



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

**REAL PROPERTY CONTRACTING OFFICER
WARRANT PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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1. PURPOSE

This Real Property Contracting Officer Warrant Program Handbook (Handbook) describes the Real Property Contracting Officer (RPCO) Warrant Program for employees carrying out real property leasing activities. The guidelines in this document are developed to ensure real property leases are executed by individuals having the appropriate authority, experience, education, and training.

2. AUTHORITY

In accordance with Department Administrative Order (DAO) 200-0, *Department of Commerce Handbooks and Manuals*, this Handbook has the status and effect of a DAO. This Handbook serves as an authoritative Department reference on RPCO Warrants and supersedes all prior versions. All DOC employees shall adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in this Handbook when performing RPCO responsibilities.

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration (CFO/ASA) by Department Organization Order (DOO) 10-5, *Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration*, and redelegated by DOO 20-1, *Director for Facilities and Environmental Quality*, the Director of the Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality (Director) is responsible for establishing Department-wide policy and procedures for the acquisition, management and disposal of real property, and for serving as the liaison with the General Services Administration (GSA) on all Department-wide real property programs. The Director is also responsible for conducting the RPCO Warrant Program, issuing Warrants, policies, overall direction for the program, and the overseeing of all Warrant holders.

3. ISSUANCE, MAINTENANCE, AND DISTRIBUTION

DOC Office of Real Property Programs (ORPP) is responsible for issuing and maintaining this [Handbook](#).

The DOC Operating Units (OUs) are responsible for disseminating this Handbook to the appropriate employees within their organizations. Updates to account for new laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and other Federal policies may be issued in the form of bulletins.

4. APPLICABILITY

The Handbook is applicable to all employees within the Department of Commerce requiring a RPCO Warrant, permanent or interim, regardless of whether using a General Services Administration (GSA) delegated authority or an independent leasing authority. Government contractors are ineligible to hold a RPCO Warrant.

5. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

5.1 Director, Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality

In accordance with DOO 20-5, the Director of the Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality (OFEQ) is responsible for establishing Department-wide policy and procedures for the acquisition, management, and disposal of real property and is also the Department's Real Property Warranting Official who issues and terminates RPCO Warrants.

5.2 Associate Director, Office of Real Property Programs

In accordance with DOO 20-5, the Associate Director of the Office of Real Property Programs (ORPP) serves as the designated career management point of contact. The Associate Director oversees the Warrant Program and ensures Warrant applicants meet all Federal and agency requirements for training, education, and experience. Additionally, the Associate Director establishes the policies, procedures, and requirements that govern the Warrant Program and approves/disapproves in writing any deviations, waivers, or exemptions from any of those requirements. The Associate Director will designate an individual in ORPP to monitor and manage the RPCO Warrant Program. This designated person has the authority to work directly with the RPCOs, RPCO candidates, and GSA contacts. This individual will be responsible for ensuring contracting officers and realty specialists have the appropriate access to the features of the various management systems for leasing and the DOC's Career Management System of Record. This individual will also be responsible for keeping the Handbook current.

5.3 Agency Head of the Real Property Activity

The Agency Head of the Real Property Activity is the person within each Bureau or Operating Unit (OU) responsible for performing real property lease contracting and lease administration activities. Also, the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity is directly responsible for the qualitative and quantitative aspects of real property leasing (e.g., OU Real Property Management Division leader or immediate supervisors of the RPCO).

The Agency Heads of the Real Property Activities establish and budget for training plans for the RPCOs, monitor the performance of RPCOs, and establish controls to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and good management practices concerning the Warrant used by the RPCOs. They determine the number and type of Warrants necessary to accomplish the work of the Bureau or OU.

5.4 Supervisor of Record

The Supervisor of Record is the RPCO's first line supervisor and is responsible for coordinating with ORPP to facilitate the lease Warrant process. This position may also serve as the Agency

Head of the Real Property Activity. Further, the Supervisor of Record is responsible for notifying ORPP when a Warranted RPCO:

- (1) resigns,
- (2) transfers to another Agency,
- (3) is reassigned to another office,
- (4) is terminated,
- (5) is disciplined for misconduct or incompetence, or
- (6) fails to comply with or meet experience, education, or training requirements.

6. RPCO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A RPCO is an employee of the Department of Commerce who holds a Real Property Contracting Officer Warrant issued by the Department of Commerce. A RPCO Warrant gives the Warrant holder the authorization to execute, modify, and terminate lease interests in real property, including signatory authority to obligate funds and contractually commit the United States.

RPCOs are responsible for acquiring, administering, modifying, and/or terminating leases for all real property by following applicable Federal laws, regulations, policies, and procedures, including those of their organizational unit. In addition, RPCOs are responsible for administering all executed leases to ensure lessors fully comply with the terms and conditions of the lease, such as providing required services (e.g., utilities and maintenance). RPCOs are responsible for maintaining a complete file on the lease acquisition and administration of the lease during the contract term, which includes items such as all supplemental lease agreements/lease amendments, correspondence, inspections, and all records on lease enforcement matters. For additional details, please consult the Real Property Management Manual.

7. WARRANT THRESHOLDS

The Department’s Warrant thresholds mirror the thresholds identified in GSA’s Real Property Leasing Certification Program (LCP). Each level represents a separate Warrant with specific experience, education, and continuous learning requirements.

Warrant Thresholds	Certification Requirements
Level I - Basic Warrant	LCP Level I
Level II - Simplified Warrant	LCP Level I
Level III - Intermediate Warrant	LCP Level II
Level IV - Senior Unlimited Warrant	LCP Level III

<https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/policy/acquisition-policy/real-property-leasing-certification-program>.

8. RPCO WARRANT APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

In the approval process, the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity is responsible for developing plans within their respective OU for implementing the Department of Commerce Real Property Contracting Officer Warrant Program Handbook.

8.1 Agency Head of the Real Property Activity Responsibilities

The Agency Head of the Real Property Activity shall:

1. Identify the mission need for RPCOs within their Bureau or OU and request the most qualified candidates submit applications for Warrants. Employees cannot submit applications without prior approval from their supervisor or management.
2. Guide employees in preparing applications for Warrants. Employees must submit a copy of the DOC Real Property Warrant Program Application (see Appendix I). All applications should include a current detailed resume and an executed GSA Form 3409, *Personal Qualifications Statement for Appointment as Contracting Officer*, further detailing the employee's work experience, training, and education. A copy of the candidate's transcript(s) identifying a minimum of 24 hours in business-related courses, or a baccalaureate degree transcript must also be attached to the application package.
3. Review the candidate's Warrant submission package, and once complete, forward via email the package to ORPP for official consideration.

8.2 ORPP Responsibilities

ORPP shall:

1. Perform a detailed review of submitted packages, to ensure the required documentation has been provided, submitted correctly, and the qualifications needed for the candidate have been met.
2. Approve the training classes in the Career Management System of Record once it has been confirmed all qualifications have been met by the prospective Warrant holder. ORPP will then generate a Leasing Certification Program (LCP) certificate at the applicable level for the RPCO candidate.
3. Submit packages to the Director of OFEQ for official consideration. The packages shall include ORPP's recommendation letter, a copy of the LCP certificate, the candidate's full package (e.g., resume, application, etc.) submitted by the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity.

8.3 OFEQ Responsibilities

The Director of OFEQ shall:

1. Approve or deny the Warrant package and return the package to ORPP for dissemination to the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity. In the instance of an applicant being declined, ORPP will work with the Director of OFEQ to identify the specific concerns and, if applicable, develop a plan for resubmission.
2. Issue a RPCO Warrant for the candidate if the Warrant package is approved.

9. RPCO CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Department follows the GSA's Real Property Leasing Certification Program for experience, education, and training requirements, unless noted in this Handbook.

10. INTERIM WARRANTS

If it is essential and in the best interest of the Department to appoint a RPCO who does not fully meet the Warrant qualifications, an interim Warrant may be provided by the Director of OFEQ.

For non-Warrant holders, the following shall apply for interim Warrants:

1. The interim Warrant shall be for a limited and specified period of time;
2. The candidate must have a clear understanding of the applicable laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and responsibilities that apply to real property actions and a RPCO; and
3. The candidate must have a clear understanding of the applicable DOC policies and procedures that apply to a RPCO prior to appointment.

10.1 Non-Warrant Holders

Non-Warrant holders, particularly senior-level officials, may be provided with an interim Warrant under exceptional circumstances or emergency situations to execute a real property transaction. The Director of OFEQ shall set forth the exact authority assigned and its limitations in these limited circumstances.

11. MAINTAINING A WARRANT

Once warranted, RPCOs must obtain 80 continuous learning points to maintain their certification in each two-year continuous learning period, beginning with the initial certification date. This information must be maintained by the RPCO together with their supervisor and submitted to ORPP through the Career Management System of Record. For RPCO's working towards the next warrant level the required training may be used towards the 80 continuing learning points.

12. SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF A WARRANT

The following procedures shall be followed for the suspension or termination of a RPCO Warrant (including interim Warrants):

12.1 Suspension of Warrant

The Agency Head of the Real Property Activity, the Director of OFEQ or the Associate Director of ORPP may suspend a RPCO's appointment at any time or for any of the following reasons:

1. The RPCO failed to exercise sound business judgment or acted outside of their Warrant level.
2. The RPCO engaged in other alleged improprieties in carrying out contracting officer responsibilities.
3. The RPCO failed to comply with continuous learning requirements.

12.2 ORPP Responsibilities for Suspended Warrants

If a RPCO Warrant is suspended:

1. The Agency Head of the Real Property Activity shall email the Associate Director of ORPP with information related to the suspension, including the justification for the suspension, if it is the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity who suspended the RPCO Warrant.
2. ORPP will note the suspension in the Career Management System of Record.
3. ORPP will send a formal email to GSA to suspend the Warrant from the GSA Real Estate Exchange (GREX) system.

12.3 Termination of a Warrant

Only the Director of OFEQ (i.e., the Warranting Official) may terminate a Warrant. A request for termination can be initiated by the Agency Head of the Real Property Activity or the Associate Director of ORPP.

In the event a Warrant is terminated by the Director of OFEQ, the respective Agency Head of the Real Property Activity will provide written notification of the termination and the reason(s) for such action to the employee. The RPCO's Warrant must also then be returned to ORPP who will notify GSA to remove references of the employee holding a Warrant from any applicable GSA system.

13. APPENDICES

Appendix I - [DOC Real Property Warrant Program Application](#)
Appendix II - [GSA Form 3409](#)