POLICY ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) PROCUREMENT

This document implements OPM's Information Security and Privacy Policy

July 2009

Revision History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Revision Summary
1.0	November 2004	Initial release.
2.0	July 2009	Revised to add the requirement that CIS purchase laptop computers.

The version of this document that is posted to the Web is the official, authoritative version.

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Policy on
Information Technology (IT) Procurement

1. IT Procurement Policy

All IT-related procurements must be approved in advance by the Chief Information Officer (CIO). As part of this policy, all IT-related procurement plans and strategies must include the CIO as one of the approving officials.

OPM will not approve acquisitions that duplicate any of the major systems covered by e-Gov initiatives from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

2. Effective Date

Upon issuance, this policy is effective for all IT-related procurements, plans, and strategies.

3. Purpose

The CIO is responsible for overseeing OPM-wide IT investments. This policy ensures that the CIO can meet this responsibility and assure the Director that technology will be used prudently to enhance OPM's delivery of service. The policy also ensures compliance with Governmentwide regulatory and administrative IT requirements. The policy incorporates the following:

- The Clinger-Cohen Act requirement that the CIO monitor IT spending and ensure the wise use of available funding for IT investments.

- The OMB requirement that the CIO implement and maintain an agency process for IT capital planning and investment control (CPIC). Monitoring all IT procurements is an essential component of a comprehensive CPIC process.

- The CIO's overall responsibility for the security of OPM's IT systems. When approving technology, the CIO must ensure that IT security is uncompromised by keeping all systems and their underlying infrastructure secure.

4. Center for Information Services IT Support

Under the direction of the CIO, the Center for Information Services (CIS) meets OPM's essential IT needs by providing and managing critical agencywide technology services. These include providing the basic agencywide IT infrastructure (a secure and reliable LAN, WAN, network and enterprise server, and mainframe environment), providing agencywide technology refreshment, and providing systems development and maintenance support, including Web services. These centrally provided services meet most OPM program offices' technology requirements.

5. IT Procurement Procedures

To meet occasional, unique mission requirements that are not satisfied by current CIS IT support services, program offices may, within the constraints of their approved funding levels, purchase additional technology items or services. However, prior to procurement, program offices must follow the procedures described below.

5.1 Authorized IT Purchases

Program offices may purchase some technology items, usually by credit card, after approval by CIS. Examples include local printers, BlackBerry devices (see section 5.2 below for BlackBerry instructions), and software that is not normally loaded as part of the standard desktop configuration—for example, project management software. IT-related supplies such as floppy disks and toner cartridges do not require CIS approval. Generally, these items must comply with established standards for IT architecture and security, and they must meet Section 508 accessibility requirements. The CIS online Information Technology Procurement Authorization (ITPA) tracking system includes a reference list of equipment that meets OPM's technology standards.

NOTE: Because CIS purchases and configures all agency laptops, they may not be purchased with credit cards. Instead, individual offices must place laptop orders with CIS. The offices pay CIS through funds transfer.

Program offices must use the online ITPA tracking system to submit IT procurement requests to CIS for approval. CIS uses this system to facilitate the review and approval process and to document planned IT purchases. The tracking system includes a drop-down list of hardware and software compliant with OPM standards. When items are selected from this list, CIS will provide the review and approval decision within 2 business days. If an emergency requires faster action, program offices can contact the Chief, Network Management Group (NMG) or the CIO for assistance.

CIS strongly encourages program offices to consult with CIS to select new equipment prior to procurement. CIS will install approved products after they are delivered. To ensure timely service, program offices must notify the OPM Help Desk when orders are placed, so that CIS can plan for the required support based on the projected time of delivery. Program offices also must notify CIS when products are delivered so that a service appointment can be scheduled. CIS will not install nonapproved or noncompliant IT products. Noncompliant IT products are not authorized on OPM's network.

5.2 BlackBerry Devices

The BlackBerry is the only email-enabled, hand-held device supported by OPM and permitted to connect to OPM-networked workstations. OPM employees must meet the BlackBerry Use Criteria described below before a program office can acquire or issue a BlackBerry device and before CIS will activate the device on OPM's network.

A. BlackBerry Use Criteria

Use of an OPM BlackBerry is restricted to the following employee categories:

- OPM senior executives (i.e., SES), as well as other senior managers and key staff designated as requiring BlackBerry devices by the Office of the Director, by an associate director or office head, by the Deputy Associate Director of the Center for Security & Emergency Actions (CSEA), or by the CIO. Senior staff may designate appropriate staff (typically resource management officers) to approve BlackBerry devices in their program areas.

- Staff designated as key staff in OPM's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP), such as staff necessary to perform critical support of agency missions. If the BlackBerry is being purchased solely to support OPM's COOP, the Deputy Associate Director for CSEA must submit the request.

- Investigators working in the Federal Investigative Services Division (FISD), Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and CSEA.

All other requests for a BlackBerry must be submitted to the OPM Help Desk and approved by the Chief, NMG.

B. Purchasing BlackBerry Devices

Program offices must use the online ITPA tracking system to submit requests to CIS for BlackBerry purchases. To do so, the program office representative chooses BlackBerry from the tracking system's drop-down list of hardware and software, and then selects the BlackBerry-use category that applies.

NOTE: When purchasing BlackBerry devices, program offices must also purchase BlackBerry server licenses.

Requests for BlackBerry devices in support of COOP must be submitted through ITPA by the Deputy Associate Director for CSEA, who will confirm that the employee is on the official COOP list. CIS will work with the Center for Contracting, Facilities, and Administrative Services (CCFAS) to identify reputable vendors and the specific models to be purchased. Program offices should contact the OPM Help Desk or the Customer Support Branch Chief for assistance in selecting a specific BlackBerry device.

C. CIS BlackBerry Support Services

As part of the process for procuring BlackBerry devices, CIS will provide the following support services:

- CIS will review the request to purchase and install a BlackBerry device to ensure it meets the standards of use described above.

- Prior to purchase, CIS will consult with the program office about the source and model of BlackBerry to be acquired.

- CIS will coordinate purchases with program offices.

- CIS will install and activate the BlackBerry device, offer a tutorial, and provide client support when needed. A BlackBerry tutorial and a brief outline of the functionality of the devices are available on THEO.

- Every request for a new BlackBerry must include the requisite licenses. This includes, but is not limited to, BlackBerry Enterprise Server licenses.

- BlackBerry support questions should be directed to the OPM Help Desk at 202-606-4927.

5.3 Purchasing Laptops

All laptop purchases are to be completed by CIS. Program offices must place their request for a laptop with the OPM Help Desk. Program offices must provide appropriate charge-back criteria (funds transfer) to complete the purchase. Once CIS has received office cost code information, the Help Desk will deliver a laptop from the CIS inventory. The purchase (funds transfer) must include software licenses as designated by the Help Desk. Software licenses must include, but are not limited to, Microsoft Office, telework software, LANDesk, and Credent.

5.4 Business Case Exceptions

In general, program offices may not purchase personal computers (that is, desktop systems), LAN or network printers, file servers, IT services, or any other significant IT hardware or software. These types of technology are provided by CIS as part of OPM's centrally managed IT services. IT purchases must be either specifically approved by CIS (as explained above) or submitted for approval as an exception (as explained below).

If a program office believes it has a valid business case for purchasing IT hardware or software that is not available on the drop-down menu in ITPA, or if a program office wishes to procure IT services directly, it must request CIO approval by entering the request in ITPA and completing a Business Case Exception (BCE) request. The BCE form, OPM Form 1669, is available in the ITPA tracking system. The BCE request should present a clear justification for the procurement, including what is needed, why it is needed, when it is needed, and the estimated cost of acquisition and maintenance. After approval by an associate director or office head, or a deputy associate director if so authorized by the associate director, the exception request must be submitted to the CIO for approval. This review and approval process is in addition to, and should exceed the requirements of, the IT-related procurement plans and procurement summaries developed during the program office clearance and CIO review. This review also will prevent acquisitions that would duplicate any of the major systems covered by the OMB e-Gov initiatives.

CIS will send the submitter a confirmation that the BCE has been received. Within 1 week of receipt, CIS will follow up with an estimate of the time needed to complete the review or provide a status update on the procurement request. For straightforward equipment purchases that vary only in make and model from approved standards, the BCE is all that is required. CIS will assess the cost-effectiveness of the requested items, as well as the impact on CIS's ability to support and maintain OPM's infrastructure. This review will take from several days to several months, depending on the complexity of the request, the existing CIS workload, and agency priorities. More extensive acquisitions, including such initiatives as outsourcing major systems or procuring IT services, will require additional documentation through the IT System Manager on the OPM intranet. In these cases, once the BCE is received, CIS senior staff will contact the submitter to discuss the next steps.

The Center for Talent Services Technical Services Group (TSG) has unique IT support responsibilities for certain reimbursable OPM programs. Therefore, TSG should prepare exception requests for the technology that supports the TSG business lines. Because TSG will be responsible for maintaining approved technology, it should provide assurance in the exception request that the integrity of OPM's core IT infrastructure will be maintained, in addition to the information normally provided in an exception request.

6. Enforcement

OPM employees, managers, contracting officers, and holders of credit cards are key to ensuring that OPM's IT procurement policy and procedures are followed. Procurement officials, including holders of credit cards used to make purchases, must not make IT-related purchases without specific CIO approval. Enforcement of this policy will consist of the following actions:

- Requests to the Help Desk for installation services or support for nonapproved IT equipment or software will be reported by the CIO to program office management for appropriate action.

- Acquisition of nonapproved or noncompliant IT products that are discovered during periodic CCFAS review of credit card reports and purchase orders will be reported to program office management for appropriate action.

- Purchasing authority may be revoked if violations are identified.

- Disregard of the policy may result in administrative actions ranging from counseling to dismissal.

7. Questions

Questions on this policy may be addressed to helpdesk@opm.gov.