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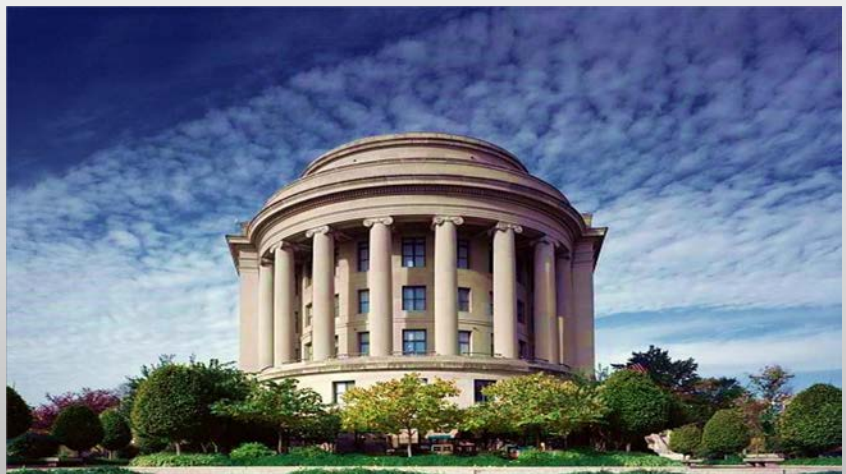
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Domain Expertise

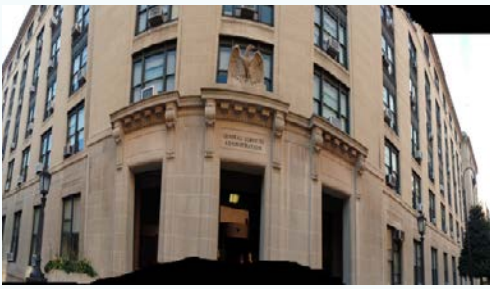
Feedback Requested: for new Health IT Categories / Offerings on one of GSA's eTools

Last Thursday, the General Services Administration (GSA) issued a [request for feedback](#) on GSA Interact regarding the addition of Health IT opportunities to the [IT Solutions Navigator](#) (ITSN), a GSA e-tool which captures customers' requirements to provide the best-fitting contract vehicle and appropriate point of contact. In order to map Health IT to the ITSN, GSA has developed a hierarchy of categories for Health IT, and the agency is seeking industry's feedback on how this hierarchy could be optimized.

GSA [announced](#) that they were adding the Health IT Special Item Number (SIN) to Schedule 70 in July. There have been no sales under the SIN in Fiscal Year 2016.

[Read More](#)





Federal Marketplace Matters

DOD opts not to rush new R&D rules

Contractors may get a little extra time before the Department of Defense steps in for a closer look at their government funded, independent, technology research and development projects, according to a top DOD tech official.

The Pentagon rolled out [Independent Research and Development requirements](#) in April 2015 as a way to get an earlier look at developing technologies. The rules were part of the DOD's [Better Buying Power 3.0](#) acquisition reform.

DOD contractors criticized the rules for potentially delving too deeply into their R&D efforts.

According to a [2015 Pentagon white paper](#), "the objective of this engagement is to ensure that both IR&D performers and their potential DOD customers have sufficient awareness of each other's efforts and to provide industry with some feedback on the relevance of proposed and completed IR&D work."

The rules were supposed to take effect Oct. 1.

[Read More](#)

GSA Announces Cost-Saving Shared Services Vision

On December 7, 2016 the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced an innovative new vision for administrative mission support services that eliminates redundancy, reduces risk, and leverages government's buying power to deliver administrative services that create a more effective government.

The GSA office of Unified Shared Services Management (USSM) has worked with the Shared Service Governance Board, providers, and customers to craft a 10-year vision for service delivery of administrative functions that moves government towards realizing the full benefits of shared services by:

- Driving the federal enterprise to standard business requirements. Common agreement on business processes and business capabilities will enable true standardization of technology, will limit costly customizations, and will allow the government to realize the benefits of economies of scale.
- Enabling subscription technology services, such as Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) that act as a utility; the government will pay only for what it uses and reduce costs from lengthy IT implementations and periodic upgrades and patches.
- Creating a balanced marketplace of federal and commercial providers that includes both transaction processing services and technology services.
- Leveraging economies of skill, or the expertise of people in much-needed HR, accounting, and acquisition roles, so that agencies can more strategically use the resources they have to be analytical and add more value back to mission.
- Enabling the exploration of new funding models to change how investments are made and migrations are funded through harnessing the capital and innovation of the private sector.

[Source](#)





Federal Marketplace Matters

CBO: House's Government IT Modernization Bill to Cost \$9B from 2017 to 2021

The Congressional Budget Office has said a House bill that would set up new budget accounts to fund updates to federal information technology systems would cost \$9 billion to implement over five years, a figure that is subject to appropriation.

CBO said in a report published Thursday the enactment of the Modernizing Government Technology Act would result in a \$3 billion increase in direct spending from 2017 through 2019 since the bill would authorize "agencies to spend previously appropriated funds that would otherwise lapse."

According to the report, the MGT Act's budget accounts include a government-wide fund to modernize government IT platforms and a working capital fund intended for the replacement of older IT systems at each agency.

[Read More](#)

2017 NDAA Restricts DoD's Use of LPTA Procedures

The 2017 NDAA is full of important changes that will affect federal contracting going forward. As Steve wrote about earlier this week, some of these changes relate to government contracting programs (like the SDVOSB program). Still others relate to how the government actually procures goods and services.

One of these important changes severely limits the use of lowest-price technically-acceptable ("LPTA") evaluations in Department of Defense procurements. Following the change, "best value" tradeoffs will be prioritized for DoD acquisitions. This post will briefly examine when LPTA procurements will and won't be allowed under the 2017 NDAA.

The 2017 NDAA sets a new DoD policy: to avoid using LPTA evaluations when doing so would deny DoD with the benefits of cost and technical tradeoffs. As a result, the 2017 NDAA limits the use of LPTA procurements to instances when the following six conditions are met:

- 1) DoD is able to comprehensively and clearly describe the minimum requirements expressed in terms of performance objectives, measures, and standards that will be used to determine the acceptability of offers;
- 2) DoD would recognize no (or only minimal) value from a proposal that exceeded the minimum technical or performance requirements set forth in the solicitation;
- 3) The proposed technical approaches will not require any (or much) subjective judgment by the source selection authority as to their respective desirability versus competitors;
- 4) The source selection authority is confident that reviewing the bids from the non-lowest price offeror(s) would not result in the identification of factors that could provide value or benefit to the Government;
- 5) The Contracting Officer includes written justification for use of the LPTA scheme in the contract file;
- 6) and DoD determines that the lowest price reflects full life-cycle costs, including costs for maintenance and support.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

NIST Report Recommends Approaches to Reduce Software Vulnerabilities

The National Institute of Standards and Technology has published a new report that includes strategies to reduce bugs in software.

NIST said Monday the 60-page *Dramatically Reducing Software Vulnerabilities* report includes input from software experts in the computer industry and government entities such as the Defense Department and NASA.

Paul Black, an NIST computer scientist, said the report is a response to a request for methods from the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy and is designed to help organizations write low-defect computer code.

[Read More](#)



Federal Acquisition Regulation: Set-Asides Under Multiple-Award Contracts

On December 6, the FAR Council published a [proposed rule](#) that would implement regulatory changes made by the Small Business Administration (SBA). These changes would provide Government-wide policy for partial set-asides and reserves, and setting aside orders for small business concerns under multiple-award contracts.

Pursuant to the rule, small businesses would no longer be required to submit an offer on the non-set-aside portion of a solicitation to be eligible for consideration on the set-aside portion. In addition, it would create substantial coverage for "reserves," a new concept that allows agencies to ensure small business participation at the prime contract level when a total or partial set-aside of the work required is not feasible.

Comments on the proposed rule are due by February 6, 2017.

[View Proposed Rule](#)



GSA governmentwide Adobe contract could save \$350M

The General Services Administration has inked a governmentwide deal for Adobe's "data-centric" security and electronic signature software.

The deal comes from a modification to software reseller Carahsoft's Adobe IT Schedule 70 contract to streamline acquisition and reduce duplication, GSA said in a release. The contract is the latest GSA has signed with a software vendor adhering to the strategic IT purchasing principles of category management and the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act, which call for federal agencies to buy from governmentwide software contracts when possible. GSA believes that the contract, which leverages the collective buying power of the federal government, could save American taxpayers \$350 million through tiered discounts to agencies and reduced administrative acquisition costs.

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Federal Marketplace Matters

Shutdown averted, Senate backs stop-gap spending bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — With less than hour to spare, the Senate late Friday backed legislation averting a government shutdown as coal-state Democrats retreated on long-term health care benefits for retired miners but promised a renewed fight for the working class next year.

The vote was 63-36 and sent the stop-gap spending bill to President Barack Obama, who signed the measure early Saturday morning. The Senate also passed and sent the president a \$10 billion water bill with money for the California drought. The vote was 78-21.

The votes came hours after Democrats dropped threats to block the spending measure in hopes of using the shutdown deadline to try to win a one-year respite for 16,500 miners facing the loss of health care benefits at year's end. Instead, the legislation provides benefits at a cost of \$45 million for four months.

[Source](#)

Educational

COFC: HUBZones Are Responsible for Tracking 35% Employee Residency Requirement

The Small Business Administration's HUB Zone program seeks to encourage development in *historically underutilized business* (or HUB) zones. Like the SBA's other socio-economic programs, HUBZone contractors are eligible for certain set-aside contracting opportunities, as well as participation in the SBA's new [All Small Mentor Protégé Program](#).

The HUBZone program is different from other SBA programs in that owning a HUBZone business depends less on *who* you are (unlike, for example, the SBA's [women-owned](#) or [service disabled veteran-owned](#) programs) and more on *where* your business and its employees live and work. For example (and among several other requirements), the SBA's HUBZone rules require that at least 35% of the business's employees must reside in a HUBZone approved area.

This 35% rule can be particularly problematic for HUBZone contractors. If a company is close to the line, something as simple as one employee moving (from a HUBZone address to a non-HUBZone address) can be enough to tip the scale away from compliance. **For that reason, we recommend that HUBZone contractors implement a vigorous compliance program that tracks employee residency – and emphasizes to employees the vital importance of keeping the company in the know.**

Moreover, a recent [Court of Federal Claims decision](#) highlights that HUBZone contractors must keep an eye not only on employee residences – but also the HUBZone map itself. Much like how voting districts can be redrawn, the SBA periodically publishes updated maps defining what areas are – or are not – included in a designated HUBZone. So, an employee that lived in a HUBZone five years ago might not live in one today – and the Court's decision makes clear that it is the business's responsibility to know that and adjust accordingly.

[Read More](#)



Upcoming Events

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.



April 13 2017 B2G Conference & Expo Joint Base Langley / Eustice

[More Info](#)



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Compliance

Holiday Celebrations and Government Ethics

TGG employees had their Annual Government Ethics training presented by Carolyn Alston who is very knowledgeable of the Office of Government Ethics policies and insight of how to avoid even the perception of wrong doing which TGG takes very seriously.

A reminder that in most cases, a federal employee cannot accept a gift from a contractor.

A gift is any item or service that has monetary value. A gift can include anything from meals to discounted concert tickets. Generally, a federal employee may not accept gifts that are given because of their official positions or that come from "prohibited sources". A "prohibited source" is a person (or an organization made up of such persons) that --

- seeks official action, is doing or seeking to do business with, or is regulated by a federal employee's agency, or
- has an interest that may be substantially affected by performance or nonperformance of the federal employee's official duties.

There are some exceptions to the ban on gifts from prohibited sources. For example, the following gifts are allowable:

- a gift valued at \$20 or less. However, be aware that the total value of gifts from a source cannot exceed \$50 in a calendar year. In this case "source" would include an entire company.
- a gift motivated solely by a family relationship or personal friendship
- a gift based on an employee's or his spouse's outside business or employment relationships, including a gift customarily provided by a prospective employer as part of bona fide employment discussions
- modest refreshments (such as coffee and donuts), greeting cards, plaques and other items of little intrinsic value

These exceptions are subject to some limitations on their use. For example, a federal employee can never solicit a gift. Additionally, a federal employee cannot accept gifts on such a frequent basis that a reasonable person would believe that the employee was using public office for private gain.

Particularly relevant to this season of holiday celebrations, GSA's legal counsel has advised that "Generally, contractor employees should not be invited to off-site events during working hours." You can read the complete guidance [here](#).

If you have any questions on these Ethics generally and in particular with regard to the Transition please don't hesitate to reach out to your TGG Consultant.

