

Resource Sheet: Contracts Specialist

What does the position entail?

The NIH Contract Specialist manages, performs, and/or develops policies and procedures for work involving the procurement of supplies, services, construction, or research and development using formal advertising or negotiation procedures; the evaluation of contract price proposals; and the administration or termination and close out of contracts. Contract Specialists have responsibility for procurement planning, development of requests for proposals, broad agency announcements (solicitations), contract negotiations, awards, administration, terminations and close-outs, and perform acquisition planning, preparation of price/cost analyses for designated actions, formulation of negotiation strategies, development of negotiation objectives, and negotiation of contracts for the procurement of equipment, supplies, services, construction, Information Technology (IT) equipment, systems, and services to support NIH research initiatives. Contract Specialist work requires knowledge of contracting principles, laws, statutes, Executive Orders, regulations and procedures, and a knowledge of procurement regulations and contract principles to prepare and negotiate contracts. Positions also require a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field; or at least 24 semester hours in any combination of an appropriate business field.

<http://www.jobs.nih.gov/positions/admin/contractspec.htm>

Suggested Competencies:

<http://hr.od.nih.gov/workingatnih/competencies/occupation-specific/1102/default%20.htm>

Acquisition Management	Manages post-award contract activities through contract close-out.
Acquisition Planning	Develops and guides customers/partners through a comprehensive plan for fulfilling acquisition needs in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Departmental and NIH regulations, policies and procedures.
Contracting Financial Management	Understands and applies financial management concepts and practices related to contracting.
Contract Negotiation and Source Selection	Facilitates discussions between customers/partners and potential vendors to agree on contract terms and evaluates bids or proposals to make contract award decisions.
Federal and Departmental Acquisition Policies and Procedures Knowledge	Understand and applies knowledge of Federal and Departmental statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures.
Project Management	Creates and maintains an environment that guides a project to its successful completion.
Qualitative / Quantitative Analysis	Examines and evaluates numerical data to manage and achieve results.
Solicitation	Understands and employs methods for obtaining submission of offers or quotations to the Government from industry/vendors.

Suggestions on how to strengthen General Competencies

- Actively participate on a team.
- Volunteer to participate in a high-visibility project.
- Learn about the agency where you work.
- Learn new technologies (e.g., through self-study, seminars).
- Study technical writing as it applies to your work role.
- Attend conferences, meetings, or seminars.
- Join an industry or professional association.
- Read technical publications to keep up-to-date on new development in your field (e.g., books, professional newsletters, trade journals).
- Build an informal network of peers through which you can exchange ideas and discuss issues relevant to technical advances in your field.
- Learn from others on the job (e.g., obtain on-the-job training, ask others for guidance).
- Find a mentor for technical and/or career guidance.
- Study lessons learned from reviews of failed and successful projects.

Suggestions on how to strengthen Technical Competencies

- Work with your supervisor and assist with the development of an Individual Development Plan.
- Conduct interviews or informational sessions with senior HRD specialists to gain insight into the skills critical for success.
- Actively participate on a team such as with other co-workers or internal focus groups, to assist in accomplishing projects or in ensuring the success of the projects goals.

Quicksheet – Individual Development Plans

WHAT IS AN IDP?

- Action based Plan
- An outline of Short and Long-term goals
 - Short-term goals (1-2 Years)
 - Long-term goals (3-5 Years)
- A Communication Tool between employee and supervisor or mentor

WHO NEEDS AN IDP?

- Employees at all levels of the organization benefit from thinking about their career path and outlining a plan for development
- You are ultimately responsible for your career development

WHY ARE IDPS IMPORTANT?

- Serves as a tool for career planning and success (increases chances of success)
- Identifies strengths, interests, or talents and areas for improvement
- Tracks progress and is easily adjusted to address changing needs

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- As a communication tool, an IDP formalizes the role and commitment of all parties involved to fulfill the development of your career goals.
- By outlining specific training and development options, you can proceed along a career path in a timely and productive manner with improved skills and competencies.
- Timely plan to pinpoint training and development options

WHEN IS IT USED/CREATED?

- Developed at least once per year (on an annual basis)
- Reviewed periodically (monthly or quarterly) to ensure info is still relevant for intended objectives
- Adjusted to meet changing needs – A pliable document for both the individual and the organization

YOUR GOALS SHOULD BE *SMART!*

Simple

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely