

PTAC Link

PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER - CONNECTING BUYERS & SUPPLIERS

Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

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Are You Ready for Fall?

While it is usually considered the end of summer, look forward to the fact that the fall is when a lot of contracts are up for renewal and fiscal years begin!

Also don't forget to check your renewal dates on your certifications and registrations.

Federal Contracting MBA Class October 9, 2014

Did you ever want to take your company's federal contracting skills to the next level?

The Southern Alleghenies PTAC, in partnership with the PTAC at SEDA-COG in Lewistown, PA, is sponsoring a Federal Contracting MBA class on **October 9, 2014**, in Bellefonte, PA (Not too far from the Nittany Mall). The Federal Contracting MBA class is taught by the professionals at Wessel & Company of Johnstown, PA, a company who has had over 50 years of experience dealing with government contracting.

The class starts at 9 A.M. and ends at 12:00 p.m., with check-in at 8:30 A.M. The topics that will be covered are Key Concerns for Government Contractors, Ensuring Compliance with Federal Contracts, and Teaming Arrangements/Prime and Subcontracting Relationships.

Pre-registration is required, and there is a fee of \$20 for the class. To register or for more information, please visit <http://www.seda-cog.org/ptac/Pages/Federal-Contracting-MBA.aspx> or contact James Gerraughty at jgerraughty@sapdc.org or (814) 949-6528.

Get a Contracting Plan In Place Early

When contracting fails, there are several common reasons offered: the source selection and bid protest requirements; onerous acquisition regulations; an understaffed, poorly trained workforce. However many contracting officers can relate to significant delays during the planning phase, particularly to difficulties obtaining an acquisition plan (AP).



2014 PIW Event

Southern Alleghenies International Trade Department Sponsors Pennsylvania International Week

This year's theme for the event held at the Casino at Lakemont Park was "Bringing the World to PA 2014." Our International Trade Department did just that. Authorized Trade Representatives (ATRs) from countries around the world met with area business to discuss international opportunities to market their products. ATRs, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development's Center for Trade Development, advised those companies on market intelligence and foreign company background checks, customized searches for buyers and partners, and in-country logistical support for business trips. Business students from St. Francis University were also in attendance and able to meet with the ATRs to discuss business practices of countries around the world.

Small Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Fraud: Guilty Plea In "Rent-A-Vet" Case

A Nebraska man has pleaded guilty to fraud and money laundering charges stemming from a SDVOSB "rent-a-vet" scheme under which an ineligible business received 45 SDVOSB contracts.

According to a [Department of Justice press release](#), the man faces up to 24 months in prison and financial penalties. He and his companies also have been suspended from government contracting and face the likelihood of debarment.

The DOJ press release alleges that beginning in 2007, Ram Hingorani and his companies, Midwest

Often it's developed well *after* the contracting request for action. When this occurs, it places contract managers in the unenviable position of delaying RFP release, thus risking agency funding, but more importantly, jeopardizing mission success. The alternative is to jump into a contracting process with ambiguous goals or results. Thus, for all the debate about the effectiveness of government contracting, the success or failure of programs involving government contracting is actually determined very early, often unfortunately before the contracting officer's involvement - that is, during acquisition planning.

Eyes glaze over when someone references the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), and many are on record as wanting to modify, reduce, or even abolish it. However, the FAR's Part 7 acquisition planning guidance provides a great roadmap to all the many considerations necessary before satisfying a government need via contract. The program office must take non-delegable responsibility to figure out what, why, when, where, and how they will obtain acquired resources to support their goals. This shouldn't be another paperwork drill, completed by support contractors or the contracting officer and subsequently filed away. However, that sometimes is the case.

Defending the FAR isn't always popular, but it does provide clear, understandable guidance on *what* to consider in an AP, who to include, when key milestones, should occur, and how to get there. Just about anything significant and reasonable should be considered and addressed during acquisition planning, along with any alternatives, will before requesting a contractor's proposal. Later surprises should be few if the homework was completed beforehand. This homework includes open communication with industry to better understand the market, business trends, financing, and available technology; seeking out required expertise within the acquisition team; analyzing affected internal business processes or regulatory/policy mandates; collaborating closely with the requirements community; etc. The FAR even recommends periodically updating the AP to account for inevitable program changes.

So is acquisition planning one of those unnecessary, self-serving, bureaucratic, and burdensome requirements that slows the process and leads to poor outcomes? If the government moved toward a more commercial model, a program or business manager still needs to know where they're headed and why. Just as the analogous football coach doesn't take the field without a game plan, program planning must include an AP. When any of us goes to the grocery store, we likely know where and why we're going, what we plan to buy, and why we chose one store over another. We'll choose a product for various reasons (quality, price, ease of use, previous satisfaction) and decide payment and delivery terms. If dissatisfied, we'll return our purchase based on pre-understood criteria.

The integrity, responsibility, quality, and length of acquisition planning must be part of any discussion to improve acquisition outcomes. Contracting solicitation and award processes (like most business) can go smoothly if planned

Contracting Inc. and Midwest Paving Inc., engaged in SDVOSB fraud. According to the press release, Hingorani used the service disabled status of a business partner, Ronald Waugh, to qualify MCI as a SDVOSB. However, an investigation "revealed MCI was a pass-through and/or front company for Hingorani's other businesses and that Waugh was simply a figurehead or 'rent-a-vet' who was being used for his SDV status."

The government's investigation concluded that Hingorani, a non-SDV, controlled MCI and caused MCI to falsely self-certify as a SDVOSB. As a result of the fraudulent self-certifications, MCI was awarded 45 set-aside and sole source contracts worth approximately \$23.5 million.

Hingorani faces a prison term of up to 24 months, as well as financial penalties. Hingorani and his companies are currently suspended and face the prospect of debarment. Hingorani's SDV business partner, Waugh, was initially charged in the case as well, but the government has agreed to drop those charges,

Because of Hingorani's blatant SDVOSB fraud, legitimate SDVOSB were deprived of more than \$20 million in federal government contracts. When it comes time for sentencing, let's hope that the judge throws the book at Hingorani-and that Hingorani's time behind bars will help convince other potential fraudsters that SDVOSB crime doesn't pay.

Article posted courtesy of Steven Koprince

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well. But acquisition planning that only completes the file or occurs after the fact will result in less optimal program results. Good contracting managers are instrumental and must be included in this process, but ultimate responsibility lies with the agency, company executive, or program manager. Let's develop the game plan before we take the field!

Article posted courtesy of Michael P. Fischetti

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

[PA Supplier Portal](#)

[PA eMarketplace](#)

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

[FedBizOpps](#)

[Small Business Administration / Contracting](#)

- Quality assurance and packaging guidance

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



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