

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



July 21, 2006

TO: Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices
Directors, NASA Centers

FROM: Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Competency Management System (CMS)

During the past several years, significant changes in several of our programs created a major imbalance between the work the Agency plans to do and the workforce that we have on board, a situation that we have encompassed under the shorthand of "uncovered capacity." This uncovered capacity issue has resulted in substantial inefficiencies across much of the Agency, absorbing large amounts of corporate and Center resources, undermining critical stakeholder relationships, and, last but not least, damaging the morale of the very resource that will be most critical to the ultimate success of the Vision for Space Exploration--NASA's people.

A major contributor to this situation was our inability to forecast our future workforce needs, compare those needs to existing capabilities, and develop and implement the policies and programs required to bring our capabilities into alignment with our requirements. In short, we lacked the tools and the processes to conduct adequate workforce planning and management at the Agency level.

The challenges that face us in the next several years potentially dwarf those that we have just been through. To meet these challenges, NASA must have a workforce planning capability grounded in the competencies and skills of its individual employees at a sufficient level of detail and degree of commonality across the Agency to respond to external expectations and requirements (including the maintenance and expansion of legislative flexibilities), assess Center readiness for new activities, locate expertise required to implement specific tasks, develop our personnel, better align projected work and program demand, provide sufficient planning lead time to prevent the reoccurrence of problems with uncovered capacity, and, most of all, enable the continuing success of the Vision for Space Exploration.

NASA has a tool in place that can satisfy these critical requirements--the CMS. We recognize that other systems and approaches to managing our workforce and conducting workforce planning have the ability to satisfy some of the requirements mentioned above, particularly at a local level. We are convinced, however, that the CMS offers the level of detail and degree of commonality that is needed to conduct workforce planning across NASA's Centers and installations.

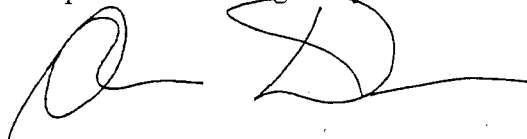
To serve the Agency's requirements, the CMS must include comprehensive and validated information from all our employees. Therefore:

- All Agency civil service employees shall document their individual expertise (for both current position and career history) by identifying in the CMS a relevant set of personal competencies and corresponding proficiency levels by September 30, 2006.
- All supervisors shall validate the employee self-assessments by October 31, 2006.
- The Workforce Information Management System (WIMS) is the designated Agency workforce planning tool used to collect future workforce requirements by identifying the competencies needed for each program and project as a part of the Agency budget planning process. Center workforce, financial, and/or strategic planners are responsible for ensuring that an accurate competency assessment is fed into WIMS by September 11, 2006, to support the FY 2008 budget development process.

It is important to emphasize that populating the CMS with validated competency data is an ongoing process. New employees will be required to enter data when they join the Agency, current employees will be required to update their data on a regular basis as they develop and add new competencies to their respective inventories, and organizations will add the competency requirements associated with new positions as they are established. It is only through the periodic updating and validation of such data that the Agency will be able to fully utilize the CMS to guide recruitment and training programs, to identify and support development opportunities for all employees, to balance our workload to best take advantage of our existing workforce, and to develop longer-term policies that will enable us to meet our mission challenges.

To support this ongoing requirement, the Office of Human Capital Management will continue to assess, on a regular basis, and improve our full suite of Agency workforce planning and management tools, including the CMS, to ensure that they evolve to meet the changing demands of the Agency.

For more information, and to use the CMS tool, you can access the system at <https://cmstool.nasa.gov>. In addition, CMS informational and training sessions will be conducted at the Centers. For session schedules and any further assistance, please contact the CMS Operational Manager at your Center listed on the CMS Web site.



Shana Dale

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