

APEX CONNEX

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

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

<https://www.apexaccelerators.us/>

Northwest Pennsylvania Defense Council

Strengthening the Defense Industrial Base

The NW Commission's APEX Accelerator is developing an advisory group for companies in the Northwest PA region that will focus on bringing resources, guidance and networking opportunities in the area of Defense Contracting. The group will be called the "Northwest Pennsylvania Defense Council".



We are asking local businesses, company owners/Presidents/CEOs, employees, etc. in the region to respond to our survey to help us gather the appropriate information to assist in building a strong and

effective advisory group that will be a tremendous asset to both new and well-established defense contractors.

COMPLETE OUR SURVEY: [CLICK HERE](#)

For more information, please contact Robyn Young, Government Contracting Manager: robyny@northwestpa.org, 814-677-4800 ext 130.

President's Fiscal Year 2024 Defense Budget Released

On March 9, 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration submitted to Congress a proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget request of \$842 billion for the Department of Defense (DoD), an increase of \$26 billion over FY 2023 levels and \$100 billion more than FY 2022.



The FY 2024 Defense Budget is driven by strategy and provides for capabilities and investments to advance the Secretary's three key priorities: defending the nation, taking care of our people, and succeeding through teamwork.

Read about the President's Defense Budget Here: [FY 2024 Press Release](#)

Federal Contracting:

Improved Registration Workflow Coming to SAM.gov on May 26

Beginning on **May 26, 2023**, there will be improvements to the start of the SAM.gov registration workflow. The changes may be noticeable to returning or frequent SAM.gov registrants, but likely won't be significant for those registering for the first time.



First, when you start a new entity registration, you will be asked two questions that will help determine how you want to use your SAM.gov registration (the "purpose of registration"). Next, you will see a personalized recommendation for your registration option based on how you answered the questions. Finally, you will be able to compare the other options to your recommendation and make the choice that fits your organization's goals.

If you are updating an existing registration, you will also answer the two new questions about how you want to use your SAM.gov registration. Next, you will see the registration table with your current registration option highlighted. You can change that option or continue with your current option.

Whether you are registering for the first time or updating, you will only be asked the new questions once. On future updates, you won't see the questions.

Why is this changing? What else do you need to know? [Continue reading HERE.](#)

As always, if you need assistance with a SAM registration or renewal, be sure to connect with the APEX office for help.

SBA Update:

SubNet, DSBS, and HUBZone Application Have Moved



"SubNet" is the online Subcontracting Network managed by the Small Business Administration (SBA) that is used by federal prime contractors to post subcontracting opportunities. **SubNet recently moved to a new platform at https://subnet.sba.gov/client/dsp_Landing.cfm.**

The "DSBS" is SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search which is linked to a company's registration in SAM.gov. (In SAM.gov, DSBS is also known as the "SBA Profile"). The DSBS is an important marketing tool for small businesses, as this database is used by federal contracting officers & federal primes in conducting market research. **The DSBS has migrated from the General Login System (GLS) to [SBA Connect](#).** An instructional

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Visit our website:

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

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on social media for more gov't contracting news, resources, events & more:



In the News:

DoD Instructs Acquisition Teams to Prioritize Small Business Engagement Over Best-in-Class Contracts

The Department of Defense (DoD) is instructing its components to support efforts to expand small business participation in the federal marketplace following the release of its *Small Business Strategy* earlier this year. The Office of the Under Secretary for Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment released a **memorandum** saying that meeting small business goals and increasing contracting opportunities for small disadvantaged businesses and other socioeconomic small businesses should be prioritized over attaining best-in-class contract goals "if achievement of both goals is not possible." [Read more HERE](#) from *FCW.com*.

video on how to reach the DSBS Profile Pages via SBA Connect is available [HERE](#).

Additionally, the **HUBZone application process has also moved to SBAConnect**. A training video on how to register & login to the HUBZone portal via SBAConnect can be viewed [HERE](#).

Need help using SubNet or DSBS, or need help applying for HUBZone certification? Connect with the APEX Accelerator office for assistance!

Federal Contracting:

Facility Clearance Lifecycle for Small Businesses



On April 25, the Small Business Administration (SBA) Western PA District held a webinar training with Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA). The guest speaker from DCSA discussed federal facilities clearance for small business contractors/subcontractors.

Watch a recording of this session & download slide decks at sba.box.com/s/unpol7z051xa6p8cr3hzcghe64xgxaut. And feel free to reach the APEX Accelerator for assistance in understanding & obtaining security clearances for government contracting.

Need Bonding for Commercial or Government Contracting?

SBA's Surety Bond Guarantee Program

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Surety Bond Guarantee Program can open doors for small businesses by reducing barriers to bonding & increasing contracting opportunities. Visit their site for more info:

<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/surety-bonds>



AND on May 9 at 10:00a, the SBA Western PA District will be holding a free informational webinar on the Surety Bond Guarantee Program -- [Sign up HERE](#).

Upcoming Regional Events

Federal Funding for Innovation: Understanding the SBIR/STTR Programs

May 10, 2023 | 10-11:30a | Virtual | Free

Learn from subject matter expert Kelly Wylam, Executive Director of Innovation Partnership (IPart), as she joins us to discuss the Small Business

OFCCP Notification to Federal Contractors to Certify Through the Contractor Portal by June 29, 2023

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) opened its Contractor Portal on March 31, 2023, for existing covered federal contractors to certify compliance with Affirmative Action Program (AAP) requirements for this year.

Covered federal contractors and subcontractors must use the Contractor Portal to certify, on an annual basis, whether they have developed and maintained an AAP for each establishment and/or functional/business unit, as applicable.

For more info, including portal registration and certification resources: [CONTINUE READING HERE](#).

National & State EVENTS *that may be of interest:*

Blue Cyber Small Business Cybersecurity 'Ask-Me-Anything' Series

Every Tuesday | Virtual, Free

The "Blue Cyber" series 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: 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/>

Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. These competitive programs offer early-stage funding to U.S. small businesses in Federal research & development.

More info & registration at nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4461.

PA Cybersecurity Resource Center Webinar

May 31, 2023 | 1-2:00p | Virtual | Free

Our guest presenters for this session are representatives from PA Cybersecurity Resource Center operated by Concurrent Technologies Corporation (CTC). CTC received a grant from the PA Department of Community & Economic Development to create a center focused on bringing cyber awareness, education & resources to PA businesses. The PA Cybersecurity Resource Center is tasked with guiding the Defense Industrial Base (DIB) in cybersecurity compliance and assisting with eligibility to compete for Department of Defense contracting opportunities.

More info & registration at nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4464.

Watch for upcoming Northwest Commission APEX Accelerator events at:
nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events
and
northwestpa.org/news__events/calendar_of_events/



Have questions on anything in this issue of our newsletter?

Be sure to contact an APEX Accelerator Counselor:



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Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Webinar Trainings & Virtual “TKO” Seminar

Ongoing | Virtual, Free

DLA holds regular webinar trainings on various topics -- as well as their quarterly “Training, Knowledge and Opportunities” (TKO) Seminar -- to teach vendors how to do business with the agency. [See the DLA Small Business Outreach Calendar](#) for upcoming course offerings &/or to register for the next available TKO.

Doing Business with NASA Science & Resource Centers

May 17 | Virtual, Free

As NASA continues to innovate in the space exploration, scientific, and research industries, small businesses will be critical to its success. Each Center plays a unique role in cultivating the vendors needed to ensure success. [More info & registration HERE.](#)

2023 Showcase for Commerce

May 31 – June 2 | Johnstown, PA

Business & industry trade show and defense contracting exhibition in Johnstown, PA. This event offers opportunities to connect with government acquisition leaders, federal elected officials, major defense primes & subcontractors, and strategic business partners.

Find more details, and learn about registration for attendees & booth space, at:

www.showcaseforcommerce.com

DOL Prevailing Wage Seminars

Upcoming sessions:

June 27 & 28 and Sept. 13 & 14

Virtual, Free

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for Dept. of Labor's (DOL) Virtual Prevailing Wage Seminars: Free sessions will cover Davis-Bacon Act & Service Contract Act compliance topics. [Find more details & registration HERE.](#)