



Nicole Vele

Of Counsel

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Leveraging her extensive military background, Nicole delivers strategic counsel to help clients navigate the labyrinth of government procurement opportunities and related disputes.

Nicole brings more than a decade of experience and an LLM in Government Procurement to manage virtually every aspect of legal compliance for high-stakes government contracts. For the US Air Force, she served as a member of the Acquisitions, Fiscal Law & Litigation Directorate, directing a team of nine government contracts attorneys and overseeing the review of more than \$9B in acquisitions, while minimizing litigation risk across more than 150 worldwide requirements.

As Chief of the Field Support Center at Joint Base Andrews, Nicole led a team providing legal guidance to acquisitions professionals worldwide on a variety of contracting issues including solicitations, source selections, modifications, claims, terminations, contracting officer's final decisions, and corrective actions.

When government contract issues escalate from disputes to litigation, Nicole draws on her Air Force Commercial Litigation Field Support Center experience to offer strategic guidance throughout all stages of the dispute. Clients also benefit from her trial experience as an Air Force Judge Advocate General prosecuting felony cases.

PRACTICES

Government
Business Litigation
Government Contracts

INDUSTRIES

Aerospace and Defense
Construction and Development

EDUCATION

The George Washington University Law School, LL.M., 2021
Government Procurement
With Highest Honors

University of Wisconsin Law School, J.D., 2011

University of Wisconsin School of Education, M.S., 2011
Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Marian University, M.S., 2008
Organizational Leadership & Quality

Marquette University, B.A., 2003
Criminology & Law Studies

BAR ADMISSIONS

New York
District of Columbia
Wisconsin

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces
U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia
U.S. Court of Federal Claims

EXPERIENCE

Contracting

- Solicitations
- Source Selections
- Modifications
- Claims
- Terminations
- Final Decisions
- Bid Protests
- Contract Disputes Act
- Claims and REAs
- Federal Grants

Litigation

- Commercial Contract Disputes
- Business Disputes
- Tort Litigation

CLIENT RESULTS

During her time in the Air Force, Nicole handled the following matters:

- Provided analysis and legal support for a \$1.6B Space Development Agency requirement that fortified it against a pre-award protest.
- Litigated multiple Government Accountability Office protests that resulted in dismissal within three days of submitting the government's response.
- Navigated Africa Command through the reinstatement of a vital fuel contract that had been improperly terminated and saved the federal government more than \$1.5M.
- Saved the federal government more than \$6M and assisted the command in procuring facilities critical to retrograde operations.
- Served as the sole Contracts & Fiscal Law legal advisor for Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa. Reviewed 130 projects valued at more than \$32.3M that increased force protection and allowed for mission expansion in Somalia.
- Acted as lead counsel for 235 joint acquisitions professionals enabling the execution of a multi-billion dollar contracting mission for U.S. and coalition partners resulting in the expeditious procurement of surveillance systems vital for the 2014 Afghanistan Presidential election. Saved the Government over \$6M and assisted the command in procuring facilities critical to retrograde operations.
- Primary legal advisor on cross-functional team composed of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Army Criminal Investigative Division, DOD Inspector General, and the FBI, that identified fraudulent contractors performing substandard, unlicensed electrical work on military housing units in Afghanistan.
- Prosecuted more than 50 felony cases that resulted in convictions for rape, aggravated assault, the possession, use, and distribution of illegal drugs, absence without leave, and larceny.
- Served as the lead undercover officer in over 400 narcotics investigations that resulted in hundreds of felony convictions stemming from plea agreements.

PUBLICATIONS

"A Defense Contractor's Guide to CMMC, DFARS, and FAR Requirements," *CyberNINES*, June 3, 2025

"Under Attack—An Examination of the False Claims Act's Whistleblower Provisions," *American Bar Association, The Procurement Lawyer*, March

6, 2025

"All in a Fiscal Year's Work – GAO's 2024 Annual Report," *Government Contracts Update*, November 26, 2024

"Key Compliance Takeaways for Companies from the DOJ's New Corporate Whistleblower Program," *Department of Justice Update*, August 20, 2024

"How Fiscal Law Principles Shape US Government Spending," *The Procurement Lawyer*, March 4, 2024

"Eliminating Corruption? How the FCPA and Corporate Compliance Programs Fail to Deter Greed Amongst the Most Challenging Offenders," *11 Wake Forest J.L. & Pol'y* 625, 2020-2021

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"BCABA Annual Program Panel," *Board of Contract Appeals Bar Association*, March 4, 2025

RECOGNITION

- Department of the Air Force, Acquisitions, Fiscal Law & Litigation Directorate, Andrews AFB, Maryland, Field Grade Officer of the Year, 2021
- Department of the Air Force, Acquisitions, Fiscal Law & Litigation Directorate, Andrews AFB, Maryland, Field Grade Officer of the 4th Quarter, 2021
- Air Force Test Center, Edwards AFB, California, Albert M. Kuhfeld Award (Outstanding Young Judge Advocate), 2019
- 412th Test Wing, Wing Staff Agencies, Edwards AFB, California, Field Grade Officer of the Year, 2019

PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

- American Bar Association, Public Contract Law Section
 - Commercial Products and Services Committee, Vice-Chair, 2022; Co-Chair, 2023 - Present
 - Procurement Fraud and False Claims Committee, Vice-Chair, 2024, 2025 - 2026
 - Annual Conferences, Co-Chair, Fall Forum, 2025 - 2026
 - Battle Space and Contingency Procurement Committee, Vice-Chair, 2022 - 2025
 - Diversity Committee, Vice-Chair, 2024-2025
- National Contract Management Association, Member
- Highland High School Mock Trial Team, Volunteer Attorney Coach, 2018 - Present
- Autism Society of America, Board Member, 2023 - Present