

Karla Smith Jackson

Karla Smith Jackson is the Senior Procurement Executive, Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer & Assistant Administrator for the Office of Procurement at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In this role, she provides senior executive leadership and oversight of NASA's procurement functions, policy, and initiatives to an acquisition workforce of over 4,000 personnel. Ms. Jackson serves on the Federal Acquisition Institute Board of Directors and on the Federal Acquisition Regulation Council. She is one of only three signatory authorities that can execute procurement policies and procedures on behalf of the United States Federal Government. In addition, she represents NASA's enterprise procurement organization across the Federal Government, industry and international organizations.

A seasoned acquisition professional with over 30 years of extensive experience, Ms. Jackson previously served as the Acting Director for Acquisition at the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). As the senior advisor and authority on all aspects of acquisition, contract planning, and management she provided guidance and oversight to programs that successfully integrated a single missile defense system into a layered missile defense capability. From 2016 to 2020, she served as the Director of Contracts at MDA, responsible for all agency contracting actions.

Ms. Jackson began her federal service career in 1991, as an Acquisition Management (AM) intern at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, formerly the Defense Nuclear Agency. After graduation, Ms. Jackson joined the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO), which later became the Missile Defense Agency, as a senior contract specialist. During her tenure at BMDO, Ms. Jackson held several positions, including, Director of Technology, Test, and Targets Contracting and Director of Contract Policy, Pricing, and Review. Ms. Jackson moved on to serve as the Director for Acquisition Policy and Legislation in the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In this role, she managed the development and promulgation of Government-wide acquisition regulation and policy and represented DHS on all acquisition legislation decisions. Previous assignments include Chief/Deputy Chief of Contract Operations for the U.S. Coast Guard, Chief of Staff/Executive Officer to the Director of Acquisition at MDA, Chief of Acquisition Operations at the Headquarters of the Defense Logistics Agency, and Deputy Executive Director for Contracts at the Headquarters of the Defense Contract Management Agency.

Ms. Jackson holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Hampton University and a Master of Science degree in contract and acquisition management from the Florida

Institute of Technology. She also holds a Master of Science degree in national resource strategy with a concentration in acquisition from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (Defense Acquisition University). Ms. Jackson became a Certified Professional Contracts Manager in 1997 and is Level III–certified in the Contracting (Acquisition) Career Field. She is a graduate of the Department of Defense Executive Leadership Development Program and the Defense Leadership and Management Program.

Ms. Jackson has received numerous awards and is a recipient of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service, the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Humanitarian Civilian Service. Ms. Jackson is married and has two daughters.