

# PTAC Link

PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER - CONNECTING BUYERS & SUPPLIERS

Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

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### Events at the SAP&DC PTAC - June 2016

The Southern Alleghenies PTAC is looking forward to the 26th annual Johnstown Showcase for Commerce, May 31 through June 2, 2016. More details on the event can be found at [www.showcaseforcommerce.com](http://www.showcaseforcommerce.com). We will have a booth at the event, so please stop by!

The PTAC will also be attending a special training sponsored by the Defense Supply Center - Columbus (OH) and our professional organization, APTAC, on June 7-8, 2016.

We will be having some outreach/training events, so please stay tuned!

If you have any questions, or would like to see a course put on, please contact [James Gerraughty](#) or (814) 949-6428 with your ideas.

**Pentagon Wants to Raise**

## PTACs Help Businesses Win \$12 Billion in Government Contracts

The Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) report that businesses, nationwide, won 73,000 government contracts worth \$12 billion, thanks to the assistance provided by the network of procurement technical assistance centers (PTACs). Small businesses won 88% of these contracts.

There are 300 PTAC offices across the country, plus in Guam and Puerto Rico, and each one is supported by a local host organization that provides funds matching the support granted by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). APTAC estimates that the return-on-investment is **\$344 for every federal dollar invested in the PTAC program.**

Through the free or low-cost assistance provided by PTACs:

- 57,000 businesses - located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico - were educated in the past year through one-on-one counseling sessions, electronic tools, and training seminars on how to do business with the government.
- The equipment and supply needs of our country's warfighters are supported - and the nation's industrial base is boosted - through the influx of businesses seeking to compete for government contracts.
- Help is targeted toward small businesses, especially veteran-owned businesses, women and majority entrepreneurs, and businesses located in economically depressed HUBZones.

PTACs contribute not only to the success of small businesses, they also help government agencies and large businesses. For example, PTACs:

- Support initiatives by the Department of Veterans

## Purchase Card Maximum to \$10,000

The Pentagon wants to accelerate procurements by raising the "micro-purchase threshold" for using a government credit card from the current \$3,000 maximum to \$10,000 as part of the fiscal 2017 Defense authorization act. The [proposed language](#), first reported by the nonprofit Project on Government Oversight, would also require the Office of Management and Budget to update its guidance to help ensure that agencies follow "sound acquisition practices when using the government purchase card" and "maintain internal controls that reduce the risk of fraud, waste and abuse."

The increase would also apply to similar tools called fleet cards and integrated payment cards. The language did not, however, make it into the House Armed Services Committee [chairman's mark](#) of the NDAA, though legislative sources say it has not been ruled out for floor consideration. The committee reported out its version of the authorization bill on April 28th.

Raising the threshold, which would allow program managers to avoid multiple layers of approval when acquiring more-expensive goods and services, would come at a time of continued concern in Congress about purchase card abuse.

Though Congress in 2012 enacted the [Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act](#), the Government Accountability Office and Pentagon inspector general subsequently [found cases of employees](#) using cards for gym memberships, strip club visits and breast implants.

"It's concerning that the DoD is proposing this large increase to the micro-purchase threshold given that the majority of recent purchase card violations are by DoD employees," wrote POGO program manager [Nicholas Pacifico](#) in a [blog post](#). "For instance, POGO received documents in response to a Freedom of Information Act request that show that, in the first half of fiscal year 2015, agencies

Affairs to make more veteran-owned firms "procurement ready."

- Boost vendor registrations in the General Services Administration's System for Award Management (SAM).
- Show Businesses how to use DLA's Internet Bid Board System (DIBBS), radio frequency identification (RFID) tagging and unique identification (UID) marking.
- Increase qualified sources, competition and create better value for the military, agencies and American taxpayers.
- Stimulate local economic activity by helping businesses across the country navigate federal, state and local government contracting processes.
- Educate businesses on how to meet stringent government standards and complex contract requirements.
- Help large government contractors identify qualified subcontractors and suppliers to address their small business subcontracting requirements.

For more information about APTAC and the national network of PTACs, visit [www.aptac-us.org](http://www.aptac-us.org).

To see a fact sheet on APTAC, click on this link: [PTAC Fact Sheet - May 2016](#).

*Article posted courtesy of:  
Georgia Tech Procurement Assistance Center*

## 8(a) Program Participation Down 34% Since 2010

Participation in the SBA's 8(a) Program has declined from about 7,000 firms in 2010 to only around 4,500 today -- a sharp drop of approximately 34% in only six years.

These startling numbers come from a recent [SBA Office of Inspector General report](#), which focuses on whether the SBA properly documented the reasons for admitting certain 8(a) participants. While that matter is interesting in its own right, the most revealing part of the SBA OIG report is the rapid decline in 8(a) Program participants, and the SBA's plans to reverse it. The SBA OIG report states that "[s]ince 2010, there has been a steady decline in the number of firms participating in the 8(a) Program from about 7,000 in 2010 to about 4,600 in 2015." As of January 2016, the numbers had dropped even more, to "approximately 4,495 participants."

One potential reason for the low numbers: the administrative burdens of getting certified. The SBA's letter responding to the SBA OIG Report states:

*Though over 2,000 applicants apply each year, the SBA historically rejects most applications as incomplete and missing documentation. Typically, only 25% of the applicants or approximately 500-600 applicants per year are ultimately certified to participate in the 8(a) BD Program by the Associate Administrator of the Office of 8(a) Business Development.*

reported [1,302 instances](#) of abuse, fraud, or waste related to purchase or integrated cards. Of those instances, [1,181 \(or over 90 percent\)](#) were by DoD employees. This breakdown has been consistent for at least [the last two years.](#)" POGO previously supported hiking the threshold to \$5,000.

*Article posted courtesy of Charles S. Clark*

## Become a PTAC Client

To take advantage of the services and resources provided by The PTAC at SAP&DC, complete the [New Client Sign-Up form](#).

## Quick Links

[The PTAC at SAP&DC](#)

[PA Department of General Services](#)

[PA Small Business Procurement Initiative](#)

[PA Supplier Portal](#)

[PA eMarketplace](#)

[System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)

[FedBizOpps](#)

[Small Business Administration / Contracting](#)

In an effort to increase the number of certified 8(a) Program participants, the SBA has "developed an aggressive growth plan to increase the number of participants in the 8(a) Program for the coming years by piloting a streamlined application process and shifting responsibilities for continuing eligibility." SBA's goal is "to increase the number of approved applications over the previous year by 5 percent for both FYs 2016 and 2017." As part of this initiative, SBA plans to "provide responsive customer service for 8(a) applicants" and "reduce administrative paperwork burdens on applicants...."

The sharp decline in 8(a) participation seems stunning at first blush--but it really should come as no surprise. For several years, it has been very difficult for many companies to navigate the administrative aspects of becoming 8(a) certified. I've heard more than my share of complaints about unusual delays, difficult-to-reach evaluators, and so on--all of which can cause well-qualified companies to give up on becoming 8(a) certified.

The SBA is right to emphasize customer service in an effort to reverse the downward trend. The SBA needs to continue serving as an effective gatekeeper to keep ineligible companies out of the 8(a) Program, but should make it as easy as possible for qualified companies to become admitted. Better interaction with applicants should go a long way toward meeting those 5 percent growth goals the SBA has established.

*Article posted courtesy of Steven Koprince*

## 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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