

## **Appendix F – NIST Lessons Learned**

### **NIST Lessons Learned**

NIST staff provided the following compiled list of lessons learned during CSTARS implementation at NIST:

- 1) Dedicate a core group of staff to work on the implementation full time.
- 2) Have that core group thoroughly trained on the system's functionality prior to the beginning of BPR.
- 3) Involve anyone who may be affected by transition to CSTARS to the BPR sessions, i.e., accounting, requisition end users, systems administrators, supervisors, clerks, purchasing agents, contract specialists.
- 4) Dedicate a resource responsible for keeping, developing and/or distributing meeting minutes, master logs of action items, project cost and schedule, lessons learned, presentations, etc.
- 5) Map the as-is business processes before beginning BPR. That will become your roadmap to ensure that no balls get dropped along the way.
- 6) Have a skilled facilitator working with you during the BPR to ensure that all issues are explored and a consensus reached.
- 7) Begin deciding early the universe of actions to be migrated into CSTARS. Train your staff to accurately gather and record the necessary information, and train a small group of people to add the migrated information into CSTARS. Include as many QA checks as possible, both on the data gathering side and the data input side, to minimize errors. This effort will require lots of time and lots of resources--you cannot afford to underestimate this part of the process.
- 8) Have a written agreement with OAM regarding who is paying for which costs and on what schedule.
- 9) Examine any service level agreement with OCS and determine if it meets your needs. If not, develop your own SLA and be prepared to pay for the difference in any costs.
- 10) Focus on the reporting aspects of the project early. Determine your needs, and fund the necessary resources and talent to make it work.
- 11) Prepare a realistic project schedule before beginning the project and stick to it as best you can. Send up smoke signals early if things are off track.

- 12) Communicate, communicate, communicate. This is a big change for many users, and they need to hear that management is behind the initiative and that life after CSTARS will be just fine. Be prepared to offer significant desk-side support, both contracted and internal, for an extended period of time after going into production.
- 13) Use BPR to identify opportunities to improve your processes, and document and communicate those decisions.
- 14) Look for a solid system's administrator. The person should have a practical technical background as well as be very conversant in acquisition.
- 15) Be prepared for the possibility of needing to hire additional staff. Production can take a nose dive for the first several months, and the users' frustration level can be very high. Assess the adverse impact your customers are willing to live with, and plan accordingly.
- 16) If you have staff that are computer illiterate, get them into basic windows application training now.
- 17) Be sure to teach your business rules. Document them in your manuals, make certain everyone knows what they are and where to locate them.
- 18) Be sure to restrict including and updating vendor records to a small core group of users.
- 19) Be sensitive to auditing issues, such as segregation of duties, logging levels, disaster recovery, etc. The strategy for addressing these types of issues may affect the decision of who should be performing duties such as application administration, vendor table maintenance, requisition entry.