

DDC J-7: Supporting the Warfighter by procuring supplies smartly

By DDC Acquisition Staff

Supporting the Warfighter takes more than having expertise in the distribution process - it also takes knowledge of the acquisition process to ensure that supplies and services are procured in a smart and timely fashion. The acquisition process is sometimes confused with the “contracting” process, but contracting is only one small piece of the acquisition process timeline.

“Acquisition starts with advanced and proper planning by requirement officials, and includes the identification of a need, defining the need, and preparing proper documentation so that Defense Distribution Center Acquisition Operations, or J-7, can carry out the contracting process,” said Renee Cairo-Iocco, chief of the contracting office.

Certain supplies and services must be purchased from private industry in order to carry out the DDC mission. There are several critical steps in the process that requires participation from various DDC personnel.

The “requirements generator” is one member of the acquisition team. A requirements generator identifies and defines a need, while considering timely planning and preparation of the procurement package. A procurement package consists of pertinent documentation to carry out the contracting process.

In order to procure supplies and services, J-7 follows several steps. First, the requirements generator identifies a need. Next, the requirements generator “defines” the supply or service, which is outlined within a Statement of Work, or SOW, or Performance Work Statement. Service requirements use this type of documentation. Some supplies that have specific characteristics need to be well defined, so that potential vendors know how to price appropriately and understand the government’s minimum need. Finally, a procurement package, containing

pertinent documentation is prepared with assistance from J-7 acquisition assistance. This package includes documents such as the Independent Government Cost Estimate, which is prepared in accordance with DDC J-7 policy, a SOW or a description of supplies, and funding. There may be other documentation required, which is identified by the DDC J-7 acquisition assistance team or the contracting officer.

DDC J-7 is comprised of two divisions; Acquisition Management and Contracting. The Acquisition Management division provides acquisition assistance that supports the requirements generator in the preparation of the procurement package. Once a package is complete, it is then ready to be procured. At that time, the Contracting division receives the package and commences the contracting process. The contracting process analyzes what procurement strategy would be best suited for the requirement. The estimated dollar threshold of the procurement will also drive certain strategies.

In any acquisition assistance initiative, DDC J-7 provides the acquisition assistance and guidance to flesh out requirements to answer questions such as: What type of work do you need to have performed, how often, and by what type of individuals? What skills are required? What will the work hours be? What type of security is necessary? What is the location? There are many questions that need answered before moving forward.

“Our acquisition assistance personnel are the ‘sculptors’ taking a mound of requirements provided by our customers and molding it into a finished acquisition package,” said Rose Snavelly-Howe, chief of Contracting Management. “This assistance provides the ‘bridge’ from the technical experts to the contracting personnel.”

One of the most complex acquisition actions performed is distribution depot support. An Acquisition Planning

Team, or APT, is formed to provide the acquisition assistance and guidance. The APT is made up of multiple subject matter experts, including depot representation, distribution support, policy and procedure, finance, safety, security, facilities and equipment, contracting, and the J-7 acquisition project officer. The APT ensures that the depot customer is updated and included in all information exchanges.

During the contracting process, there are various times where the requirements generator, subject matter experts and other support personnel such as legal, are called upon to finalize the process and execute the award.

Acquisition Management also is the retail supply manager for stocked items. Retail supply managers work with depot representatives to establish and maintain records of inventory, to determine operating supply levels, to determine reorder levels and timeframes and monitor incoming shipments to validate receipt in time to support distribution operations. The retail supply managers also prepare procurement packages to establish long term supply contracts for high use packaging supplies and other operating supplies required to perform distribution operations. For supplies not on long term contracts, in coordination with the depot representatives, the retail supply managers initiate documents and requests for materiel to be procured. Information technology requirements also are processed through Acquisition Management to ensure that the correct services are procured and renewed to be sure service is not interrupted.

The acquisition process is a team effort which starts with the identification of a need and proper planning, and leads to a sound and accurate contract award. Communication and teaming are key to the success of the acquisition process.