



Upcoming Events

Part of our mission at the PTAC is to provide training to our clients and members of the business community. We are very excited to announce these upcoming training events:

- **Veteran-Owned Small Business Seminar**
May 4, 2017 in Altoona, PA
Registration is closed. We'll do our best to bring it back for those who did not register this time.

- **DYNET Pittsburgh**
May 25, 2017 in Pittsburgh
This event will bring businesses and local, state, and federal agencies together for a day of networking and education in Pittsburgh.

[Register Now/Get More Info](#)

- **Showcase for Commerce**
May 30 to June 1, 2017 in Johnstown, PA
SAP&DC will have a booth at the region's largest B2B/B2G expo! It's always a good idea to visit and see what is happening with manufacturing and industrial services in our area.

- *The ever-popular* **Doing Business With Penn State**
June 9, 2017 in State College 9 AM to Noon.

[Register Now](#)

If you have any questions about these events, please email [James Gerraughty](mailto:James.Gerraughty@ptac.org) PTAC Program Manager or call him at (814) 949-6528.

In This Issue

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Defense Contracting Rebounded](#)

[No Reply to PPQs..."Too Bad"](#)

[Game-changing Legislation](#)

[About Us](#)

Defense contracting rebounded in 2016 but R&D spending continues to suffer

By Jared Serbu | @jserbuWFED

A new analysis of government data shows that 2016 may have been the low ebb of Defense contract spending, following six years of steady declines. Contracts for military hardware made a robust comeback last year, and to a lesser extent, so did those for services. But spending on research and development continued to suffer following years of large, disproportionate declines.

The conclusions come from a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, based on the think tank's review of numbers in the Federal Procurement Data System. It shows that DoD contract obligations fell in every year from 2009 to 2015, from \$414 billion to \$278 billion. But the decline began to level off in 2015, and then reversed itself last year:

Newly available data shows the Pentagon spent \$296 billion on goods and services in 2016. "It went up 7 percent, which definitely exceeded our expectations," said Andrew Hunter, a senior fellow at CSIS and a co-author of the report. The rebound was driven almost entirely by increased spending on procurement contracts: major weapons systems the military has already figured out how to build. Overall, spending on products was up 12 percent compared to 2015. Service contract spending grew [Click to read more](#)

(Accessed 4/19/2017)

Government References Didn't Complete PPQs? "Too Bad," Says GAO

by Candace Shields

Federal contractors frequently find themselves in the position of needing to establish their past performance credentials to secure future contracts - the government's form of a reference check. The government often performs these reference checks by requesting completed past performance questionnaires, or PPQs, which the government uses as an indicator of the offeror's ability to perform a future contract.

But what happens when a contractor's government point of contact fails to return a completed PPQ? As a recent GAO decision demonstrates, if the solicitation requires offerors to return completed PPQs, the agency need not independently reach out to government officials who fail to complete those PPQs.

By way of background, FAR 15.304(c)(3)(i) requires a procuring agency to evaluate past performance in all source selections for negotiated competitive acquisitions expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold. The government has many means at its disposal to gather past performance information, such as by considering information provided by the offeror in its proposal, and checking the Contractor Performance Assessment Reports System, commonly known as CPARS.

PPQs are one popular means of obtaining past performance information. A PPQ is a form given to a contracting officer or other official familiar with a particular offeror's performance on a prior project. The official in question is supposed to complete the PPQ and return it-either to the offeror (for inclusion in the proposal) or directly to the procuring agency. Among other advantages, completed PPQs can allow the agency to solicit candid feedback on aspects of the offeror's performance that may not be covered in CPARS.

But the potential downside of PPQs is striking: the FAR contains no requirement that a contracting official respond to an offeror's request for completion of a PPQ or similar document within a specific period (or at all). Contracting officials are busy people, and PPQ requests can easily fall to the bottom of a particular official's "to-do" list. And procuring agencies sometimes contribute to the problem by [PPQ Continued](#)

(Accessed 04/25/2017)

Contractors Resist Push to Post Contracts Online

By Charles S. Clark

In a move intended to make it easier for the public to see what exactly federal contractors do for the taxpayer money they receive, two Senate Democrats have introduced legislation that would require agencies to post the text of major contracts online. But contractors and contracting specialists are pushing back.

On March 15, Sens. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., and Jon Tester, D-Mont., introduced the Contractor Accountability and Transparency Act of 2017 (S. 651), which would require agencies to post a "machine-readable, searchable copy of each covered contract" within 30 days of its signing.

The bill would cover awards worth \$150,000 or more and would require that contracts be posted not later than 30 days after the agency enters into the agreement.

(Accessed 4/5/2017)

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 contract 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!
[Read more](#)

[Forward this email](#)

STAY CONNECTED

