



Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator - September

by James Gerraughty
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Manager



To paraphrase Douglas Adams, I never could get the hang of August/early September. No holidays between 4th of July and Labor Day, but you get to make your own. Hot summer weather (at least in the Northern Hemisphere) that can drop to almost-Fall levels of temperature without warning. The opportunities and challenges of a new school year that even 30-something years later give me some gastric butterflies.

The inconsistency of this time period gives way to the relative consistency of government contracting and the APEX Accelerators' roles in it across the country. This introspection is coming at a good time, with our funding applications coming due! I'm happy to say, in looking back to look forward, that Barb, Gloria, Ethan, and I have done a pretty good job serving our area and look forward to that service in 2025 (and beyond!).

For upcoming outreach events, we have an ongoing DCAA monthly class, a cybersecurity monthly class (timely, considering the rule change!), and a review/Q&A of the VA PACT Act signed earlier this year. All of these classes are free to attend, but you need to register to get the login information. Please review our training opportunities that are coming up in September 2024 and beyond on our [eCenter page](#). Stop back often, as the training events do update regularly!

Finally, 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](#). We'd love to hear from you!

DOD Unveils Proposed Final Rule for CMMC Contracting By Nick Wakeman, Editor-in-Chief, Washington Technology

A phased rollout of the cybersecurity standard should begin in early 2025, with varying compliance levels and increased program office discretion. Comments on the Part 48 rule are due by Oct. 15.

After months of anticipation, the Defense Department has released a proposed rule for how it will incorporate Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification requirements into defense contracts.

The Thursday Federal Register notice confirms several things we have known since the CMMC proposed rule was released in December. Most importantly, the CMMC rule will have a phased rollout once the rule becomes final and that is widely expected to happen in early 2025.

During the phase-in period, individual program offices will make the decision of whether CMMC will be a requirement. But by the end of the phase-in, all defense contracts will have a requirement for either of the three CMMC compliance levels. [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 8/20/2024)

VA Launches New Platform to Help Veterans Identify and Report Scams

By Edward Graham, Staff Reporter, Nextgov/FCW

Scammers have increasingly targeted veterans and their beneficiaries, particularly after the PACT Act expanded benefits and health services for retired service members. The Department of Veterans Affairs announced on Friday that it launched a website and call center to help protect veterans from scams, a move that came after lawmakers pressed VA to step up its anti-fraud efforts.

The department said the new services “will help inform veterans and their families of common fraud schemes, give them tools to protect themselves and provide an outlet for reporting and further assistance.”

VA’s launch of the new resources roughly coincided with the two-year anniversary of the PACT Act, which was signed into law by President Joe Biden on Aug. 10, 2022. The law expanded access to benefits and healthcare services for veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances while on active duty, but has also led to an increase in predatory scammers seeking to defraud retired service members.

“We know that more veterans than ever before are now receiving VA benefits, which sadly means that more bad actors are trying to steal those benefits,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. “That’s why we’re launching these tools: to give these heroes every tool at the federal government’s disposal to protect themselves and their families.” [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 8/20/2024)

VOSB Program Possibly Expanding? Congress Takes Next Step Towards VOSB Expansion

By John Holtz, Senior Associate Attorney, Koprince McCall Pottroff, LLC

The Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) Program has long held a sort of unheralded position in SBA and federal contracting. Unlike its much more expansive counterpart, the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) Program, the VOSB Program only allows for set asides for VOSBs for VA procurements (and even within VA SDVOSB companies are in a higher tier than VOSBs). In contrast, all agencies can set aside contracts for SDVOSBs. This has limited the desirability of admission to the program for many veteran owners, many of whom do not do work, that the VA needs. But things might be changing, as Congress has proposed a big step towards expanding what agencies can set-aside contracts for VOSBs.

As noted above, at the present time, only the VA can set aside prime contracts for VOSBs. VOSB status can be helpful when it comes to subcontracting in some situations, but otherwise, the program is very limited in its scope. Considering that the VA is quite a small agency compared to some of the behemoths like the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Health and Human Services, the VOSB program often is overlooked by contractors, and, to a degree, one can’t blame them.

However, on June 14, 2024, the House of Representatives approved language for the upcoming 2025 National Defense Authorization Act that would change things if it becomes law. This language, located at Section 861, would allow DoD to set aside contracts for VOSBs: [Continue Reading](#)

(Accessed 8/20/2024)

The Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The APEX Accelerator stands ready to support businesses in the central PA Alleghenies region in the pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide.



Due to the generous support of our Commonwealth and Federal funding partners, services provided by the APEX Accelerator are free of charge.

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the APEX Accelerator will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing all of the program resources necessary to increase your share of contract awards. We will also coordinate assistance, if needed, with our PA PREP partners.

Contact us today at the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC to get started!

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