



# Writing Better Requirements

The ARC Method



# Performance-Based Acquisition



# What is PBA?

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*"Performance-based Acquisition" (PBA) means an acquisition structured around the results to be achieved as opposed to the manner by which the work is to be performed. - [FAR 2.101](#)*

1

Uses a Performance Work Statement (PWS) or Statement of Objectives (SOO)

2

Includes measurable performance standards for all performance requirements

## 4 KEY ELEMENTS OF PBA

3

Provides appropriate incentives to drive higher performance and/or promote innovation

4

Utilizes a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) to define how the contract will be monitored (see [FAR 46.4](#))



# Action - Result - Context (ARC)

# ACTION – RESULT – CONTEXT

## ACTION:

What do you want the contractor to do?

## RESULT:

What result or outcome do you want?

## CONTEXT:

What is it for? What mission? What program?

### **ORIGINAL:**

*The Contractor shall train system end-users on how to use the system*



each requirement statement begins with The Contractor shall (or must)

Action verb

Result?

Context

# Agile Scrum Development Example

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1. The Contractor shall conduct Agile Sprints, including all Scrum ceremonies to produce demonstrable “incremental deliveries” of working software.
  - As determined by the Agency PO, these deliveries of capabilities may or may not be fielded to the operational community.
  - Each iteration/sprint should be time boxed, that is the iteration/sprint should have a fixed duration (2 weeks).
1. The Contractor shall virtually conduct Sprint Planning Sessions during which they will commit to completing a set of user stories from the product backlog up to their capacity (this may be done using story points and average velocity).
2. The Contractor shall virtually conduct a Sprint Demo at the conclusion of each sprint that demonstrates the successful completion of user story acceptance criteria for each story and that the sprint has met the Sprint Definition of Done.
3. The Contractor shall make daily Sprint Backlog updates in the approved Agile scrum project management tool, including user story percent complete and user story status.
4. The Contractor shall virtually conduct Daily Scrum sessions with the Development Team, Scrum Master, and the Agency PO to identify and clear impediments and roadblocks.
5. The Contractor shall virtually conduct and document Sprint Retrospectives at the conclusion of each sprint.
6. The Contractor shall virtually conduct a Storytime session (backlog grooming) to discuss the product backlog of user stories, establish acceptance criteria, and to ensure the Dev Team fully understands the objectives of all user stories eligible for inclusion in the next Sprint cycle.

# ACTION – RESULT – CONTEXT

## ACTION:

What do you want the contractor to do? - verb

## RESULT:

What result or outcome do you want?

## CONTEXT:

What is it for? What mission? What program?

**ORIGINAL:** *The contractor shall be required to create or implement approaches to gather internal or external agency data through data collection, surveys, or questionnaires.*

**REVISION:** *The contractor shall create (A) data collection methodologies (R) for internal or external data used in support of Agency Projects and Programs.*

*The contractor shall gather (A) data (R) from internal or external sources using approved data collection methodologies.*

**ORIGINAL:** *The contractor shall utilize the appropriate data collection or management approaches to prepare, process, and manage internal or external data utilized in analysis/modeling efforts. The contractor may utilize data collection equipment, such as Profile Analysis & Monitoring Systems (PAMS) and Portable Emissions Measurement Systems (PEMS), or database management systems (DBMS). The contractor may be responsible for data storage and reporting of all information utilized in the task area.*

**REVISION:** *The contractor shall prepare, process and manage (A) internal and/or external data (R) using approved data collection and management methods to support analysis and modeling efforts. (C)*



# Ambiguity Can Be Painful

## **BEWARE of AMBIGUITY!**

*The contractor shall assist in supporting Sprint Demos to ensure that the feature acceptance criteria were met at the conclusion of each sprint.*

**don't use ambiguous words: assist, support, help, manage**

**- what kind of assistance?**

**- what is involved with support?**

*The contractor shall conduct a Sprint Demo with the Product Owner, key stakeholders, and development team to ensure that the feature acceptance criteria were met at the conclusion of each sprint.*

**ACTION [A] – RESULT [R] – CONTEXT [C]**



# Use the Imperative

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Family Life, External Studies, Audits, and Analysis.

- The contractor **will** capture and submit information for agency's Campaign.
- Written progress reports **should** be provided on the 10th day of each month.

*Use “shall” or “must”*

***Imperative:***

*1) of vital importance; crucial.*

*2) giving an authoritative command;  
peremptory.*



**Plain Language is  
KEY**

# NO GIANT PARAGRAPHS

- Use
  - Short sentences & bullets
  - Lists
  - Tables
  - Bold, Italics, Underline
- Write for your specific audience
  - Balance technical and plain language
  - ***Write for the vendor you've never worked with before***
- Stop using government jargon!

## 1. BACKGROUND

Mission & Vision go here, OR

## 2. SCOPE OF WORK

Mission & Vision go here

## X. PRODUCT VISION

*If you are doing IT System development, it is recommended that you include a product vision statement. This is most effective when included as a standalone section, but it may be included in the Scope Section. For more information, check out: <https://techfarhub.cio.gov/handbook/requirements/>*

## 3. HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.1. **High Level Objective Statement 1 (task area) -> why, what results, outcomes**

3.2. **High Level Objective Statement 2**

## 4. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.1. **High Level Objective Task Area 1**

4.1.1. The Contractor shall... ACTION, RESULT, CONTEXT.

- Additional context as needed

4.1.2. The Contractor shall... ACTION, RESULT, CONTEXT.

4.2. **High Level Objective Task Area 2**

4.2.1. The Contractor shall...

## 5. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Section Ref	Requirement Statement	Standard(s)	Acceptable Quality Level(s)	Incentives	Applicable Document(s)



**Requirements  
ALWAYS Have  
Standards**

## REQUIREMENTS ROADMAP WORKSHEET

**VISION:**

**PROJECT NAME:**

PERFORMANCE			ASSESSMENT				INCENTIVE	
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE <small>What results are required?</small>	PERFORMANCE STANDARD <small>What level of performance is required to meet the Performance Objective or Task?</small>	AQL <small>What is your tolerance for less than 100% performance?</small>	WHAT/DATA SOURCE <small>What are you going to inspect?</small>	HOW/METHOD OF ASSESSMENT <small>How are you going to inspect?</small>	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE <small>Name/Position</small>	CALCULATION <small>How will you determine if the AQL and Standard are being achieved?</small>		
<b>TASK AREA: Training &amp; Development</b>								
<b>Task Statements (ARC)</b> <small>What are the specific requirements that fall under this objective?</small>	The Contractor shall provide training to end users on how to use the system.	Training results in users' effective ability to use all aspects of the system.	90% of staff are able to effectively use the system after training	Knowledge Check  Course Survey  Participant Follow-Ups  Course Observation	100% Inspection   Random Sample  Periodic Inspection	Jenny Lee, Agency Training Coordinator	Number of students who pass the knowledge check with 100% divided by the total number of students. Calculated monthly.	<90% - (\$1000)  >90% - \$2000  CPARS: Quality
	The Contractor shall deliver a user manual that covers the functionality of all aspects of the system.	User Manual covers all system elements, is accurate, professionally drafted and user-friendly.  Final User Manual is received 1 week prior to system launch.	No more than 1 revision needed after receipt	User Manual	100% Inspection			



# CSAW As a Service

# What is a Civilian SAW?

*A Civilian Services Acquisition Workshop (CSAW) is a facilitated workshop built around a specific acquisition and its multi-functional integrated project team (IPT). The workshop facilitates the team through the performance-based acquisition (PBA) process from beginning to end.*

# Workshop Purpose & Objectives

## PURPOSE

Develop the vision, mission, high-level objectives, performance requirements, measurable standards and performance-based strategies for the Agency Requirement.



## OBJECTIVES

- **Understand and Apply** the Performance-Based Acquisition (PBA) process and the Steps to PBA
- **Explore** the tools, resources, techniques, innovations and best practices to successfully execute this requirement
- **Collaborate** as a team through facilitated activities to develop draft documentation for this requirements
- **Develop** a high-level roadmap for successful implementation of this performance-based acquisition
- **Gain** consensus on critical decisions and the path ahead

# CSAW Webinar Series!

- February 21 (1pm ET) - Better Market Research
- April 17 (1pm ET) - Performance Standards & QASP
- June 26 (1pm ET) - Incentive Strategies

Go to [gsa.gov/events](https://gsa.gov/events) to register (*they are posted about 1 month prior to event*)



# Q&A / Contact

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**Jonathan Evans**

CSAW Program Manager & Senior Facilitator

Office of Professional Services & Human Capital Categories

GSA Federal Acquisition Service

Email: [csaw@gsa.gov](mailto:csaw@gsa.gov)

