faster than creating an evaluation from scratch.

### **3. How should a contracting officer request this information from contractors?**

Contracting officers may request, but not require, contractor performance self-assessment information in the post-award phase. The contract kickoff meeting is a great time for the contracting officer to have the initial discussion about the request for a contractor performance self-assessment so that the contracting officer gets the full benefits of having the contractor tracking performance and making them more likely to self-correct performance issues. You may also use this process for on-going contracts.

Allowing the contracting officer to consider contractors self-assessments alongside contracting officer representative (COR) reports is a good practice in evaluating contractor performance.

The contractor should not charge for providing a self-assessment.

A sample letter for contracting officers to use for requesting a self-assessment can be found in [Attachment A](#).

### **4. What should a contractor include in the self-assessment?**

We want to receive the self-assessment from our contractors in the same format we need to enter it into CPARS. This is why Attachment A mirrors the required sections<sup>1</sup> in CPARS to include:

- Technical (quality of product or service).
- Cost control (as applicable).
- Schedule or timeliness.
- Management or business relations.
- Small business subcontracting (as applicable).

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<sup>1</sup> See FAR 42.1503(b)(2)

- Other (as applicable) (e.g., tax delinquency, defective cost or pricing data, terminations, suspensions and debarments).

## **5. How should a disagreement with the contractor's performance self-assessment and the contracting officer's past performance evaluation be handled?**

- Any feedback the contractor provides on their past performance is only for informational purposes.
- The contracting officer can utilize this information as a "discussion avenue" with the contractor and it should not negate or take the place of the contracting officer's independent assessment.
- There is no requirement for the contracting officer to have discussions with the contractor if there is a disagreement with the contractor self-assessment and contracting officer's past performance evaluation. Contracting officer's should follow the guidance in FAR 42.1503(d) when handling disagreements between the parties regarding the past performance evaluation.
- The contracting officer makes the determination to adopt, respond, or rebut the contractor self-assessment.

## **6. How frequently should a Contracting Officer request this information from contractors?**

The contracting officer should align the contractors self assessment with the past performance evaluations required by FAR 42.1502. Typically, this would be requested on an annual basis and at the time the work under a contract or order is completed. Prior to the official agency evaluation of contractor performance in CPARS, it is best practice for the contracting officer to schedule a meeting with the contractor to collaboratively review the contractor performance self-assessment. This is not a substitute for ongoing communication that should occur throughout the contract between the parties, especially regarding any improvements needed to maintain satisfactory performance. [Attachment B](#) identifies a sample workflow that contracting activities could follow.

## **7. Where can I get more information?**

More information on past performance techniques can be found on the [GSA Acquisition Portal](#). For questions regarding this AA, contact Clarence Harrison, GSA Acquisition Policy Division, at [GSARPolicy@gsa.gov](mailto:GSARPolicy@gsa.gov).

### **Attachments**

[Attachment A - Sample Letter](#)

[Attachment B - Sample Workflow](#)