

# ECQ Narrative

**EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENT – [REDACTED]****Introduction**

I began my public service career in 1985 as a GS-5 Contract Specialist with the Defense General Supply Center in Richmond VA. After serving in various procurement positions with several Federal departments and agencies, in 2003 I joined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Office of Human Capital as a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative. In that role I successfully applied my extensive experience in acquisition management to achieve accomplishments in a managerial role. As a result, in December 2005, I was promoted to a K-Band (GS-14/15 salary equivalent) Program Manager position in which I managed oversight and service delivery of various human capital contracts.

In April 2006, I transferred to the Department of Defense (DoD) Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) as the GS-15, Director of the Professional, Information Technology, and Protective Services (PIPS) Division in the Acquisition Procurement Office (APO). Two years later I returned to TSA as Director of the Security Technology Acquisition Division in the Office of Acquisition. I lead a 25 member team of acquisition professionals engaged in support of two multi-million dollar acquisition programs for purchase, deployment, and installation of transportation security equipment valued at \$1.5 billion annually.

**Leading Change**

As the PIPS Division Director I was one of five Division Directors in the WHS APO. My charter was to lead my staff in providing pre- and post-award procurement support for the WHS and the Pentagon Force Protection Agency. I joined a team of acquisition managers and high level professionals tasked to oversee transition and merger activities of two disparate legacy organizations: the WHS Acquisition Directorate (WAD) and the Pentagon Renovation Project. As a result of the merger, the WHS had established the Acquisition and Procurement Office (APO). The Pentagon renovation began in the mid-1990s. At that time the Pentagon and its infrastructure had deteriorated to the point that the entire building had to be renovated. It is ironic but fortunate that the portion of the Pentagon struck by American Airlines Flight 77 on September 11, 2001 had already been renovated and greatly strengthened. Otherwise, the deaths and destruction would have been far worse.

When I joined WHS, some of the professional staff members originally associated with the WAD were content to replicate past procurement strategies rather than using current best practices. Conversely, the Pentagon Renovation Project staff was composed of talented high performing and motivated contracting professionals. The legacy WAD staff doubted whether new strategic priorities of innovation, accountability, and transparency would be successful in the WHS environment. The consensus was that the complexities and sensitivities associated with providing acquisition support to Pentagon customers, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), demanded 'special considerations' and would not permit the required transformation. My challenge was to continue the transformation and reorganize the PIPS Division to proactively focus

on modern procurement practices and execution. Specifically, I wanted to improve the quality of acquisitions and make information associated with planning and ongoing procurements more transparent and readily available to our program partners.

My first actions were to communicate with, gain buy-in, and demonstrate the advantages of modern acquisition strategies to our customers in order to break down legacy behaviors wedded to past inefficient ways of doing business. I developed a communications plan to manage customer expectations to ensure that a consistent message was being delivered to WHS program offices regarding the nature of the changes we were implementing. I explained to them the impacts of the information they needed to provide to us, along with the benefits and efficiencies that would be gained. I tasked my two subordinate managers to meet weekly with their respective program offices. These meetings provided an opportunity to communicate planned changes and provide the status of on-going procurements. In addition, I tasked my staff to develop an automated tool that provided the current status of procurement actions 'in real time' while we were implementing changes so that program offices would have continual access to the status of the procurement actions they had submitted to APO for contract award.

My first operational priority was to stop approaching individual procurements on a case by case basis. Rather, I wanted to achieve efficiencies by finding ways to identify opportunities for synergy and efficiency that would result in more cost effective contract awards. I was convinced that we could ultimately be able to procure like goods and services WHS/OSD-wide. I tasked my branch chiefs to analyze DoD budget and resource allocation reports to help identify opportunities for consolidation across the organization.

At that time multiple contractors provided IT support services throughout WHS and OSD. I assembled a team of IT program partners and my Branch Chiefs to explore short and long term strategies for consolidation of IT procurements to achieve efficiencies without degrading service delivery. As a result, we devised a phased acquisition strategy to achieve this goal. I monitored the execution of the strategies and we successfully reduced the number of OSD IT contracts from 15 to 7, thus saving millions of dollars that would otherwise have been spent for duplicative and overlapping contracts.

Historically, WHS awarded contracts that required a specified number of labor hours per year for support efforts. The result was simply 'staff augmentation' with no measureable outcomes or demonstrated value for funds expended. My challenge was to lead my staff in moving away from relying heavily on labor intensive Time and Materials (T&M) contracts and move toward Fixed Priced performance based contracts. This shift in focus required closer consultation with WHS customers to identify specific goods and services required. I tasked my Branch Chiefs to develop performance metrics that would facilitate the implementation of performance based contracts. I collected and publicly displayed each Branch's performance against established metrics. I monitored our organizational progress as we reduced the number of T&M contracts, increased the number of performance based awards, and reduced sole source procurements.

The long-term impact of my efforts was to significantly enhance transparency with the APO external stakeholder community, thereby achieving a key customer satisfaction improvement

initiative. As a result, we were able to increase the midyear obligation rate from 42% to 65% within one year. As used here, 'obligation rate' means percentage of total annual procurement actions awarded by midyear (30 June). WHS management and our customers recognized my performance and I received a WHS Award for Excellence for my accomplishments.

As mentioned above, in early 2008 I returned to TSA as Director of the Security Technology Acquisition Division (STAD). Its mission is to provide 'cradle to grave' acquisition support for the TSA Electronic Baggage Screening, Passenger Screening, Air Cargo, and Deployment Programs. I soon learned that this position had been held by a number of managers in recent years, resulting in a lack of effective and consistent leadership. As a result, the leadership void had fostered competition between STAD teams and led to a lack of accountability and commitment to the overall Division acquisition support mission. For example, early in the day on 30 September 2007, the Passenger Screening Program (PSP) staff had successfully completed its fiscal year end workload. Instead of offering to support their colleagues who were struggling with procurement actions that had to be completed before midnight, the PSP team considered its work to be complete and left for the day.

My first step to address this untenable situation was to become thoroughly familiar with each team's workload and its funding and human resources. I convened an offsite meeting with my Branch Chief and individual Team Leads. I required the Leads to brief the group on their workload and describe any ongoing problems or issues. I made it clear that we all were accountable to resolve all issues, not just individual teams. My goal was to make everyone work together to come up with solutions. During this offsite meeting, several Team Leads vocally criticized the decisions made by their colleagues. There was a heated debate on whether selected acquisition strategies were appropriate or correctly executed. It was clear there was no mutual respect or support amongst the Team Lead cadre. At this point I decided to discuss adjustments to organizational and individual performance plans. I told the group that I was going to establish specific performance metrics to assess overall STAD performance against individual team success. For example, instead of assigning individual team and program goals, I set STAD-wide metrics to measure accomplishments and modified individual performance plans to include overall Division goals.

Another step I took to improve organizational performance was to require all Team Leads to meet periodically with their program office customers to ensure that we were appropriately aligned with their program priorities. I also required Leads to draft a staffing plan that supported their current workload. Together, we reviewed these plans, identified critical vacancies, and developed a recruitment strategy that focused our efforts on filling critical positions. These actions led to changes in organizational priorities that created a cohesive work environment and focused the workforce on supporting the overall STAD mission. As a result, I succeeded in establishing a shared management approach under which all staff members accepted responsibility for success across team lines.

### Leading People

From October 1998 to September 2003, I was Chief of the Acquisition Services Division in the Department of the Interior (DOI) National Business Center. Shortly after my appointment, I had to

deal with a staff member who was openly disruptive and resented the leadership changes I was trying to make. This person consistently challenged my initiatives to increase employee accountability. In addition, he was often late coming to work, left early, disrupted meetings, and refused to follow review and oversight guidelines I had established to improve work product quality. It was clear that I had to take quick action to resolve this situation. Initially, I counseled him on the reasons and value of my newly implemented procedures and my expectation that he would adhere to them. Within 2 weeks of the counseling session, he reverted to his original behavior. I then issued a formal Performance Improvement Plan that specified required accomplishments within a specific period. As a result of this formal disciplinary action, the employee began working regular hours and discontinued his prior unacceptable behavior. My strong action showed my staff that I would not tolerate performance deficiencies and that there would be consequences for non-conformance. Ultimately, the employee elected to leave my staff. The overall team performance improved after his departure and the remaining staff members responded positively to my insistence on high standards and concrete performance results.

When I joined WHS as Director of the Professional, Information Technology, and Protective Services Division in 2006, DoD was planning to implement a new 'pay for performance' National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to replace the traditional General Schedule (GS) position and pay management system. Essentially, the NSPS would require managers to correlate their subordinates' performance appraisals to annual pay increases. One of my challenges was to meet the NSPS implementation timelines established by DoD leadership. The idea of moving away from what was viewed as a 'pay entitlement system' to a more 'results oriented' system generated much anxiety. Understandably, my staff was demoralized and, in 'herd fashion,' opposed any change in how they were paid and wondered how the NSPS would affect promotion opportunities. Under NSPS, all employees would be required to document their yearly accomplishments. The accuracy and completeness of this documentation would affect employee ratings and pay increases. I developed and conducted training sessions for my staff on how to effectively write up performance accomplishments. I held regular Q&A sessions in order to create a continuous flow of information and quash recurring negative assumptions about the impact of the NSPS.

I arranged several 'all hands' sessions to educate and train my staff; my goal was to convince them that DoD management had their best interests at heart. One concern was that NSPS would not be implemented across the entire Federal civil service. Therefore, the benefits of the new system needed to be clearly articulated in order to mitigate an unnecessary exodus of WHS employees to other agencies that were still using the GS system. The transition from the GS to the NSPS system ran smoothly in my Division. None of my staff members transferred to other agencies because of NSPS implementation. The work we accomplished was again put to good use when DoD later transitioned back to the GS system.

When I was appointed as Director of the TSA Security Technology Acquisition Division (STAD) Director in April 2008, the staff I inherited was apprehensive about my capabilities and expectations because I was an 'external hire.' From the beginning, I stressed that one of my primary goals was to move the organization forward both operationally and from a workforce development perspective. I moved quickly to establish Individual Development plans for my Team Leads. I assured them that I would provide them with formal training and developmental work

experiences to enhance their opportunity for promotion. I held regular coaching sessions with each staff member to focus on innovative techniques that I knew would improve their service delivery. I worked closely with my supervisors to develop performance plans that accurately targeted behaviors and the results we needed to achieve. As a direct result of my efforts, two of my Team Leads have been promoted to Branch Chief positions; and two of my Branch Chiefs have been promoted to TSA Division Director positions.

Throughout my career, I have always promoted gender and ethnic diversity. While with WHS, I represented the agency during job fairs and on campus recruiting trips to many Historically Black Colleges and Universities. As a result, I generated increased interest in the WHS mission and the contracting career field. My efforts were initially rewarded with an increase in the number of applicants we interviewed as compared to previous years. Ultimately, we were successful in hiring four minority candidates for full time entry level positions.

As an African American woman, I believe that describing my accomplishments while rising to the executive/managerial ranks motivates other women and minorities to seek Federal civil service employment. As the STAD Director, I have often served as a principal presenter at DHS Intern orientation briefing where I promote the advantages of working for a large Cabinet Department where individual differences are embraced and rewarded. I also make presentations at TSA job fairs where I engage the diverse candidates in attendance. By sharing my career experiences and successes I am often able to spark increased interest in TSA and the employment opportunities it has to offer. As a result, I was able to hire two Hispanic entry level intern candidates from TSA's Career Resident Program. Both candidates have progressed well and are thriving under my leadership.

I also support internal advancement and actively mentor the senior leaders on my TSA team. I provide feedback that they can use to better position themselves for advancement to the next level. As a result of my efforts, two female branch chiefs have been promoted to Division Director positions.

### **Results Driven**

As mentioned earlier, when I joined WHS as Director of the Professional, Information Technology, and Protective Services Division, my biggest challenge was to reduce the use of Time and Material (T&M) contracts and implement performance based firm fixed priced contract solutions. I conducted a spend analysis of our customers' prior year procurement actions to identify specific opportunities to implement this change. I found that excessive penalty expenses associated with construction delays in the Pentagon Renovation Project had resulted when the Pentagon Force Protection Agency (PFPA) Access Control contractor was unable to complete doorway installations on schedule. Characteristic of T&M contracts, the contractor was only exerting 'best efforts' to complete each installation, thereby impacting progress of the Project. I collaborated with PFPA to transition the installation of Access Control capability to the renovation contractor. This required that I convince PFPA that they would not lose ultimate control of these requirements and realize the benefit of not being identified as the reason for delays in the Pentagon renovation schedule. I earned the trust of the PFPA Director and assured him that his concerns and desires would be

considered. I also convinced him of the advantages of giving up control of installation efforts associated with the renovation.

As a result of my efforts, WHS awarded a new contract for Access Control installation services that was performance-based and focused contractor efforts on completion of specific tasks. This strategic change in acquisition strategy resulted in a reduction in program funding necessary to execute the Access Control program, an increase in the number of tasks completed under the contract, and a reduction in Government caused delays to the Pentagon Renovation Project.

As mentioned in the Introduction, my current staff includes 25 Contract Specialists who manage an annual contract administration portfolio in excess of \$1 billion. From February 2009 to September 2010, I led efforts to obligate the funds allocated to TSA by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) for surveillance programs and enforcement of transportation security efforts. ARRA, commonly referred to as the Stimulus Bill, earmarked \$1 billion specifically for procurement and maintenance of TSA Explosives Detection Systems (EDS) for screening checked baggage, passengers, and carryon baggage at airport security checkpoints.

Administration pressure to allocate ARRA funds quickly and effectively was intense. My challenge was to obligate a billion dollars of ARRA funds before they expired. If we didn't do this, then we would have failed to support the President's goal of stimulating the Nation's economy and averting an economic disaster.

Another of our challenges was to spread proposed funding obligations across as many of the Nation's communities as possible to improve economic conditions. This effort was complicated by the need to award contracts competitively while also complying with "Buy American" requirements, i.e. 95% of all construction material associated with an ARRA funded project had to be manufactured in the US. Our goal was to obligate 50% of the funds for EDS equipment by 30 June 2009 and the remainder by 30 September 2010. However, before obligating the funds we had to coordinate with Congress, the White House, and the Office of Management and Budget to obtain approval of our proposed distribution of the funds.

My Contracting Officers and I negotiated and executed many contracts for these aviation security efforts, especially at the largest US commercial airports. ARRA funds also provided an opportunity for accelerating TSA plans for eliminating stand-alone EDS units systems located in crowded airport lobbies. Most of the projects we were funding were subsets of ongoing larger airport construction efforts. Since many of the baggage handling systems included foreign made components, we had to obtain a limited waiver to the Buy American requirement. I established a team to analyze the impact of these exceptions on our plans and the extent of the waiver. In the end, we requested and obtained OMB permission to post a waiver in the Federal Register to comply with the Buy American requirement.

The initial plan for ARRA funding allotted approximately \$700 million for existing in-line EDS moderation projects at large airports. Since airports were anxious to be chosen as ARRA fund recipients, we encouraged them to accelerate plans for construction to accommodate new EDS equipment installation. Although TSA was willing to fund the majority of the proposed projects,

airports had to also invest funds for such efforts. TSA agreed to fund 90% of the projects and airports had to provide the remaining 10%. I personally negotiated funding and contractual issues with airport officials and educated them on such ARRA provisions as Buy American and reporting requirements.

Once we completed negotiations with each airport to establish project prices, we were able to fund the projects with \$244 million less than the original estimates. As a result, we were able to add 10 additional in-line passenger and baggage screening airport projects to the list of airports whose EDS equipment would be upgraded, thereby distributing the funds to more U.S. communities than originally anticipated. I am proud to say that our efforts resulted in obligating TSA ARRA funds on time and met all expectations.

### Business Acumen

While serving as the Chief of the DOI Acquisition Services Division, one of my challenges was to find ways to convert the traditional DOI manual word processing contract writing process to an automated integrated electronic system in order to improve customer service and save money. Accordingly, I implemented an electronic contract writing tool called the Interior Department's Electronic Acquisition System (IDEAS). I integrated IDEAS with DOI's financial system to enable electronic posting of contract commitments, obligations, and invoices, thereby improving the quality of contractual vehicles. IDEAS also resulted in automation of the program fund control function. Initially, obligations had to be manually posted during the transition to IDEAS. This required intense coordination to ensure that all obligations were entered into the financial system accurately. A major obstacle that I overcame was convincing the financial management and acquisition communities that the use of electronic systems was now mandatory. The end result was a seamless integration of systems that streamlined DOI's acquisition mission.

In April 2008, as the new Director of the TSA Security Technology Acquisition Division (STAD), I inherited a staff of 25 procurement professionals responsible for pre- and post-award activities associated with approximately 700 procurements supporting the Office of Security Technology. The STAD workload, valued at \$1.5 billion annually, is the largest within the Office of Acquisition. STAD has three Branches: Electronic Baggage Screening Program (EBSP) Acquisition, Passenger Screening Program (PSP) Acquisition, and Air Cargo/Deployment Acquisition. While the staff had achieved specific team goals in the past, there was a lack of Division wide cohesiveness, largely because the two former STAD Directors had come and gone during the past 12 months. This lack of consistent leadership had resulted in loosely organized groups that 'did their own thing' without coordinating with one another. One of my challenges was to lead a transition from a loosely managed to a cohesive organization that worked together toward common goals.

My first step was to analyze the organizational structure to determine what adjustments were required from a leadership and supervisory perspective. I reviewed the customer organizational structure to ensure appropriate alignment and support for key projects. It was crucial that our structure facilitate information flow and accountability for our stakeholder leadership. Accordingly, I obtained and filled two additional senior level Branch Chief positions. The new structure provided additional operational and supervisory capability for each of my three

Branches. Next, I reviewed the overall STAD workload to determine whether we had sufficient staff resources and found that the EBSP Branch was understaffed. The in-line project team consisted of only one person who was responsible for all in-line airport project support at some 450 airports nationwide. I obtained authorization to establish a regional structure to provide this support consisting of an East, West, and Central Regional Office, each with one full-time staff member. I then executed recruitment actions to fill these four new positions.

In early 2010, I noticed a synergy developing between my Passenger Screening Program (PSP) Acquisition Branch and the TSA Passenger Screening Program (PSP) Office. When compared to the other Branches in my Division, my PSP staff was much more involved with the PSP Program Office. The latter Office consistently consulted with my PSP staff at the earliest stages of the procurement process, resulting in acquisition scheduling efficiencies. Based on this excellent relationship, I proposed that my PSP staff be collocated with the PSP Program Office. This would be a 'first' because, historically, procurement functions are organized independently of a Program Office chain of command. Consequently, the idea of physically relocating the team to the Program Office generated a significant amount of anxiety. Some of my staff members felt that they would be 'abandoned and neglected' and no longer supported by Office of Acquisition management. I met with my PSP staff to provide an opportunity for them to express their concerns. I assured them that this was not an attempt to leave them 'out in the cold'. I stressed that co-location with program offices would result in even more visibility and support. I emphasized the benefits of being 'at the table' with the program partners when acquisition matters were being developed. It was certainly more likely that their program colleagues would engage them earlier in the process if they were sitting right beside them.

I then prepared for the physical move of my PSP staff to the PSP Program Office, but they were not happy about their relocation. I continued to demonstrate the advantages and interfaced with the team daily. Within 2 weeks of the move, the entire Office of Acquisition team had embraced the concept of collocation and was completely integrated with their Program Office partners. The anticipated advantages were achieved. The program office experienced increased transparency and the acquisition staff had increased opportunities for collaboration prior to decisions being made. As a result of my efforts, I changed the culture, broke down barriers, and facilitated an environment where the Office of Acquisition and the Program Office worked together more seamlessly.

As stated above, ARRA allocated \$1 billion in addition to TSA's annual appropriation. DHS Office of the Secretary officials set goals for obligating ARRA funds by the end of fiscal years 2009 and 2010. However, late in FY-2010, the TSA Office of Security Technology (OST) still had approximately a third of its original allocation remaining and those funds would expire on 30 September 2010. Failure to obligate these funds would result in missed opportunities to further implement the ongoing Checked Baggage In-Line System project. To make matters worse, Congress usually adjusts future year appropriations by the amount of expired funding left over from the prior fiscal year. My challenge was to develop and implement a plan that spread the proposed obligations across as many U.S. communities as possible and also enhanced OST's efforts to improve security at the Nation's airports. Such efforts included allocation of funds for both airport in-line projects and purchase of enhanced security technology equipment to support airport checkpoint

screening. Our initial spend plan identified approximately 30 contract actions to obligate the \$1 billion. As we negotiated and finalized each contract, we achieved savings from the original estimated amounts.

In addition, I collaborated with OST to develop a quick and effective acquisition strategy for purchase of new Explosives Trace Detectors for passenger screening. Instead of utilizing the traditional 'best value' evaluation process in which multiple non-price variables are considered and allowance for justified premiums for increased capabilities are acceptable, we adopted an acquisition strategy that significantly simplified the evaluation process. Once proposals were received and deemed compliant with the Request for Proposals requirements, price was the sole factor leading to contract award. This strategy enabled us to reduce the acquisition cycle time from 6 to 3 weeks and significantly reduce the unit price for EDS equipment. Through implementation of sound negotiation techniques and effective execution of competitive acquisition strategies, my efforts resulted in the successful award of four major technology procurements. These contract awards resulted in a total Government purchase savings of over \$32 million when compared prices paid in prior years for comparable EDS equipment.

### **Building Coalitions**

When I was appointed as the WHS Director of the Professional, Information Technology, and Protective Services (PIPS) Division, I soon saw that there was significant duplication in IT support contracts throughout OSD. Each individual office maintained its own IT infrastructure with individual contracts. I led an initiative to gather and consolidate IT requirements from 15 separate OSD offices in order to consolidate multiple contract requirements. I had to gain consensus among competing offices for the consolidation and to convince them to share contract support for IT support services. My biggest challenge was to convince the 15 offices that they would continue to receive IT support at the same level as in the past while reducing the level of support to achieve efficiencies. I met with the OSD Chief Information Officer (CIO) to gain his trust and ensure that his priorities and desired outcomes would be achieved during the consolidation. I analyzed all separate IT requirements to identify those common to all offices and identify any unique requirements. I chartered a group of stakeholders, composed of the OSD component offices potentially impacted by the consolidation. This group reviewed and discussed my findings and facilitated a working session to ensure that common requirements were comprehensive and unique requirements were met. My office staff partnered with the OSD CIO staff to facilitate the consolidation of requirements. As the owner of the contractual vehicles we were viewed as the 'bad guys.' In general, our goal was to minimize the individual, custom IT solutions being delivered to OSD. By assuming this role we provided the CIO cover from allegations of increasing his span of control and diluting the flexibilities of the individual component offices.

I stayed cognizant of hidden agendas, including desires to maintain individual IT support. We established working relationships with IT contractors to eliminate close connections that individual offices had with vendors. I achieved buy-in by demonstrating improvements in service delivery. Previously, all offices had not had 24-hour help desk support. The consolidation would provide this support on a limited basis. I developed a contract vehicle that allowed individual offices to maintain the feel of individual control for their unique requirements, but allowed the OSD CIO to

provide support at a standardized level for basic IT services. Because of my work, we devised a solution that consolidated the 15 separate contracts. There was a significant reduction in IT costs OSD-wide.

As mentioned earlier, as Director of the TSA Security Technology Acquisition Division (STAD), I worked with various other Federal Government entities to ensure that planned obligations of ARRA funding were properly coordinated and cleared by Congress, the White House, OMB, and the Office of the DHS Secretary, before contract awards were executed. My challenge included managing the communication flow to ensure that ARRA contract award announcements were vetted and cleared by the above stakeholders before any press releases were issued by the Government or by state and local entities, e.g. airports or municipalities. By careful planning and execution, I ensured that any changes to the list of airports eligible for ARRA funding were provided to Administration officials for concurrence before that information was made public. This work included handling the many continual changes required during negotiations with airport officials and ensuring that all stakeholders had the most recent information. Each time additional projects were identified, I had to obtain spend plan approval from OMB before contacting the airports. It was difficult to balance the notification process requirements while attempting to move forward. As we entered the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of FY 2010, the timelines for finalizing agreements became more aggressive. To meet obligation mandates, it was critical that there be no significant delay in working with airport officials while we waited for clearances from the Administration. I had to balance the risk that contract award information would be released at the local level before it was provided to Congress, Administration, and other Federal officials.

I directed my staff to maintain 'unofficial' communications with airports that had not yet been approved for ARRA funding. This enabled these airports to 'get ready' to use funds if they were eventually allocated to them. During these preliminary communications we took the opportunity to educate airport officials on the Buy America, transparency, and reporting requirements. I also reached out to partner with the DHS Offices of Recovery Act Oversight and Legislative Affairs and points of contact at OMB and the Vice President's Office to ensure that award announcements were accurate and approved prior to any notification to the airports. I maintained a constant line of communication between all stakeholders. I collaborated with my counterparts at DHS and OMB to keep them aware of my 'behind the scene' activities in order to ensure airport readiness once approvals were obtained. As a result, we were able to absorb and obligate excess funding realized from initial airport negotiations and easily fund the in-line renovation projects at 10 additional airports.