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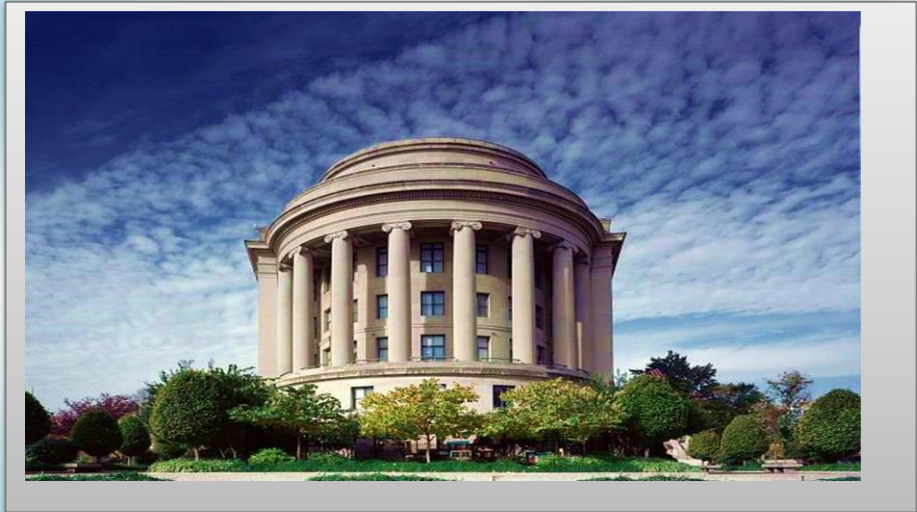
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Domain Expertise

GSA facilities contract first awarded best-in-class status

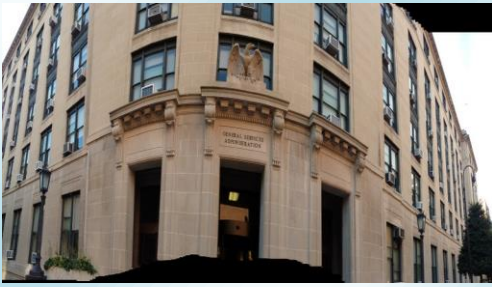
General Services Administration’s building maintenance and operations (BMO) contract has been given a best-in-class designation under new Office of Management and Budget guidance.

BMO is the first governmentwide strategic sourcing vehicle to be awarded this contracting and acquisition designation, according to [a Sept. 14 blog post](#) by Mary Ruwwe, a regional commissioner and category manager of buildings and maintenance contract.

BMO received its best-in-class denotation by meeting OMB category management performance criteria based around an approach to optimizing high-value acquisition tools through identifying core areas of spending; collectively developing heightened levels of expertise; leveraging shared best practices for requirements and review processes; and providing data-driven pricing, demand and performance management strategies.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

Alliant 2 continue bid protest evolution

Just over a month after GSA [faced](#) its first bid protest over Alliant 2 by Enterprise Information Services, a second vendor submitted a protest to GAO.

Evolver Inc. of Reston, Virginia is asking GAO to review whether GSA can rightfully require vendors to meet specific requirements for back-end accounting and purchasing systems, according to a source familiar with the protest.

The source said GSA's requirements are unduly restrictive because some small and medium-sized companies cannot get the government's approval for these back-office systems, and there are no substitutes.

Since this is a pre-award protest, GSA can continue to accept and review bids on the solicitation, but cannot make an award until the protest is decided.

GAO has until Dec. 23 to decide this case.

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IG: GSA's Schedules Program Pricing Issues Cost Taxpayers

A GSA Inspector General audit released this week suggests outdated or inaccurate pricing information provided by contractors regarding products and services on the GSA Schedules Program may cost taxpayers as much as \$405 million per year.

The audit is the fourth in a series of IG reports highlighting issues in GSA's Schedules Program, under which the Federal Acquisition Service has established numerous governmentwide contracting vehicles for commercial goods and services.

Agencies use the Schedules Program to purchase everything from pens and paper to complex cybersecurity services at a clip of about \$32 billion in sales in fiscal 2014.

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Veterans Affairs Contracting

A GAO [Report](#) issued September 20, 2016 found opportunities for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its multi-billion dollar annual procurement spending in several areas including data systems, procurement policies and oversight, acquisition workforce, and contract management.

Shortcomings in VA's recording of procurement data limit its visibility into the full extent of its spending. A recent policy directing that medical-surgical supply orders be captured in VA's procurement system is a step in the right direction, but proper implementation is at risk because procedures are not in place to ensure all obligations are recorded.

VA's procurement policy framework is outdated and fragmented. As a result, contracting officers are unclear where to turn for current guidance. VA has been revising its overarching procurement regulation since 2011 but completion is not expected until 2018.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

GAO Previews New Electronic Protest Docketing System (EPDS)

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is establishing a new system for filing bid protests – the Electronic Protest Docketing System (EPDS). GAO promises that the new system will be both “secure” and “easy-to-use.”

This week, GAO rolled out a [new set of instructions](#) that offers greater insight into the new e-filing process.

The instructions include definitions of key terms, details on eligibility for bid protest filers, and some logistical information on how protests will be filed and processed under the new EPDS system.

GAO still has not provided a firm date from when EPDS will go live. When a start date is set, will the change to EPDS be earth-shattering? No. GAO bid protests will still be subject to the same rules concerning [content](#), [standing](#), and [timeliness](#) (among other things).

[Read More](#)

Federal Agencies Once Again Prepare For A Possible Government Shutdown

The Office of Management and Budget is working with federal agencies to plan for a possible government shutdown if Congress fails to pass a stop-gap spending bill by Friday.

OMB “strongly believes that a lapse in appropriations should not occur,” an agency spokesperson said on Monday, and that there is enough time for Congress to pass a clean continuing resolution this week. “However, at this time, prudent management requires that the government plan for the possibility of a lapse and OMB is working with agencies to take appropriate action,” said the spokesperson over email. “It is our hope that this work will ultimately be unnecessary and that there will be no lapse in appropriations.”

OMB held a planning call on Sept. 23 with agencies, which [OMB Circular No. A-11](#) requires regardless, one week before agency spending runs out. “One week prior to the expiration of appropriations bills, regardless of whether the enactment of appropriations appears imminent, OMB will convene a meeting or teleconference with agency senior officials to remind agencies of their responsibilities to review and update orderly shutdown plans,” said the circular. “OMB will hold follow-up meetings or teleconferences on a periodic basis until such time as appropriations are enacted or a lapse in appropriations has occurred.”

Congress has managed to avoid a government shutdown for the last few years [after coming to the brink several times](#). The government last closed because of a lapse in appropriations for 16 days in 2013. Toward the end of 2015, [several agencies updated their shutdown plans from 2013](#), including decreasing the number of employees they would furlough during a shutdown.

Click [here](#) for latest Office of Personnel Management guidance on shutdown furloughs.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

Defense R&D takes a turn toward smaller vendors

As overall Pentagon R&D spending has declined over the past decade, more research contracts are going to smaller vendors at the expense of the so-called "Big Five" military contractors, according to a budget analysis released this week.

An assessment by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) of the defense industrial base found that Defense Department research spending has been declining steadily as a percentage of federal R&D contracts since its peak in fiscal 2009. Over that period, military R&D contract obligations declined from nearly half the U.S. research budget in 2009 to just 22.4 percent of last year's \$49.3 billion federal R&D budget.

With less metal to bend, CSIS estimates that the share of military R&D contracts awarded to small vendors rose from 10 percent in 2009 to 17 percent in 2015. The same trend was found in contract awards by the three military services. "DoD R&D contract obligations to small vendors have declined far less steeply than DoD R&D overall," the spending analysis noted. "Small vendors have managed to largely hold their ground, even as the bigger players were facing sharp declines."

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House Clears Bill to Strengthen Program Management

A [Senate-passed bill](#) to bring private-sector performance standards to federal program management cleared the House on Thursday by voice vote.

The Program Management Improvement and Accountability Act ([S. 1550](#)), [introduced by Sens. Joni Ernst](#), R-Iowa, and Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., and shepherded through the House by Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, would create new agency specialists in the discipline of program management; require the deputy director for management at the Office of Management and Budget to create a Program Management Policy Council; and direct agencies to appoint program management improvement officers.

The bill, which returns to the Senate for what is expected to be fine-tuning, is built around private-sector efficiency practices. It would create a formal federal job series and career path for program managers, spur development of a standards-based program management policy governmentwide, and highlight the key role of executive sponsorship by having each agency designate an official to be in charge and share best practices through the new interagency body.

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Address Change Modifications

TGG wants to share with you a change in practice when an address change occurs. It is no longer necessary for a Rapid Action Modification (RAM) to be submitted through the eMod system. Once your SAM record is updated and the eLibrary information is changed as a result, the eMod System will initiate a change of Address Mod. Please download this Mod and keep along with all other contract documents.

If you have any question about this or any other modification, please contact your TGG Consultant



Federal Marketplace Matters

MAS Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs)

Regarding client requests the following information may be of help to you in your discussions with your federal customers when it is time to think about minimizing the possibility of disruption of performance during future unknown GSA MAS Program Contract migrations:

1. Consider a form of “off ramp” and “on ramp” of contract numbers when a BPA is affected
2. Note: The “on ramp” (new contract) terms and conditions (for the purposes of the BPA transition) need to be the same as the original “off ramp” BPA contract terms and conditions
3. The BPA “off ramp” originally agreed upon period of performance should remain the same when item 1 occurs.

This approach is intended to provide you with a “suggested” idea to discuss with your federal customers regarding GSA BPA Schedule migrations and the possibility of an early ending of the 20year contract period (at the request of GSA/VA) and the award of a new contract period.

Contact your **TGG Consultant** about your MAS BPA transition questions.

Educational

GSA's Acquisition Gateway hits 10,000 users

The General Services Administration surpassed 10,000 users Wednesday on its online Acquisition Gateway — achieving a goal officials had set for the year's end.

The gateway — an online repository and portal for federal personnel to explore existing acquisition information and solutions, collaborate on best practices, and make more effective and efficient buying decisions in a centralized manner — had about 5,000 users in January when GSA publicly launched the website and announced its goal. Those initial users registered on the site during its 15-month soft launch period, which began in October 2014.

"The road to 10,000 started just three short years ago when we surveyed federal procurement professionals to discover how we might improve their acquisition efforts," Tom Sharpe, commissioner of GSA's Federal Acquisition Service, wrote in [a blog post](#). "What we found was that the need to for a single destination that had all the tools and resources required for a successful acquisition within a product or service category, like IT or professional services."

Rooted in the acquisition philosophy of category management, the gateway is divided into major hallways, or groups of related products and services. The initial 2014 launch started with just three hallways — IT hardware, IT software and administrative services — but the site has since grown to 19 such groupings across 10 common federal-wide categories.

Sharpe added: "the Acquisition Gateway has matured into a tool that assists acquisition professionals by giving them what they need to buy smarter and faster. Today, we are focused on superior navigation and procurement decision-support data and tools while governmentwide category teams curate unbiased, expert content for each of the hallways."

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Upcoming Events

October 6, 2016 from 2:00-3:00 PM.
GSA [Schedule 70 Virtual Quarterly Meeting](#).

[Register](#)

Watch out for GSA Events:

MARCH 7-8, 2017 IFMIPS (51V, 03FAC) Industry Day Event

May 2017 the GSA Federal Acquisition Training Symposium penciled in for in Huntsville, Alabama, and

June 2017 the Professional Services Industry Day in Tacoma, Washington.



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Compliance

Hewlett-Packard settles hiring discrimination case;

US Labor Department finds federal contractor denied opportunity to minority candidates

CONWAY, Ark. – Landing a job that pays an average of \$50,000 a year with a household name in the information technology industry is something to make any worker proud. It was an opportunity denied allegedly to more than 500 job applicants at the Hewlett-Packard Co. in Conway, as the company failed to provide equal opportunity for workers of all races and ethnicities to compete for well-paid professional positions.

The U.S. Department of Labor's **Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs** announced today that HP has agreed to pay \$750,000 in back wages and interest to settle allegations of hiring discrimination. The action affects 504 qualified applicants – including 349 African Americans, one American Indian/Alaskan Native, 109 Asians, 44 Hispanics and one Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – who the company rejected for Inside Sales Representative positions at its Conway location. **Executive Order 11246** prohibits federal contractors such as HP from discriminating in employment based on race or national origin.

“This settlement reflects a mutual commitment between the U.S. Labor Department and Hewlett-Packard to ensure that all workers have a fair shot at competing for good jobs,” said **OFCCP Director Patricia Shiu**. “Where hiring practices are barriers to equal opportunity, federal contractors have an obligation to break down those barriers and reform the process.”

After an investigation that included rigorous statistical analysis, employee and applicant interviews, and a review of information supplied by the company, OFCCP concluded that HP discriminated against qualified minorities who applied for inside sales representative positions between December 2008 and August 2010.

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