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Domain Expertise

New SIN for Schedule 70 – Earth Observation Services?

During an NGA/GSA Industry Day, the National Geospatial Agency (NGA) will explain their Commercial Initiative to Buy Operationally Responsive GEOINT (CIBORG) and GSA will outline how they are supporting CIBORG.

NGA and GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) will host an Industry Day for all interested industry partners who offer commercial earth observation products and services.

Learn about NGA's Commercial Initiative to Buy Operationally Responsive GEOINT (CIBORG) program and how you can support this effort. GSA will explain new initiatives that make it easier for industry to do business with FAS' IT Schedule 70, how to obtain a Schedule 70 contract and how supporting this effort will benefit both government and industry.

The session will be held from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm Eastern Time. Registration begins at Noon. Seating is limited on a first come basis. The session will be held in GSA's Conference Center, Room 1460. This session will allow for virtual participation (receive only) for those parties that cannot attend in person.

[More Information](#)





Federal Marketplace Matters

NITAAC looks to fee caps, laptop refresh

The National Institutes of Health Information Technology Acquisition and Assessment Center, or NITAAC, is looking to make using its CIO-CS contracting vehicle more attractive for larger federal agencies on the market for cloud services, said the acting director of the center.

The almost-two-year-old CIO-CS "is a great vehicle for cloud solutions," said Bridget Gauer, NITAAC's acting program director in an interview with FCW.

The center [lowered the contract access fees](#) for its three governmentwide acquisition contracts by as much as 35 percent back on Jan. 5, aligning it with fees charged by other GWACs like NASA's SEWP V.

NITAAC's previous director, Rob Coen, said fees on the agency's CIO-SP3 GWAC had been reduced from 1 percent to .65 percent; CIO-SB3 Small Business vehicle fees were reduced from .75 percent to .55 percent, and fees on the CIO-CS were reduced from .5 to .35 percent. Coen moved on to GSA's Federal Systems Integration and Management Center at the end of August.

[Read More](#)



GSA Moves Closer to Ending Reliance on DUNS Numbers in Contracting

The General Services Administration on Wednesday solicited information from industry on planned reforms to the governmentwide system for identifying and validating businesses.

[Since the 1970s](#), agencies have relied on the proprietary Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System, or DUNS number, as the main tag for files on companies that bid for federal contracts.

Last September, GSA updated its Dun & Bradstreet contract to allow agency acquisition personnel and contractors wider latitude to use standardized company information for purposes beyond mere identification. In addition, both the Federal Acquisition Regulation and the regulations in Title Two of the Code of Federal Regulations have been revised to delete proprietary references to Dun & Bradstreet and DUNS.

This week's request for information noted that Dun & Bradstreet's contract to provide services to uniquely identify each commercial, nonprofit or government entity in contract relationships expires in 2018.

"This RFI represents a step forward in assessing entity validation services purchased by [GSA's Integrated Award Environment](#) on behalf of the entire government awards community," says Integrated Award Environment Deputy Assistant Commissioner Vicky Niblett. "We want to ensure integrity over the awards of taxpayer dollars as we proceed to the next steps. GSA remains committed to transparency within this process, and seeks to obtain maximum public input."

Following public comment (the period ends March 13), GSA expects to issue a request for proposals or solicitations.

[Read More](#)





Federal Marketplace Matters

OPM: Agencies can exempt applicants' criminal, financial background checks rule

New guidance from the Office of Personnel Management would allow agencies to exempt a rule prohibiting them from requesting an applicant's criminal or financial background until after a conditional job offer has been made.

The rule, "[Recruitment, Selection, and Placement \(General\)](#)" and "[Suitability](#)," is an Obama-era measure designed to open federal employment to applicants who have been shut out of the government due to prior incarcerations.

Under the rule, agencies can request an applicant's criminal or adverse credit history only after they make a conditional offer of employment.

Though the rule was finalized on Jan. 3, agencies have until March 31 to be in compliance with it, allowing a window of time for them to request the exemptions

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Legacy IT Systems Pose an Obstacle to Cybersecurity Best Practices, GAO Head Says

The preponderance of legacy systems in the Federal government poses a major obstacle to improved agency cybersecurity practices, according to Gene Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States and head of the Government Accountability Office.

"There's a lot of legacy systems, old systems where they just can't keep up with patching things," Dodaro said. "Despite the breaches that have occurred most recently, there's more attention being given to this area but not enough."

Dodaro testified Wednesday at a House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on the Government Accountability Office's [2017 High Risk Report](#), which included issues of both cybersecurity and IT modernization.

Rep. Robin Kelly, D-Ill., said that legislation such as the [Modernizing Government Technology Act](#) (MGT) offers the opportunity to acquire newer government systems with cybersecurity best practices already built in. The original sponsor of the bill, Rep. Will Hurd, R-Texas, told MeriTalk in January that he intends to [reintroduce](#) the bill in the current Congress.

In his opening statement, Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., wrote that initiatives to modernize government technology systems should be paid particular attention, adding that "we are entering a critical period in the long-running saga of Federal IT reform."

The executive branch has also recognized the important relationship between IT modernization and cybersecurity practices, with drafts of an anticipated [cybersecurity executive order](#) directing agency heads to plan for a major modernization effort as a part of improving the government's cybersecurity capabilities.

According to Dodaro, these cybersecurity issues have been in the GAO crosshairs for the past 20 years, as the 1997 GAO High Risk Report was the first to include recommendations for governmentwide information security practices.

[Read More](#)





Federal Marketplace Matters

An Old Contracting Approach Could Be Just What the New Administration Needs

The Trump administration should revisit an old, results-based approach to contracting currently prevalent in the private sector—share-in-savings, also known as gain share. Unlike other types of contracts that commit the government to funding a project upfront, a share-in-savings contract requires the government to make only a minimal, upfront investment to begin a project, paying the contractor only when agreed-upon milestones or expected results are realized.

Share-in-savings contracts begin with specific agreed-upon measures, measurement methods, targets, timing, and rewards earned from successful results. The contractor is paid if it meets or exceeds the agreed-upon targets in the specified time. Further, if savings against the established cost baseline are generated, both the government and the contractor share in the savings. This incentivizes the contractor to save the government money, and helps ensure that the government does not pay for work done poorly or not at all.

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Defense Industry Calls on the Pentagon to Withdraw Proposed Changes to IR&D Rules

In public comments submitted earlier this month, the defense industry and the public contract bar called upon the Department of Defense (DoD) to withdraw or significantly revise a [proposed rule](#) altering how independent research and development (IR&D) costs are treated. These public comments reflect the defense industry's growing [concern](#) that DoD is moving to constrain the industry's ability to utilize IR&D projects as a tool for furthering technical innovation.

The proposed DFARS rule change would require contracting officers managing procurements for major defense acquisition programs and major automated information systems in a development phase to adjust the total evaluated cost/price of a proposal to account for the contractor's proposed reliance on government-funded IR&D projects. The goal of the rule is to address the concern in the Better Buying Power 3.0 [Implementation Directive](#) that contractors may use IR&D such that "development price proposals are reduced by using a separate source of government funding (allowable IR&D overhead expenses spread across the total business) to gain a price advantage in a specific competitive bid."

Public comments were submitted by the American Bar Association Section of Public Contract Law (SPCL) and the Council of Defense and Space Industry Association (CODSIA), as well as several private law firms. These comments uniformly oppose the proposed rule, raising a range of concerns, such as the following:

- The proposed rule conflicts with the statutory framework governing IR&D, which encourages contractors to administer IR&D programs independently to encourage IR&D investment by contractors.
- The proposed rule disadvantages contractors undertaking research that is directly relevant and applicable to current government needs, and the proposed rule instead favors contractors that have not invested in innovation.

[Read More](#)



Federal Marketplace Matters

WOSBs Still Underrepresented On Government's Biggest Contracts –

The Small Business Administration's FY2015 report card shows that the Government exceeded its prime contracting goals across four of the five socioeconomic categories measured. Moreover, the amount of federal spend going to small businesses reached an all-time high of over 25%.

These numbers do not tell the whole story, however. The 5% goal for WOSBs has been in place since 1994, and since at least 2008, major campaigns have aimed to bridge the gap. In 2014, WOSBs became eligible for sole-source awards, an important means of gaining a foothold in the federal marketplace.

Nonetheless, FY2015 marks the first time ever that the 5% goal has been met.

While the milestone is certainly a victory, significant disparities remain. A January 2016 report by the Department of Commerce found that woman-owned firms are 21% less likely to win federal work than comparable businesses owned by men—even when controlling for potentially confounding variables such as business size, age, and past performance.

[Read More](#)

Educational

GSA Federal Acquisition Service to Host Acquisition Training Symposium

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) will hold their 2017 Acquisition Training Symposium on April 25-26 in Huntsville, Alabama. Hosted by GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), this two-day event is packed with acquisition and training sessions tailored specifically to meet the needs of federal, military and civilian personnel, as well as GSA's industry partners. Free registration is now open for military and civilian federal attendees. Exhibit sales for GSA industry partners is also underway, with space available on a first come, first served basis.

Tom Sharpe, FAS Commissioner:

"After last year's Acquisition Training Symposium, FAS received excellent reviews from attendees representing a variety of federal agencies and industry partners. They all said how valuable the training and collaboration opportunities provided by GSA training events are. As the government makes improvements to the federal procurement landscape, GSA is developing new tools and resources to support this community of professionals. We are committed to deploying FAS's acquisition expertise to lead this change and help the government buy smarter."

Federal Military & Civilian Acquisition Professionals

The GSA Federal Acquisition Training Symposium offers acquisition training on GSA tools, products and services tailored to federal acquisition professionals responsible for mission-critical acquisition spending. The 2017 event will include sessions on multiple new government-wide initiatives that are transforming the federal acquisition space, and also create a forum for collaboration between the federal acquisition community and industry. Participation in the training event will be free for all federal attendees.

GSA Industry Partners

Exhibit opportunities are open to all existing GSA industry partners on a first come, first serve basis. Industry partners who do not wish to exhibit, can participate in the training event by paying a registration fee.

For more information, including an agenda of planned training sessions, exhibition information, and how to register, please visit the event [website](#).



Upcoming Events

February 22-23 Southwest Acquisition Center's Industry Event for 56, 66 & 73

[See more information](#)

March 1, 2017 CGP MAS Basic Training- The Nuts and Bolts

[To Register](#)

March 7-8, 2017 IFMIPS 51V, Industry Day Event

[Register](#)

March 28 -29, 2017 IFMIPS 03FAC Industry Day Event

[Register](#)

April 25-26, 2017 the GSA Federal Acquisition Training Symposium
Huntsville, Alabama,

[Registration Details](#)

June 6, 2017 the Professional Services Industry Day in Tacoma, Washington.

[See more information](#)

TGG will be represented at all GSA Industry events above so if you are not able to attend contact your TGG consultant with any questions you may have.

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

[More Info](#)



Compliance

Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)

The FAR provides uniform policies and procedures for the acquisition of supplies and services by Executive Agencies. It may be helpful to understand how your customers utilize the GSA Schedule contracting vehicle when working with your future GSA schedule customers. Please review the [FAR](#) website for more information. The authority of the Multiple Award Schedule program is granted by FAR 8.4.

[FAR Subpart 8.4 - Federal Supply Schedules](#)

The Multiple Award Schedule Program simplifies the buying process while complying with federal procurement rules and regulations for vendors and government contracting officers alike. For example, when placing orders under Federal Supply Schedule contracts, ordering activities do not need to seek competition outside of the Federal Supply Schedules or synopsise the requirement. This gives you an advantage over anyone who has not been awarded a Multiple Award Schedule contract.

The FAR also states that before placing an order, an ordering activity shall consider all reasonably available information by surveying at least three schedule contractors through GSA Advantage! or by reviewing the catalogs or price lists of at least three schedule contractors. This is why it is paramount that each contractor's price list and GSA Advantage! file remain current at all times.

For more information on the priority of government supply sources, please see [FAR 8.002 - Priorities for use of Government Supply Sources](#).

Source: GSA

