Local Contracting:

**COSTARS CONNECTIONS Conference**

**May 23, 2019 - Clarion**

We’ve brought the COSTARS Connections conference back to Clarion! On May 23, we are joining with neighboring PTACs in western & central PA and our host, Clarion University SBDC, to once again offer this FREE training & networking event focusing on the PA COSTARS cooperative purchasing program.

This event will bring together COSTARS buyers & sellers and is open to existing COSTARS Members & COSTARS Suppliers throughout western & central PA as well as businesses & organizations interested in learning more about the program.

COSTARS is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s cooperative purchasing program administered by the Department of General Services (DGS) Bureau of Procurement. The COSTARS program provides registered local public procurement units and state-affiliated entities (together known as “COSTARS Members”) and qualified suppliers (known as “COSTARS Suppliers”) a tool to find and do business with each other through the use of a contract established by DGS.

What to expect at this year’s COSTARS Connections conference:

- **Members**: Learn how to better use the program for procurement & meet suppliers from in and around the region
- **Suppliers**: Meet fact-to-face with potential customers & learn how to better use the program for sales

**New this year**: Suppliers will have exhibit tables to showcase products/services to Members & government buyers in attendance.

**FREE to attend. Registration is required**: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CostarsConnect2019](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CostarsConnect2019).

More event info available [HERE](#). Want to learn more about COSTARS? Have questions? Be sure to contact your PTAC Counselor!
The Northwest Commission PTAC, which serves as a Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

**QUICK UPDATES**

**Federal:**

**Registration in SAM Required at Time of Bid**

There is a new "change" to the FAR in 4.1102(a) which now requires companies to be registered complete in SAM AT THE TIME OF bid or offer submission. Prior to the change, this reference stated that prospective contractors had to be "registered in the SAM database prior to award of a contract or agreement".

The intent of the change is to clarify an apparent inconsistency between FAR 4.1102(a) and FAR 4.1102(b).

**Federal Contracting:**

**Coming Change: DUNS out, “SAMMI” in**

As we noted in a previous issue of PTAC TALK, the DUNS number, which has been administered by Dun & Bradstreet and a part of Federal contracting since 1962, will be phased out. A new vendor (Ernst & Young) will be taking over the entity validation system. The entity number, called a *System for Award Management Managed Identifier* (SAMMI) will be a part of the SAM registration process. As many are aware, SAM registrations are needed for federal contracts and grants.

Details are a little vague as to when all of this will hit and changeover timelines. Everyone at the PTAC and at our national association (APTAC) is keeping an eye on this to ensure minimal disruption to PTAC clients.

Original information from the General Services Administration (GSA) stated that the DUNS numbers would be grandfathered, but a recent presentation at APTAC’s Spring Conference from the GSA indicated that all contractors would need to get a new identifier/SAMMI.

As we get more information, we will keep our clients notified and up-to-date on this coming change.


**Young Named APTAC Region 3 Director**

Robyn Young, our NW Commission PTAC Manager, was recently appointed to be a Regional Director of the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC).

Robyn will head Region 3, representing Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Maryland; there are 12 PTAC offices in this region, and, overall, nearly 100 PTACs across the country.

Robyn was nominated by her APTAC peers to fill the vacant position and was officially elected and recognized during the Spring 2019 APTAC Conference, March 11-14 in Reno, NV.

In addition to her duties as program manager, as Regional Director, Robyn will serve on the board of APTAC and represent Region 3 for a two-year term. APTAC’s Board and Committees are comprised entirely of volunteers who represent member PTACs. Robyn brings 7+ years of government contracting experience to the Association and strives to be a strong resource for new and seasoned PTACers.

Of her appointment, Robyn said, “I felt that it was my time to give back to the organization that has been so generous in assisting me throughout the years. I believe in the value of this organization and look forward to contributing my expertise and time when needed.”
Federal Contracting:

Section 809 Panel Recommendations & the Potential Impact on Small Business

As included in past issues of PTAC TALK, we discussed the Section 809 Panel, a group tasked with identifying ways to streamline and improve the defense acquisition system.

Over the past year, the panel has released three volumes of reports covering their findings & has made a total 98 recommendations for change.

Just last week, the Navy’s Small Business Office held a very informative live web session with Mr. Elliott Branch, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Acquisition & Procurement), Ms. Emily Harman, Director, DON Office of Small Business Programs and Mr. David A. Drabkin, Esq., Chair, Section 809 Panel.

The group discussed the recommendations of the Panel & how they may impact small business. Now on video at the Dept. of the Navy (DON) OSDBU Facebook page, the hour-long session is well worth viewing if you want to know more about the Panel & potential streamlining of federal contracting.

Watch the recording here: https://www.facebook.com/NAVYOSBP/videos/677150802736734/

And access the Section 809 Panel’s Reports here: https://section809panel.org/

Federal Contracting Tip:

Adding Keywords to Your Company’s DSBS Capabilities Narrative

As most of our PTAC clients are aware, the SBA’s Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) is a vital component of any small business’s federal government marketing strategy. Yet many vendors either overlook this step or create an ineffective profile on the search, hurting their chances at government contract & subcontract opportunities.

Registration in the DSBS is linked to a company’s SAM registration. A company must complete SAM and be classified as a small business under the SBA’s size standards. Near the end of the SAM registration process, small businesses are prompted to register on the DSBS. At the PTAC, we strongly encourage clients to complete this step; doing so establishes your company’s profile within this key market research tool.

So why is DSBS registration so important? The DSBS is essentially used like a ‘Google Search’ for small business government contractors. This database is used by government and industry alike to find capable small businesses. When contracting officers or large primes are looking for businesses to help them meet a specific goal, they often go to DSBS to find properly registered small businesses.
New COSTARS Supplier Evaluation Tool

During the past few months, COSTARS has been working with a third party provider – Procurated (www.procurated.com) – to develop a simple and fair system where COSTARS Members can rate the performance of a COSTARS Supplier, as well as other suppliers COSTARS Members may use.

Those aggregated ratings will be accessible by COSTARS Members as another factor to be considered, along with price, geography, etc., when deciding from which COSTARS Supplier to purchase.

COSTARS has negotiated that the Procurated system will be free for all COSTARS Members for an extended period of time. As the platform is fine-tuned over the next few months, COSTARS Members and Suppliers may be contacted or surveyed by the Procurated team to get input and to test the application.

While the program will be voluntary for COSTARS Members, the greater the participation, the more useful the tool will be for all.

Read more on this & other COSTARS updates in the Spring 2019 issue of the COSTARS Connection newsletter.

Outside our region:

EVENTS that may be of interest

“C3” Government Contracting Conference

Date: May 20, 2019
Time: 9a-3p
Location: Carnegie Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh
Event Website: Click HERE

This daylong event will provide opportunities to network with federal, state, and local

Every applicable question on the DSBS should be completed. Filling out each section completely shows a vendor is responsible AND responsive to what was asked.

One of the most important sections is the Capabilities Narrative. Your capabilities narrative is the first thing that is seen when conducting a search, so it should be easy to read, provide enough information to establish what your business does, identify the certifications your business has (such as WOSB or HUBZone) and include various key words that describe your business, products, and services. You want to make sure your business comes up when doing a search, so include as many keywords as possible, including general & specific words/phrases. (Imagine you are trying to find your business on Google; what search terms would you use?)

NOTE: There is a separate Keywords section in the DSBS registration which should definitely be completed, but PTAC counselors across the country have shared their experience that including keywords in the Capabilities Narrative section is a wise idea. They say focusing more on keywords in the Capabilities Narrative is better than presenting a marketing pitch.

Be aware that because it is one of the first things that shows up right after a DSBS search, many Contracting Officers won’t even contact a vendor if they have not filled out the Capabilities Narrative within their DSBS profile.

Need help with SAM or DSBS? Please contact your PTAC Counselor!

Networking Tip:

Do Your Homework Before the Meet

If you’re going to be meeting with Government workers that handle contracting, it is important to do your homework before meeting with them.

Whether it is a quick meeting at an event or a personal Capabilities Briefing, being well prepared and knowledgeable will rapidly set you apart from the competition and instill confidence in your firm. Imagine yourself as the representative for the Government agency. You’ve come to this event to try and find new potential vendors for your upcoming procurement needs. Wouldn’t you prefer to meet with companies and individuals who already knew what your needs were and are prepared to tell you how they can meet them?

Here are some steps as suggested by TargetGov.com to feel prepared when meeting with Government decision-makers:

1. Become Familiar with the Agency

What is that agency mission and goal? How can your services or products help? If you can align your services and products with their specific goals and activities, you will begin to separate yourself from the competition.

You want to learn who you’ll be meeting with, their particular area of focus, and their goals. This will put you in a position to provide them with the
government agencies, prime contractors, universities, support organizations, and other businesses both large and small. Attendees can connect with representatives throughout the day, attend training sessions, market their products and services, and get answers to their questions.

Robyn Young of the NW Commission's PTAC will be among the speakers at this event.

Free to attend. More details & registration can be found HERE.

**DLA Land & Maritime’s Training, Knowledge & Opportunities (TKO) Seminars**

Offered quarterly—**Next sessions:** May 14-16; Sept. 10-11; Nov. 5-6  
**Location:** Columbus, OH  
**Event website:** https://tko.dla.mil/

The TKO Seminars offer 2 days of sessions on teaching vendors how to start doing business with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Vendors will be informed on how to find open solicitations, how to submit a quote through the DLA Internet Bid Board System (DIBBS), the procedures for viewing/downloading drawings, how to use Wide Area Workflow/iRAPT to get paid, and more.

All sessions are held at DLA Land and Maritime, located in Columbus, Ohio free of charge. The only costs attendees may incur is lodging, food and transportation.

***IN ADDITION TO THE TKO SEMINAR HELD IN COLUMBUS, THE TKO WEBSITE LISTS UPCOMING FREE WEBINARS OFFERED BY THE AGENCY.***

Visit the event website for details and registration. (Select Land & Maritime from the dropdown menu).

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**Upcoming Regional Events**

Watch for upcoming Northwest Commission PTAC events at http://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events

**Workshop:** Finding & Winning Simplified Acquisition Opportunities  
**Date:** May 7, 2019  
**Time:** 9a-2:30p  
**Location:** North Central Commission, 49 Ridgmont Drive, Ridgway, PA

Hosted by the North Central PA PTAC and presented by special guest speaker Guy Timberlake of Skunkworks for Competitive Intelligence Innovation in Federal
Showcase for Commerce – Government Procurement Expo (GPE)

**Date:** May 31, 2019  
**Location:** Johnstown, PA  
**Event website:** https://jari.ecenterdirect.com/events/830

Hosted by the Johnstown area PTAC. Small businesses will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with purchasing representatives from various Federal and State governments, and also connect with large prime contractors exhibiting at Showcase for Commerce.

In addition to traditional trade show ad hoc meetings, the JARI PTAC can pre-match government agency's needs with your business capabilities and schedule one-on-one sessions designed to suit your schedule.

Visit the [Showcase for Commerce](https://jari.ecenterdirect.com/events/830) website for additional information.

**PA Procurement Expo & Forum 2019**

**Date:** Sept. 4-5, 2019  
**Location:** Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA  
**Event website:** https://paprocurementexpo.com/

A networking & educational event for public & private procurement decision-makers and suppliers.

See [event website](https://paprocurementexpo.com/) for full details & registration, or contact info@paprocurementexpo.com, 610-494-8044

Contracting (SCIIF). *Northwest Commission PTAC is a co-sponsor of this event & PTAC staff will be in attendance.*

During this workshop, Timberlake will provide attendees awareness and knowledge in discussions about: **What agencies can purchase; What contract types are used; Finding buyers and customers**

Guy Timberlake is an accomplished veteran of federal contracting with over 30 years of experience, knowledge and relationships acquired supporting civilian, defense and intelligence agency programs, starting with Operation Desert Shield. Among his areas of expertise is using data gathered from the Federal Procurement Data System website (FPDS.gov) to develop government contracting strategies.

Check out a short video about this upcoming workshop at [https://vimeo.com/theasbcguy/review/329210890/364640a7d1](https://vimeo.com/theasbcguy/review/329210890/364640a7d1).

Free to attend. Seats are limited. More details & registration at [https://www.thesciif.com/sapncentral](https://www.thesciif.com/sapncentral)

**Webinar:**  
**ITAR Registration**

**Date:** May 13, 2019  
**Time:** 10-11:00a  
**Location:** Webinar

A frequently asked compliance question among government contracts firms is whether they are required to register under the International Traffic In Arms Regulations (ITAR).

The NW Commission PTAC is joining with NW Commission's International Marketing program & their co-sponsors to offer a free webinar on May 15 focusing on ITAR Registration for exporters and government contractors/subcontractors.

Mr. Robert Imbriani of Team Worldwide will be our guest speaker. During the session he will address:

- WHO must register  
- HOW to register  
- Ongoing registration issues

No fee. Registration required. More details & registration can be found at [https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4300](https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4300).

**Conference:**  
**“COSTARS Connections”**

**Date:** May 23, 2019  
**Time:** 9:00a – 12:30p  
**Location:** Clarion Univ., Clarion, PA

This conference will bring together COSTARS buyers and suppliers for training workshop and networking. Open to existing COSTARS Members (local public procurement units & state-funded organizations) and COSTARS Suppliers, as well as businesses & organizations interested in learning more about the PA COSTARS cooperative purchasing program.

Following training, the networking session will be tradeshow-style with COSTARS Suppliers & other business vendors having exhibit tables to showcase their products or services to COSTARS Members & Government Buyers in attendance.

Free to attend. Registration required. More details & registration can be found at [https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4293](https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events/4293).
Webinar:
“Top Trends in Gov Contracting 2019”

Date: June date TBD
Time: 1:00-2:30p
Location: Webinar

Government contractors can always count on one thing from the federal government, and that is change. It can be tough for small businesses to keep tabs on changes and trends in federal procurement. Which events will pose a threat to small businesses and which ones will offer opportunities?

This course will highlight some recent changes and trends that small businesses may want to know. Participants will receive high-level information about trends that will most likely impact their business with the federal government.

Presentation offered by NW Commission PTAC via Govology. Registration will be posted soon at https://nwpaptac.ecenterdirect.com/events.

Conference:
DYNET-ERIE 2019

Date: August 22, 2019
Time: 9:00a-2:30p
Location: Courtyard Erie Ambassador Conference Center

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN! SIGN-UP AT:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DyNET2019

On August 22nd, the Northwest Commission Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) and our co-sponsors will present Dynamic Networking for Small Business (DYNET), a federal contracting and subcontracting event, with the support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This event will give businesses in the region the opportunity to:

◇ Participate in a great networking event!
◇ Meet face-to-face with government agencies, prime contractors and business resources all in one day and one location!

DYNET-Erie 2019:
Thursday, August 22nd

395 Seneca Street
Oil City, PA 16301
814-677-4800
www.northwestpa.org/government-contracting