

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

Open for Public Comment: Department of Defense Contract Finance Study Follow-Up Activity



DoD is currently seeking public comment on improving the timeliness of payments to defense subcontractors. A request for feedback was published July 14 in the Federal Register and stems from the Defense Contract Finance Study, which found that defense subcontractors and suppliers generally do not receive favorable cash flow benefits as consistently or to the same extent enjoyed by defense prime contractors.

Input on this matter is solicited from interested parties, including current prime contractors, subcontractors, suppliers or vendors, and potential new entrants. This is a great opportunity for small businesses in particular to have their voice heard.

Read the Federal Register notice here:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/14/2023-14959/departments-of-defense-contract-finance-study-follow-up-activity>

Interested parties are encouraged to submit their comments by 9/12/23:

- By email to osd.pentagon.ousd-a-s.mbx.dpc-pcf@mail.mil [include "DoD Contract Finance Study Follow-up Activity" in the subject line of the message]
- Or via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/DARS-2022-0012/document>

Federal Contracting Cybersecurity Resource: PROJECT SPECTRUM

Project Spectrum, www.projectspectrum.io/, is a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)-supported initiative with a mission to improve cybersecurity readiness, resiliency, & compliance for small/med-sized businesses and the Federal manufacturing supply chain.



Watch Project Spectrum's 'Web Portal Overview' video to learn how to best take advantage of the resources they have to offer, including blog articles, training modules, and a Cyber Readiness Check: [CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO.](#)

And, as always, be sure to connect with the APEX Accelerator for free assistance with understanding cybersecurity regulations & requirements for Federal contracting & subcontracting.

Federal Contracting:

CMMC Rulemaking Updates



On July 25, 2023, the Department of Defense (DoD) sent its highly anticipated proposed rule for the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) program to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The submission sets the clock moving on the release and implementation of the final rules governing DoD contractor cybersecurity compliance requirements under CMMC to begin potentially as early as fiscal year (FY) 2024.

Next Steps and Potential Timelines for CMMC:

1. DoD has officially submitted the CMMC rule for regulatory review which begins the countdown toward official publication.
2. CMMC should be reviewed & published in late October 2023
3. There will be a 60-day public comment period
4. CMMC should be finalized & being showing up in contracting in Q1 of 2025

Contractor Implications:

The DoD's submission of their CMMC rule to OMB should dispel much of the conjecture that CMMC is unlikely to become a reality which DoD contractors need to address. Although CMMC has its roots in previous White House and Pentagon administrations, it generally fits with the mindset of the Biden Administration's National Cybersecurity Strategy and subsequent Implementation Plan in their pursuit of raising contractor and industry cybersecurity requirements.

DoD contractors continue to be well advised to get working on complying with the NIST SP 800-171 &/or other relevant standards that will position them for successful CMMC compliance and accreditation.

SOURCES and ADDITIONAL READING:

- [DoD Sends its CMMC Rule to OMB, Setting the Clock Moving on Final Implementation](#), from GovWin.com
- [CMMC Rulemaking Updates: 7 Things You Need to Know](#), from Summit7.us

Remember, if you would like assistance with understanding the current and upcoming cybersecurity regulations & requirements for federal contractors & subcontractors, please connect with the APEX Accelerator.

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Follow Us

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



In the News:

State:

The New Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP)

Recently, Governor Shapiro announced the new Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP). This program allows organizations doing infrastructure work funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) or the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to receive up to \$40,000 for each new worker they train. **LEARN MORE AT:** <https://pa.gov/newjobs/>.

Federal:

Federal Agency Small Business Procurement Scorecard, FY2022

The annual Scorecard is an assessment tool to (1) measure how well federal agencies reach their small

Federal Contracting:

Add That Capabilities Statement to Your DSBS Profile

The Small Business Administration (SBA) just launched a NEW feature in their Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) tool that allows you to link your Capabilities Statement to help market your business to agencies, primes & teaming partners.

WHAT IS THE DSBS?

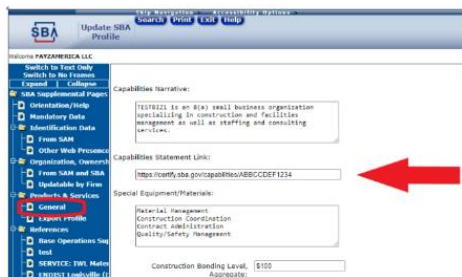
If you're not familiar with the DSBS, this is the small business profile that is linked to a company's System for Award Management (SAM) registration. [SAM registration is required for doing business with Federal-level agencies. When a company qualifies as "Small" for one or more of their NAICS codes in SAM, a profile is generated for that company in the DSBS.] The DSBS is used by government buyers for their market research. It's also a tool that prime contractors may use to find subcontractors or other teaming partners.

WHAT'S A CAPABILITIES STATEMENT?

A Capabilities Statement is a critical 1-2 page document in government contracting, no matter what size company you represent. It is a marketing tool, a snapshot of your company that serves as a resume of your business. It is a concise overview of qualifications and experience to demonstrate distinctive competencies and show why a company is a good fit for a target customer or partner.

If you have a Capabilities Statement & are familiar with accessing/updating a DSBS profile, you can find instructions on how to use the new feature here:

<https://sbaone.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DSBS/pages/2742910980/Add+a+Capabilities+Statement+Link>



Need an assist in developing your government contracting Capabilities Statement or completing your DSBS profile (or SAM registration for federal contracting)? Please feel free to [reach the APEX Accelerator!](#)

Federal Contracting:

Doing Business with NASA: The New, Updated NASA Vendor Database (NVDB)



The New NASA Vendor Database Has Launched! The NVDB is a database of vendors, both large & small, who wish to do business with NASA. The NVDB is utilized by NASA's Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) for outreach communications and Office of Procurement (OP) for market research & acquisition planning.

business and socio-economic prime contracting and subcontracting goals, (2) provide accurate and transparent contracting data and (3) report agency-specific progress. The prime and subcontracting component goals include goals for small businesses, small businesses owned by women, small disadvantaged businesses, service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, and small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones). [Read the overview, and view the FY22 Scorecard HERE.](#)

What is FOCI – Foreign Ownership, Control or Influence?

What Does it Mean for Federal Contractors?

Where federal contracting is concerned, Foreign Ownership, Control or Influence (FOCI) procedures are intended to ensure that foreign firms cannot undermine U.S. security to gain unauthorized access to classified information.

FOCI may affect a company's ability to qualify for or maintain an entity eligibility determination such as facility clearances or access to classified information. If determined to be under FOCI, a U.S. entity is ineligible for access to classified information unless and until effective security measures have been put in place to negate or mitigate FOCI.



When is a U.S. entity considered to be under FOCI?

- A foreign interest has the power to direct or decide issues affecting the entity's management or operations in a manner that could either:
 - Result in unauthorized access to classified information; or
 - Adversely affect performance of a classified contract or agreement.

The database may also be used by industry when searching for capabilities to support subcontracting opportunities or for networking purposes.

Even if you registered in the past, NASA OSBP asks that you do so again to be included in the new NVDB.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NVDB and START REGISTRATION at <https://apps.nasa.gov/nvdb/>.

Want to learn more about NASA & other government agencies? Contact the APEX Accelerator for no fee assistance, resources & guidance on how to do business with federal, state &/or local government entities.

PA State Contracting:

PA Supplier Portal Tips from PA Dept. of General Services (DGS)



Most challenges suppliers face when working in the PA Supplier Portal can be avoided by following three simple tips...

Two heads are better than one.

It is important for a supplier's PA Supplier Portal record to be up-to-date with at least two (2) administrative users at all times. Administrative users are responsible for maintaining record information including addresses (e.g., default remit-to, ordering, delivery), one bank account, and creation of additional users to access the PA Supplier Portal.

End the guessing game.

Don't know who your current administrative user is for the PA Supplier Portal? You can easily find out:

- Visit www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us, taking note of the important system requirements.
- Select "**Supplier Registration**" located along the left hand margin of the page.
- Enter the Tax ID Number and select "**Next.**"
- Enter the six-digit Vendor Number (SAP) and select "**Next.**" (If the vendor number is unknown, use the [supplier lookup tool.](#))
- Under Vendor Identification, make contact with the Administrative User via the contract information provided.

In this case, sharing is NOT caring.

Each individual user is to have their own user ID and password associated with an organization-specific email that only they can access.

Do not share user ID's, passwords, or emails!

As always, please feel free to reach the APEX Accelerator for help with the PA Supplier Portal &/or bidding on state gov't opportunities.

- The foreign government is currently exercising, or could prospectively exercise, that power, whether directly or indirectly, such as:
 - Through ownership of the U.S. entity's securities, by contractual arrangements, or other means, or;
 - By the ability to control or influence the election or appointment of one or more members to the entity's governing board.

FIND MORE ON FOCI:

- [Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency \(DCSA\)](#)
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):
 - [32 CFR 117.11](#)
 - [32 CFR 2004.34](#)

If you would like more information concerning FOCI, please [connect with the APEX Accelerator](#) as a free resource.

Other 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_6Gz84TQGRvm6YHMSVyE0Qg

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/>

DOL Prevailing Wage Seminars

**Upcoming sessions:
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 (9/13) & Service Contract Act (9/14) compliance topics.
[Find more details & registration HERE.](#)



SAVE-THE-DATES

Upcoming in-person & virtual networking and match-making events in our region & around the state.

Be sure to reach out to your APEX Accelerator Counselor if you'd like help preparing for any networking events – including help with market research &/or developing a Capabilities Statement.

PA Job Order Contracting (JOC) Networking Fair - Western Region

Sept. 12, 2023 | 10a-1:00p | Altoona, PA | No Fee

The JOC program provides prime & subcontracting opportunities in construction (all disciplines) & professional design from PA agencies undertaking construction, renovation, and maintenance projects with a total value of \$600,000 or less. [Find more info on the PA JOC Program [HERE](#).]

Networking Fairs are scheduled for Western, Central & Eastern PA Regions to give DGS verified Small Diverse (SDB) and Veteran Owned Businesses (VBE) an opportunity to network and market their goods & services directly to the awarded JOC Program general construction, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical prime contractors for the various regions of the Commonwealth. The Western Region event will be held September 12 at the Comfort Suites Altoona.

Details & registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/job-order-contracting-joc-networking-fair-western-region-tickets-671129515447>

GACO APEX Accelerator's Procurement Opportunities Fair

Oct. 25 | Monroeville, PA | Registration fees apply

Government contracting networking and training conference held by our neighbor APEX Accelerator at PennWest California University.

Find a link to the event save-the-date flyer at: <https://www.sru.edu/offices/gaco-apex-accelerator/seminar-and-other-training-events>

OH, NY & PA APEX Accelerators' Tri-State Mega Matchmaker

Dec. 5 & 6 | Virtual | Free

Our online training & matchmaking event will be held again this year. An opportunity to join training webinars and schedule one-on-one meetings with government agencies, prime contractors, and business resources.

Stay tuned for more announcements and event info to be posted in the coming weeks: <https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events>

Watch for upcoming Northwest Commission APEX Accelerator events at: nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events

AND

northwestpa.org/news__events/calendar_of_events/

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 DLA Aviation: VENDOR INFORMATION HUB Webinar

August 15 | Virtual, Free

In July, DLA Aviation launched their Vendor Information Hub ("the Hub"). The Hub provides increased communications by way of self-service tools, resources, & instructional material from across multiple DoD and/or DLA websites. It also provides a "one stop shop" specifically geared towards the needs of DLA Aviation's vendors.

On August 15, from 10a-12p, DLA is holding a free webinar to provide info on the Hub along with a live demo on how vendors can maximize its use. [CLICK HERE to register.](#)



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