

Overhaul and Digital-First Transformation of the U.S. Coast Guard Requirements Capability

BACKGROUND

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is at an important inflection point in how it defines, analyzes, and governs the capabilities its missions require. Requirements generation is the front end of mission readiness, resource alignment, and future force design, and the USCG is moving from a document-based process to an adaptive, digital-first framework that supports faster decision-making, better data sharing, and quicker fielding of capabilities. Through the Futures Development and Integration Directorate, stood up in September 2025, and its Office of Strategic Capabilities, the USCG will replace the legacy model with a requirements ecosystem grounded in Mission Engineering: mission-focused, data-driven, digitally enabled, and aligned with DHS acquisition direction and Department of War standards.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Academy has been tasked with four objectives:

01 Assess the current state

Develop a clear, evidence-based understanding of the current Coast Guard requirements framework.

02 Engage Subject Matter Experts

Identify relevant best practices, lessons learned, and transferable models.

03 Design the future state

Design a modernized, agile, streamlined, and digital-first requirements framework grounded in Mission Engineering and aligned with Coast Guard mission needs, DHS acquisition direction, DoW standards, and modern digital engineering practices.

04 Chart the transition

Develop a practical roadmap that moves the Coast Guard from the current framework to the future state, while building the workforce, communications, and pilot structure needed for successful adoption.

Oversight and deliverables: An Expert Advisory Group of Academy Fellows has been appointed to oversee and guide this study. The EAG roster and Study Team are listed on the following page. A final report with findings and recommendations, along with executive briefings on the report, will be completed by April 13, 2027.

About the Academy

Chartered by Congress to provide nonpartisan expert advice, the Academy is an independent, nonprofit organization established in 1967 to assist government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations.

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The Academy has appointed a five-member Expert Advisory Group of Fellows to oversee and guide this study.



Dr. Geoff Abbott*

Geoff Abbott brings 30 years of active-duty Coast Guard service directly to this project, including command of the Coast Guard's Research & Development Center and a tenure chairing the Commandant's Innovation Council. His career spans Coast Guard engineering, systems, and headquarters leadership roles, followed by senior fellowships at the Homeland Security Institute and his current position as Senior Leadership Faculty, Leadership & Organizational Effectiveness, at the Securities and Exchange Commission.



Zal Azmi*

Zal Azmi served as the first Chief Information Officer at both the FBI and the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA), where he ran global IT operations, built out enterprise architecture, and led cybersecurity modernization across two of the Department of Justice's largest components. At the FBI he managed a \$1.3 billion annual IT investment portfolio and put in place the enterprise governance and procurement oversight behind it, and at EOUSA, he modernized IT systems across all 94 U.S. Attorney offices. He has since moved into the private sector, building prime contracting vehicles and leading federal capture efforts as President & COO of IMTAS, giving him a blend of deep federal mission experience and private-sector acquisition execution.



Greg Giddens*

Greg Giddens has direct, hands-on Coast Guard acquisition experience, having served as the Coast Guard's Deputy Assistant Commandant for Acquisition and later as a Deputy Program Executive Officer. He went on to serve as the Veterans Affairs' Chief Acquisition Officer and later as Executive Director of the VA's modernization program. He's now a Partner at Potomac Ridge Consulting, a firm of retired senior federal executives that advises companies on the federal acquisition landscape. His 35-year career spans engineering, leadership, procurement, and program management across four Cabinet agencies, including 16 years in the Senior Executive Service.



Bill Greenwalt*

Bill Greenwalt's career centers on defense acquisition policy at the highest levels, including serving as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Industrial Policy and roughly a decade on the Senate Armed Services Committee staff helping shape acquisition law. He co-founded the Silicon Valley Defense Group to bridge commercial tech innovation and defense procurement, and is currently a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. At the Academy, he chaired the 2023 Missile Defense Integration Panel and contributed to the 2020 nuclear security enterprise review.



Mike McCord*

Mike McCord served two Senate-confirmed terms as Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and Chief Financial Officer, serving as the Department of Defense's principal advisor to the Secretary on all budgetary and financial matters from 2014-2016 and 2021-2024, overseeing execution of an annual budget of more than \$800 billion. Before that, he spent five years as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), including service as the Department's Senior Accountable Official for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. He came to the Pentagon after 24 years on Capitol Hill, including 21 years as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, where he had oversight of the defense budget topline, the Quadrennial Defense Review, and more than \$100 billion in annual operations and maintenance funding.

PROJECT STAFF

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