Memorandum

Date: January 26, 2018

From: Acting Deputy Senior Procurement Executive

Subj: VA PROCUREMENT POLICY MEMORANDUM (2018-03) – Mandatory Usage of VA’s Electronic Contract Management System (eCMS) (VAIQ 7843539)

To: Head of Contracting Activities

1. Purpose. This Procurement Policy Memorandum (PPM) updates the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guidance regarding the use of the Electronic Contract Management System (eCMS) for all procurement actions, and identifies eCMS components. This PPM supersedes PPM 2012-02.

2. Background. This PPM identifies and establishes Department-wide policy and procedures to ensure consistency regarding the use of eCMS while providing Heads of the Contracting Activity (HCAs) the flexibility to establish procedures specific to their contracting activities. This PPM clarifies, reinforces and standardizes VA’s procedures regarding the use of eCMS.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 4.801(a), requires the head of each office performing contracting, contract administration, or paying functions to establish files containing the records of all contractual actions. VA’s eCMS provides the “Official Contract of Record” in paperless form, electronically accessible to support continuity of operations in the event of an emergency. Consistent use of eCMS improves transparency and reduces duplicative data entry in the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation (FPDS-NG) and USA Spending.gov.

eCMS provides management with visibility into key metrics and workload without requiring time-consuming data calls. Using eCMS also supports legal and technical compliance by populating contract documents with up-to-date provisions and clauses.

It is mandatory that the VA acquisition workforce properly uses eCMS when soliciting for, awarding, or administering contracts so there is a clear record of the Department’s contract actions available for internal and external audits, program reviews, advanced reporting, and other oversight functions.
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eCMS interfaces with many acquisition systems to include, but not limited to the federal government’s System for Award Management (SAM), Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), Excluded Parties List System (EPLS), and Federal Business Opportunities (FBO); as well as VA operated systems and modules such as Automated Acquisition Management Solution (AAMS), Forecast of Opportunities Requirements Center of Excellence (FORCE), Electronic Contracting Officers Representative (eCOR), Ordering Officer Designation (OOD), Integrated Financial Acquisition Management System (iFAMS), Centralized Administrative Accounting Transaction System (CAATS) and Integrated Funds Control Point Activity, Accounting and Procurement (IFCAP).

3. **Applicability.** This policy applies to all authorized eCMS users. VA HCA’s shall maintain an effective eCMS review process to ensure compliance with this PPM.

4. **Effective Date.** Immediately.

5. **Expiration Date.** This PPM will remain in effect until incorporated into the revised Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) or the new Veterans Affairs Acquisition Manual (VAAM) or if otherwise rescinded.

6. **Authorized eCMS users:** Employees of the following groups are the only individuals authorized to have an eCMS account:

   a. Acquisition employees within the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), Deputy Senior Procurement Executive (DSPE) or Head of Contracting Activity (HCA) chain of command.

   b. Employees within VA Office of the Inspector General (OIG), VA General/Regional Counsel, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), and VA Acquisition Audit Organizations.

7. **Action Required.** VA acquisition workforce, including HCAs, Contracting Officers (COs), Contracting Specialist (CSs), and other VA acquisition professionals shall:

   a. Prior to receiving an eCMS account, complete training in the use of eCMS and obtain a production account. eCMS users must remain current in their training, to include initial user training and intermittent training such as major software changes.

   b. Create within eCMS, using the document generation feature, all pre-solicitation, solicitation, and contract documents available for creation using the Documents Tab.

   c. Upload to eCMS-AAMS all documents associated with the action which cannot be generated within eCMS, including a complete copy of the final executed and signed contract, any associated modifications, technical and legal reviews.
d. Enter all data and documents in accordance with the requirements of FAR Subpart 4.803—Contents of Contract Files. Enter all data completely and reliably, as specified in eCMS training with particular attention to the following details:

1) Tag and upload all external contractual documents into eCMS-AAMS in accordance with the Action Briefcase Index at https://vaww.ecms.va.gov/CARE.

2) Create all actions using the process coach and ensure new actions are connected to the other actions within the folder.

3) Properly name and label all uploaded files/documents to describe those documents. No special characters should be used in the names. Only documents associated with an action are to be placed in its briefcase; do not “Copy” or “Move” briefcases to any subsequent action.

4) Use the Connected Actions Tab to connect or relate all actions to each other.

5) Update all contract action State and Status indicators as the procurement progresses.

8. All Contracting Officers (CO) shall:

a. Ensure eCMS contains all documents necessary to support the CO’s decision throughout the acquisition cycle including market research, planning and developing requirements, soliciting and evaluating offers, making awards and notifying unsuccessful offerors, and administering the contract through contract closeout. Include in the appropriate eCMS briefcase, all the required contract file documentation specified in FAR Subpart 4.803—Contents of contract files.

b. Confirm, prior to signing any action prepared for his or her signature by other VA personnel that the contents of the eCMS contract file conform to the requirements of FAR Subpart 4.803. Per FAR 1.602, Contracting Officers are responsible for ensuring performance of all necessary actions for effective contracting, and safeguarding the interests of the United States.

c. Ensure pre/post-procurement milestones are established in eCMS. The milestones must be appropriate for the complexity of the procurement. Additionally, these milestones must track the trends and show the results of the entire procurement phase and processes such as pre-solicitation, contract award, contract administration and contract closeout for all acquisitions including construction.
9. **All eCMS users shall:**

   a. Complete eCMS training and provide their certificate to their respective eCMS coordinator.

   b. Ensure adherence to their HCA guidance and procedures, which supplements this PPM.

   c. Ensure eCMS-eCOR contains all necessary Contracting Officer Representatives’ (CORs) documentation. Documents stored in the eCOR module are part of the official contract file.

10. **All eCMS Application Coordinators shall:**

    a. Obtain local administrator rights to manage their respective organization’s eCMS users.

    b. Ensure users receive new user training prior to creation of the eCMS account. Training may be obtained from the VA Acquisition Academy (VAAA) or eCMS Organization Application Coordinator.

    c. Maintain the eCMS accounts for all users, including updating accounts to reflect changes such as in employee roles and responsibilities, warrant levels, and desktop access rights.

    d. Conduct refresher training for all users when required.

    e. Serve as the FPDS-NG point of contact, which includes monitoring FPDS-NG data, as applicable.

    f. Provide eCMS Micro Strategy reports as required by the organization management team.

    g. Maintain the organization’s Shared Desktops.

    h. Move files in the Archive Closed Shared Desktop to the ECMS ADMIN NATIONAL DESKTOP (DELETION) Shared Desktop when notified by the Contracting Officer who shall ensure adherence to the provisions of FAR 4.805 - Storage, Handling, and Disposal of Contract Files.

    i. Participate in the monthly application coordinator conference calls.

    j. Attend National and/or Administration/Staff Office level conferences as required.
11. Questions or Concerns. Direct questions regarding this PPM to the Procurement Policy and Warrant Management Service via email at vacovaproc@va.gov or (202) 632-5288.

/s/
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