

Fueling Energy's Success

A meet and greet with Francine Hughes-Charter

What is your job title?

Executive Secretary to the Commander

How long have you worked at DLA Energy and how long have you worked for the federal government?

I worked for DLA for four years and have worked for DLA Energy 28 years.

Please describe your job.

I serve as the personal and confidential assistant to the DLA Energy commander. I ensure that the practice and procedures used by subordinate business units and offices are consistent with those of the commander's office. On my own initiative, I advise and recommend changes in administrative procedures and office policies to ensure their applicability to the changing needs or changes in administrative regulations. I respond to inquiries and administrative problems brought to the commander by members of the staff and field commanders, other federal agencies and congressional staff. I notify appropriate staff officials of the need for information or recommendations and follow up to ensure timely response by members of the staff. I coordinate as necessary with other organizational elements, assign work, outlining any special requirements and procedures and assure completion of assignments

in a timely manner. I provide administrative training as needed. I receive visitors and telephone calls from high-ranking military and civilian officials of the federal government, non-DoD agencies, staff members and field commanders. That is just a small portion of my overall job and responsibilities.

What made you come to work for DLA Energy?

I knew I wanted to be a secretary in the federal government since junior high school and DLA happened to be close to where I lived at the time. I loved it so much, I never left.

What are some rewards from your job and working at DLA Energy?

Some of the extraordinary people I have met and relationships I have built during my career.

How have you evolved since being part of the DLA Energy team?

I started with DLA/DLA Energy as a GS-1 in 1983 making \$4.17 an hour using a typewriter to prepare all correspondence to include forms. Computers were not even in existence during this time. The technology world has changed tremendously since I started with DLA many years ago. I don't believe GS-1 positions even exist anymore.



Francine Hughes-Charter, the DLA Energy commander's executive secretary, answers the telephone in the command suite. Receiving telephone calls from high-ranking military and civilian officials is just one of her many responsibilities. Photo by Tanekwa Bournes

What's a project or duty you are especially proud of?

Upon the arrival of our current commander, I was tasked to come up with an electronic correspondence system that would route documents from the business units, regions, and staff offices to the command suite for coordination, approval or signature by the commander, deputy commander and chief of staff. This system is currently up and running and we at DLA Energy have gone paperless. In addition, the commander receives all read ahead material for meetings and briefings electronically.

What's a skill you've developed that you think is essential to your success?

How to adapt to different personalities and management styles in such a constantly changing environment. This is very essential in a position like mine in order to succeed and remain in the same position for so many years. Everyone is not built to take on this type of responsibility. It can be a bit overwhelming at times but I truly love what I do.

How do you define success?

Success to me is when you can look back over 32 years and have no regrets about the path you took in your career.

Tell us something that might surprise us about you.

When I started my career with the government as a clerk typist many years ago, my thought was to someday become the secretary to the commander/director for DLA Energy. I am currently in the position, and the first African American female to have held the position.

Anything you'd like to add?

My observation...when bringing in new employees, often times the procedures for having the tools needed is a process. Please remember that these individuals require the tools, resources, and training to be successful in their jobs. Often times they are expected to hit the ground running without any direction, guidance and/or grooming for the job. **ES**