

# PTAC TALK

A newsletter of the Northwest Commission's **APEX Accelerator** (formerly PTAC)



Proudly serving the Northwestern Pennsylvania counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren

## In This Issue:

- PTAC's New Name: 'APEX Accelerator'
- Minimum Wage Increase for Federal Contractors
- Annual PA Municipal Authorities' Bidding Threshold Increase
- NW Commission APEX Counselor Receives APP Certification
- SD/VOSB Certification Process Now Under SBA
- Upcoming Regional Events
- National Events that may be of interest



This APEX Accelerator is funded in-part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense.

*Warmest wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!*

*From the APEX team:  
Robyn, Aaron & Melissa*



## PTAC's New Name: 'APEX Accelerator'

As of October 1, 2022, the nationwide Procurement Technical Assistance Program transitioned to new management from the Defense Logistics Agency to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP). All PTACs across the U.S. will now be known as "APEX Accelerators".



**The Northwest Commission APEX Accelerator will continue to offer FREE government contracting assistance & resources to businesses located in the NW PA counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango & Warren.**

As stated by Mr. Farooq Mitha, the Director of DoD's OSBP:

*"These Accelerators will keep helping American businesses pursue contracts with federal, state, and local governments by assisting with various registration and eligibility requirements, identification of contract opportunities, preparation for applications and submission of bids. They will also support the Department in targeted market research and other efforts to support specific acquisitions pursuant to the action plan developed in response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) 14017 on "America's Supply Chains", EO 14036 on "Promoting Competition in the American Economy", and EO 13985 on "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government"."*

**Since we are no longer "PTAC", we need to change the name of this quarterly newsletter!**

We've been tossing around ideas like *APEX Advisor*, *APEX Exchange*...

**Have a suggestion? We want to hear from you! Help us rename our newsletter. Email us your ideas: [apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org](mailto:apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org).**

We've been updating our website, social media and more to reflect the name change. Follow us online, as we regularly post government contracting updates, resources and worthwhile events:



On Twitter: [https://twitter.com/nwpa\\_apex](https://twitter.com/nwpa_apex)



On Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NorthwestCommissionAPEX](http://www.facebook.com/NorthwestCommissionAPEX)



On LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/northwest-commission-apex](http://www.linkedin.com/company/northwest-commission-apex)



Our general email box has changed to [apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org](mailto:apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org)



You can also find the individual APEX staff contact info posted at our website, [www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting](http://www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting), which provides more details on our government contracting services

#### *What does "APEX" stand for?*

Believe it or not, we've been directed by DoD's OSBP that A-P-E-X simply stands for Apex: the top or highest part of something. *(Quite a change from what we're all used to in government contracting – an acronym for everything!)*

## Federal Contracting: Annual Update – Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors

Effective January 1, 2023, the new minimum wage rate that must generally be paid to workers performing on or in connection with contracts covered by Executive Order (EO) 14026 will be **\$16.20 per hour**.

The required minimum cash wage that generally must be paid to tipped employees performing work on or in connection with covered contracts will increase to \$13.75 per hour.

A poster reflecting this new EO 14026 minimum wage rate is posted as Appendix B on the Federal Register notice, [HERE](#).



#### SOURCES:

- Federal Register – [click HERE](#)
- U.S. Dept. of Labor – <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/eo14026>

## YOUR NORTHWEST COMMISSION APEX TEAM:

### Robyn Young

Government Contracting Manager  
[robyny@northwestpa.org](mailto:robyny@northwestpa.org)

### Melissa Becker

Government Contracting Specialist  
[melissab@northwestpa.org](mailto:melissab@northwestpa.org)

### Aaron Ritsig

Government Contracting Specialist  
[aaronr@northwestpa.org](mailto:aaronr@northwestpa.org)

### Visit our website:

<http://northwestpa.org/government-contracting/>

## APEX Counselor Aaron Ritsig Receives APP Certification

During the Fall 2022 National Conference of the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) held in November, our own Aaron Ritsig was among those APEX Counselors recognized for their achievement of Associate or Certified Procurement Professional (APP & CPP) certification. During a special ceremony, Aaron received his APP certificate.

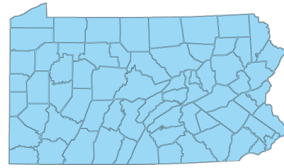


Aaron pictured above (center) with APTAC Board members

APTAC's APP Certification signifies extensive knowledge and experience in the wide range of subject areas required to provide comprehensive and effective assistance to businesses interested in government contracting.

Aaron is now working toward the CPP level. CONGRATULATIONS, AARON!

## PA Local Contracting: Municipal Authorities' Bidding Thresholds Increase, Effective Jan. 1, 2023



The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry has announced the annually adjusted authority and municipal bidding thresholds for 2023 based on the Consumer Price Index.

Beginning January 1, 2023, the minimum purchase amount that requires advertisement for bids will increase from \$21,900 to \$22,500. In addition, the minimum purchase amount for telephone quotes will increase from \$11,800 to \$12,200.

### SOURCES:

- <https://www.psats.org/2023-bid-and-quote-limits-announced>
- <https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pabull?file=/secure/pabulletin/data/vol52/52-50/1905.html>

## Update: SD/VOSB Changes: Certification Now Handled by SBA



As we included in our [November 2022 issue of PTAC TALK](#), the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) transferred to the Small Business Administration (SBA) effective January 1, 2023.

CVE is the VA office that has handled the process for veteran-owned small businesses to receive official VOSB or SDVOSB verification. **All functions of the CVE are now managed by the SBA, and the 'verification' process has become a 'certification'. SBA is calling the program the Veterans Small Business Certification Program or "VetCert".**

Last year, VA stopped accepting new & renewal applications for SD/VOSB, and new applications should be submitted to the SBA when they begin receiving them on or around January 9, 2023. Per the VA's '[VetBiz](#)' site: beginning 1/1/23, all requests, comments & questions by contracting officers and businesses regarding the verification function must be sent to SBA at [vetcert@sba.gov](mailto:vetcert@sba.gov). Additionally, **the SBA has posted a helpful FAQ at <https://www.sba.gov/document/support-veteran-small-business-certification-vetcert-program-frequently-asked-questions>.**

SBA's new website for the VetCert program is <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/veteran-contracting-assistance-programs>. SBA held a webinar introducing their new application portal on 12/6/22; watch a recording of this session on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2ocyiM7nb4>.

*APEX is keeping on top of these changes as well, so as always, we're here as a resource for free assistance! Contact a counselor at [apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org](mailto:apexaccelerator@northwestpa.org).*

## National EVENTS that may be of interest:

### Air Force & Space Force Chief Information Security Officer's Small Business Cybersecurity 'Ask-Me-Anything' Series

Every Tuesday | Virtual, Free

This series, referred to as "Blue Cyber", offers a different topic each week that highlights common questions, concerns, issues regarding **cybersecurity regulation compliance** &/or SBIR/STTR programs.

Find topics & register for select dates at:  
[https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_6Gz84TQGRvm6YHMSVYEOQg](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_6Gz84TQGRvm6YHMSVYEOQg)

*All of the Blue Cyber educational materials presented at these events can be found here:*  
<https://www.safcn.af.mil/CISO/Small-Business-Cybersecurity-Information/>

### Doing Business with GSA

January 13 | Virtual, Free

General Services Administration's (GSA) Small Business Office is hosting a Webinar, "How to do Business with GSA". This 30-minute webinar is open to all small businesses looking for additional information and guidance on GSA and their opportunities.

Details & registration at:  
[https://gsa.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSf-vqTmiGeYG6jUUpIN9mZ0JmE\\_hYi8](https://gsa.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSf-vqTmiGeYG6jUUpIN9mZ0JmE_hYi8)

### Virtual Networking Event with NASA

January 26 | Virtual, Free

Join the NASA Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) for a networking event, "Research and Develop Your Small Business Opportunities at NASA". This event will host four networking rooms.

More info & registration at:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/research-and-develop-your-small-business-opportunities-at-nasa-registration-477306074317>

# Upcoming Regional Events

Watch for upcoming Northwest Commission PTAC events at <http://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events> and [https://www.northwestpa.org/news\\_events/calendar\\_of\\_events](https://www.northwestpa.org/news_events/calendar_of_events)

## Understanding ITAR Compliance for Supply Chain Subcontractors

January 26, 2023 | 9:30a | Virtual | Free

This FREE program will provide a thorough understanding of the scope of the ITAR regulations and the compliance requirements of a subcontractor.

Hosted by NEPA Alliance APEX, co-sponsored by NW Commission APEX and Southern Alleghenies APEX. **TO REGISTER, visit NEPA Alliance's event page at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4456750963856523096>.**

## Developing a Capabilities Statement & How to Use It

January 26, 2023 | 2:00p | Virtual | Free

Presented by Robyn Young, NW Commission APEX Program Manager, and hosted by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Robyn will discuss a key government contracting tool -- the Capabilities Statement. She will talk about what a Capabilities Statement is, how to develop one & how to use it for connecting with government agencies and primes.

More info & registration link at <https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4450>.

## Understanding HUBZone Certification

January 31, 2023 | 10:00a | Virtual | Free

During this free webinar presentation, Ms. Takeisha Hodge, Program Manager of Certification & Outreach with the HUBZone Program, will cover the Historically Underutilized Business Zone Certification. In this webinar, you will learn:

- How the HUBZone certification program has changed
- What the program requirements are, and if your business meets them
- How to apply and what the application process looks like

Co-sponsored by NW Commission APEX, North Central PA APEX, and PennWest Clarion SBDC. **TO REGISTER, email your name & company information to [bbrennen@ncentral.com](mailto:bbrennen@ncentral.com).**

## Understanding the Service Contract Act (SCA) & Davis Bacon Act

February 2, 2023 | 10:00a | Virtual | Free

Join us to learn from Karen Welton of the U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL) Wage & Hour Division as she discusses the Davis Bacon Act and the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act (SCA).

Hosted by Southern PA Commission (SPC) APEX & co-sponsored by the NW Commission APEX, JARI Johnstown APEX & West Virginia RCAC APEX. **TO REGISTER, visit <https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4449>.**

## 'Welcome to WOSB' Series

Ongoing Dates | Virtual, Free

The Women-Owned Small Business Program announced a new webinar series: "Welcome to WOSB". This series is intended as a pre-application primer on the program and application process. Sessions will be held virtually every third Thursday of each month at 10am and 3pm EST.

More info & registration at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/welcome-to-wosb-webinar-tickets-482397874027>

Choose date/time by selecting "more options" under 'When and where'.



Have any questions on anything in this issue of our newsletter?

Be sure to contact your APEX Accelerator Counselor:

[Robyn Young](#)  
[Melissa Becker](#)  
[Aaron Ritsig](#)



395 Seneca Street  
Oil City, PA 16201

814-677-4800

[www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting](http://www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting)

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