

The Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management Newsletter 2017 November/December

New Template and Process for Requesting a Ratification of Unauthorized Commitment

The responsibility for processing requests for ratification of unauthorized commitments within NIH has been transferred from the Division of Acquisition Policy and Evaluation (DAPE) to the Acquisition Services and Review Branch (ASRB), Division of Simplified Acquisition Policy & Services (DSAPS), within the Office of Acquisition Management and Policy (OAMP), Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM).

All ratifications of unauthorized commitments must be approved by the Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) for the National Institutes of Health, currently the Director of the Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management located in the NIH Office of the Director. Where the unauthorized commitment exceeds the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) (currently \$150,000.00), ASRB will coordinate the request for ratification with HHS Office of the General Council (OGC).

Effective immediately, electronic copies of all ratification requests should be forwarded to the new email box established for this purpose at RequestRatification@od.nih.gov.

After reviewing dozens of requests for ratification, we have used this information to update and improve the template for processing a ratification of an unauthorized commitment. The revised template lists specific elements that were often left out of requests. Improvements to the template and process include: a detailed signature and routing structure; Executive Officer Signature will be required when the unauthorized commitment meets or exceeds \$25,000, Chief Administrative Officer signature will be required in all other cases; the Budget Officer will be required to certify funds of the appropriate fiscal year.

A new revised template containing nine (9) basic elements will be required for all future requests for ratification. These elements include:

- Identifying specifically what was acquired and when;
- Identifying specifically what happened—how the unauthorized commitment came about;
- Describing the correct process that should have been followed;
- Explaining steps taken by management, procurement and/or or program to prevent reoccurrence; and
- Identifying, by name, the individual or individuals who were responsible for creating the unauthorized commitment.

HCA Ratification Memorandum—signature lines for HCA have been removed from the request for ratification template. The official ratification memorandum:

- Will be prepared in OAMP and reference the submitted request for ratification package;
- Will not identify by name the individual responsible for creating the unauthorized commitment;

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- Will be signed by the HCA and returned to the cognizant Director of the Office of Acquisition for proper execution or distribution (if approved).

The new template and other tools and guidance may be found in the SharePoint folder: [Ratification of Unauthorized Commitment](#). If you have any questions regarding ratifications, please submit them to the ratification mailbox at: RequestRatification@od.nih.gov.

GAO Comptroller General Lists HHS Conferences Among ADA Violations

On November 15, 2017, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued the Antideficiency Act Reports – Fiscal Year 2017 at <http://www.gao.gov/products/D18063>.

This document is GAO's summary of agency Antideficiency Act (ADA) Reports for fiscal year 2017. It includes unaudited information extracted from agency Antideficiency Act reports filed with GAO, as required by section 1401 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Pub. L. No. 108-447, 118 Stat. 2809, 3192 (Dec. 8, 2004).

HHS reported that it violated the Antideficiency Act when it obligated and expended appropriated funds in the amount of \$100,913.39 from its Administration for Children and Families (ACF) account for an ACF-hosted conference in violation of Section 3003(e) of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013. Section 3003(e) provides that funds are not available for travel and conference activities that are not in compliance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-12- 12, May 11, 2012. OMB Memorandum M-12-12 provides that Deputy Secretaries (or their equivalents) are to approve the spending for all proposed new conferences to be sponsored or hosted by the agency (or by other Federal or non-Federal entities) where the net conference expenses by the agency would be in excess of \$100,000.

HHS also reported that an additional ADA violation occurred when it obligated but did not expend appropriated funds in the amount of \$101,738.00 in its ACF account for another ACF-hosted conference in violation of section 742(e) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, which also provides that prior approval in accordance with OMB Memorandum M-12-12 is required for obligation of funds that exceed \$100,000. HHS also reported that ACF executed a modification in May 2014 to the above referenced contract to exercise Option Year 1 to pay for services without obtaining the required prior approval from the Deputy Secretary. HHS reports, however, that no funds were expended because the planned conference was cancelled.

Each report entry includes a brief description of the violation, remedial actions taken, and links to individual agency reporting letters. For more information on individual violations and actions taken, contact the agencies filing the reports.

GSA SmartPay 3 Transition Planning

SmartPay 3 is right around the corner and transition activities are gearing up! What exactly does this mean? The current GSA SmartPay2 (SP2) master contract will expire on November 29, 2018. JP

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Morgan, our current servicing bank, will no longer be the purchase card issuer for NIH purchase cards. This will also affect travel and fleet cards that are currently under JPMorgan.

Beginning November 30, 2018, a new contract will be issued to a new bank under the SmartPay3 (SP3) program. GSA has awarded master contracts to two banks, Citibank and US Bank. HHS will be issuing a task order to one of these banks in the coming months.

HHS is forming a working group to begin looking at requirements for the Operating Division (OpDivs) including NIH. NIH will be forming a project team to begin gathering their own requirements and assist with transition planning as we move from one bank to the next. Once NIH requirements are gathered, they will be shared with HHS so that these may be included in the agency's task order. PSC, an OPDiv of HHS, will be awarding the task order on behalf of the agency.

How will this impact the NIH Purchase Card Community?

- All purchase cards under the current SP2 program with JP Morgan will be deactivated on November 29, 2018.
- New purchase cards under the SP3 program with the issuing bank will be issued and available for use on November 30, 2018.
- The NIH Purchase Card Office will begin working with ICs on various clean-up projects including:
 - CAO hierarchy clean-up for any card approving officials that do not currently have any cardholders tied to them and may no longer be needed.
 - Demographic updates and changes (e.g. address, phone number updates, any name changes, etc.).
 - NBS reconciliation such as unreconciled accounts and cardholder proxy clean-up in NBS to deactivate any proxies no longer needed.
 - Review of inactive purchase card accounts with little or no transaction activity over an extended period.
 - Excessive account limits that are not needed based on transaction history.

The NIH Purchase Card Office will keep the community abreast on transition activities that may impact cardholders and Card Approving Officials. Additionally, we will provide any updates that may become available during throughout the SP2 to SP3 transition.

If you have any questions on SP3 transition activities for NIH, please contact the Purchase Card Help Desk at Creditcard@od.nih.gov or the helpline at 301-435-6606.

NIH PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PORTAL PROJECT: Leveraging Technology to Improve Accountability

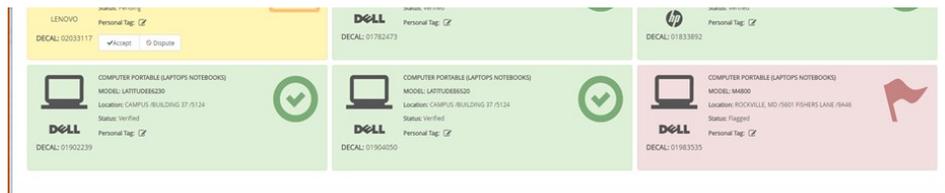
Have you heard the news? After years of hard work by many, the NIH Property Management Portal (NPMP) was approved on September 19, 2017 for implementation across all Institutes and Centers

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during FY 2018!



Figure 1 Snapshot of Portal on Website



The NIH Property Management Portal is a web-based application which facilitates open communication between the IC community and its property professionals (e.g., IC Property Accountability Officers and IC Property Custodial Officers). Utilization of the NPMP allows Accountable Users direct access to their personal property records and shows which property is assigned to their name within the system of record – NBS-Property, Sunflower. Also, Accountable Users have an increased awareness and accountability for government property.

Other benefits of the NIH Property Management Portal include:

- Alleviates risk of inventory shortages/loss.
- Decreases accessory charges: e.g. - software licenses, warranties.
- Automatic email notifications to Accountable Users when changes occur against an individual's property record'
- Creates electronic validation (Audit trail) of property verified by Accountable Users.
- Reconciles discrepancies; gives process ownership to Accountable Property User.
- Can also be utilized as a "Pre-Inventory" tool prior to the annual inventory being conducted, which will mitigate overages and shortages.

A strategic benefit of the NPMP is avoidance of internal NIH A-123 Audit findings including:

- Assets not decaled in a timely manner.
- Assets not reconciled in a timely manner.
- Accountability as an organizational challenge throughout NIH.

The NIH Property Management Branch is excited to launch this new initiative and is managing a working group for this project as well as hosting Property Management Portal Information Sessions, via WebEx. Sessions are open to the general NIH community on December 6, 13, 20, and 27. Employees are encouraged to sign up for sessions via <https://doodle.com/poll/2ywawyepzhma6wis>.

With emphasis on change management, the NIH Property Management Branch will work closely with IC

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representatives to determine individual Institutes or Centers implementation schedules. A pilot of NPMP implementation and adoption are already underway in the first quarter.

The potential benefits of the NIH Property Management Portal Project will enable NIH to efficiently integrate property management throughout the lifecycle of an asset in addition to facilitating a timely audit and inventory reconciliation of assets.

Points of Contact for this initiative are:

Emily M. Ballou, Project Manager, NIH Property Management Portal, Property Management Branch, (301) 594-5569, emily.ballou@nih.gov

Michael B. Fratina, Chief, Property Management Branch, (301) 451-9605, michael.fratina@nih.gov

Quality Management at the NIH Supply Management Branch

The NIH Supply Management Branch, which operates the NIH Supply Center, was recently recertified and upgraded to ISO 9001:2015 standards.

The International Standards Organization (ISO) is a global network of the world's leading standardizers. Through its members (the national standards bodies in 163 different countries), they bring together experts from all over the world to develop International Standards.

“ISO management system standards (MSS) help organizations improve their performance by specifying repeatable steps that organizations consciously implement to achieve their goals and objectives, and to create an organizational culture that reflexively engages in a continuous cycle of self-evaluation, correction and improvement of operations and processes through heightened employee awareness and management leadership and commitment.” [ISO website](#).

Among the many standards developed by ISO, ISO 9001:2015 specifies requirements for a quality management system for an organization. By obtaining certification, the Supply Management Branch demonstrated its ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and that it is engaged in a continuous improvement effort to enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

This is a demonstration of the ongoing commitment by OALM/OLAO/DLS/SMB to understand and serve the needs of the NIH Community, particularly individuals involved in the procurement process of medical supplies, lab supplies, and office supplies such as Lab Managers, CAN Card users, Purchase Card Users, Purchasing Agents, and Administrative Officers. This is part of our ongoing effort to help shape, improve and guide existing and future procurements. ISO 9001:2015 certification represents a commitment to Quality Management in everything that SMB does to support the NIH Community.

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OM TALKBACK

The NIH Office of Management (OM) invites NIH OM employees to share ideas, votes, and comments for the campaigns below, plus any questions for leadership to address at the OM All Hands event on January 30. Some ideas will be highlighted at the event and in communications such as blog posts and newsletter articles during 2018. Please visit <https://nihcrowdsourcing.ideascale.com> for more information.

Employees have the option of submitting feedback anonymously. Simply choose that option upon submission of your idea or comment, and your name won't be published.

OM TALKBACK CAMPAIGNS:

- Questions for Q&A at the OM All Hands event on January 30, 2018
 - 2:00-3:00 PM at the Masur Auditorium, Building 10
 - This event will also be available through [NIH Videocast](#).
- Creating Greater Operational Efficiencies
- Facilitating Better Partnerships
- Improving Diversity in OM
- Making OM More Inclusive
- Improving Your Workplace

Responses are subject to moderation. OM leadership encourages constructive ideas and viewpoints, and looks forward to your valued and creative input.

Thank you for your participation!

NIH Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) Lists Available Online

Lists of all NIH Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) can be found at the NIH [Blanket Purchase Agreement webpage](#).

This location contains Two BPA Lists:

1. Complete vendor alphabetical list;
2. Vendor list sorted by commodity; and

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact the BPA helpline at 301-496-5212 or [email](#).

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Training Information

Acquisition Training at NIH

Acquisition Training Classes that are offered by the NIH Training Center can be accessed at the following link: [Acquisition Management Training](#).

Federal Acquisition Certification Coursework

CON courses and other Federal Acquisition Certification required courses can be found at the [NIH Training Center](#), [Federal Acquisition Institute](#), and [Defense Acquisition University](#).

Section 508 Accessibility Training

Section 508 Accessibility Training courses can be accessed at: [CIT Section 508 Accessibility training website](#).

Green Purchasing Training

Green Purchasing Training and other Green Training courses can be found at [OALM Green Purchasing Website](#).

As a reminder, per HHS policy, all contracting officers, contract specialists, purchase cardholders, card approving officials, CORs and acquisition staff in job series 1102, 1105, and 1106 are required to take the Green Purchasing training every two calendar years. The training includes online training modules for your convenience.

Questions regarding Green Purchasing Training should be sent to GreenPurchasing@mail.nih.gov

Thank You.

We Would Like to Thank All Those Who Contributed to This and Future Editions of the OALM Newsletter.

The OALM Newsletter will be published six (6) times in calendar year 2018. OALM invites your comments and suggestions for future articles. We encourage staff to submit articles that would be of interest to our readers. We will do our best to include such articles in future editions of the OALM Newsletter.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding the information, policy and/or procedures published in *this* issue, you may contact Barry Solomon at the e-mail address above. For future issues please contact the Simplified Acquisitions Helpline on 301-496-0400 or via e-mail at OALMNewsletter@mail.nih.gov and you will be referred to the appropriate editor.