



Acquisition Directorate

military acquisition career guide



"This Military Acquisition Career Guide was developed to introduce major acquisition to Coast Guard professionals of all ranks and specialties and is an important step in the development of our Military Acquisition Career Path. The careers of the military acquisition professionals profiled in this guide highlight the diversity of backgrounds required by the Acquisition Directorate project and stakeholder staffs. Certification is an important milestone in an acquisition career, and it is required of all Acquisition Directorate project managers and contracting officers, and will ultimately be required of all project staff. The highest acquisition certification levels require both acquisition experience and specialized training, which can be attained over multiple acquisition or acquisition support tours. You can be one of approximately 900 acquisition professionals (of which 50 percent are military), that execute a \$1.5 billion annual budget, to put critically needed assets and systems in the hands of Coast Guard men and women executing our missions. I look forward to you joining our team as we build the future."

-Rear Admiral Ronald Rábago, Assistant Commandant for Acquisition

"Acquisition is a very good career field based upon its ability to provide you with skills that are not only beneficial throughout your military career, but also after your military career."



-Lt. Jeff Chonko



what is acquisition?

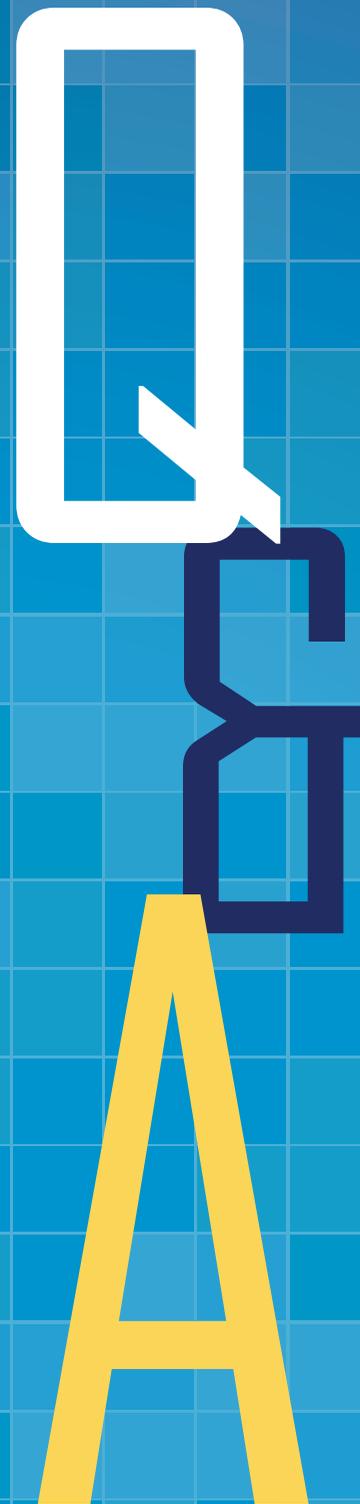
The Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate acquires and delivers interoperable assets and systems, and high-quality, timely services that support Coast Guard operational forces in executing missions effectively and efficiently.

The Coast Guard's Acquisition Directorate provides the service with the most modern, efficient and cost-effective assets to perform its many missions. The Acquisition Directorate oversees more than 20 major acquisition projects—ranging from cutters and response boats to fixed and rotor-wing aircraft, and the systems to integrate the fleet and shore sites—valued in excess of \$27 billion. Military and civilian personnel work together to oversee the design, construction, testing and acceptance of the Coast Guard's major assets and systems.

why acquisition?

Acquisition billets offer junior officers the opportunity to make direct contributions to the mission success of the Coast Guard while filling rewarding staff assignments. During a two-to-four year tour in acquisition, junior officers will help the Coast Guard acquire the assets and systems that they may use when they return to the field in operational billets, such as Rescue 21, the Fast Response Cutter or the HC-144A Ocean Sentry Medium Range Surveillance Aircraft. As they rotate back to the field, junior officers will be tracked for the necessary experience, qualifications and certifications to serve the Coast Guard in subsequent, more senior acquisition positions.

A career in acquisition doesn't have to end with the end of your Coast Guard career. There is a shortage of qualified acquisition professionals across the federal government, and attaining the experience and certifications required to be an acquisition professional while on active duty will provide you continual opportunities after retirement.



Q. What acquisition assignments are available to junior officers?

A. Junior officer acquisition assignments include technical and project support staff, business management, financial management and accounting, operations research, modeling, cost estimation/analysis, and duty at a Project Residence Office. In addition, there are numerous assignments on the project sponsor, technical authority and field support staffs, where you would be part of an acquisition project team.

Q. Are there any prerequisites for project staff assignments?

Prerequisites for project staff assignments will vary depending on the billet. Most O-2 or O-3 level billets have no prerequisites, while others may require an acquisition certification and may even require graduate school. Senior billets require officers, with specific specialty backgrounds, and the highest level of project management certification.

Q. How will acquisition experience and project management certification benefit me after I leave the Coast Guard?

A. Acquisition management provides a solid foundation for a career after you leave the Coast Guard. The private and public sector require individuals with acquisition experience and professional certifications to manage their government programs. Officers with these skills and backgrounds are among the most highly recruited individuals for post-service employment.

desired backgrounds:

- Budgeting/Finance
- Configuration Management
- COTR
- Engineering
- Information Technology/Systems
- Logistics Management
- Modeling & Simulation
- Operations
- Operations Research
- Program Reviewers
- Project Manager
- Quality Assurance
- Testing & Evaluation
- Command Cadre

education & certifications opportunities

Acquisition Career Field Certifications

- Business Cost Estimating
- Business Financial Management
- Facilities Engineering
- Information Technology
- Lifecycle Logistics
- Production, Quality & Manufacturing
- Program/Project Management
- Science & Technology Management
- Systems Engineering
- Test & Evaluation

Post-Graduate Education Opportunities

- Defense Acquisition University (DAU), Program Manager Level I thru III
- George Washington University, MBA, Project Management concentration
- MIT, MS in Systems Design & Management
- Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Senior Acquisition Program
- Project Management Professional (PMP)
- Naval Postgraduate School, MBA, Systems Acquisition concentration

career contracting opportunity program

The Career Contracting Opportunity Program (CCOP) offers outstanding professional development and career broadening opportunities for active duty personnel who are interested in becoming contracting professionals during their military career. Developing a military contracting workforce is part of our strategy to address near-term and long-term potential contracting professional shortfalls. The CCOP provides retirement-eligible military personnel with the training and experience necessary to join the Coast Guard's civilian contracting workforce.

"Working in project management, you draw up a lot of statements of work and create documents for solicitations for contracts with the contracting division. So I was more on the user side of it, providing them with the documentation to solicit the contracts."

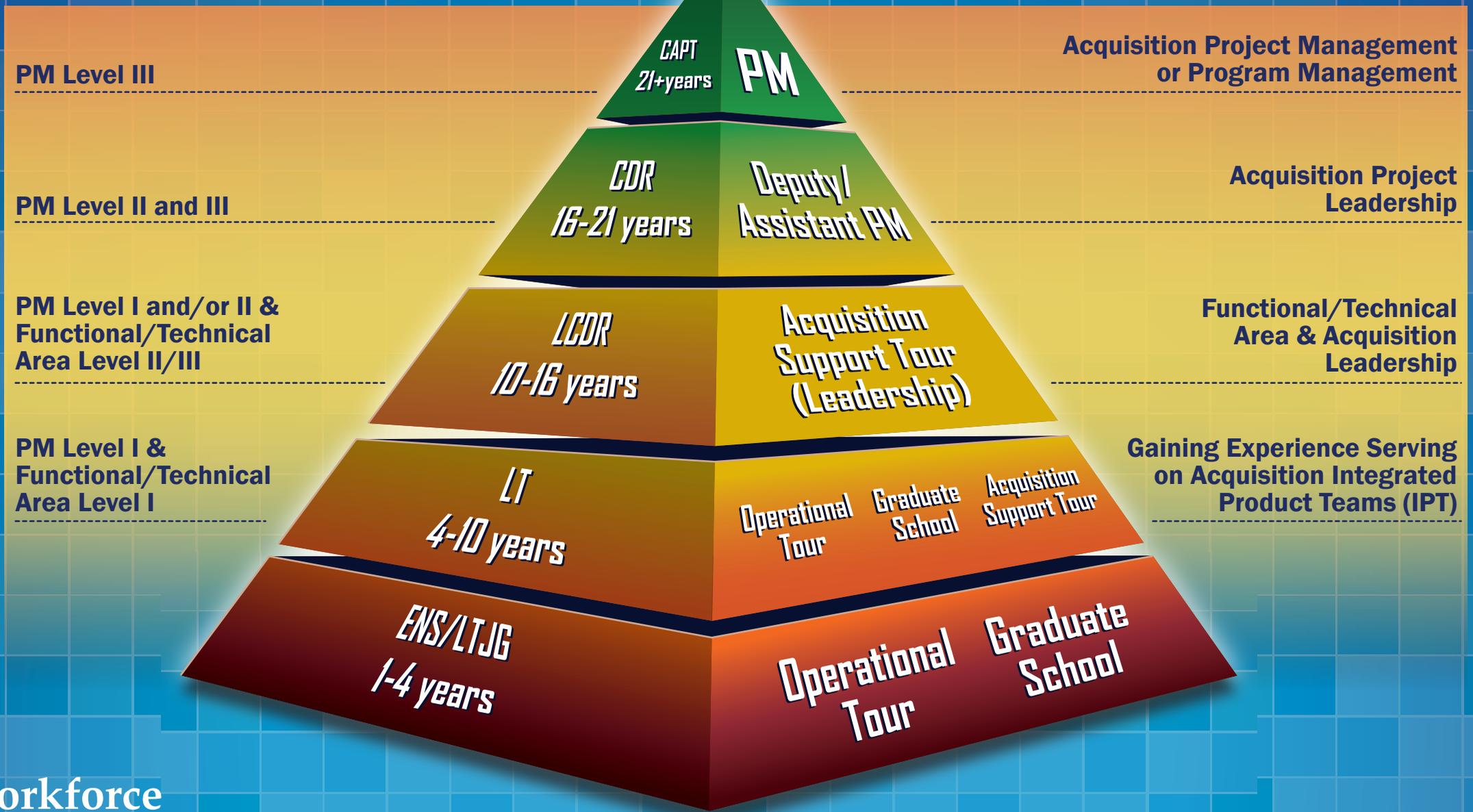
-Senior Chief Michael Bumgardner / Career Contracting Opportunity Program



USCG Acquisition Professional Career Path

Certifications

Experience



Workforce Management



senior acquisition professionals

Capt. Bruce Baffer (Rear Adm. Select) / Civil Engineering:

"Acquisition is where engineering meets finance, logistics and operations. Acquisition professionals must also understand government and corporate finance, federal procurement, logistics and Coast Guard operations. Each area is a profession in its own right, but the acquirer must be able to understand and communicate across the specialty boundaries to successfully balance the competing demands of cost, schedule and performance."



Capt. Ken Marien / Ocean Engineering:

"In acquisition, you get to interact with industry and see that side of the work. You get to learn about how things in government work, like the budget process. In addition, you get face time with senior management at headquarters. The work you do in acquisition affects not just the Coast Guard, but other federal agencies and state and local partners, as well. One of the most exciting things is that acquisition has the attention of the top leaders in Coast Guard and at the Department of Homeland Security. You get a lot of visibility. The decisions you make in acquisition impact a lot of people—a lot is at stake."



Capt. Lisa Festa / Naval Engineering:

"Acquisition is a good fit for anyone with a love of problem-solving. Every day you have to solve problems and deal with new issues. I enjoy that challenge. Acquisition allows you to gain skills and experiences that are extremely valuable. Working in acquisition is a long-term project—you are working toward delivering something. Acquisition is a good complement to the traditional short-term operational focus."

Cmdr. Robert S. "Buck" McClure / Financial Management:

"Having people in acquisition with a business background is very important. Performing cost-benefit analysis is similar to making acquisition decisions in that most of the questions you are answering are resource related. It all boils down to cost, schedule and performance. The more senior tours in acquisition deal with tremendous amounts of resources, in terms of both dollars and personnel, and should be considered equivalent to a large shore command. The authority that is delegated to the program managers is incredible, and the role that they play in shaping the future of the Coast Guard is often overlooked."



Cmdr. Jon Hickey / Civil Engineering:

"Being a member of the Coast Guard acquisition team is incredibly rewarding. I have thoroughly enjoyed my acquisition assignments and applying my engineering, project management and leadership skills to help deliver a project that improves the Coast Guard's ability to serve the public. The acquisition career path offers outstanding professional development opportunities. I feel extremely fortunate to have been able to work on acquisition programs that will have long-term impacts on the Coast Guard's mission performance while developing project management competencies that I will leverage in all future career endeavors."



ACQUISITION CAREER PATH TIMELINE

Sample Military Career Paths	Rank / Years of Service				
	ENS & LTJG / 1-4 Years	LT / 4-10 Years	LCDR / 10-16 Years	CDR / 16-21 Years	CAPT / 21+ Years
USCG Acquisition Professional Career Path	Gaining Field Experience / Education Specialty Education and Experience	Experience on an Acquisition Integrated Project Team Certification: Project Manager Level I Certification	Technical Lead Acquisition Project Certification: Project Manager Level I and/or Level II	Leading Acquisition Project Certification: Project Manager Level II and Level III	Managing Project / Program Certification: Project Manager Level III
	<p> ◆ Acquisition Certification Level I → Operational Tour & Graduate School ◆ Acquisition Certification Level II → Acquisition Support Tour ◆ Acquisition Certification Level III → Operational Tour ◆ Acquisition Certification Level III → Deputy / Assistant Project Manager ◆ Acquisition Certification Level III → Program Manager </p>				
 CAPT Lisa Festa Naval Engineering	CGC JARVIS, DCA	CGC MIDGETT, AEO NESU Alameda	CGC NORTHLAND, EO Yorktown (Eng / Weps Chief)	CO, NESU Portsmouth	
	BS, Ocean Engineering	MIT (MS Naval Engineering)	MIT (MS Technology Mgmt) Deepwater Modeling & Simulation; Project Manager (PM)	ICAF (Sr. Acq) Rescue 21 Project; Surface Domain; PM PM Level III Certification	
 CAPT Ken Marien Ocean Engineering	CGC CITRUS	CGC THUNDER BAY (XD)	CUE Miami	CGC ACACIA (XD)	DHS Customs & Border Protection, Office of Acquisition
	BS, Civil Engineering	MS, Ocean Engineering, UNH	MIT (MS Technology Mgmt) Rescue 21 (R21) Deputy PM	DAU Level III Training Program Deepwater Systems Engineering & Integration (SE&I) Integrated Operations Centers IOC	ICAF (Sr. Acq) PM Level I PM Level III Certification
 CDR Robert McClure Financial Management	CGC THETIS	CGC PT COUNTESS (CO) D7	OPCEN	CGHQ Budget Staff	
	BS, Management	MBA, UMCP	R21 Resource Manager Business, Cost Estimating, and Financial Mgmt I, II & III	Cutter Sustainment Project Deputy PM Legacy Sustainment Support Unit CO PM Level I, II & III	
 CDR Jon Hickey Civil Engineering	CGC MIDGETT	CEU Oakland (PM)	ISC Alameda	CGHQ Budget and Programs Staff	CGHQ Deputy Chief, Office of Budget and Programs
	BS, Civil Engineering	MSCE, U of Illinois	MS, Project Mgmt, GWU	R21 Business Manager	R21 PRO XD PM Level I, II & III
					Selected for MIT

KEY: Operations/Specialty Tour Education Acquisition Project Tour Acquisition Training and Certification

junior officer acquisition professionals

Lt. Jeff Chonko:

"In acquisitions, you get the whole broad spectrum, from doing research on what type of systems you want to put on the ship, all the way through sustainment of the systems once the ship is delivered. The reason I came to acquisition was for the opportunity to work on the NSC from an acquisitions perspective. I feel that the knowledge I gain now with the production of the ship will help me as I progress through my career. This gives me the opportunity to possibly go and be the commanding officer of an NSC and be able to say, "I worked on building this ship, and now I have the opportunity to drive it."



Lt. Jessica Bylsma:

"One of the challenges is that acquisition as a priority has just started to emerge in the last five years or so. But one of the things we know is that acquisition is here to stay. We're going to keep buying assets to meet the needs of our service. As a pilot, you see the other side. You see the new things being delivered. On the acquisition side, you get to see what's going to be happening and you're seeing a much bigger picture than you do receiving the gear. You get to plan ahead and see the needs of the entire aviation and surface programs, not just your specific project."

Lt. Max Jenny:

"It's a logical career step to go between supporting systems that the Coast Guard is using operationally to being more on the front end of that by studying requirements and purchasing the material and equipment. Folks who come into acquisition in the future, they're going to benefit tremendously from the work the senior leaders in the Coast Guard have done in developing the processes. The organization has matured a lot and is continuing to do so."



Lt. Gerri Danielly:

"Having a tour in acquisition as a junior officer helps guide you and train you for future tours. I also think having experience in acquisition is a big help when you decide to leave the Coast Guard. I can easily see myself being a PM [project manager] when I leave the Coast Guard because I have the skills. It has made me more marketable."



acquisition professional recognition

Mission execution begins *here*.

The Acquisition Directorate greatly values its growing cadre of talented Acquisition Professionals. The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 provides the Coast Guard with specific requirements to recognize excellent performance by individuals and teams who contribute to the long-term success of a Coast Guard acquisition project or program. We are pleased that Congress recognizes the importance of acquisition to the Coast Guard's future. We look forward to formally recognizing the important contributions of all members of the Acquisition Enterprise, including acquirers, technical authorities, sponsors and other key stakeholders. Acquisition professional recognition will raise the *esprit de corps* and enhance the credibility and prestige of the service's acquisition career path.

For additional information, please visit Acquisition Workforce Central at:
<https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/acquisition-workforce-central>



Homeland
Security