

401.601 General.

(a) The authority and responsibility vested in the Secretary to manage USDA's acquisition function is delegated through the Assistant Secretary for Administration to the SPE. This broad authority includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- (1) Prescribing and publishing Departmental acquisition policies, regulations, and procedures.
- (2) Taking any necessary actions consistent with policies, regulations, and procedures with respect to purchases, contracts, leases, and other transactions.
- (3) Designating contracting officers.
- (4) Establishing clear lines of contracting authority.
- (5) Evaluating and monitoring the performance of USDA's acquisition system.
- (6) Managing and enhancing career development of the contracting work force.
- (7) Participating in the development of Government-wide acquisition policies, regulations, and standards; and determining specific areas where government-wide performance standards should be established and applied.
- (8) Determining areas of Department-unique standards and developing unique Department-wide standards.
- (9) Certifying to the Secretary that the acquisition system meets approved standards.

(b) The SPE may delegate contracting authority to the Heads of Contracting Activities (HCA's) and the responsibility to manage their acquisition function.

(c) Unless prohibited by the FAR, the AGAR, or by other applicable statutes and regulations, the SPE may redelegate to HCA's the authority to make determinations as the agency head in order to implement the policies and procedures of the FAR. Such delegations shall be in writing, but need not be published.

(d) Unless prohibited by the FAR, the AGAR, or by other applicable statutes or regulations, each HCA may designate one individual from the contracting activity to carry out the functions of the HCA (HCAD). The HCAD may exercise all authority delegated to the HCA.

Parent topic: [Subpart 401.6 - Contracting Authority and Responsibilities](#)