

SAP&amp;DC

# PTAC Link

PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER - CONNECTING BUYERS & SUPPLIERS

Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

Issue No.  
04-16

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### Upcoming Events at the SAP&DC PTAC

The PTAC at Southern Alleghenies is happy to announce the following training events, in collaboration with SEDA-COG PTAC:

**COSTARS Seminar - April 12, 10 AM to 12 PM, State College, PA :**

Topics to include Background on the PA COSTARS program, benefits, opportunities, and marketing tips. [Registration required by clicking here:](#)

**Doing Business with Penn State University -- April 14, 10 AM to 12 PM, State College, PA:**

Registrants will learn more about how PSU purchases goods and services, the pre-qualification process, and how to find business opportunities within Penn State's 24 campuses. [Registration is required by clicking here:](#)

If you have any questions about these events, please contact [James Gerraughty](#) or (814) 949-6428

## SBA Reports Record-High Contracting for Women-Owned Firms

For the first time in 20 years of trying, federal agencies met their mandatory goal of steering small business contracts to women-owned firms, the Small Business Administration announced on Wednesday.

"What we were able to achieve was because of that big lift across the country," Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet told a gathering of contractors and agency officials at the National Press Club. "Women entrepreneurs can be the linchpin for a broader middle class, for upward mobility and social mobility."

In fiscal 2015, federal agencies awarded 5.05 percent of eligible small business contracting dollars - or \$17.8 billion - to women-owned firms, SBA said. Leading the way, Contreras-Sweet said, was the Commerce Department, where, under Secretary Penny Pritzker, women-owned firms won 13.4 percent of contracts, worth \$557 million. "This achievement is no longer our glass ceiling," but the new bar, Contreras-Sweet said.

Federal agencies also for the third year in a row met the broader government wide goal of awarding 23 percent of contracting dollars to small firms. Agencies in fiscal 2015 awarded 25.75 percent of contracts to small companies, SBA announced, or \$90.7 billion. This supported 500,000 jobs according to Contreras-Sweet.

SBA also broke the record for contracting with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, which doubled from 5 percent to 10 percent, and is now 4 percent of contract spending, said Contreras-Sweet, who presented certificates to four female federal contractors.

Seven agencies exceeded their small business goals, she said. They are the Homeland Security, State, Interior and Transportation departments, as well as the General Services Administration, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and SBA itself.

SBA's success comes after women-owned businesses in recent years enjoyed the fruits of legislation that allows them to do more sole-source contracting "without an arduous bidding process," she said, and compete for higher-award contracts. She announced a new Commerce report that adds 36 new industrial classification categories biddable as sole source.

## March brought Changes to the SAP&DC PTAC

Change is one of the three things you can count on in life (death and taxes being the other two). The month of March brought some interesting changes for the Southern Alleghenies PTAC.

First, Procurement Specialist Mr. Brandon Peters was promoted to Transportation Program Manager at SAP&DC's Planning and Community Development directorate. The PTAC will miss him, and wishes him the best in his new endeavor!

Second, Ms Gloria Brooks, who many of you have spoke with if you've visited our offices, will be taking over as the Government Procurement Specialist. She brings a large amount of experience to the position and will do a great job!

Finally, the program manager James Gerraughty was appointed as Region 3 director within the PTAC's professional organization APTAC. Region 3 covers PTACs in Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. His term will run until Spring of 2017, when he can run for it again.

What will these changes mean to you, the client/stakeholder of the PTAC? Nothing, as **our level of service will not change!** As always, we are ready to help you and your company with government contracting. Please contact James Gerraughty at [jgerraughty@sapdc.org](mailto:jgerraughty@sapdc.org) or (814) 949-6528 if you have any questions.

## Follow Southern Alleghenies PTAC On Twitter & LinkedIn

Did you know that the Southern Alleghenies PTAC has [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) feeds? Do you want to stay up-to-date on the breaking issues related to government contracting as they happen? We regularly post on interesting and important issues

The context for the contracting progress, Contreras-Sweet said, is that women-owned firms have been "fighting back" from the recession and lending freeze of seven years ago, while SBA is offering "record historical lending levels, record historical investment."

The new figures show "what is possible when government comes together in a goal," she said, crediting President Obama for stressing the women-owned firm issue during her first interview with him. Over the past seven years, small business contracting with "the world's largest procurer" reached \$640 billion, a \$125 billion increase over the prior administration, she said.

The SBA Chief spoke with three members of Congress: Reps. Nydia Velazquez, D-N.Y., ranking member of the Small Business Committee; Judy Chu, D-Calif.; and Cheri Bustos, D-Ill. Though Velazquez celebrated the new records, she said more needed to be done.

The reason it took 20 years to hit the goal for women-owned business, she said, was a "lack of outreach by federal agencies. Some contracting officers have not made engaging women businesses a priority. In other instances, women-owned businesses were not made aware of the contacting opportunities available to them." She also singled out the Defense Department, the largest agency purchaser, for not meeting the goal for hiring women-owned businesses, saying, "We'll be watching."

Contreras-Sweet was also applauded in remarks by Valerie Jarrett, the senior adviser to the president who marshaled agency action on women-owned businesses. "What better way to kick off Women's History Month," she told the crowd. "Talent is ubiquitous, but opportunity is not."

Jarrett linked the SBA's new report to the larger Obama agenda for women and working families over the past seven years, mentioning equal pay, science and technology education, college affordability, inexpensive preventative health care, ending domestic violence and sexual assault on campus, paid medical leave, child care and raising the minimum wage. "When we invest in women-owned business, we invest in the backbone of the country," she said.

Jarrett and John Sharoka, associate administrator of government contracting and business development at SBA, in interviews with *Government Executive*, said the effort to aid women-owned businesses is bipartisan. Asked whether it would continue if a Republican takes the White House, Jarrett said, "I certainly hope so. The accomplishment is not partisan, and there are small businesses in every community--it's the economic engine. There will be increasing opportunities through federal procurement power."

*Article posted courtesy of:  
Charles Clark, Government Executive*

**In Congressional testimony, PTAC association says better compliance with subcontracting requirements is needed**

like disadvantaged or small business topics, contract compliance, state and local contracting, larger trends, and breaking contracting news. If you want to stay ahead on what is going on in the contracting world, follow us on [Twitter](#) and/or [LinkedIn](#) today!



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[FedBizOpps](#)

[Small Business Administration / Contracting](#)

Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) President Chuck Spence appeared before the U.S. House Small Business Committee's Subcommittee on Contracting and the Workforce last week, testifying as part of the Hearing, "[Hotline Truths: Issues Raised by Recent Audits of Defense Contracting](#)." Spence is Deputy Director of the Utah Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). The hearing focused on Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) reports that two key Marine Corps commands failed to meet their legally-mandated requirements for small business subcontracting plans, as part of the subcommittee's efforts to help small firms better compete for contracts with DoD, providing value to the taxpayer and quality of the warfighter.

*"The Small Business Act contains important protections for small companies that provide services to our men and women in uniform,"* said Subcommittee Chairman Richard Hanna (R-NY). *"Existing law ensures that we have a vibrant community of small contractors ready to provide innovative and cost effective solutions. However, if the statutory provisions of the Small Business Act are not observed, those benefits are lost."*

*"The Marine Corps' documented failure to comply with statutory requirements concerning the approval and oversight of small business subcontracting plans has resulted in significant harm to the small business community. Continued failure to provide mandatory oversight of small business subcontracting plans has real consequences,"* Hanna added.

In his testimony, Spence confirmed that such oversight failures present a real problem. *"We are not surprised by the OIG findings in response to Defense Hotline allegations. On the contrary, we suspect that the problems identified -- lack of adequate policies for requiring subcontracting plan submissions and reports, insufficient training for contracting officials regarding their responsibilities for evaluating and administering subcontracting plans, and failure to monitor compliance with subcontracting plans - are common across all federal agencies, because the root causes are not unique."* He cited an unrealistic overreliance on contracting officers with insufficient resources to effectively enforce subcontracting compliance, as well as an inadequate disincentives for prime contractors, noting that no firm has been penalized for failure to comply in many years.

However, Spence went on to commend the House Small Business Committee for their efforts to tackle the problems, stating *"We applaud Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Velazquez and the House Small Business Committee for the ambitious effort to address these issues through [HR. 4341, The Defending America's Small Contractors Act of 2016](#). The bill's comprehensive approach to clarifying the language and definitions of contracting provisions in the Small Business Act -- as well as promoting greater transparency in goaling and accountability in execution -- is much needed."*

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) are deeply engaged with subcontracting issues, helping small

businesses identify subcontracting opportunities, connect with and market to prime contractors, and generally become responsible, "procurement ready" subcontractors, as well as assisting large prime contractors with developing subcontracting plans and locating small business vendors that can meet their requirements. In 2014, PTACs helped over 57,000 small businesses win government contracts and subcontracts valued at over \$12 billion. APTAC is the professional organization of the 98 PTACs nationwide.

*Article posted courtesy of  
the Georgia Tech PTAC*

## About Us

The PTAC at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The PTAC stands ready to support businesses in the Alleghenies region in their pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide by:

- Identifying niche government markets and specific contract opportunities
- Assisting with bid and proposal preparation
- Preparing the required vendor registrations
- Navigating your company through the requirements and procedures of government contracting
- Enhancing competition by obtaining applicable socio-economic certifications
- Providing guidance to ensure successful post-award contract performance

**Due to the generous support of our Commonwealth and Federal funding partners, services provided by the PTAC are free of charge.**

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the PTAC will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing the following program resources to increase your share of contact awards.

### **PTAC Resources**

- Electronic Bid Matching for products and services
- Military/Commercial specifications and standards
- Past procurement information and pricing histories
- State and Federal regulations guidance
- Professional training and outreach events
- Quality assurance and packaging guidance

Contact us today at [The PTAC at SAP&DC](#) to get started!



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