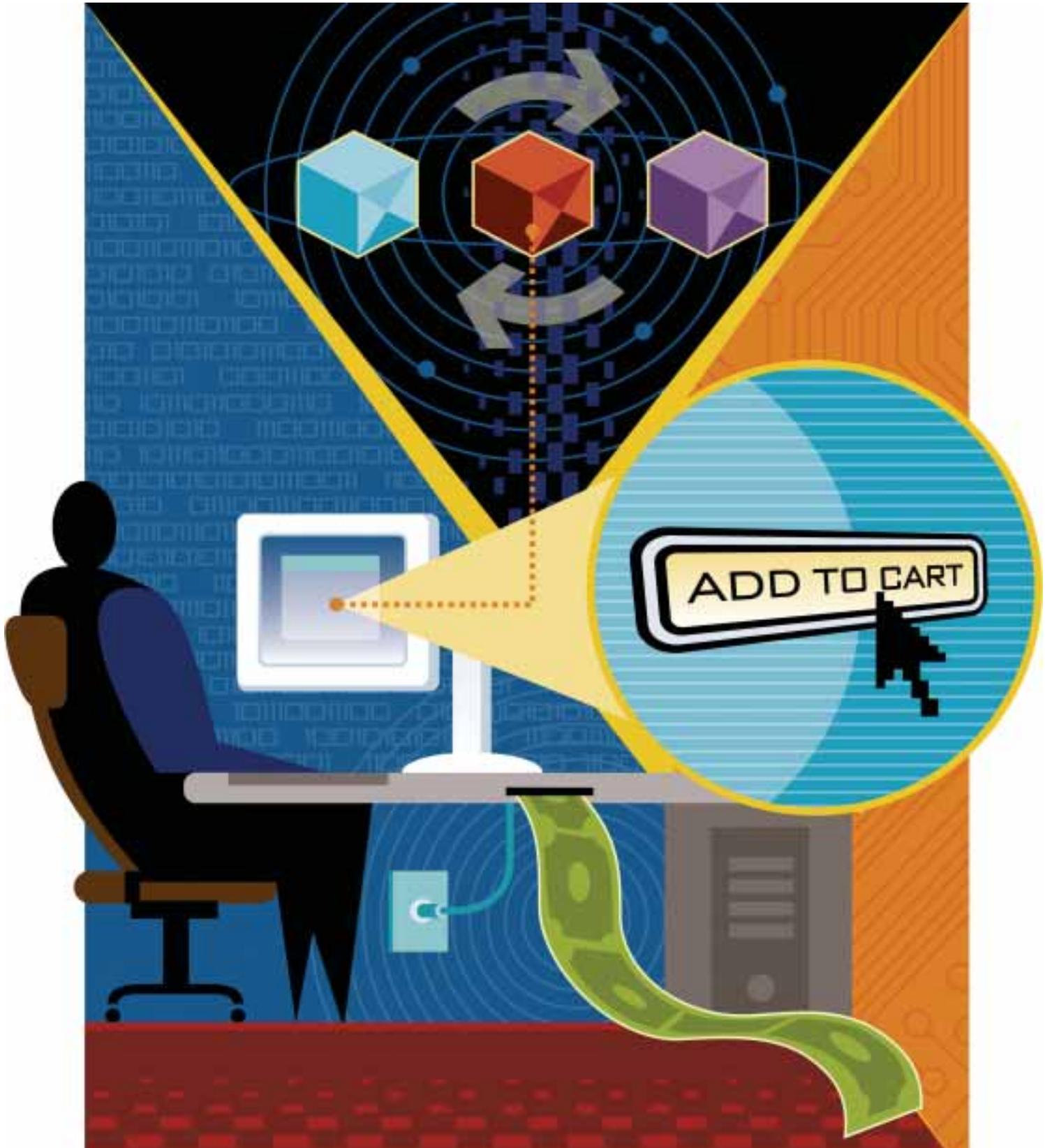


GWAC *GUIDE*



Next Generation GWACs

Government-wide Acquisition Contracts or GWACs give you access to practically every IT product and service available.

Are you standing up a new program? Or is your existing program currently migrating its data from a legacy system to a virtual server inside a “green” data center? Or you are modernizing your IT infrastructure to meet your program’s growing data collection, collaboration, security and regulatory requirements? Or are you upgrading your network infrastructure to handle future IPv6 traffic and information sharing initiatives?

Knowing you need IT as a part of any program mission solution is just start point. At some time in your business process you and your colleagues will have to decide what and how you are going to buy the services – and the associated IT products – needed.

Enter the Government-wide Acquisition Contract or GWAC (pronounced GeeWack) where you benefit from access to practically every IT product and service imaginable.

Born out of the feeling that you can get more innovation with competition, GWACs were authorized by the 1996 Clinger-Cohen Act. Right now Commerce, GSA, NASA, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and EPA have GWACs – even though Commerce just recently transferred management of its COMMITS NexGen GWAC to GSA.

And while GWACs have been around for what seems like years, they are always evolving, with new next generation GWACs rising to meet customer needs in a relentlessly changing IT landscape.

What Today’s GWACs Do

GWACs can be used by all government customers – both civilian and defense. Each GWAC provides the IT customer with a pre-screened list of “approved contractors” with proven skills. Hardware, software, related supplies and services can be bought as part of an integrated technology solution.

GWAC contract terms and conditions pre-negotiated. Competition occurs at both the contract and task order or delivery order levels. Contracts are pre-qualified for capability. Fair opportunity requirements are met. Task order awards are not protestable in most cases.

GWACs provide the flexibility to add team partners with unique skills at the task order level. They include a full range of contract types; i.e., fixed-price, cost-reimbursement, time-and-materials, and labor-hour. And they support small business and meet procurement preference goals, with availability and access to proven small

business and 8(a) technology providers.

GWACs shorten procurement lead time, provide easy-to-use online tools and charge reasonable fees for their services that are built into the customer price.

Planning Next Generation GWACs

Because GWACs have expiration dates and are funded as fee-for-service businesses, planners constantly keep in close contact with customers and contract holders, updating their current contracts and preparing their next generation vehicles.

That’s exactly what happened at the recent NASA SEWP annual conference that attracted its largest attendance in



program history with 200 attendees including more than 90 federal registrants representing 15 agencies.

“We are pleased at the strong interest in our conference. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the successful first year of SEWP IV, provide and obtain information with our key customers and contract holders, and plan for the future.” said Joanne Woytek, the SEWP Program Manager.

At the same time, because two NIH GWACs scheduled to expire at the end of 2010 -- the CIO-SP2i and IW2nd GWACs – the NIH Information Technology Acquisition and Assessment Center (NITAAC) recently took the first steps in creating the next iteration of the GWACs by soliciting issuing an RFI and comment from stakeholders.

According to Tom Keith, NITAAC program manager, the RFI sought feedback from both industry and government as to the technology envisioned under the successor contract and best practices to be employed,

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Make FY08 4th Quarter Buying Stress Free

Government contracting staffs face a number of challenges in this condensed period of acquisitions. They must be sure they are buying best value and meeting the ever growing and more complicated mandates and requirements. And, they must efficiently and effectively manage the heavy acquisition workloads dictated by last minute IT requirements.

Successful acquisition professionals have devised strategies to confront the challenges presented by the year-end buying crunch including these five tips.

1. *Communicate Early and Often.*

Engage all affected personnel early and often. Talk to the program managers you support about planned and unplanned IT requirements. Remind them about deadlines.

Ask leadership to be proactive and raise the issue at staff meetings or volunteer to give a 30 second update. Ask your leadership to send e-mails to your program managers. Leadership can get your managers to address a subject of importance.

2. *Engage in Acquisition Planning*

Prepare for the unexpected. You know that the end of the year will bring last minute purchases. September 30th will be busy but can also be manageable. Acquisition planning can help you strategize how to manage the known workload. You can also build in time and resources for that unexpected necessity by developing a written acquisition plan.

Prepare a decision matrix. There are many acquisition vehicles already in place that can be used to streamline your acquisition. Include contact information in the matrix, as well as delivery estimates and documentation needed for the acquisition.

3. *Review Funding*

In the rush to finalize year-end buying requirements, it is important to keep funding availability and regulatory requirements in focus. Contracting officers and administrative officers should work together with program officials to ensure that adequate funding is available to complete the purchase of IT requirements. With a few exceptions, appropriated funds may only be used to purchase IT products and services in the fiscal year for which they were appropriated.

4. *Know Your Options*

Your customers' IT requirements will not fall into a "one-size-fits-all" category. There are more contracting vehicles available than ever. Some of the contract vehicles that can streamline your ordering process are GWACs, Multi-Agency Contracts (MACs), Enterprise-wide contracts, and Schedules. Your matrix may help answer the question of which vehicle is the right one to meet the IT requirement in front of you.

5. *Work Smarter, Not Harder*

Determine what the priority is for each acquisition.

Is it delivery time? Is it customer service to assist you with a complicated Request for Quote (RFQ)? Do you plan to use this acquisition to meet small business goals? Does Fair Opportunity to be considered figure highly into the decision? Can you obtain immediate sales and discounts? Do you want this acquisition to focus on Performance-Based Service Contracting? How important is it to use electronic ordering as part of your acquisition process?

In our "on-time-delivery" world, getting IT now to fulfill your agency's mission is often the priority. If this is your priority, choose a vehicle that can reduce time for your delivery order by having pre-competed vendors and a history of delivering in under a week.

Can you do it yourself or is the statement of work outside your expertise? Sometimes customer service and working with knowledgeable professionals who are familiar with the IT and services for an enterprise-wide or complex solution is your most pressing need. There are acquisition professionals who specialize in IT solutions, and access to them is often just a phone call away.

Use the expertise of these business and task order specialists to both assure an accurate and complete acquisition, and to reduce time and stress.

Time is money. Streamlined acquisitions that can be accomplished electronically meet the goal of saving time, which results in cost savings. Include electronic ordering as a choice when possible. By selecting the right contracting vehicle that meets your requirements' priorities, you will reduce your time and effort significantly.

Source: NITAAC

Seven GWAC Facts

When deciding whether to use a GWAC or not, here are seven reasons why a GWAC may be best for you and your agency.

1. GWACs

The “G” stands for Governmentwide. GWAC stands for Governmentwide Acquisition Contract. They can be used by all civilian and defense agencies; are indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity (IDIQ) contracts; and intended solely for information technology products and services.

You would use a GWAC because they offer a convenient way of buying IT products and services. Contractors on a GWAC are pre-approved, having already gone through one level of competition just to get on the GWAC.

Thus this “Good Housekeeping Seal” gives you the confidence that whoever wins your task order has been vetted. Plus task orders placed via GWACs have the advantage that other companies can’t protest them except on the grounds that they are out of the GWAC’s scope. And with the way GWACs are making sure that all IT is in scope, that possibility is diminished.

It works this way. After receiving OMB approval for an upcoming IT requirement, agencies write a SOW and put together an RFP based on a GWAC. Those contractors on the GWAC respond and the customer evaluates responses based on best value, price and the companies’ ability to perform tasks within the GWAC’s scope.

Before issuing a GWAC task order, agencies must still go through an evaluation procedure called the fair opportunity process, which is designed to give all GWAC-listed companies an opportunity for task-order business. Agencies then make a source-selection award.

For IT providers – both big, small and minority the GWAC is their “hunting license”. A GWAC is an IDIQ contract and being on the GWAC doesn’t guarantee business. Companies have to earn that by winning your task orders. So there are two levels of competition

Some GWACs permit only small businesses to gain a slot. Using a small-business GWAC for an in-scope requirement is an easy way to guarantee that small businesses will gain a contract. Small-businesses are included on GSA’s 8(a) STARS, VETS and COMMITTS NextGen contracts and NASA SEWP.

2. Invest In The Experts.

So the question is: Why would you pay another government contracting center to buy stuff for you?

One answer is the sheer complexity of government procurement has grown. Services have replaced goods as

the largest category of government procurement and they are complex buys. It’s not like buying a commodity. At the same time, the federal procurement workforce has declined or stayed static.

GWACs offer fee based assisted-services to help you define requirements, perform the necessary market research and write your contracts. Using assisted services can speed up the purchase if your own contracting shop is backlogged.

GWACs charge fees. These fees are typically added into the contract price so you never see a bill from the GWAC holder. GSA’s is 0.75 percent throughout their portfolio. NASA SEWP is 0.6 percent. NIH’s varies according to contract.

3. Speedy Convenient Customer Service

Back in the ancient times of the 1980s, ordering was snail like. Delivery could be 2 years after the request. Today products delivery times are measured in months, weeks or days depending upon the requirement.

For example to place and complete an order on the NIH CIO-SP2i contract takes with Fair Opportunity an average of 14 working days for Time & Material (T&M) and 21 working days for Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) /Cost Plus Award Fee (CPAF). The ordering timelines for GSA’s many GWACs is comparable.

On NASA SEWP, new product/solutions are added in 1 business day and their customer service team turns around customer issues and requests in 1 business day.

All have customer service representatives to help you at every turn – and will come to you to help solve your problems.

4. Friendly Online Tools

Visit the SEWP, NITAAC or GSA websites and you’ll find easy to use online tools that assist you with every step of the acquisition.

5. Meet Small Business/Minority Requirements

GWACs can help you meet your small business contracting requirements. There are a number of GWACs that cater specifically to these needs. One reason to use small business is they are usually innovative and will adopt technological innovations faster than larger busi-

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GWACs = Best In Class

The purpose of a GWAC is to provide you – the government customer – with a way to get the innovative best in class solutions for your IT requirements.

GWAC planners take great care is selecting industry GWAC contract holders, making sure these “industry partners” really represent the “best of the best” among the large and small business IT product and services providers. Take advantage of a wide variety of choices – one of which is sure to meet your unique needs.

GSA – www.gsa.gov/gwacs

For information on all GSA GWACs, contact the Enterprise GWAC Center Client Support toll free number at 877-534-2208 or visit www.gsa.gov/gwacs.



GSA by far has the largest number of solution-based GWACs available with special contract vehicles designed to help you meet minority and small business contracting requirements. Even though it has been painfully slow getting the “next generation” Alliant and Alliant Small Business GWACs off-the-ground, GSA is confident they have the contract vehicle that meet your needs – right now.

“We have a robust GWACs program that can satisfy our customers’ needs today,” said GSA ITS Assistant Commissioner, John Johnson proudly.

Johnson further said task orders can be customized and hardware, software, and services may be purchased through GWACs as part of a total technology solution. According to GSA, task orders placed against GWACs may be customized to meet the full range of IT service solutions, including, but not limited to:

- Service/product integration
- Systems integration
- Systems operation and management
- Software engineering management
- Communications
- Information systems engineering
- Information systems security services
- Network/management telecommunications
- Web enabled solutions.

Plus with the recent addition of COMMITS NexGen (Commerce Information Technology Solutions-NexGen) from Commerce, GSA has even more capabilities. And GSA says look for Alliant and Alliant SB to make their debut in late 2008.

According to GSA Commissioner Jim Williams, GSA’s latest e-Business innovation is e-Buy an electronic

RFQ/RFP system designed to allow Federal buyers to request information, find sources, and prepare RFQs/RFPs, online, for millions of services and products offered through GSA’s Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and GWACs. It also can help you find out which products are “Green”.

To use a GWAC, an agency can either get a delegation of procurement authority (DPA) from GSA and manage the acquisition directly or call on GSA Client Support Centers for a whole host of Assisted Services.

“Federal buyers can use e-Buy to obtain quotes or proposals for services, large quantity purchases, big ticket

GSA, NASA and NIH GWACs offer two levels of competition – assuring you that you get the “best of the best” among the large and small business IT product and services providers. Take advantage of a wide variety of choices – one of which is sure to meet your unique needs.

items, and purchases with complex requirements,” said Williams.

Typically the GSA fee for GWACs is .75 percent and is built into the contractor price. There is no “bill” from GSA. But right now, if you have an IT requirement, you can turn to the following GSA managed GWACs.

ANSWER (Applications 'n Support for Widely-Diverse End User Requirements)

GSA promotes ANSWER as a “best value and innovation” solution for a wide variety of applications stretching from telemedicine, war gaming, agriculture and homeland security to nuclear energy and social security systems. ANSWER constantly updates technology

offerings with a technical refreshment provision, thus helping keep requirements “in scope”.

Recently GSA extended the performance period for ANSWER by six months and is saying ANSWER task orders must be awarded prior to contact expiration on June 30, 2009. Task orders awarded prior to June 30, 2009 expiration date may be awarded for a period of up to five years inclusive of base and options.



According to GSA, ANSWER is an ID/IQ that features “10 world class contractors with unlimited subcontractor support”, worldwide geographical reach, dual levels of competition, limited protestability and streamlined acquisition.

There is a comprehensive listing of labor categories with fair and reasonable ceiling rates and competition-driven discounts at the task order level. Common task order types are fixed price (incentive and award), time and materials and hourly labor.

ANSWER has seven geographical rate areas with ceiling prices reflecting locations; 40 hours of training for every contractor full-time equivalent; and one group manager for every 35 contractor employees.

Learn more at www.gsa.gov/answer.

8(a) STARS (Streamlined Technology Acquisition Resources for Services)

Using 8(a) STARS you can buy a full range of IT solutions – including application development, computer facilities management services, and information assurance – through small disadvantaged 8(a) firms.

This is an 8(a) set-aside contract gives customers the benefit by having access to a portfolio of over 200 industry partners distributed across eight areas of expertise. Federal agencies also receive 8(a) and other small business credits toward their procurement preference goals through the use of these contracts.

GSA recently has added 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.

Learn more at www.gsa.gov/stars.

COMMITTS NexGen (Commerce Information Technology Solutions-NexGen)

This set-aside for “exceptional small, disadvantaged, 8(a), women-owned, veteran-owned, service disabled veteran-owned, and HUBZone businesses”, as GSA describes them, was transferred to the GSA portfolio from Commerce in March, 2008 to provide “competitive IT solutions”.

Beginning in April GSA began an extensive 45-60 day review of the COMMITTS NexGen GWAC to: “provide for an important dialogue with the prime contractors/industry partners; to update the COMMITTS NexGen Ordering Guide; and to begin incorporating the prime contractors into GSA systems.”

GSA held a planning a conference with COMMITTS NexGen prime contractors in May 2008 and the GWAC will be managed by the Small Business GWAC Center in Kansas City, MO.

Learn more by sending questions to commits@gsa.gov or call the Small Business GWAC Center toll free at (877) 327-8732.

Millennia

This is another GWAC that will be eventually replaced by Alliant. Millennia expires on April 27, 2009 and task orders issued prior to the expiration of the contract can be issued for a period of up to five (5) years. After the contract expiration date, all labor ceiling rates will be negotiated at the task order level according to GSA.

Consisting of nine ID/IQ contracts, Millennia fulfills the demand for large system integration and development projects by providing IT support contracts in the areas of software engineering, communications, and systems integration. It also provides IT services, including ancillary hardware, software and firmware.

Millennia offers you integrated solutions incorporating a wide range of IT products and services; fixed-price and cost reimbursement task orders; and the choice of using GSA Assisted Services or direct services options. Plus task order awards are non-protestable.

According to the GSA website, “Millennia was basically created to provide three main types of IT services”. They are:

- Communications – Definition, design, implementation, and management of digital and integrated or linked communications systems
- Software Engineering – Managing software from initial conception and planning, through design and development, to conversion, maintenance and improvement
- Systems Integration – All activities needed to develop and initiate automated information system.

Learn more at www.gsa.gov/millenia.

Millennia Lite

Based on the IT lifecycle, Millennia Lite has four functional areas:

1. IT capital planning, studies, and assessments
2. High-end information technology services
3. Mission support services; and legacy systems migration
4. New enterprise systems development.

GSA promotes that “typical projects under the Millennia Lite GWAC include, but are not limited to: biometrics; nanotechnology; CPIC; IA and security; critical infrastructure protection; KM; systems engineering; application development; software development, CAD, CAE, and CAM; and business and systems analysis.”

Millennia Lite has a base contract period of three years and seven available performance-based extension years through 2010. Customers have the option of issuing fixed price, cost reimbursement, or labor hour/time and material task orders. And to promote high quality contractor performance, contract option periods are based on the Award Term performance incentive plan.

Learn more at www.gsa.gov/millennialite.

VETS (Veterans Technology Services)

VETS, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business set-aside GWAC that expires in 2012, focuses on two functional areas:

- Systems operation and maintenance
- Information systems engineering.

Designed to grow federal contracting opportunities for service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns, according to GSA, “the VETS GWAC will assist agencies in meeting their three (3) percent service-disabled veteran-owned small business goals, by providing pre-qualified industry partners in one easy-to-use contract vehicle.” Task orders have limited protestability.

In January, the Army named VETS “as a resource to meet Army's Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) goal.”

Learn more at www.gsa.gov/VETS.

NASA – www.sewp.nasa.gov

SEWP IV

For information on SEWP call (301) 286-1478 or email help@sewp.nasa.gov

Its proper name is Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement, but everyone knows this NASA GWAC by its acronym – SEWP. The latest iteration is SEWP IV, a seven year contract running until 2014.

SEWP was born out of the need for access to the latest IT products -- specifically a “vast selection and wide range of advanced technology, including UNIX, Linux and



Windows based computer systems and servers along with peripherals, network equipment, storage devices and other IT products and product solutions”, according to the SEWP website.

SEWP has 38 prime contract holders, including 21 small businesses and 9 veteran-owned businesses. In addition to these 38 contractors that competed for SEWP, there are several non-competed 8(a) Set-Aside Contractors.

According to the SEWP website, “SEWP offers low prices (generally below GSA schedule prices), the lowest surcharge (0.6%) and the easiest and fastest ordering procedure using pre-competed contracts”.

Online search and quote capabilities help agencies find the exact fit for their needs. Fast ordering procedures and continuous pro-active after-order tracking provide you with “the best overall value on the right solutions offered directly by leading hardware and software manufacturers and experienced Government integrators”.

SEWP IV are firm fixed price contracts that offer a wide variety of IT products and product solutions, including:

- Desktop Computers and Laptops
- High performance servers and data-base servers
- Mass storage and network devices
- Advanced video and visualization solutions
- Computer support devices
- Security systems and tools
- Audio-Visual systems
- Cost per Copy Multi-Functional Printers
- Warranty and Maintenance
- Implementation and Installation
- Product-based Training

More than 1,000,000 contract line items from over 2400 manufacturers are available through the SEWP contract holders.

According to its website, SEWP is divided into five Groups of contracts. Groups A, B, C and D were awarded through a Competitive process with the Group B competition set-aside for SDVOSB (Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses) and Group C competition set-aside for Small Business. Group E consists of non-Competed 8(a) set-aside contracts.

Each Competed Group has the same scope which provides overlap among all Contracts and Groups. At a minimum, to provide Fair Opportunity as required by FAR Part 16, all Contract Holders within any one individual Group must be provided Opportunity (the SEWP On-line RFQ and Search tools automatically provide the Fair Opportunity groupings when selecting Contract Holders). For maximum competition one, two, three or all four Groups can be selected.

Learn more at www.sewp.nasa.gov.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) – <http://nitaac.nih.gov>

To learn more about NIH GWACs visit <http://nitaac.nih.gov> or call the NITAAC hotline at 1-888-773-6542.



NIH GWACs are managed by NITAAC – the NIH Information Technology Acquisition & Assessment Center. Recently NITAAC got comment from the government and contractor community on its next general contract(s) that will succeed CIO-SP2i and IW2nd GWACs

that expire in December 2010. NIH said it is planning to combine them into one contract. The plan right now is to develop 10 functional areas for the new contract to cover a broad array of technology services.

ECS III, the third NITAAC GWAC does not expire until 2012 and will remain in effect.

CIO-SP2i (Chief Information Officer Solutions and Partners 2 Innovations)

The CIO-SP2 i contract provides Information Technology hardware, software, systems, and services in support of IT solutions within NIH and other Government Agencies. Task orders will be written for support and services in nine primary task areas. It expires in 2010.

Listed below is a definition of each task area. These are quoted from the CIO-SP2 i Section C.

CIO-SP2i provides infrastructure and information assurance, IT operations and maintenance and CIO support, among other services including:

- Chief Information Officer (CIO) Support
- Outsourcing
- IT Operations and Maintenance
- Integration Services
- Critical Infrastructure Protection and Information Assurance
- Digital Government
- Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- Clinical Support, Research, and Studies
- Software Development

IW2nd (ImageWorld 2 New Dimensions)

IW2nd offers all necessary imaging technology for business, medical sciences and geographic information systems. The contract, which expires in 2010, has three functional areas including:

Business Technology: The NIH requirements for document conversion and electronic storage address the need to archive large quantities of legacy data while maintaining search, retrieval, and printing capabilities. It includes requirements for Electronic Document Management (EDM) and Administrative Correspondence Workflow (ACW) which are the typical NIH business processes, such as the review of grant applications

consist of the flow and processing of information.

Medical Sciences: Electronic image applications and medical image analysis are two disciplines that will benefit from better fulfillment of document management, workflow, and security recognition systems requirements.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): GIS provides powerful tools for geographic analysis for almost any health discipline and integrates key data components based on geographic elements to help achieve precise analysis and powerful presentations.

ECS III (Electronic Commodities Store III)

ECS III provides software and hardware, software documentation, hardware maintenance, warranty services and peripherals. According to the NITAAC website, items include “Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS):

- Desktop, laptop, handheld computing devices (including peripherals), workstations, Software (including operating systems)
- Networking equipment, commercial telecommunications equipment items related to telephony, including but not limited to (network routers, switches, repeaters, and cabling),
- NITAAC says the Equipment Specialists in the Acquisition Planning and Specifications Branch at OLAO assist program offices/personnel with all phases of the acquisition process. Please call (301) 496-4814 with questions.

NITAAC also makes its contracts both competitive and user-friendly by providing tools such as an electronic RFQ system that allows you to post and receive contract bids electronically for best-value determinations.

While open to all government buyers, these GWAC specifically support the NIH medical research mission by helping NIH buy technologies and services that are specific to the NIH mission, such as any kind of image-related technology from document-imaging to MRIs.

Learn more at <http://nitaac.nih.gov>. □

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as well as potential new sources for these types of requirements. NIH is using the information received from the RFI to develop its business case for the project and in prepare a subsequent Request for Proposals.

“We want to get the RFP correct to support our customers within NIH and HHS,” said Keith. “We don’t want to do something quickly; we want to do this with quality. And we have a good timeline to get this done and we’ve already done quite a few interviews.”

Alliant Comeback?

Another of the next generation GWACs is GSA’s Alliant, now slated to be awarded later this year and will replace the soon to expire ANSWER and Millennia GWACs.

“We are committed to Alliant as a program,” said GSA FAS Commissioner Jim Williams, “but it is part of a larger program where we have current vehicles that are available to agencies such as Millennia, Millennia Lite, ANSWER, STARS, VETS and other that agencies can continue to use until we can award Alliant.”

GSA’s John Johnson is leading the team working the Alliant program and doing it in a way that complies with what the judge told GSA had to be done. “The judge didn’t say entire procurement was flawed,” explained Williams. “He found some issues with how we executed the source selection plan and we need to go back and do those in compliance with the judge’s instructions.”

“To be clear,” Johnson said. “We are looking at the program from the perspective of source selection to award. We are not going back and revamping entire program; just looking at that piece which is in compliance with the judge’s decision.”

Johnson asserted that GSA has a robust GWACs

program that can satisfy our customers’ needs today. However, “we are excited about Alliant because it has some features that we believe will position us well in the future to be proactive in meeting our customer’s needs,” said Johnson. “We feel very capable today to do whatever our customers need us to do and Alliant is our flagship program for the future.”

A Philosophical Change

One of the things next generation GWACs will most likely do is not try to list every product and service imaginable. Next generation GWACs will shorten – such as SEWP’s (1-day) or eliminate (what Alliant promises) the “contract modification” process.

Next generation GWACs most likely will tie themselves to an agency’s Enterprise Architecture and assist agencies completing their OMB 300. The mantra is: when it comes to describing the scope of IT, because the IT is tied to the EA, products and services needed will always be in scope. Thus GWACs will continue to thrive in the rapidly changing environment that is norm for the IT industry.

“The next generation GWACs reflect the direction the government has been moving in its IT investments in last few years,” said Mary Powers-King, GSA Director of GWAC programs. “It’s clear that IT is really the gear that drives government. Data needs to be stored, analyzed and transported. Everyone relies on some level of IT to accomplish their mission.”

According to Powers-King, what GWACs do best is help you minimize your risk, so you don’t have to buy solutions more than once. You don’t want to invest in a solution that doesn’t work; you want a provider to come in – knowledge in-hand – and solve your problems and facilitate whatever it is you are trying to accomplish. □

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nesses that aren’t as nimble. Countless technologies we use today grew from small business roots with less bureaucracy.

6. Don’t Mistake a MAC for a GWAC

MAC stands for multi-agency contract. They are also IDIQ contracts. You must have permission to use another agency’s MAC. An agency placing a MAC order with another must also attest that the order is in the best interest of the government and whatever is bought can’t be obtained elsewhere as conveniently or economically.

Agencies often create MACs for internal use. An example is the DHS EAGLE contract which is open only to DHS components and selected agencies.

7. Task Reducing Contract and Task Order Management

GWACs provide automated tools that focus on the processes and metrics that support task order management. The objective of the tools is to provide quicker access, improved accuracy, and enhanced accessibility for contractors/clients, real-time monitoring of status/deliverables, tracking the quality of work products and gauging overall customer satisfaction. □