



Small Business In Focus

April 2008

Volume 3, Number 12

Small Business GWAC Center

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Director's Corner



Mary Parks, Director, Small Business GWAC Center

These past three months have been filled with a lot of changes, a tremendous amount of activity as well as opportunities to improve what we do. As we move towards the last half of Fiscal Year 2008, we expect to normalize many of the changes, and bring more variety to our contract offerings.

In launching the GWAC Management module in the IT Solutions Shop, the GWAC portfolio has improved the management of information available on our contracts. This change alters

the method that sales are reported and Contract Access Fee (CAF) is paid by our contract holders. It also provides our customers with an automated method to query information on the task orders issued against the GSA managed GWACs and also gives them specific information on their orders in easy to use reports. We understand the difficulty any change in processes creates, but believe all of us will see benefits to the new system very quickly.

On another front, we were pleased to receive Executive Agent designation from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on the COMMITTS Next Generation (NexGen) GWAC that was previously managed by the Department of Commerce. Our Small Business GWAC Center has recently received the contract files from Commerce and are preparing for an industry meeting in the near future. We are excited about this new opportunity and looking forward to meeting the COMMITTS NexGen contract holders and helping new customers utilize this important small business GWAC.

In closing, the delay in the launch of the Alliant Small Business GWAC has given us an opportunity to ensure the awards were evaluated properly. Although this will take some additional time, we look forward to getting this important small business GWAC launched once we have completed our review.

"Quality is not an act. It is a habit." – Aristotle

GWAC Customer Training

Center Provided Delegation Training at Air Force Bases

Janna Babcock, Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) for the Veterans Technology Service (VETS) Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC), and Misty Claypole, PCO for 8(a) Streamlined Technology Acquisition Resources for Service (STARS) GWAC, presented Delegation of Authority training for both contract vehicles in San Antonio, Texas. Two training sessions were held at Randolph and Lackland Air Force Bases on January 29, 2008. One training session was held at Brooks-City Air Force Base January 30, 2008. Overall, 103 government employees attended the five training sessions, and 94 requested the available one hour of Continuous Learning Points (CLP) credit. Fourteen contracting officers will receive a delegation of procurement authority for both contract vehicles. Others attending were small business specialists, contract specialists, and program managers. The training was a result of an invitation from the Small Business Office at Randolph AFB, TX.

National Weather Service Strategy Meeting

Matt Verhulst, Center Contracts Division Director, visited the National Weather Service (NWS) in Norman, Oklahoma on February 11 regarding the potential of using the VETS GWAC for a significant IT requirement. During the meeting it was learned that NWS also was interested in assisted contracting services for this requirement, so Matt connected them with the regional assisted services contracting team who is supporting them on this requirement. The Small Business GWAC Center looks for opportunities such as this to support both its GWACs and to bring business to other parts of GSA.

CDC Briefed on Small Business GWACs

Jean Oyler, Business Operations Manager, and Matt Verhulst, Contracts Division Director, visited with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on February 21 to visit about the potential of using the VETS and other small business GWACs for a significant IT requirement. CDC was represented by its Chief Information Office, Program Officials and Contracting Officials, and they generously afforded

Jean and Matt three hours of their time. A request for capabilities statements was issued in March directly to the VETS GWAC prime contractors by the Small Business GWAC Center on behalf of CDC to conduct market research.

Training Provided at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Aletha Pelham, Contract Specialist, and Jihyun Huyck, Business Development Specialist, presented delegation training for the Center's 8(a) STARS and Veterans Technology Services (VETS) GWACs at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Department of Health and Human Services, on Feb 26 in Baltimore, Maryland. Howard Innis and Janna Babcock, PCOs for the two GWACs also participated via teleconference. The training included an overview of the GSA GWAC Program, VETS and 8(a) STARS' features and benefits, and a demonstration of the contract websites. The course provided participants with Continuous Learning Point (CLP) credit as well as delegations of procurement authority. The participant surveys indicated a high satisfaction with a score of 4.7 out of 5.

GSA Customer Accounts and Research Trained on VETS

Jihyun Huyck and Lori Hanavan, Business Development Specialists, held a webinar on January 24th to train the Regional Customer Service Representatives and Account Managers in the Customer Accounts and Research (CAR) business line on the Veterans Technology Services (VETS) GWAC. The webinar was a repeat of the live presentation given to the Regional Marketing Managers and CAR Staff at the International Marketing Conference held in Phoenix, AZ last October. The training offered information on VETS to include in Regional customer outreach initiatives.

Reminder for the GWAC ordering contracting officers (OCOs) --

Task orders including modifications can be uploaded in the IT Solutions Shop, <https://itss.gsa.gov> or can be sent via email or fax to the Center immediately after award.

VETS Quarterly Program Meeting

The VETS GWAC Quarterly Program Meeting was held by teleconference on January 16, 2008. Both the Contracting Division and the Business Development Division took part in the presentation. The agenda included review of contract requirements, training and sales, outreach efforts, and success stories. Questions that came from the prime contract holders in the written quarterly status reports are used to develop a targeted agenda. Two of the major topics of discussion were re-representation of size status at the option period, subcontracting limitations and reporting. Forty out of the forty four contractors on the VETS GWAC were represented on the teleconference. The next meeting will be held before the National Veteran Small Business Conference on July 7, 2008.

Center Welcomes New Associate



Dean Cole
Business Development
Specialist

Business Development is Booming! Dean Cole joined the Center as a Business Development Specialist on February 3. Dean began his GSA career in the legacy Federal Technology Service as a Telecom Specialist and then moved on to become a Project Manager in what has now become the

Assisted Acquisition Division of Federal Acquisition Service. Dean was actually previously loaned to the SBGWAC Center as a part of the Alliant SB Evaluation Team, and we're proud to welcome him to our center as an official SB GWAC member!

Commits NexGen

COMMITTS OMB Designation Received

The final approval was received from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on the transfer of COMMITTS NG to GSA. Jim Ghiloni, Director, GWAC Programs, Mary Parks, Director, Small Business GWAC Center, and Small Business GWAC Contracts Director, Matthew Verhulst met with the Small

Business Administration on March 10, 2008 to present the GWAC Center's plan to address the small business issues raised in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) brief presented to the Department of Commerce regarding Commits NG. Now that OMB's approval has been received, meetings are being planned with Industry and customers regarding the Commits NG ordering procedures. The Commits NG contracts will provide GSA with a small business cost type vehicle to offer customers. Please monitor the contract website, www.gsa.gov/commits for more updates.



Matt Verhulst,
Contracts
Division
Director, with
Commits
contract boxes
arrived

8(a) STARS' Technical Refreshment

8(a) STARS was updated to add new pre-priced labor categories to the contract as a result of its recent technical refreshment. The new labor categories will help reduce the need for other direct costs on orders issued under this contract, making it more adaptive for federal requirements. Check out the [Contract Section J](#), updated with the additional labor categories and descriptions, and the [ceiling pricing](#).

On March 20, 2008, Misty Claypole and Howard Innis, Contracting Officers, and Matt Verhulst held a conference call with the 8(a) STARS industry partners to review the recent technical refreshment to the 8(a) STARS contract.

Center Receives “Above and Beyond” Award

The GSA Office of Small Business Utilization announced the Small Business Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC) Center Team has been selected as 2007 Above and Beyond Award recipients for demonstrating Outstanding/Innovative Support for Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Small Business. This is the second time that the Center received the award with the first being 2005.

Small Business GWAC \$ales

Total order value (in obligated dollars) as of March 31, 2008:

- ★ **8(a) STARS \$1,235,350,455**
- ★ **HUBZone \$36,139,397**
- ★ **VETS \$171,256,295**

For a listing of customer agencies visit www.gsa.gov/sbgwac and click “Small Business GWAC Sales”.

VETS Contractor Meets with President to Discuss Economic Stimulus Package



April 7, 2008, Washington, DC – Mr. Tony Jimenez, President and CEO of MicroTech, a VETS contractor, attended a meeting at the Whitehouse, at President Bush’s request, to speak with the President and his advisors regarding the tax incentives in the economic growth package and the positive benefits the tax incentives will have on small and medium sized businesses.

Change in the GWAC Sales Reporting System

Bilateral modifications were issued to all VETS and 8(a)STARS Industry Partners to change the GWAC sales reporting system from the Vendor Support Center (VSC) to the GWAC Management Information System effective April 1, 2008. Modifications on VETS were issued on March 17, 2008, and the STARS modifications were issued on March 28, 2008. Industry partners will be required to enter information on all active task orders for their contract, as well as allocate the Contract Access Fee (CAF) that they have paid for those tasks. Contractors can now pay their CAF by check, credit card or by ACH. Instructions and forms for payment of the CAF were sent to contractors by the Small Business GWAC Center in mid-April. For more information, contact Chris Carver at 816-823-2330 or christine.carver@gsa.gov.

Management Information System (MIS) Net Conference

On March 26, the Small Business GWAC Center and the VETS Industry Partners participated in a webinar held by Jie “Jeff” Chao, GWAC National Program Office. Jeff demonstrated the new system using a test system and showed screen prints in a powerpoint which was provided after the meeting. The VETS GWAC industry partners will report all task orders for the VETS GWAC beginning with the second quarter of FY 2008 in the MIS, <http://itss.gsa.gov>, in lieu of the Vendor Support Center. Industry partners will be able to allocate the contract access fee (CAF) paid to individual task orders using the system.

Selling to the Federal Government 101



Getting to know agency small business advocates

When marketing to the government, industry can find that there are a number of trade shows and procurement conferences focusing on opportunities for small businesses in the government market. Often those events offer networking sessions with government buyers and large businesses seeking business partners. As a small business, you may find it challenging to schedule and allocate resources among these various events. You simply can't attend them all! Furthermore, you will need to get more information about each event than advertised for your cost-benefit analysis. One way to help prioritizing and scheduling your event participation is to work with agency small business advocates. Small business staff can be found at most agency Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) websites, which post relevant events taking place in the government market.

OSBU is responsible for the scope of small business programs mandated by law. Every federal agency is required by the Small Business Act of 1953 to establish an office that reports to and advises the head of the agency on the implementation functions and duties under this act.

OSBU's outreach activities make it possible for the small business community to meet key contracting experts and be advised on the procurement process.

OSBUs are good points of contact for introducing our GWAC contracts and setting up training on GWACs for their agency procurement community. OSBUs can provide data on their agency small business goals and achievements as well as forecasts. Visit your customer agency OSBU website to find more agency specific information. Additionally, following is a link to Federal Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Directors Interagency Council ("OSDBU Council"): www.osdbu.gov. OSDBU Council is an organization led by the Directors of the Federal OSDBUs.

Small Business In Focus Quiz

1. How many new labor categories were added in the 8(a) STARS Functional Area 1 (FA 1) since the contract's recent technical refreshment?
 - a. 20
 - b. 25
 - c. 30
 - d. 35

2. Which of the two Functional Areas on VETS GWAC is "Information Systems Engineering"?
 - a. FA 1
 - b. FA 2

Answers on page 6

Acquisition Corner

Proposed FAR change on Priority of Small Business Programs

Now that I have your attention, there is a proposed FAR change on this topic but it is intended to clarify existing SBA policy. The Federal Register (Vol. 73, No. 47 March 10, 2008) features a proposed rule on this topic starting on page 12699. Basically, there may have been some confusion with some contracting officers and others as to what the proper priority is when working with small business set-asides. This proposed rule is intended to bring clarity to the FAR to ensure it reflects the order of precedence for set-asides as listed in the SBA regulations.

There is a fork in the road with this rule that goes one way for procurements over \$100,000 and another way for those that fall between the Micro Purchase Threshold (currently \$3,000, except certain special circumstances) and \$100,000.

Let's look at the over \$100,000 path first. Over \$100,000 the contracting officer must consider using 8(a), HUBZone or Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) before proceeding with a general small business set-aside. With one exception, the consideration may lead to the use of the general small business set-aside. The exception? By statute the contracting officer cannot set aside the acquisition for small business (non HUBZone) if the criteria for setting it aside for a HUBZone company are met (see 15 U.S.C. 657a(b)(2)(B)).



What are the criteria for a HUBZone set-aside?
 1. The acquisition is above the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$100,000. 2. The contracting officer must have a reasonable expectation that offers will be received from two or more HUBZone companies (one manifestation of the "rule of two"). 3. The award will be made at fair market price.

Let's revisit the fork in the road to go the other way. Where the procurements will be under \$100,000 they are reserved for set-aside to small businesses (including HUBZone, 8(a) and SDVOSB where there is a reasonable expectation that two or more small businesses will submit competitive offers (rule of two again). At these dollar values, the contracting officer has discretion over which way to go. If a requirement has been accepted by SBA under the 8(a) program it must remain in the 8(a) program unless SBA agrees to its release.

Finally, aside from the special situation with HUBZone companies where the valuation of the procurement is over \$100,000 there is no order of priority among 8(a) HUBZone and SDVOSB companies for set aside purposes. The Federal Register wording lends nuances to these rules that there is not space to examine here. Check out the actual proposed wording of the FAR at www.acquisition.gov.

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Lee Tittle
Contract Specialist



Lee Tittle joined the GSA Small Business GWAC Center in November 2005 as a Contract Specialist Intern. As a Contract Specialist for the VETS GWAC and Alliant Small Business GWAC, Lee is responsible for a variety of contract administration tasks. He also serves as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) for the Center's internal acquisition and administrative support tasks. Lee holds a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Missouri and a M.Ed. from Rockhurst University. He is married to Lisa, a fellow GSA associate. Together they enjoy rooting for the Chiefs and Royals. Lee is also an avid runner and enjoys competing in events ranging from 5Ks to marathons.

Upcoming Events



The Small Business GWAC Center participates in a variety of events throughout the year. Many events offer training on GSA's GWACs as well as networking opportunities for small business. Please monitor our website for updates.

May 5-9	DISA Customer Partnership Conference & Expo	Orlando, FL
May 15	Small Business GWAC Briefing, DISA	Falls Church, VA
June 16-19	Annual FAA National Small Business Procurement Conference	Las Vegas, NV
July 7-10	4th Annual National Veteran Small Business Conference & Expo	Las Vegas, NV
August 11-14	2008 GSA Network Services Conference	Dallas, TX

Contact Us

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Please send us your suggestions for *Small Business In Focus*.

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