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CONTACT

The Gormley Group  
 1990 M Street, NW  
 Suite 480  
 Washington, DC 20036  
[www.gormgroup.com](http://www.gormgroup.com)  
[info@gormgroup.com](mailto:info@gormgroup.com)



Domain Expertise

**GSA Unveils iBook Version of Federal Acquisition Regulation**

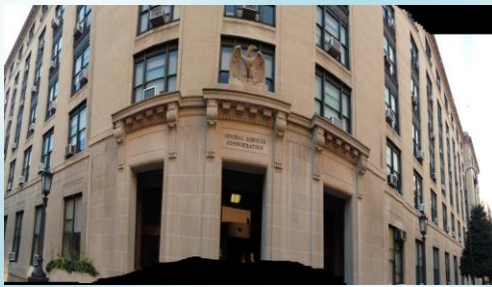
GSA has released an iBook version of the *Federal Acquisition Regulation* to offer contracting officers, contractors and business owners information on the federal government’s purchasing process.

Jeff Koses, senior procurement executive at GSA’s Office of Government-wide Policy, wrote in a blogpost [published Tuesday](#) “We’ve had multiple requests for a downloadable version of the FAR because contracting exists regardless of whether there’s a strong wifi signal where you are,” said Dan Briest, program manager of Acquisition.gov for GSA.

GSA is also looking to release an iBook copy of the *Federal Management Regulation* and *Federal Travel Regulation* as well as a downloadable FAR document on the Kindle and Google Play stores.

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## Federal Marketplace Matters

### GSA launching interagency community on artificial intelligence

"The difficulty is how do you take that data and make it A) digestible and B) actionable in a way, or even to be able to spot trends before they happen," said Justin Herman, SocialGov community leader at the General Services Administration. "This isn't just like an outreach thing, this isn't just a chatbot thing, this is being able to look at where to provide lifesaving food, water, shelter into areas."

That struggle was one of a growing list of instances for GSA, highlighting the need to be able to collect, translate and use massive amounts of data for citizen services, and one of GSA's solutions to that is in next week's launch of an interagency AI for citizen services community.

Herman said the hope for the interagency community is to provide opportunities for agencies to learn more and work better with other agencies that have expertise in the realm of AI, as well as with the private sector companies," who are going to likely be developing the cognition as a service tools that agencies will probably be purchasing in order to cover these services."

[Read More](#)

### GSA revamps IT contract matching tool

The General Service Administration recently gave a major facelift to one of its most popular tools that helps match customers with IT acquisition vehicles that best fit their needs.

GSA launched a revamped IT Solutions Navigator that not only looks a lot nicer but also makes it easier for acquisition professionals to choose from the agency's expanse of IT acquisition offerings, Mary Davie, assistant commissioner of GSA's Office of Integrated Technology Services, announced in a blog post Wednesday.

"We just made it a whole lot easier for agencies to select the best acquisition solution to meet their unique requirements from GSA's broad array of IT offerings," Davie wrote. GSA's array of IT offerings can otherwise be a bit overwhelming to the unfamiliar.

In addition to simplifying the user experience of navigating and selecting solutions on the enhanced tool — to which many current users gave thumbs up during a summer usability testing session — GSA also optimized search results, increased best option identification via the National Customer Support Center Live Chat and made it more mobile-friendly.

Essentially, the tool in its latest form — it was originally launched in 2013 — walks a potential IT buyer through the step-by-step process of narrowing in on a GSA IT contract that best fits their needs in an acquisition.

"The IT Solutions Navigator solves an immediate need for an automated decision support tool to help agencies narrow down the choices of acquisition solutions available through GSA IT contracts based on their own unique criteria," Davie wrote.

[Source](#)







## Federal Marketplace Matters

### GAO Decision Illustrates Breadth of Agency Discretion in Past Performance Evaluations

In the recent bid protest decision of [Halbert Construction Company Inc.](#), the Government Accountability Office (GAO) illustrated the breadth of a procuring agency's discretion in conducting a past performance evaluation. Halbert Construction brought the protest after being excluded from the competitive range, arguing primarily that the Navy unreasonably included a non-relevant prior project in the past performance evaluation which led to Halbert Construction's exclusion. The GAO sustained the protest based on the well-established principle that offerors must be treated equally because the Navy excluded another offeror's past performance reference from the evaluation as not relevant under the solicitation's relevancy criteria but then failed to do the same for the protestor.

[Read More](#)



### DOD Looks to Amend Regulation Regarding Small Business Subcontracting

DoD is proposing to revise the DFARS to implement section 821 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and section 872 of the NDAA for FY 2016, both of which revise the Test Program for Negotiation of Comprehensive Small Business Subcontracting Plans.

Section 821 of the NDAA for FY 2015 provides for contractors participating in the Test Program to report, on a semiannual basis,

- the amount of first-tier subcontract dollars awarded;
- the total number of subcontracts active under the Test Program that would have otherwise required a subcontracting plan under 15 U.S.C. 637(d);
- costs incurred in negotiating, complying with, and reporting on comprehensive subcontracting plans; and
- costs avoided by adoption of a comprehensive subcontracting plan.

This information is expected to assist in determining if Test Program participants have achieved cost savings while enhancing opportunities for small businesses.

The full text of the proposed changes is available in the [Federal Register](#). If you have further questions, please reach out to [DoD Office of Small Business Programs](#).

[Read More](#)



### GSA unveils OASIS Small Business Pool 2 presolicitation

The agency opened a presolicitation for its One Acquisition Solution for Integrated Services Small Business Pool 2 vehicle on [Oct. 3 on FedBizOpps](#), offering 31 contractors the chance to bid before January 2017.

The multiple award, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract solicitation covers offices of certified public accountants, tax preparation services, payroll services, other accounting services and research and development in the social sciences and humanities.

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## Federal Marketplace Matters

### Army wraps up major IT upgrades at 21 bases; 44 more planned in 2017

After more than a decade of relative neglect, the Army says it's picking up the pace to modernize the IT infrastructure on its installations: 21 bases received major upgrades in fiscal 2016, and another 44 are planned in the coming year.

Among the features: dramatic expansions of the bandwidth that connects each base to the broader DoD Information Network, built on multi-protocol label switching (MPLS) technology, upgraded routers and switches throughout a given base, and a collapsing of security architectures to bring them behind the [Joint Regional Security Stacks](#) (JRSS) the Defense Information Systems Agency is building for all of the military services.

The JRSS effort will eventually consolidate about 125 separate points of Army cyber defense into 25 shared, regional centers to protect both classified and unclassified networks, said Maj. Gen. John Baker, the commander of the Army Network Enterprise Technology Command (NETCOM).

[Read More](#)

### Contract Consolidation Effort Saves \$2 Billion and Counting

Two years after the Office of Federal Procurement Policy embraced the consolidation-of-contracts strategy known as [category management](#), the White House on Friday announced that the effort to “transform the federal marketplace” has delivered \$2 billion in savings.

Chief Acquisition Officer Anne Rung, in a [blog post](#), said the Obama administration’s effort to modernize government and incorporate private-sector best practices through bulk purchasing is “on track” to save \$3.5 billion by the end of next year. “We’ve seen prices drop by as much as 50 percent of personal computers since the release of the workstation policy,” Rung said. “By the end of 2016, 45 percent of the \$1.1 billion spent in annual purchases for desktops and laptops will be consolidated into three governmentwide contracts.”

Small business goals were exceeded, Rung said, and 700 duplicative contracts were eliminated.

More than 10,000 agency acquisition professionals, she added, are now using the General Services Administration’s online [acquisition gateway portal](#), as planned. In addition, the administration has “graduated our first class of Digital IT acquisition specialists, agency contracting officers who are trained in agile approaches to purchasing IT,” she wrote. “And we’ve created the first-of-its-kind management structure of category leaders focused exclusively on promoting agile and other inventive practices to buying across government.”

Sometime this week, according to Friday’s announcement, Rung’s office will release a draft Category Management Circular for comment that will “further institutionalize category management” so the federal government can “buy as one” beyond the Obama years.

The new government structure to implement category management and improve procurement transparency includes 10 specialized category managers and 350 support staff.

[Read More](#)





## Federal Marketplace Matters

### GSA's 18F executive director moving on

The head of the General Services Administration 18F organization, Aaron Snow, is stepping down.

Snow, however, is not leaving government immediately. GSA Administrator Denise Turner Roth said in a note to staff obtained by Federal News Radio that Snow will move into an advisory role to the incoming commissioner of the Technology Transformation Service (TTS).

Roth said Snow's last day as executive director of 18F will be Oct. 13.

Dave Zvenyach, the acquisition management director at 18F, will take over as the head of the organization on an interim basis.

"When it comes to 18F, perhaps no one has been more instrumental in establishing this organization than Aaron Snow," Turner Roth said in the email to staff. "One of the first Presidential Innovation Fellows, Aaron was one of the key contributors in building on this successful program to create 18F, and has served as its executive director for the past year."

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## Educational

### SAM Profile Mistake Leads to Possible Lost Contract

Small business owners have lots of items on their to-do lists. In addition to *actually running the business*, there are many administrative tasks required to make sure that you meet the applicable small business size standards and [maintain those standards year-after-year](#) (in order to avoid, or at least minimize, vulnerability to an SBA size protest).

Among the (sometimes admittedly) tedious tasks associated with remaining eligible for small business contract awards is registering in the required government databases. Over the past five years, this process has been considerably streamlined by the rollout of the System for Award Management ([www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov)). SAM is a no-cost, government website where contractors must register and provide certain identifying information about their business.

One of the areas covered by a SAM profile is a business's size – and specifically whether it qualifies as "small" under the applicable size standards.

The importance of paying proper attention to your SAM profile was highlighted in a recent [SBA size protest](#) concerning a small business set-aside contract for the lease of two bucket trucks at Marine Base Camp Lejune, North Carolina.

In the protest, a disappointed offeror argued that the awardee did not meet the size qualifications required by the contract. Although the SBA's Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) found that the protest lacked real specificity (and therefore was subject to being dismissed) – it nevertheless sustained the protest.

Why did a protest lacking in specifics get OHA's attention? It pointed out that the awardee's SAM profile *itself* stated that the contractor is not "small" under the contract size standard. That fact alone was enough for OHA to send the protest back to the SBA area office for further review.

This story should serve as a helpful reminder that even basic information should be reviewed periodically. The attention to detail will pay off with less headaches in the long run.

[Source](#)



## Upcoming Events

**CGP Fall Training Conference – November 17<sup>th</sup>.** The Westin Tysons Corner [Register](#)

**April 13 2017 B2G Conference & Expo**  
Joint Base Langley / Eustice [More Info](#)

### Watch out for GSA Events in 2017:

**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.



CONTACT

The Gormley Group  
1990 M Street, NW  
Suite 480  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.gormgroup.com](http://www.gormgroup.com)  
[info@gormgroup.com](mailto:info@gormgroup.com)

## Compliance

### North Carolina Couple Sentenced For Government Contract Fraud

GREENEVILLE, Tenn. – On Oct. 3, 2016, Ricky Anthony Lanier, 49, and his wife Katrina Reshina Lanier, 43, both of LaGrange, N.C., were sentenced to serve federal prison terms of 48 months and 30 months, respectively, for conspiracy to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and major fraud against the United States. The couple were found guilty of these offenses on Dec. 17, 2015, following a 13-day jury trial in U.S. District Court.

According to evidence presented at trial, the Laniers conspired from November 2005 to April 2013 to defraud the United States government through a scheme to fraudulently obtain federal contracts intended to be awarded to businesses lawfully participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) program and the Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development program. They falsely represented that JMR Investments was eligible as an 8(a) business and Kylee Construction was eligible as an SDVOSB and an 8(a) business.

Ricky Lanier, who had previously owned and operated an 8(a) business receiving government contracts, became ineligible to participate in the 8(a) program after that business graduated from that program in 2008. Lanier used a friend and service-disabled veteran as the purported owner of Kylee Construction, representing that the friend was involved in the daily management of the business, even while the friend was working for a government contractor in Afghanistan. The Laniers used a business owned by Ricky Lanier's college roommate, JMR Investments, as a front to obtain construction contracts from the National Park Service and other federal agencies under the 8(a) program, misrepresenting the friend's involvement in the management and operation of the business. The scheme also involved sub-contracting out all or almost all of the work on the contracts in violation of program requirements.

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