



GSA Acquisition Workforce Forum

--Informing the GSA acquisition workforce on the latest acquisition news and events!



CAO Corner by Emily Murphy

Strategic Sourcing

Strategic sourcing illustrates that the acquisition workforce includes professions other than the 1102 job series, while recognizing the power that contract specialists have to be strong business advisors. To succeed, strategic sourcing needs to engage the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) community in areas like spend analysis; include the small business community to truly understand the supply chain; and include the Chief Information Officer (CIO) community to ensure that our systems facilitate the use of the resulting contracts. In many cases, these groups lead commodity councils. The success of the initiative relies on all of these communities and the many others who form the acquisition team. With that in mind, I want to give you an update on GSA's strategic sourcing initiative.

As many of you are aware, in May of 2005 the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) advised agencies to use strategic sourcing as a way of managing expenditures and recognizing cost savings. Strategic sourcing is best defined as the **collaborative** and **structured** process of critically analyzing an organization's spending and using this information to make business decisions about


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"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."

--George Patton



acquiring commodities and services more effectively and efficiently. This process helps agencies optimize performance, minimize price, increase achievement of socio-economic acquisition goals, evaluate total life cycle management costs, improve vendor access to business opportunities, and otherwise increase the value of each dollar spent.

The Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) is co-managing the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI). GSA's initial internal effort identified Office Supplies, Express/Overnight Delivery, Printers and Copiers, and wireless communications, as suitable for Strategic Sourcing in FY 2006/07. GSA has been meeting the strategic sourcing mandate through previous efforts such as the National Broker Contract, the CIO's hardware Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA), the recent purchase of training courses for the Federal Acquisition Institute, and the CIO's current efforts on IT consolidation.

Concurrent with the initial effort to meet OMB's mandate for FY 2006/07, my office is developing an agency-wide strategic sourcing blueprint that will implement a clear, repeatable process to manage the agency's spend from this point forward. My staff is working through GSA's Strategic Sourcing Council. The Strategic Sourcing Council is comprised of representatives from Public Building Service (PBS), FAS, Office of General Council, CFO, Small Business Utilization, and regional management. The primary responsibility of the Council is to provide high level management of the strategic sourcing initiative for GSA's internal purchasing.


While GSA's internal strategic sourcing plan is not fully developed (expect to see it in the second quarter of 2007), the driving principle behind GSA's internal strategic sourcing initiative is development of a process by which

the agency controls costs and monitors spending on the goods and services it consumes. A fully implemented strategic sourcing plan for GSA will result in:

- Streamlined purchasing operations, potentially freeing up Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) to perform other mission critical functions;
- Ability to manage spend to meet socio-economic goals;
- Regions and service offices better understanding how and where they are expending resources;
- Leveraging spend to gain cost savings; and,
- Improving the performance of the agency as a whole.

GSA's internal strategic sourcing program has 5 identified goals:

1. Better Spend Management – This will lead to a reduction in erroneous purchases, improved purchasing planning, and an improved ability to manage finances.
2. Direct Cost Savings – We will determine if existing methods or vehicles are getting volume discounts, and reduce erroneous purchases.
3. Reduced Administration/overhead costs – By reducing the number of vehicles available for use we will reduce costs associated with maintaining those vehicles. Further, better spend planning will help avoid last minute, undiscounted purchases.
4. Socio-Economic Goals (Agency-Wide) – GSA is a leader in doing business with small businesses. New contracts should be developed to assist regions/services in meeting or exceeding their small business goals.
5. Better Quality Purchasing Data – Better data will assist in managing office budgets and understanding our own purchasing trends.



While my office is responsible for developing and maintaining the broad vision for the agency's strategic sourcing initiative, we need your help to participate in agency-wide working groups on commodities, services and further development of the strategic vision for the program. We are forming teams for each commodity or service identified. The teams will initially gather and analyze GSA spend data on the identified commodities. Teams will then carefully review the market for the identified items, available multiple award vehicles, and other means that can enhance the efficiency of the purchasing of the identified commodity. Some of you may have seen this already in work on a copiers solution led by OCFO and the cleaning up of GSA's wireless contracts by OCIO, our first two cases. For overnight delivery services, GSA will be transitioning off its current contract with FedEx to the new FSSI vehicle with FedEx. This should result in more savings for the agency.

Look for more information on this subject as we move forward internally. If you have any interest in participating in the initiative, please contact Michael Berkholtz, of my staff, at 202-208-1806 or michael.berkholtz@gsa.gov.

From the Desk of the Editor


by Judy Steele



I recently was fortunate enough to attend the NCMA Contract Management Conference and found it, as always, to be a very rewarding experience. For those of us who get "lost in the trenches," it's a great opportunity to get out and mingle with our fellow acquisition professionals in government and private industry and share the struggles they are dealing with and find out what are this year's "buzz" topics. This year's conference was keynoteed by GSA's new Administrator,

Lurita Doan, and the new OFPP Administrator, Paul Denett, so this was a great opportunity to hear them address what they consider to be the key issues facing them. Mrs. Doan, coming from a business background, is actively championing small businesses. As you can see from this month's Small Business Corner, she has been front and center at many recent GSA small business conferences. Paul Denett continued his long time advocacy for honoring the acquisition profession by encouraging everyone to nominate a hard working co-worker for one of the many acquisition awards available; for example, he challenged everyone in the audience to nominate someone in their office for the Elmer B. Staats Award. At GSA, I'd like to challenge you to nominate someone in your office for the Ida M. Ustad Award—see the enclosed article on the most recent winner. I'd also like to challenge everyone to continue to enhance their professional experience by attending the GSA sponsored Federal Acquisition Conference (FACE), to be held at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C., June 19-20, 2007. There will be more information on FACE in the Spring 2007 newsletter.

Many topics in this month's newsletter were addressed at the NCMA conference. Strategic Sourcing, the topic of our CAO Corner, was a break-out topic at the conference and widely discussed throughout the two days. A big surprise at the conference was the announcement that the JWOD Program was changing their name to AbilityOne. The lunch speaker for the first day of the conference was a JWOD success story, Belinda Porras, whose emotional telling of her life story clearly illustrated the role JWOD can play in so many lives. If you are a JWOD supporter, or know someone who is, check out the opportunity to be recognized through the E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award.



We hope you will find this issue of the “Forum” to be helpful. Please forward any comments, suggestions and articles for the newsletter to the Editor, Judy Steele, at judy.steele@gsa.gov. The “Forum” is here to meet the needs of the GSA acquisition community and we can’t do that without your input!

OCAO UPDATE

GSAM Rewrite Update

OCAO continues to perform a comprehensive review and rewrite of the GSA Acquisition Manual (GSAM). [The GSAM incorporates the GSA Acquisition Regulation (GSAR) as well as internal agency acquisition policy.] Teams of GSA employees throughout Central Office, National Capital Region (NCR) and the other regions are participating in the GSAM rewrite project. The teams are updating the GSAM for FAR changes through Federal Acquisition Circular 2005-09 (April 19, 2006). Once this is completed, OCAO’s FAR analyst will be responsible for its ongoing maintenance.

The teams are conducting a thorough review of each GSAM Part to determine if revisions are necessary, eliminating unnecessary or redundant parts and information, and writing agency regulations that implement or supplement the FAR. The teams are incorporating other existing policies and procedures, such as GSA Acquisition Letters, PBS and FAS Acquisition Letters, directives (for example, the FSS Handbook 2901.2A), and pertinent paragraphs of the GSA Delegations of Authority Manual, MV and V orders. They are also incorporating and deposing of the numerous comments received in response to the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) about the rewrite which was published February 15, 2006.


The GSAM rewrite has an ambitious plan for

completion by December 2008 in order to provide updated policies and procedures to our contracting offices as quickly as possible. The teams are making remarkable progress; so far, they are in the process of rewriting 15 GSAM parts. Along with the GSAM rewrite, the team members continue to perform their regular tasks and job functions. Their dedication and commitment to this project is commendable.

As each GSAM part or subpart is rewritten, OCAO will solicit comments through the directive clearance red border process. As a result, the clearance officers will be receiving many proposed directives in the future. The work of the team members, reviewers and clearance officers is imperative to the success of this project and is very important to GSA and our customers. The Chief Acquisition Officer, Emily Murphy, and her entire staff, appreciates all the hard work being put into this project by all of the participants. For more information, contact Beverly Cromer at beverly.cromer@gsa.gov or 202-501-1448.

GSA Contracting Officer Warrant Program by Rachael Lerum

OFPP Letter 05-01 established uniform core training requirements for the civilian and defense acquisition workforce by prescribing the training requirements of the Department of Defense (DoD). As a result, on October 24, 2006, the Office of National and Regional Acquisition Development issued Acquisition Letter V 06-06 on Transitional Guidance in regards to the GSA Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP). This transitional guidance reflects major COWP changes to the GSAM. Changes to the COWP include replacing current GSA core training curriculum for all 1102 Contracting Officers with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) curriculum.



To keep in line with the DAU Curriculum, GSA has also adopted the education, training and experience requirements of Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C). OMB prescribed the FAC-C for the civilian workforce as approved by the Chief Acquisition Officers Council. The FAC-C is designed to align the civilian and defense acquisition workforces and is applied to all executive agencies not subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAIWA). The new COWP procedures apply to all warrants being issued. The FAC-C applies to all new warrants that are being issued on or after January 1, 2007.

A major goal of our office is to train, develop, educate, and provide the tools needed for GSA's acquisition workforce. If you require any additional information on this guidance, or any aspects of core curriculum we would be more than happy to discuss them with you. Please contact Ellis Osiname at ellis.osiname@gsa.gov or 202-501-0049.



Update on Acquisition Planning Wizard

There are new and exciting enhancements to the Acquisition Planning Wizard (APW) on the horizon for all of the acquisition planning pioneers out in the trenches who have utilized the APW. They include the expansion of use of the APW to federal government users other than GSA, and the relocation of the APW servers from GSA Central Office to GSA Region 6 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Due to the overwhelming requests to make the APW available to users outside of GSA, plans have been put in motion to make the APW available to external users, giving approved non-GSA users access to the electronic tool (E-tool). We know that a lot of GSA APW users make contract and task

order awards on behalf of other agencies and making access to the Wizard available to these agencies allows them to be a part of the acquisition planning process from the beginning. OCAO is currently coordinating this change with OCIO. This change is expected to be completed no later than the first quarter of calendar year 2007.


The move of the APW servers to Kansas City is expected to happen in the April – May 2007 timeframe. There will be minimal downtime associated with this move. The current location for the APW servers at the GSA Central Office in Washington was not designed to be a server room so the move to the Kansas City office is designed to serve the APW users better. This facility was created with the intent and purpose of housing servers which means it has all the required amenities including the proper ventilation and air conditioning, raised flooring, proper electrical supply, etc. The new OCAO APW point-of-contact is Michael O. Jackson. He can be reached at 202-208-4949 or at michaelo.jackson@gsa.gov.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



NCMA Hosts 25th Annual Government Contract Management Conference

The National Contract Management Association (NCMA) held their 25th annual Government Contract Management Conference December 4-5, 2006, at the Sheraton Premiere at Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The conference brought together almost 600 participants to network, discuss the impact of contract management processes, and share best practices for increasing the efficiency of contract departments. Lurita Doan, the Administrator of GSA, was an inspiring keynote speaker



on the first day, speaking to the theme of “Courage” while discussing many issues currently in the news. Paul Denett, the new Administrator of OFPP, who was the keynote speaker the second day, discussed a variety of issues, stressing the need to reward outstanding, hard working associates through some of the many acquisition awards available, such as the Elmer B. Staats award. The conference covered a variety of themes including Strategic Sourcing, the blended workforce, inter-agency contracts, and the findings of the Section 1423 Acquisition Advisory Panel (also known as the SARA Panel), among others. NCMA’s next large conference, the 2007 World Congress, will be held in Dallas, Texas, April 22-25, 2007. For more information on the NCMA conferences (including copies of presentations from the recent conference), check out the website at www.ncmahq.org.

the enemy’s weapon of choice in the global war on terror. Over the last year, the use of these weapons in southwest Asia has soared to as many as 30 a day. Their increasing use confirmed the urgent need to develop and deploy suitable countermeasures.

Ms. Gerace led a team of contracting and technical experts from the Army Research Laboratory to award a production contract to produce the ICE systems. The team went from concept to initial fielding of the systems in just 5 months! Her strategy was to proceed quickly from design and development to production by utilizing existing electronic warfare support contracts, government engineering, and extensive military input. As a result of this acquisition strategy, the government owns the design and components of the ICE system, and all projected options are commercial off-the-shelf items. That adds up to a great value for the government and taxpayers in the production phase, and critical protection for our troops in harm’s way. Ms. Gerace was selected from 10 finalists for the award.



Barbara Gerace Receives Ida Ustad award from David Bibb

2006 Ida M. Ustad Award Winner Announced

GSA is pleased to announce that the recipient of this year’s Ida M. Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition is Ms. Barbara Gerace, Contracting Officer, U.S. Army, Research Development and Engineering Command Acquisition Center, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. Ms. Gerace was instrumental in awarding a production contract to produce the improvised explosive device countermeasure (ICE) system to provide support to our U.S forces. Radio controlled improvised explosive devices (RCIEDs) are

The Ida M. Ustad Award is an annual \$5,000 award sponsored by GSA recognizing an individual government employee whose actions demonstrate or embody the concept of “contract specialist as business leader/ advisor” and who had a major impact on improving the acquisition process. The award is given in the memory of GSA’s former Senior Procurement Executive, Ida M. Ustad, who was well known for her commitment to public service and the federal acquisition community. GSA is now seeking nominations for the 2007 award. Nominations may be submitted online (<http://acquisition.gov/comp/ida/idaform2007.html>) from January 3, 2007 through February 16, 2007.

For more information, contact Patricia Miller at patricia.miller@gsa.gov or 202-501-2518.



SMALL BUSINESS CORNER

GSA Participates in U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Convention & Expo

The 27th Annual National U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Convention & Business Expo was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from September 20-23, 2006. This was a record-breaking conference with over 4,000 participants and close to 200 exhibitors from all over the U.S., Mexico, Dominican Republic, Panama, Venezuela and Latin America. This is the largest gathering of Hispanic businesses and entrepreneurs in the country.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of Small Business Utilization, along with Felipe Mendoza, Associate Administrator for the Office of Small Business Utilization, and members of his staff, participated in the Expo. Administrator Doan was the keynote speaker at the Ana Maria Arias Hispanic Business Women's Luncheon, which was held in conjunction with the convention and Expo. Administrator Doan's remarks focused on removing barriers to help small businesses work with the federal government. Her remarks were well received by over 1,000 event attendees.

Regional associates conducted a workshop on "How to Obtain a GSA Schedule Contract." Information on contracting opportunities, the procurement process, resources and market-

ing strategies were provided to the small businesses during the workshop. Contracting officers from PBS and FAS participated in the "Business Matchmaking" event sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Hewlett-Packard, and others, for a day of business matchmaking held on the last day of the convention. The day was filled with "matched" appointments between those that supply specific items or commodities and those from federal, state and local agencies, as well as major private sector corporations that buy similar goods and services. For more information on the Mid-Atlantic regional participation, contact Mari McNally at mari.mcnally@gsa.gov or 215-446-4934.



Earl Warrington participated in IT Panel

Earl Warrington, of OCAO's IAE Program Office, also participated in the Conference, serving on a panel for the "Technology and Procurement Town Hall Session." The panel addressed how technology can serve as a critical tool expanding procurement opportunities in business-to-business, federal government, and international sourcing. For more information on Earl's presentation, contact him at earl.warrington@gsa.gov.

Veterans Team Up with Greater Southwest and Rocky Mountain Regions

The Greater Southwest and Rocky Mountain Regions partnered to conduct the 2nd Annual Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Conference October 5-6 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Approximately 120 people participated in sessions targeted



A presentation at the Vets Conference

toward veterans who own small businesses and want to do business with the federal government. GSA Chief of Staff John Phelps provided the keynote address for the conference. U.S. Representative Heather Wilson, an Air Force veteran, also participated in the conference. For more information, contact Willie Heath at willie.heath@gsa.gov or 817-978-0800.



Congressman Thompson addresses the Seminar

Southeast Sunbelt Region Participates in Small Business Conference

Congressman Bennie G. Thompson co-sponsored a small and minority business seminar with GSA on "How to Register Your Business on the GSA Schedule" at the Jackson State University E-Commerce Center's Convention Hall on October 30, 2006. Southeast Sunbelt Region's Mildred Quinley, Director, Regional Office of Small Business Utilization, and Dinora Gonzalez, Small Business Technical Advisor, provided an educational, hands-on workshop on understanding how the government buys and registration information. The Congressman stated that this workshop was a first step in educating Mississippi's small and minority business owners on doing business with the

federal government, and invited GSA back for follow-up small business workshops in the very near future. The Congressman initiated the workshop as a rebuilding strategy to assist communities in Mississippi impacted by Hurricane Katrina last year. Approximately 100 small business owners attended the seminar. For more information, contact Dinora Gonzalez at dinora.gonzalez@gsa.gov or 404-331-3031.



Marty Wagner helps open Outreach Europe

Mid-Atlantic Region Hosts GSA Outreach Europe Expo in Germany

FAS Deputy Commissioner Marty Wagner and Mid-Atlantic Region FAS Assistant Regional Administrator Jack Williams joined representatives from the U.S. Army, Air Force, and Department of State in opening GSA's Outreach Europe 2006 Expo and Training Conference October 16-19 in Heidelberg, Germany. This was the sixth exhibition designed specifically for GSA customers in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, and with over 2,400 participants, Outreach Europe was once again an overwhelming success. Lieutenant General Gary Speer, Deputy Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army stated that GSA's support and Outreach Europe ensure the U.S. Army Europe is a "trained and ready force to win the global war on terror."

Over 200 displays from America's leading suppliers and manufacturers showcased the vast selection of American-made products



Expo Attendees inspect Displays

and services available from GSA. Outreach Europe 2006 also featured extensive training workshops and interactive roundtable discussions for customers and industry partners addressing issues relevant to doing business overseas. The Expo offered 60 hours of training, all of which granted Continuous Learning Points (CLPs). GSA partnered with the Defense Acquisition University to offer classes tailored to meet our customer’s needs such as Strategic Sourcing, Best Value Source Selection and Performance Based Acquisition. For more information, contact Dena McLaughlin at 215-446-5055 or dena.mclaughlin@gsa.gov.



Byron G. Rogers Courthouse

GREEN PROCUREMENT

David Winstead Speaks at Nation’s Principal Green Building Expo

PBS Commissioner David Winstead addressed the Closing Plenary at the Greenbuild 2006 International Conference & Expo on November 17 in Denver. Winstead told the session how GSA is committed to creating high-quality, sustainable workplaces

for federal customer agencies that reduce negative impacts on the environment, while enhancing the health and comfort of the building occupants. The Greenbuild Conference & Expo is presented annually by the U.S. Green Building Council, a nonprofit coalition of more than 5,500 private companies, nonprofits and governmental agencies. The conference, attended by 15,000 participants, included green building tours of the Byron G. Rogers and Alfred A. Arraj U.S. Courthouse, and the new headquarters for the EPA in downtown Denver. The Rogers U.S. Courthouse received a Gold rating under the LEED for Existing Buildings rating system in September 2006. LEED for Existing Buildings maximizes operational efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts. The Rogers Courthouse was constructed in 1965 and just completed a 4-year renovation.

With adoptions by major building owners including GSA, Green Building is fast becoming recognized as the standard for smart construction. For more information, contact Maryanne Beatty at Maryanne.beatty@gsa.gov or 202-501-0768.



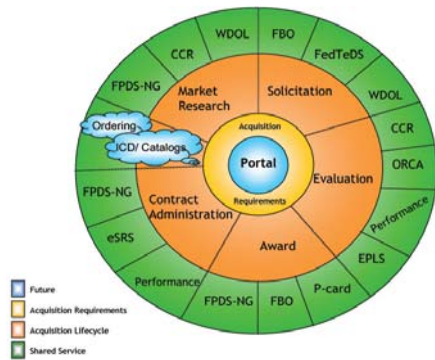
IAE CORNER

Then & Now: Integrating the Acquisition Environment—Part 2 **by Judy Steele and Lisa Cliff**

In the first part of this article, published in the Fall newsletter, we provided a discussion of how the IAE Program developed. In Part 2 we begin a discussion of each individual IAE system.

Then and Now. This article discusses the IAE systems in the order they are used in the acquisition lifecycle; however, many systems overlap stages (see “wheel” diagram). For example, FPDS-NG is a reporting database





Now: FedBizOpps.gov (FBO) is the single government point-of-entry for federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information directly to FBO via the internet. The online system, allowing for immediate publication, has greatly shortened acquisition leadtimes. The 15-day waiting period for the CBD to be posted has been eliminated by this easy-to-use system. FAR 5.2 allows for Contracting Officers to assume a notice is posted one day after entering on FBO.

(Contract Reporting) but vendors and analysts often use FPDS-NG reports to identify trends in government buying (Market Research). In this article we try to provide the latest information on each system, but some things may change (for example finalization of FAR cases) by the time this article is published. We recommend checking the IAE website at www.acquisition.gov, for the latest updates on topics discussed in this article.

FebBizOpps (www.fbo.gov)

Then: *Each Contracting Officer was responsible for typing up and sending a Commerce Business Daily (CBD) announcement about their solicitation, sources sought, or contract award, and mailing them to the CBD. CBD requests were often rejected because notices weren't typed exactly according to CBD's very specific instructions—it was very frustrating. After mailing the CBD announcement, Contracting Officers had to wait 15 days before issuing a solicitation and allow 30 days for responses. Each contracting office had a person assigned to check the CBD to ensure that notices of solicitations or awards had been posted—which often took several weeks. The old process was also labor intensive for vendors because they had to manually flip through each CBD booklet to check for notices they were interested in.*


Through one easy-to-use website, commercial vendors seeking federal markets for their products and services can search, monitor and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire federal contracting community. Vendors can also sign up to request e-mail notification of solicitations based on specific criteria. The following is a quote from a commercial vendor who uses FBO frequently, *"The website has been helpful. The support staff was absolutely wonderful. I had a little difficulty at first when I didn't know how to use it, but when I asked how to use the system I was given a very detailed e-mail that has been wonderful."*

The future is bright for FBO and the IAE goal of exploring new and creative ways to increase transparency of government procurement opportunities to the public. Over 26,000 government buyers are currently registered to use FBO and over 843,000 vendors have registered to receive e-mail notification of procurement opportunities. Currently, FBO has over 123,155 active synopses and active solicitations.

FedTeDS (www.fedteds.gov)

Then: *If a solicitation required that a contractor have access to sensitive documents, the contractor usually had to*





make arrangements to come to the contracting office to view the documents or arrange to pick up copies of the material. Usually the contracting office would have to provide a “warm body” to stay in a secured room during review of materials or provide contractors copies if necessary. This was a real space and manpower issue.

Now: The Federal Technical Data Solutions (FedTeDS) is an online system by which federal agencies can securely disseminate technical drawings, specifications, and other documents that may contain sensitive acquisition-related material to approved business partners. It has proven to be a real help to government and industry. Effective May 19, 2006, FAR Part 5 was changed to support the use of FedTeDS. The FAR now requires Contracting Officers to make solicitation-related information that requires limited availability or distribution available to offerors electronically via FedTeDS, unless certain exceptions apply. As a program under IAE, FedTeDS is designed to be a companion site with FedBizOpps.gov.

Since September 11, 2001, it is more important than ever that sensitive information is protected in order to ensure that precarious groups and unauthorized individuals do not misuse the data and potentially threaten national security. Because business opportunities are inherently public, there is no monitoring or control over who has access to your solicitation information. Contracting Officers can use this system to implement multiple levels of security to control and monitor access to their documents.


Examples of information protected by FedTeDS includes construction drawings, transportation project documents, and specifications; Continuity of Operations Plans; and potentially sensitive schedules, work hours, and security clearance requirements. Although some of this information may not

seem significant alone, when aggregated, this sensitive, acquisition-related data may pose a threat to national security if misused or paint a detailed picture that a Contracting Officer would never provide in full. As a rule of thumb, sensitive data is any piece of information that should not be available to **anyone** in the world to access and maintain on file.

Contracting Officers and contractors interviewed for this article were very enthusiastic about FedTeDS. A contractor who uses FedTeDS frequently said the vendor access process to FedTeDS is fairly straightforward, but it is very important to get the correct link. One Contracting Officer noted that to ensure she provides the correct identifier to link to the online information, she copies the link to the documents directly from the website; however, FedTeDS can automatically generate this direct link. To access documents in FedTeDS, contractors must have a Marketing Partner Identification Number (MPIN) (described later in the article in the section on CCR). Contracting Officers can restrict access to certain firms, require firms to request access, or receive reports on who accessed the technical data.

Wage Determinations Online.gov (www.wdol.gov)

Then: *Contracting Officers had to write to the Department of Labor (DOL) to obtain a wage determination. The Contracting Officer would have to type up the Standard Form (SF) 98 (and 8 carbons!) and sometimes an SF 98a, the continuation form. Just preparing the forms took a lot of time. Once the forms were mailed it took at least two months and often up to six months or longer to receive a wage determination. Sometimes it took so long, the wage determination had to be added into the contract AFTER award, requiring amendments to the contract. Before this process was automated, service*



contracting accounted for 53% of executive agency procurement expenditures and there were in excess of 60,000 requests for wage determinations annually governmentwide, so you can imagine the backlog.

Now: The new governmentwide public website, Wage Determinations Online (www.wdol.gov), makes Service Contract Act (SCA) and Davis Bacon Act (DBA) wage determinations and contractor labor standards information issued by DOL available and easily accessible by the contracting community. WDOL.gov was developed by a multi-agency work group sponsored by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The DBA requires that contractors on federally funded construction projects pay their construction workers no less than the locally prevailing wage. The SCA requires contractors performing services on most federal contracts to pay service employees no less than the wage rates and fringe benefits found prevailing in the locality. The wage determinations are incorporated by the contracting agencies into covered contracts. Rather than waiting for a response from a paper request, Contracting Officers and the public can go directly to WDOL.gov and access the appropriate wage determination for a contract action. Generic wage determinations are available immediately. An SCA “wizard” questions the user to ensure the appropriate SCA determination is obtained. If it is still necessary to fill out an SF 98, that application is available online as well. A Contracting Officer at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) described the system as “Awesome!”

FAR Case 2005-033 (interim) which amends FAR Part 22 and makes WDOL.gov the source for SCA and DBA wage determinations issued by the DOL, was published in the Federal Acquisition Circular June 28, 2006. Prior to this, many Contracting Officers were already using the program under


an August 2005 memorandum from DOL authorizing use of WDOL.gov in place of the SF 98. Future plans for WDOL.gov include developing an application to facilitate integrating wage determinations into agency contract writing systems.

CCR (www.ccr.gov) and FedReg (www.bpn.gov/far)

Then: *Contractors had to fill out business information to get on bidder’s mailing lists or submit the SF 129 Mailing List Applications at multiple locations in most agencies. In order to be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), bank account information was required by each finance office. Agencies kept files of this information, but if the information changed, updates were made manually. Information was often old and out of date.*

Now: The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database was originally developed by DoD to provide contractors a single point to enter all common business information, including bank account information for electronic payments. This includes name, address, products and services, payment information including Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) information, and Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) numbers. FAR 4.11 requires contractors to register business information in the CCR before contract award and for Contracting Officers to ensure they have done so. Contractors are responsible for the accuracy of the data in the CCR and are required to maintain it.

CCR dramatically reduces the contractor workload because once the data is entered it spreads across IAE systems governmentwide so the contractor doesn’t have to do multiple reports to multiple agencies. To register, the contractor first needs to obtain a D&B D-U-N-S number. This is a 9-digit number



assigned by Dun and Bradstreet to identify unique business enterprises. (D&B provides a central website and Help desk just for federal contractors at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.) An online CCR Handbook is provided for contractors and government officials at www.ccr.gov to help them get familiar with the CCR registration process. Currently over 425,000 contractors are registered, most of them small businesses.



Brian Williams, D&B


You may wonder why the D&B D-U-N-S number is used as the identifier in CCR and other IAE systems. When CCR was developed as a DoD system, they needed a unique identifier and the D&B D-U-N-S number had been used in federal contracting since 1979 and most contractors already had a number. D&B specializes in maintaining the number, spending over \$250 million a year to do so, and it was a well established 40 year-old system and an already recognized number. As Brian Williams, Government Client Manager for D&B Government Solutions, said in a recent interview, *“The U.S. Federal Government adoption of the D&B D-U-N-S number first began in 1978 and 1979 with a move to use the number to aid in uniquely identifying businesses and providing roll-up reporting of government spend. In an efficient system, the government should get the most out of its resources. To do this each party focuses on their strengths—at D&B ours is collecting global data and mobilizing it to allow our customers to decide with confidence.”* Use of the D&B D-U-N-S number also facilitates system interoperability as the other IAE systems interact and pull data from CCR.

Creation of a Marketing Partner ID Number (MPIN) is now mandatory for all CCR registrants. The MPIN is a personal code that the user creates and registers in CCR which allows access to other government applications such as ORCA, PPIRS, and FedTeDS. The MPIN acts as the password in these other systems and should be guarded as such.

GSA, DoD, and the Small Business Administration (SBA) want to ensure the integrity of the data in CCR as it relates to eligibility for the federal government’s small business program. To do so, SBA is now providing data regarding the firms it has certified as HUBZone, 8(a) and Small Disadvantaged Business, and validates the Small Business and Emerging Small Business status of the firm for each North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code listed based on the employee and revenue data provided to CCR by the registrant.

Effective June 28, 2006, FAR parts 2, 4, and 52 were changed to include the process of the IRS validating a CCR registrant’s Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) for each new and updating CCR registrant to improve the quality of data in the CCR. Once the contractor enters the TIN, the IRS ensures that it agrees with the one that is in their database. Future plans for CCR include a complete redesign and updating of the website.

Federal agencies also register in the CCR for intragovernmental transactions under the subsystem called the Federal Agency Registration (FedReg) (www.bpn.gov/far). OMB Memorandum M-03-01 requires all government agencies that engage in buying and selling of goods/services to other federal agencies to register in FedReg. It is essentially the agency yellow pages. This database collects basic information about trading partners to facilitate standard financial



reporting and data reconciliation. Examples of transactions include leasing space from GSA's Public Building Service, buying telephone systems from GSA's Federal Acquisition Service, or using another agency's procurement services or accounting system. An additional benefit of this system, and CCR, is that once the data is collected it can be distributed through all the IAE and agency systems for reuse, cutting down on repetition of data entry.

ORCA (www.bpn.gov/orca)

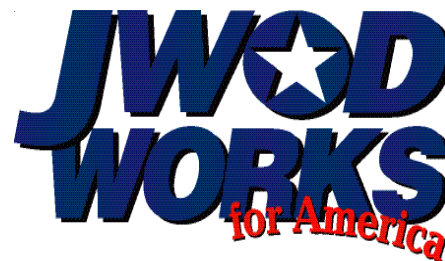
Then: *Contracting Officers were required to place Representations and Certifications in Section K of each solicitation document over \$25,000, and contractors were required to fill them out—a time and paperwork intensive process. Contractors often kept typewriters in their offices just to fill out the Section K!*

Now: No more typewriters! Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) was developed as part of the Business Partner Network. ORCA was designed to replace most of the paper-based Representations and Certifications in proposals. Under current FAR regulations (FAR 4.12), vendors are required to submit Annual Representations and Certifications via ORCA and are required to update them as necessary, but at least annually, to ensure they are kept current, accurate and complete. This allows contractors to enter this information once for use on all federal contracts. ORCA has been a big help to contractors and currently has over 50,000 registered vendor users.

The ORCA site enables vendors to maintain an accurate and complete record and also provides contracting offices both current and archived views of the data with the click of a mouse. Contractors log in to ORCA using their D&B D-U-N-S number and MPIN personal code. Once logged in, the system

pulls a lot of the information directly from CCR. A questionnaire asks 24 questions that feed to the various FAR provisions. Once the contractor is sure the answers are correct he can download a copy of the information in PDF. In June 2006, web services were implemented that allow agencies to bring the ORCA data into their contract writing systems, right to their desktop.

In Part 3 of this article, which will be published in the Spring 2007 newsletter, we will finish our descriptions of each system and provide information on the IAE vision for the future.



GSA AND JWOD/AbilityOne STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

JWOD Program Renamed AbilityOne

Although the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program has a new name, AbilityOne, the mission remains the same—to create jobs for Americans who are blind or who have other severe disabilities that prevent them from obtaining competitive employment. The JWOD Program will officially roll out AbilityOne as its new name in the Spring of 2007. The announcement was made in a November 27, 2006, Federal Register notice. The socioeconomic employment initiative was created in 1938 to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind. In 1971, the Act was expanded to include people with severe disabilities and to include the provision of services. Jobs are created when federal agencies purchase products and services furnished by nonprofit agencies under

the auspices of the JWOD Program. Under the JWOD umbrella, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a range of severe disabilities) work with the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, the federal agency which oversees the program.

The JWOD Program name change was made to foster a program identity that more clearly communicates the program's mission and benefits. The JWOD Program is the single largest employer of people who are blind or severely disabled, and is an important part of the U.S. government supply and service base.



New JWOD/AbilityOne Catalog is Available

The new 2007 JWOD/AbilityOne Program Catalog is the federal customer's reference guide to quality JWOD mandatory source items with descriptions and ordering instructions for more than 3000 SKILCRAFT® and other JWOD products. To order your copy of the 2007 JWOD Catalog, call Customer Service at 800-433-2304 or send an e-mail to customer_service@nib.org. Please be sure to specify whether you would like to receive a print copy of the catalog or an electronic version on CD-Rom. For more information on the JWOD/AbilityOne Program please visit www.jwod.gov or contact Stephanie Lesko at slesko@jwod.gov or 703-603-2146.

Know a Career JWOD/AbilityOne Program Supporter?


The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (the Committee), the federal agency which oversees the JWOD/AbilityOne Program, is soliciting nominations for the 2007 E.R. "Dick" Alley Career Achievement Award. This is the highest award given by the Committee and is intended to recognize current federal employees who have provided **extraordinary, sustained** support for the JWOD Program and its mission of creating employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The most recent GSA employee to receive this honor was Donna Hutchens, Procurement Services Team Leader in the Northwest/Arctic Region of GSA's PBS, in 2001.

Nomination submissions (including additional recommendations) must be received via electronic mail in an accessible file format (i.e., Word Perfect, Word, or ACCESSIBLE Adobe PDF, etc.). Signed hard-copy originals will be accepted only in conjunction with the appropriate electronic files. The deadline is February 1, 2007. Nomination instructions and forms can be found on the Committee's website at www.jwod.gov or by contacting Stephanie Lesko of the Committee staff at slesko@jwod.gov or 703-603-2146.



DID YOU KNOW?

GSA's Online University (OLU) provides a variety of learning opportunities for professional and leadership growth. Acquisition courses have been mapped to several acquisition competencies and are among the available courses offered through OLU. These courses are recommended for all employees. Employees should discuss



these opportunities with their supervisor to determine how these acquisition courses align with their personal development and performance goals. For more information, contact Abe Morrall at abe.morrall@gsa.gov or 202-501-3789.

Did you know that GSA has awarded the Veterans Technology for Services (VETS) Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) to more than 40 service disabled, veteran-owned contractors? Eligible contractors will now be able to compete for federal government procurements under this contract set-aside that has a five-year option period and potential overall value of \$5 billion. A complete list of industry partners is available on www.FedBizOpps.gov under solicitation number 6FG2005MTV00001 and on the VETS GWAC web site. For more information, contact Mary Parks at mary.parks@gsa.gov or 816-823-3960.



CHECK IT OUT!

“Check It Out!” highlights upcoming conferences and events of interest to the GSA acquisition community. If you’d like to have your conference or event listed in this column, please send an e-mail to the Editor, judy.steele@gsa.gov with the pertinent information including a point of contact.

2nd Annual CES Government Conference

January 10-11, 2007
The Flamingo Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV 89109
www.CESweb.org

NCMA’s World Congress

“Achieving Outstanding Results Through Effective Life-cycle Contract Management”
April 22-25, 2007
Hyatt Regency
Dallas, TX
www.ncmahq.org/meetings/WC07

Federal Acquisition Conference (FACE)

“Acquisition Frontiers: Blazing New Trails”
June 19-20, 2007
Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, DC
www.fai.gov/face

We thank our guest authors for their contributions to this newsletter. Guest authors express their own views, which are provided for the information of our newsletter readers. We welcome any comments, suggestions, and articles. We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele at judy.steele@gsa.gov with comments or suggestions.

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