



The IAE Digest

News and Program Updates from
the Integrated Award Environment

GSA

Volume 3, Issue 2
2nd Quarter FY2016

From the Assistant Commissioner



If there is one thing that's constant within the Integrated Award Environment, it is change. Change surrounds us and it influences so much of what we do on a daily basis. What's more, change is a motivating force that drives our work in many respects.

The IAE's biggest and most significant product – the new SAM.gov (which will initially be housed at the forthcoming transition.sam.gov) – is rooted in change. We're changing, or transitioning, the current 10 disparate IAE systems into one integrated, user-friendly environment that will be housed in the cloud; a one-stop shop for anyone who needs to interact with the functions or systems that administer federal awards. Anyone seeking to do business with the federal government will be able to access one environment instead of having to jump around to multiple, various sites. If that's not monumental change in the right direction, I don't know what is!

To help us with the constant change and transition going on within the IAE Program Management Office (PMO), I'm pleased to introduce *The IAE Digest* readers to our new Deputy Assistant Commissioner and IAE Program Manager Vicky Niblett. Vicky joined the IAE PMO in March and has hit the ground running as the program's senior manager.

Vicky made her change and came to GSA from the U.S. Army's Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems where she served as deputy product director, wideband control. In this role, she developed, deployed, and managed complex, mission-critical satellite control systems.

She also was the liaison to the Australian Government's Department of Defense.

Prior to becoming a federal civil servant, Vicky was a federal government contractor where she supported NASA headquarters as a mission directorate project manager and an application development branch manager.

We knew that Vicky would fit in well at the IAE when we learned that she co-founded a successful nonprofit organization that specializes in providing bereavement support services. It was clear that kind of passion would mesh well here with our culture. The IAE staff and the work we do have real-world impact; it's not "just IT work." We seek to improve countless lives by making our data more readily available and more transparent: by increasing access and opportunity for all Americans (more on this in the next issue of *The IAE Digest*).

Right out of the gate, one of Vicky's first on-the-job tasks will be to help us institute a very significant change (once again) as we adhere to requirements set out in the Federal

In This Issue:

- From the Assistant Commissioner
- IAE Agile Tip
- IAE Governance
- IAE Awards Reporting Task Order
- Two IAE Leaders Named to the 2016 Federal 100
- The IAE Shares Program Updates
- Standardized Award and Funding Office Codes Now Required in FPDS-NG
- Quarterly System Updates
- IAE Team Member Spotlight

From the Ass't Commissioner (continued)

Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and make the transition to Activity Address Codes (AACs).

As you will read further in this edition of *The IAE Digest*, AACs will provide greater consistency in how data is collected and reported when it comes to identifying awarding and funding offices for procurement awards captured in the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG).

This is a big change, and we're thrilled to have Vicky on board to lead us through it.

As we move forward with the building of your new SAM.gov, be on the lookout for even more communication from us through a variety of mediums, all aimed at keeping you – our stakeholders – apprised of our progress and what you need to be aware of.

If you're not already, please be sure to join our almost 16,000 subscribers and register for the IAE Industry Community blog; be sure to follow the official GSA Twitter account [@USGSA](#) where you will receive IAE updates; keep informed about the program online at [www.GSA.gov/IAE](#); and join us for our quarterly Industry Day events.

As always, you can reach me (or Vicky) anytime with questions, concerns, comments, or suggestions at IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.

Eric Ferraro
Assistant Commissioner
Integrated Award Environment

The Evolution of SAM.gov

SAM.gov is evolving. To help you understand the transition, here's some information you need to know:



(The Current) SAM.gov: The System for Award Management is the current entity registration site for anyone looking to do business with the federal government. The largest of the IAE's 10 systems, the current SAM.gov will be the final site to transition into the new environment.



Transition.SAM.gov: This will be the temporary home for all of the functions of the IAE's ten current systems as we transition them into the new environment. Each of the ten systems will continue to exist for a time, but users will start to be redirected to transition.SAM.gov to complete their intended activity.



(The Future) SAM.gov: At the conclusion of the IAE's modernization effort, all of the IAE's award management functions will be united under the umbrella of SAM.gov, which will become a one-stop-shop for federal contract and assistance management.

IAE Agile Tip: Relationships and Trust Are Everything

Agile development isn't just about giving cool new toys to software developers so they can shake up the process. It also is about shaping an organization's culture to embrace a different way of designing and deploying products and services. Today's Agile developers need a supportive culture that facilitates clear and continuous lines of communication and collaboration to deliver products and services based on end-user requirements.

During our Industry Day event last quarter, IAE Assistant Commissioner Eric Ferraro cited a famous quote by Peter Drucker, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." He pointed out that as the IAE was changing course, the PMO also focused on its people to help them perform their tasks in a newly agile environment. He also stated that the IAE PMO's big "Ah-Ha" moment during the ongoing transition was when they realized that "relationships and trust are everything."

To cultivate relationships and trust, the IAE PMO leadership focused on shaping its culture in the following ways:

- Putting the mission first, people always
- Preventing the hoarding of information
- Letting team members take responsibility for their actions, outputs, mistakes, and accomplishments in a supportive environment
- Giving team members the opportunity to learn
- Treating contractor personnel as full team members, not hired hands
- Holding retrospectives as scheduled
- Modeling servant leader qualities including building collaboration, breaking down silos and fostering trust across boundaries while balancing getting work done.
- Valuing learning

- Investing time, resources, and budget on training and coaching
- Tapping into the experiences of others outside the organization who have gone through their own Agile transition
- Fostering versus dictating organizational dialogue

If your organization is embarking on an Agile IT project, be sure to include business, operations, and other non-technical staff in your training, planning, and development efforts. The communication and collaboration between multidisciplinary teams will serve as a key driver for the success of an iterative software development process.

In Case You Missed It: Industry Day 10

- Held on March 9, 2016
- Featured IAE Assistant Commissioner Eric Ferraro speaking about lessons learned during the IAE's ongoing transition to agile development, including: the catalyst, agile best practices, how the IAE Program Management Office is maturing its operations, and critical takeaways from this long-term effort
- Participants learned how agile development supports the IAE's modernization strategy, the phases the IAE undertook to implement the Structured Agile Framework (SAFe), how the IAE is coming into SAFe maturity, and some of the cultural changes that are happening as we continue to improve as an agile organization
- Event materials and an archived recording are housed on the [IAE Interact site](#)

Don't miss Industry Day 11! Please join [IAE's Interact community](#) to receive information about our next event.

IAE Governance

Procurement Committee for E-Government (PCE)

Several bodies provide governance and guidance to the IAE program. The Procurement Committee for E-Government (PCE) is a cross-agency group of experts responsible for addressing the data needs of the federal procurement workforce. The PCE provides analysis and recommendations to the IAE Program Management Office (PMO) on how its future environment can be designed to deliver efficient and effective data access to federal procurement professionals.

The PCE is charged by the Award Committee for E-Government (ACE) to make decisions and/or recommendations related to (1) improving the collection and use of procurement data in acquisition decisions and management, (2) increasing transparency and traceability of federal procurement data, (3) developing and maintaining data standards and associated tools, and (4) creating policies and guidance related to those data and systems.

The PCE is composed of voting members from each of the 24 Chief Financial Officers Act agencies. Advisory members (non-voting) include representatives from the GSA IAE PMO, the Office of Management and Budget Office and other small agency councils.

“The thoughtful and well-informed input provided by the PCE is critical for the success of our modernization strategy,” said IAE Assistant Commissioner Eric Ferraro. “We value our ongoing partnership with the PCE, and appreciate their devotion to create an improved environment for federal procurement stakeholders.”

The PCE meetings typically are held on the fourth Tuesday of every other month, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. To learn more information about the PCE, please contact IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.

IAE Awards Reporting Task Order

The IAE PMO advanced its modernization effort by awarding the the IAE Reporting Task Order to Wexler Technical Solutions. The objective of this task order is to obtain Agile development, testing, transition, operation, and maintenance services for the presentation of FPDS-NG data, including the modernization of existing reports and the creation of new reports and data visualization capabilities. Wexler Technical Solutions is tasked with developing a new Procurement Reporting application that will provide a centralized location to access reports, and support standard, static, and ad-hoc reporting capabilities.

The IAE PMO looks forward to working with Wexler Technical Solutions to advance its modernization effort.

Did You Know?

Activity Address Codes (AACs)

Effective March 31, 2016, the FAR requires the use of Activity Address Codes (AACs) to identify awarding and funding offices for procurement awards captured in FPDS-NG. Read more about this new requirement in Standardized Awarding and Funding Office Codes Now Required in FPDS-NG article on page 7.



Two IAE Leaders Named to the 2016 Federal 100

The IAE is excited to announce that two of our team members – Navin Vembar and Judith Zawatsky - were selected to be on the 2016 Federal Computer Week's Federal 100 list. The list recognizes leaders in government and industry who have demonstrated excellence in federal government IT. This is an impressive accomplishment and much-deserved recognition for both Vembar and Zawatsky.

Vembar, the IAE's former IT director and currently GSA's Chief Technology Officer, is being recognized for his vision and work in turning the IAE into an impressive example of innovation in government. To support the migration of key functionalities of the IAE's ten current systems into a modernized environment, he devised and executed a plan to build a unified, cloud-hosted Common Services Platform (CSP) to serve as the foundation for developing federal award management functions. The CSP received an Authorization to Operate (ATO) in October 2015, making it GSA's first ATO for a cloud-based platform-as-a-service and paves the way for continued IAE and GSA-wide technology innovation.

Zawatsky, the IAE's former director of outreach and stakeholder management and currently the MAS Transformation Program Manager, Office of the Commissioner, FAS is being recognized for her stellar outreach and user engagement strategy that played a fundamental role in the IAE's success. Zawatsky built strong, critical relationships with the users of our systems, our industry partners, and our governance stakeholders. Through a series of more than 30 virtual and in-person focus groups, our users were able to provide feedback about their interactions with our systems. This feedback has provided critical insight about the selection, design, and development of features and functionalities for the future environment. Through this and other engagement tactics, Zawatsky frequently conveyed program updates

and engagement opportunities to the IAE's large base of stakeholders.

Please join us in congratulating Vembar and Zawatsky for their accomplishments!



The IAE Shares Program Updates with Key Stakeholders

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2016, IAE PMO representatives continued to spread the word about our progress with industry and government partners at multiple events:

U.S. Navy Past Performance System Meeting

On January 11th, IAE Assistant Commissioner Eric Ferraro and Program Manager Marci Eaton visited the U.S. Navy team in Portsmouth, New Hampshire that runs three of IAE's systems: the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PIIRS). It was a great opportunity to explain our product roadmap to the U.S. Navy Past Performance Team and to detail how their important work in helping the IAE run our past performance reporting sites fits in with the program's overall mission and strategy.



USTDA Global Procurement Initiative

On February 9th, Judith Zawatsky, the IAE's director of outreach and stakeholder management, participated in a roundtable hosted by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Speaking with a delegation from the Philippines, Zawatsky shared best practices for IT procurement that we employ here at the IAE PMO and throughout government.



Washington, DC PTAC Meeting

On March 10th, IAE Assistant Commissioner Ferraro had the opportunity to speak with representatives from Washington D.C.'s Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Ferraro shared information about the IAE's product roadmap, and answered questions about SAM and FBO. It was a great opportunity to provide important information that will help the PTACs give the best support possible to companies seeking to do business with the federal government.

The IAE team thoroughly enjoys any opportunities to share program updates with industry and government partners. If you would like an IAE representative to speak at an upcoming event, please contact iaeoutreach@gsa.gov.



Standardized Awarding and Funding Office Codes Now Required in FPDS-NG

Effective March 31, 2016, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires the use of Activity Address Codes (AAC) to identify awarding and funding offices for procurement awards captured in FPDS-NG. The AAC is a uniform way to identify organizations in federal agencies. An office is the smallest organizational unit in an agency with direct responsibility for awarding or funding most of the actions. The migration to AAC is a standard and uniform way to identify offices.

According to FAR Subpart 4.6 - Contract Reporting, all agencies are required to record an awarding and funding office in FPDS-NG.

Beginning April 1, 2016, the change that you will see in FPDS-NG is to the format of these codes and perhaps the names of the offices depending on your agency implementation of the codes. These new codes will also be included in the changes to the Procurement Instrument Identifier that must be in place by October 1, 2017.

The change to a standard and uniform identifier will provide greater consistency in how data is collected and reported as well as transparency for both the public and for federal agencies using such award data for spending management purposes, such as category management. Each office identified by a department or independent agency has a unique AAC and is managed by one agency point of contact.

Contract actions in FPDS-NG already include information about funding and contracting offices. As agencies were planning for the AAC requirement, they took a close look at the offices they were using and updated them by retiring some, eliminating others that were outdated, or adding new ones.

For any changes, agencies also provided a mapping to trace updated office codes to back to original office codes. This mapping allows users to run reports using the AAC and see awards based on the new codes and the original codes. These same names and codes will be utilized in the new environment. You will see the same office names in all other IAE systems as they transition into the new environment.

If you are the program manager in the funding office, you'll need to know what funding office code to include in your request. If you are the contracting officer or contract specialist, you'll need to know both your awarding office code as well as the funding office code to record your actions in FPDS-NG (either directly or via your agency contract writing system). If you don't know the AAC for your awarding office or funding office, please reach out to your agency lead. There are many codes from which to select and picking the wrong one may result in you having to do data corrections later in the year.

Senior Procurement Executives from each agency, in coordination with Heads of Contracting Activity, are responsible for ensuring full accuracy and precision, and wide-range applicability, of procurement data. Selecting the wrong offices for an award will result in report and management errors that will need to be corrected later in the year. Understanding the impact of inaccurate data submission in FPDS-NG data now will avoid extra work later.

At the end of the fiscal year, the Chief Acquisition Officer of each agency certifies whether the agency's procurement data is complete and accurate. For more information about the AAC requirement, please visit the [IAE Industry Community blog on GSA Interact](#).

Quarterly System Updates

System for Award Management

With each software release, we work to improve the System for Award Management (SAM) user experience, improve the quality of information available from SAM, and reduce the burden for those who wish to do and have business with the U.S. government. We do this through a combination of minor enhancements and fixing known issues. In the February 26th quarterly release, we made improvements that included:

- **Increasing data integrity about the determination of small business concerns in the Representations & Certifications section.** We updated the logic to determine if an entity is a small business concern in Representations & Certifications only if they meet the Small Business Administration (SBA) size standard as small for one or more North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code they selected.
- **Enhancing the usability of the Register/Update entity search functionality.** We improved the Register/Update Entity search fields and Registration Details display to only present those fields applicable to the user's roles.
- **Enabling SAM to collect the required information of any parent, subsidiary, or successor entities with regard to offerors that are responding to a solicitation for a federal contract.** We implemented Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Case 2013-020, Information on Corporate Contractor Performance and Integrity.



- **Improving regulatory compliance with FAR Case 2015-011, Prohibition on Contracting with Corporations with Delinquent Taxes or a Felony Conviction.** We displayed FAR Case 2015-011 in SAM, including two new FAR questions, adding FAR 52.209-11, and updating provision FAR 52.212-3.
- **Reducing user frustration by streamlining the Data Access Request process.** We changed the SAM Entity Management web service to default to the highest role available if there are multiple data access roles. In addition, we updated SAM to prevent users from creating multiple data access requests for the same data access role.
- **Enhancing usability of the Representations & Certifications section.** We inserted SAM Assistant text for the drop downs, checkboxes, and text boxes in this section. A pop up now appears and provides definitions for information inputted in the action fields by the user.
- **Increasing access to historical BioPreferred Reports.** We resolved an issue which prevented certain government users from downloading the BioPreferred Reports.
- **Increasing usability of the Status Tracker.** We updated the Status Tracker to display the correct status bubble for certain entity registrations which have passed IRS validation and are pending CAGE Code assignments.

For additional details, you may find and read the February 26th posted to [SAM.gov > General Info > News > Release Notes](#).



Quarterly System Updates

Common Services Platform: Release 5

Using a modified version of agile methodology to build the new environment, the IAE IT development team has planned for quarterly “releases” during which we will complete various tasks and migrations of systems. In the second quarter of 2016, we were immersed in Release 5.

During Release 5, the IAE IT development team was able to successfully test the integration between the CSP and Connect.Gov.

Connect.Gov creates a secure, privacy-enhancing service that conveniently connects people to government services and applications online using an approved digital credential they may already have and trust. By being able to integrate the CSP and Connect.Gov, federal government users will be able to securely access IAE applications using their PIV/CAC cards.

The IAE development team also was able to propagate changes to the CSP from a non-production platform to production platform using Chef tools. Chef is a tool used to automate the server set up and migrate changes from one platform to another. In anticipation of potential disruptions with the propagation and migration of changes, the CSP can manually deploy new servers if the Chef tool is not working at a given time.

Additionally in Release 5, we were able to improve the developer experience of using the CSP for developing applications, such as enhancing the DNS solution by migrating to Route 53 technology and upgrading new versions of existing tools such as Docker. The IAE development team also made enhancements to reduce deployment time of new applications in the CSP by 50 percent, from approximately 40 mins down to 20 mins. To learn more about the IAE’s Release 5 accomplishments, please email IAEOutreach@gsa.gov.

IAE by the Numbers

Federal Service Desk 2nd Quarter FY 2016

- Call volume was at an average of 35,390 calls per month, an increase of 32 percent from Q1
- Average speed to answer was 35 seconds, compared to the industry standard of 30 seconds
- Average handle/talk time remains approximately 14 minutes, consistent with Q1
- First call resolution rate decreased slightly to 89 percent, but continues to exceed the industry standard of 80 percent

System for Award Management 2nd Quarter FY 2016

- Average number of registrations activated per month:
 - New registrations: 6,963
 - Updated registrations: 53,850
- Average cycle time in 2Q FY2016 was 2.05 days
- Average number of site visits per month was 1,021,674
- Average number of searches performed per month was 5,066,436

IAE Team Member Spotlight



Kristen Lanier

Kristen Lanier is a Program Analyst with the Program Planning, Analysis and Control (PPAC) Division within IAE. In her role, Kristen is an integral part of the IAE team, and her work touches almost every facet of the program in multiple

ways. Talk about wearing many hats!

She joined the IAE team two years ago, and since then her primary focus has been on project management, acquisitions, and on supporting the team in the budgetary functions of the program.

Today, Kristen manages the IAE Program Plan and is responsible for coordinating the plan with myriad other program documents. She also serves as the program liaison to GSA's Region 5 Contracting Office in Chicago; serves as the contracting officer representative (COR) on five of the IAE contracts; she manages the overall repository of contract files and information for more than 30 contracts; and Kristen handles data call management and submissions for program related reports (such as small business and contract reporting requirements).

Recently, Kristen led the contract transition project within IAE through which all contracts were moved from one contracting office to the current office in Region 5. Kristen also has been working in support with the financial team in preparation for submission of the new budgetary requests and planning sessions to determine and align the next five years

fiscally to the planned schedule.

“Working in the IAE program continues to be a fun and exciting experience,” said Lanier. “The IAE always is changing for the better and we’re always working toward an improved, cloud based environment for our stakeholders. It’s very rewarding to watch the progress as we move forward. But for me, it’s never been just about learning the technology and the Agile process behind the modernization effort. For me, it’s a pleasure to work with an incredible group of people who I’ve had the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from.” Prior to her start in the IAE, Kristen worked in GSA’s Fleet Management Program

When not giving her all to GSA, Kristen enjoys many different things (just like her job entails inside the building). She is very into art projects, outdoor adult sport leagues such as flag football and kickball, and traveling to new and exciting places. She relishes any excuse to be outside on a beautiful day enjoying a walk around the many sights in DC, and she’ll jump at the chance to get a bit outside of the city and take on a vigorous hike.

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