



# U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

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## MSPB REPORT LINKS MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTING OFFICER REPRESENTATIVES (CORs) TO IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY, TIMELINESS, AND COST OF CONTRACT DELIVERABLES.

According to MSPB Chairman, Neil McPhie, “The volume of contract spending—\$328 billion in fiscal year 2004—demonstrates the importance of developing and managing Federal contracts in ways that will ensure the best contract outcomes and the best return on the taxpayers’ dollar.” While the Government has modernized its contracting rules and procedures and improved the management of contracting officers who carry out the business aspects of contracting, almost no work has been done to assess agencies’ management of contracting officer representatives (CORs). These individuals provide the technical expertise necessary to develop and oversee Government contracts. Even the best-managed contract is not successful if its deliverables fail to meet the technical requirements of the Government.

Today, MSPB released its newest report, “Contracting Officer Representatives: Managing the Government’s Technical Experts to Achieve Positive Contract Outcomes.” This report provides findings and recommendations based on a survey of CORs from 10 agencies that spent 90 percent of the Government’s contracting dollars. These highly experienced CORs provide a compelling and authoritative perspective on contracting and on how they can be better managed to ensure positive contract outcomes in terms of the quality, timeliness, completeness, and cost of contract deliverables.

The report recommends that agencies do a better job of fulfilling the regulatory aspects of managing CORs to include formal delegation of authority, improved COR training, and strategic management of the COR workforce. In addition, agencies need to improve the day-to-day management of CORs. This includes improving COR selection and assignment, involving CORs early in the contracting process, ensuring CORs perform critical pre-award technical contracting tasks, providing enough time for CORs to do their contracting work, and rating CORs on the performance of their contracting work. The report shows that fulfilling the regulatory requirements for managing CORs and managing CORs more effectively day-to-day were both significantly related to more positive contract outcomes.

MSPB recognizes that while agencies have the primary responsibility for effective COR management, individual CORs and Governmentwide policy-makers also play a critical role in improving how CORs are managed. The findings and recommendations regarding COR management contained in this report will therefore be useful to all those who are interested in ensuring that Government contracts achieve positive results on behalf of the taxpayer.

The MSPB is an independent, quasi-judicial agency with responsibility for deciding Federal employee appeals from personnel actions taken against them, protecting the integrity of the civil service and other Federal merit systems, and conducting studies of the civil service and other merit systems in the Executive Branch. To request a printed copy of the report, e-mail [STUDIES@mspb.gov](mailto:STUDIES@mspb.gov); call (202) 653-6772, extension 1350; or write: Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20419. The report may be downloaded from the Studies page of the Board's Website at [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov).