



Procurement Times

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Director's Corner

As a very prominent colleague of mine in the acquisition community often states, "The greatest contract I ever used is the one that I did not have to write." He was referring to interagency contracts, which help bring efficiencies in the federal procurement process. Interagency contracts streamline the procurement process, take advantage of unique expertise in a particular type of procurement, and achieve savings by leveraging the government's collective buying power.

The GSA Alliant Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) is an interagency contract; and allows authorized federal agencies to award a Task Order (TO) under the Alliant GWAC directly, or use the contracting services of another agency to obtain information technology services.

On January 29, 2013, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released the results of their review on interagency contracting noting: (1) progress made by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and the General Services Administration (GSA) in addressing issues identified in the GAO 2010 report on interagency contracting; and (2) progress made by federal agencies in implementing policy changes related to the use of interagency contracts. (For more information on the GAO report: <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-133R>)

In the audit report, it states that, "both OFPP and GSA have implemented corrective actions to address the key interagency contracting issues identified in our 2010 report regarding the creation, use, and oversight of interagency contracts." The report also goes on to say that "key policy changes have been made to both guide the creation of new interagency contracts and strengthen the use of existing contract vehicles. For example, federal acquisition regulations have been revised and guidance has been created to require, among other things, that agencies formally document the roles and responsibilities in an interagency agreement for certain interagency acquisitions. A federal policy framework is now in place that addresses the key risks associated with interagency contracting. OFPP and GSA have taken a number of steps to improve practices regarding the creation and use of interagency contract vehicles. The policy framework, as well as making more data available, should help agencies more fully realize the benefits of interagency contracting."

We are very pleased with Alliant being positively mentioned in this report, "GSA has updated ordering information for the MAS program and Alliant GWAC to include the best procurement approach determination requirement."

The timing of this report could not be better. Interagency contracting can play an integral role in the years ahead in government's efforts to save money by reducing the time and effort it takes to acquire the goods and services agencies need to perform their mission. On behalf of GSA and other agencies that develop interagency contracts, we are proud of the contributions that the GSA GWAC Program has made to put controls in place to strengthen the use of existing contracting vehicles like Alliant. We will continue working hard to ensure that the Alliant GWAC adds value to our federal clients, enabling them to acquire premier solutions to their information technology service needs in an efficient and cost effective manner that saves both procurement time and money.



- Casey Kelley

Alliant... Moving At The Speed of Technology

Alliant Pre-Award Scope Review Process

The scope of the Alliant contract conforms to the Federal Enterprise Architecture and Department of Defense Enterprise Architecture. This enables Alliant to evolve over time as technologies change without requiring a technical refresh. Alliant supports information technology serviced-based solutions which may include ancillary non-IT components as long as they are integral and necessary to an IT outcome. Application Services for Cloud Enterprise and Database Architecture are some of the examples of IT solutions accomplished under Alliant.

To ensure proper use of the Alliant GWAC, The Alliant Program offers an optional value-add service for its clients through scope compatibility reviews. Every Tuesday and Thursday, the review team, comprised of technical & contracting professionals, discuss and review recent scope submissions. Written responses are typically disseminated by email within 48 hours following the review.

Throughout the procurement process, those clients that still have technical questions, may call the review team for further consultation.

Do clients need scope reviews? Typically, a Statement of Work (SOW) that clearly supports a comprehensive IT solution may not require the Alliant team to do a scope determination. However, Statements of Work that have a mixture of Information Technology (IT), logistics and professional service may need to have a scope compatibility review by the Alliant review team to ensure the primary focus is IT. Many customer agencies have found the scope compatibility reviews meaningful. - Diemle Phan

“Responses are typically disseminated by email within 48 hours following the review”

Alliant STATS (January 2013)

Top Ten Agencies Using Alliant:

1. Department of Homeland Security
2. Department of State
3. United States Air Force
4. Department of Justice
5. United States Army
6. Department of Agriculture
7. Department of Health and Human Services
8. Defense Cyber Crime Security
9. DoD U.S. Central Command
10. United States Navy

GSA Assisted Services

Direct Order Direct Bill

Totals:

	Total Orders Issued	Total Estimated Dollars
GSA Assisted Services	128	\$ 6,139,903,799
Direct Order Direct Bill	169	\$ 6,531,406,138
Totals:	297	\$12,671,309,937

Alliant Advocates for Writing a Better Quality Narrative

Past Performance is on the forefront of Government Initiatives to improve acquisition. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and General Accountability Office (GAO) have issued memorandums and a report citing the need to improve the *quantity* and *quality* of information available in Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) so that source selection officials have greater confidence in the reliability and relevance of the information to make an informed decision. OFPP further emphasized, that although compliance is important, the quality of the reports submitted is critical to provide source selection officials with useful and meaningful information.

In support of the acquisition community and OFPPs efforts to improve and document past performance assessments, Alliant team members Mimi Bruce and Paul Martin took a creative approach. They teamed with Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), who manages the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) and also trains the Federal Government and Contractor community, to develop a series of five, two-hour webinars entitled “How to Write a Quality Narrative.” These webinars provided an overview of the CPARS system with a **focus** on writing quality narratives using Information Technology examples that convey meaningful and useful information to the contracting officer and source selection official conducting the procurement. Last year, we held a total of five sessions and to be attended by Alliant Ordering Contracting Officers (OCOs), Contract Specialists, Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs), and Program Managers.

In all 52 Government representatives received training that resulted in some very positive feedback:

“The pace was right on target, and the material was focused toward the individuals that actually already performed these functions. Our time is valuable and getting right to the meat of the subject matter was greatly appreciated.”

“This was an excellent class! It was very, very helpful to get instruction and handout information to help us write the narrative. The class we took two years ago when we switched to the CPARS system showed us how the system works but did not give much information about how to write a good narrative. I will be referring to the handout as I write future CPARS.

Also, the CPARS help desk is terrific. I called them a week or two ago when I was trying to figure out how to respond to vendor comments/non-concurrence and then get it through the reviewing official and finalized. The ladies were really helpful.”

For those who may have missed our 2012 webinars on “How to Write a Quality Narrative” we will offer them again in 2013. For further information please contact Mimi Bruce, Director of Client Support at (925) 735-1641 or email mimi.bruce@gsa.gov.

- Mimi Bruce

Fair Opportunity, FAR 16.505 Ordering and the Alliant GWAC

What does fair opportunity under the Alliant Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) mean? Under Federal Acquisition Regulation 16.505 Ordering, task orders are not subject to the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) requirement to obtain full and open competition. Rather, task orders issued under the Alliant Multiple Award IDIQ GWAC shall be placed on a competitive basis for each Order issued above the micro threshold level. This promotes an ongoing competitive environment in which each Alliant Industry Partner (IP) is fairly considered for every task order issued unless an exception to fair opportunity applies. There are six statutory exceptions to fair opportunity requirements, per FAR 16.505(b)(2)(i). If an agency uses an exception to fair opportunity, the contracting officer must prepare a detailed, written justification and obtain the requisite approvals. Under the Alliant GWAC, using allocation or designation of any preferred contractor is prohibited per FAR 16.505(b) (1) (ii) (B).

Ordering Contracting Officers (OCOs) have great latitude in tailoring their order placement procedures. It is good practice to tailor the fair opportunity procedures to each task order acquisition. OCOs must always consider cost or price in the selection decision and provide each Alliant IP a “fair notice of the intent” by making a clear description of the services to be performed and the basis on which the selection will be made. In addition, all IPs responding to the solicitation must be afforded a fair opportunity to submit an offer and have that offer fairly considered. Fair consideration requires that the basis for selection be clear in the solicitation, and that the award decision follow the stated criteria. When developing their Order placement procedures OCO’s should consider:

- Past performance on earlier orders under the contract, including quality, timeliness and cost control
- The amount of time contractors need to make informed business decisions
- Whether contractors could be encouraged to respond to potential orders by outreach efforts to promote exchanges of information,
- Keeping submission requirements to a minimum
- Use of streamlined ordering procedures including oral presentations (e.g. , FAR Part 15.3 source selection procedures are not applicable)

In conclusion, tailor the fair opportunity procedures to each acquisition and always consider cost or price in the selection process. Follow the streamlined ordering procedures and do not introduce the complicated procedures of FAR Part 15.3 source selection. If an exception to fair opportunity procedures is used, be sure there is a valid exception and document the basis for that exception in the contract file. Following these simple guidelines should increase competition and create a fair opportunity environment.

- Roger Chapin

We've Moved - Enterprise GWAC Division Office Changes Scenery

As 2013 began, the Enterprise GWAC Division, with fellow GSA colleagues from Assisted Acquisition Services, Acquisition Operations, Customer Accounts and Research, and Fleet, settled into new office space within the brand new Federal District Courthouse, centrally located in civic center plaza of downtown San Diego. The building's design was conceptually driven by the idea of creating a sustainable and modern collaborative working space. Located on the 9th floor, the Enterprise GWAC Division office enjoys views of both the hustle and bustle of downtown as well as the water front from the Pacific Ocean. Natural lighting and spacious windows offer a pleasing and welcoming environment to conduct business. Be sure to stop by for a visit!



Our address and contact phone numbers have changed as a result of this exciting move and can be located on the back page for your reference. We look forward to seeing some of you soon with a new start and refreshing change to a promising year!

- Tiffany Worthington

Alliant in the Cloud



As you can see, cloud orders issued under Alliant continue to increase each fiscal year, we expect this trend to continue through fiscal year 2013.

	Total Orders	Total Estimated Value
FY09	1	\$ 17,948,518.00
FY10	1	\$ 6,686,093.33
FY11	3	\$ 12,324,934.67
FY12	11	\$ 284,014,697.10
FY13	2	\$ 133,848,155.65
TOTAL	17	\$ 454,822,398.75

Events

Alliant Program Management Review (PMR) Meeting

The Enterprise GWAC Division conducted the Alliant PMR Meeting on November 8th at GSA Headquarters in Washington DC. Casey Kelley, John Cavadias, Jim Lilac and Jennifer Jeans provided industry and invited guests a current overview of Alliant, insight into the Fiscal Year 2013 Business Development plan, and a live demonstration of the new GWAC IT Dashboard. The Alliant Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO) provided a contract administration review, an update on contractor past performance assessments, and discussion emphasizing the importance of small business subcontracting supported by statutory, regulatory, and contractual laws, rules, and requirement. Other speakers included Kevin Youel-Page, Acting Assistant Commissioner for ITS; Tim Fleming, Assistant Commissioner for AAS; Mark Day, Director of the Office of Strategic Programs; Christopher Fornecker, Acting Director GWAC Program; and Chris Hamm, Deputy Director for FEDSIM. Special guest speakers included Mike Canales, DoD Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy and Jeff Koses, Director of Acquisition Operations. Over 140 contractor representatives attended this event. Overall, it was a successful meeting!



Alliant's 1st Lunch n' Learn Webinar



The Enterprise GWAC Division held its first Alliant Lunch N' Learn Webinar Pilot on December 11th. GSA Region 4 Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS) and CAR leadership provided an overview of their past and current usage of Alliant and pipeline information. They also addressed industry questions and concerns. There were 129 participants from industry and GSA taking part in this 90 minute event. This is just the first of many Lunch n' Learn webinars that are planned in the near future.

- Jennifer Jeans

GWAC Information and Client Support



If you are interested in learning more about the GSA Government wide Acquisition Contracts, please visit: www.gsa.gov/gwac. Everything you need to know can be found with a click of a button!

If you wish to speak to a GWAC staff member, you can contact Client Support by dialing (877) 534-2208 or sending an email to Alliant at alliant@gsa.gov.

This is just an example of the many ways you can get in touch with us!

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Contract Websites:

- **Alliant**— www.gsa.gov/alliant
- **ANSWER**— www.gsa.gov/answer
- **Millennia**— www.gsa.gov/millennia
- **Millennia Lite**— www.gsa.gov/millennialite



We Want Your Feedback

The Enterprise GWAC Division's Procurement Times Newsletter has been a tradition since the inception of the ANSWER Contract. We believe it adds value by providing Government and Industry insight into current GWAC trends, activities, and noteworthy accomplishments. We want this newsletter to be of value to you so we are asking for your input. What do you like? What would you like to see more of or less of? Any other comments that you believe may add value to future newsletters?

Please submit your comments to jennifer.jeans@gsa.gov