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Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the PTAC - January 2022

*by James Gerraughty,
SAP&DC PTAC Program Manager*



Happy New Year! No government shutdown on the radar, and some pretty significant changes to federal and state contracting on the horizon!

A big change (again) is the Cybersecurity Maturation Model Certification, or CMMC. It's on version 2.0 and it has been somewhat simplified, going from 5 levels to 3, and requiring slightly different assessment parameters. The Southern Alleghenies PTAC will be hosting a deep-dive CMMC class this spring, so stay tuned.

In the next few weeks, we're going to have various trainings, mostly online, pandemic-dependending. Some topics of interest will be the E-Verify program from

DHS, SBIR training from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a small business workshop pairing government contracting and business growth.

Please refer to the events calendar below. Furthermore, you can review and register for upcoming events on our [eCenter page](#).

If you have ideas for topics, or would like to learn more about something, please drop us a line at (814) 949-6500 or by [Email](#).

Leader of SAM Transition Is Leaving Government

By Aaron Boyd, Senior Editor, Nextgov

[Note: I had the pleasure of working with Ms. Zawatsky on SAM training and initiatives since 2013.]

Judith Zawatsky will retire from public service after 15 years to take on a new role in the private sector.

The head of the General Services Administration's Integrated Award Environment—the effort to combine all acquisition support sites under a single portal at SAM.gov—will be leaving government in the new year.

Judith Zawatsky, assistant commissioner for the office of systems management in the Federal Acquisition Service, is leaving government in early January to return to the public sector after 15 years in public service.

Zawatsky started her federal career in 2006 as a program analyst for GSA, serving in a number of support and leadership roles in FAS. She was appointed assistant commissioner in June 2018. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 1/5/2022)

5 Key Takeaways From GAO's Latest Annual Report on Bid Protests

By Ethan Brown, McCarter & English LLP

Statistics indicate that nearly 50% of protests are effective.

Federal contractors may be wondering whether it is worthwhile to file a bid protest, and what their chances of success are if they choose to challenge a contracting decision. The Government Accountability Office's latest bid protest report to Congress—required annually under the Competition in Contracting Act—provides federal contractors a snapshot of GAO's bid protest metrics for the 2021 fiscal year, along with data on the previous four fiscal years for comparison. Below is a five-year retrospective summary of GAO's bid protest statistics, followed by five major takeaways from the [fiscal 2021 report](#).

1. The protest effectiveness rate remains high. Although showing a slight decrease from the record-high 51% effectiveness rate in fiscal 2020, GAO’s 48% percent effectiveness rate for fiscal 2021 (the rate at which a protester obtains some form of relief at GAO as a result of either a sustained protest or voluntary agency corrective action) continues to outpace the average effectiveness rate over the past five fiscal years (46%) and the 10-year average of 45%.
2. Case filings continue to drop. Of the 1,897 cases filed in fiscal 2021, bid protests accounted for 1,816 of the filings, compared to 2,052 protests filed in fiscal 2020. The remainder of the cases filed during fiscal 2021 constituted costs claims (43 filings) and requests for reconsideration (38 filings). Compared to fiscal 2020, the total number of fiscal 2021 cases filed dropped by 12%, representing a significant drop from the high of 2,789 cases filed in fiscal 2016 and continuing the downward trend in case filings beginning in fiscal 2019. A key factor in the drop [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 1/5/2022)

Researchers to Harness America’s First Exascale Supercomputer in Summer 2022

By Brandi Vincent, Defense Technology Consultant, Nextgov

It will be used to pinpoint new patterns in patient data for precision medicine—and more.

Select researchers will soon gain access to America's earliest exascale supercomputer, Frontier, which is poised to offer modeling and simulation capabilities at the very highest level of computing performance next year.

“Frontier is a first-of-its-kind system and it requires a thoughtful, deliberate process to bring a machine of its magnitude online,” Justin Whitt, program director for the Oak Ridge Leadership Computing Facility where the machine will be based, told Nextgov on Wednesday. “Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our world-class team, we’re exactly where we thought we’d be when we put the plan in place two years ago.”

Exascale systems are at the heart of the next generation of high performance supercomputing.

The big and powerful tools will perform a quintillion operations per second. According to Whitt, they are expected to “more realistically simulate the processes involved in scientific discovery and national security,” such as those associated with regional climate, additive manufacturing, “the conversion of plants to biofuels, the relationship between energy and water use, the unseen physics in materials discovery and design, and fundamental forces of the universe, and myriad others.” [Continue Reading](#)

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