

NEWSLETTER

July 2025



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CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Eastern Shawnee contracting accelerates joint-venture strategy with 2 new partnerships

The Overland Park, Kan.-based company, owned by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma through its [Eastern Shawnee Companies](#) holding company, formed federal-contracting partnerships with both Veracity Consulting and Bay West through separate joint ventures announced May 7 and May 8.

The partnerships bring the company's total joint ventures to eight since CEO Matt Metcalf and his management team [arrived in November 2023](#) — an unusually rapid pace for tribal businesses entering federal contracting. The tribe obtained SBA 8(a) certification in June 2024.

Read more here: <https://tribalbusinessnews.com/sections/federal-8-a-contracting/15136-eastern-shawnee-contracting-accelerates-joint-venture-strategy-with-2-new-partnerships>

TIP OF THE MONTH

Understanding and Effectively Using Product and Service Codes

If you are involved in federal government contracting, you're probably familiar with North American Industry Classification System Codes, better known as NAICS codes. But government buyers also use a lesser-known type of code, called Product and Service Codes, or PSCs. For contractors, understanding PSCs and effectively using them in their public profiles, capability statements, and websites can make it easier to connect with federal buyers.

What Are PSCs?

PSCs, which are sometimes referred to as Federal Supply Codes, are four-character codes used to describe products and services purchased by the federal government. Most federal solicitations and contracts are assigned a PSC. A full list of PSCs and their definitions can be found in the government's [PSC Manual](#).

How Do PSCs Differ From NAICS Codes?

NAICS codes identify a type of industry, whereas PSCs more specifically identify the products and services the government is purchasing. For this reason, PSCs are often more granular than NAICS codes. For example, just within the field of building maintenance, there are several dozen potential PSCs, ranging from maintenance of air traffic control towers to maintenance of schools to maintenance of warehouse buildings and much more.

Many contractors are much more familiar with NAICS codes than PSCs because the U.S. Small Business Administration uses NAICS codes to determine small business size standards. Government buyers, however, use PSCs every bit as much—if not more—than they use NAICS codes.

How Do Government Buyers Use PSCs?

By assigning PSCs to its contracts, the government can much more closely track its spending. But government buyers also use PSCs to help find qualified contractors when they are conducting market research or otherwise reviewing a contractor's qualifications.

For example, if the Department of Defense intends to build a new school on a military base, its market research might include seeking contractors whose profiles identify PSC Y1CA, "Construction of Schools."

How Can Contractors Effectively Use PSC Codes?

Like NAICS codes, contractors are asked to self-identify their PSC codes on their SAM and Dynamic Small Business Search profiles. Don't overlook this opportunity! Spend some time reviewing the PSC Manual and add the PSCs in areas in which you have worked or would like to be considered for work. Reviewing the PSCs assigned to previous solicitations and contracts in your industry can be helpful in identifying the right PSCs to add to your profiles.

Don't stop at your profiles: add your PSCs to your capability statement and website, too! Finally, if you would like assistance identifying your PSCs and advice for how to better use them to help government buyers connect with you, schedule an appointment with your APEX Accelerator counselor.

NICC APEX ACCELERATOR NEWS YOU CAN USE

No More HUBZone Price Preference for Most Mentor-Protégé Joint Ventures

The SBA recently adopted a rule change that eliminates the ability of a mentor-protégé joint venture consisting of a HUBZone Program protégé and a large business mentor to avail itself of the 10 percent price evaluation preference under [FAR 52.219-4](#). The SBA took this action in response to concerns that large business mentors could unfairly benefit from the evaluation preference when competing on unrestricted procurements.

While this action slightly narrows the reach of the HUBZone price preference, the price preference remains a unique, powerful, and often-overlooked tool available only to certified HUBZone firms. Notably, the preference remains in effect when a HUBZone prime

contractor teams with a large business, even a mentor, in a prime/subcontractor relationship, just not in a joint venture.

Are you interested in learning more about the HUBZone program, the SBA’s mentor-protégé program, or both? Your APEX Accelerator can help! Contact your APEX Accelerator counselor today to arrange an appointment.

GOVOLOGY WEBINARS

Please use the new code **52NICC20** when registering for Govology webinars.



Developing Your First Cost and Pricing Proposal

Date: July 8, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Jacob Barclay, Barclay Group LLC

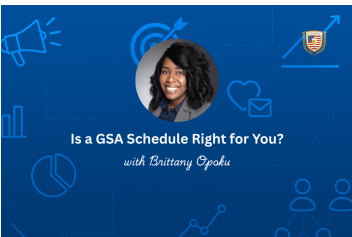
[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Tool Sets for Contract Opportunities

Date: July 10, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Amber Hart, The Pulse of GovCon

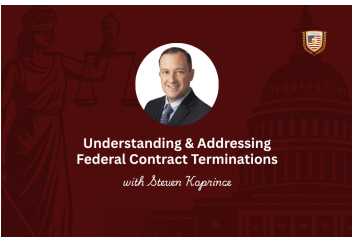
[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Is a GSA Schedule Right for You?

Date: July 15, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Brittany Opoku, First Foster Consulting, LLC

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Understanding & Addressing Federal Contract Terminations

Date: July 17, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Steven Koprince, Govology

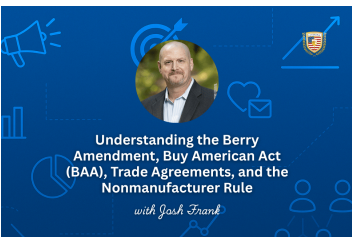
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Navigating Navy Procurement – Unlocking Opportunities for Your Business

Date: July 22, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Leslie Faircloth, Small GovCon Solutions, LLC

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Understanding the Berry Amendment, Buy American Act (BAA), Trade Agreements, and the Nonmanufacturer Rule (2025 Update)

Date: July 29, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Joshua Frank, RSM Federal

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

ChatGPT Is Not Your Lawyer (Even If it Sounds Like One), Recent GAO Case Confirms

Using artificial intelligence tools to draft a bid protest can be risky, as one protester recently discovered. In this case, instead of hiring a lawyer, the protester apparently used AI to draft its GAO bid protest—but the AI tool invented cases that didn't exist, miscited cases for incorrect legal principles, and committed other fundamental mistakes. [Read the full account of the GAO bid protest involving AI-generated content.](#)

DBE Program in Peril: Recent Legal Challenges and What They Mean for Women- and Minority-Owned Contractors

Recent legal challenges jeopardize the future of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, a long-standing initiative designed to support minority- and women-owned businesses in federally funded state and local transportation infrastructure projects. [Read about the recent legal challenges to the DOT's DBE program.](#)

Ongoing FAR Overhaul: Market Research and the New FAR Part 10

The ongoing Revolutionary FAR Overhaul process (also known as "FAR 2.0") continues. The RFO team recently released the rewrite of FAR Part 10, which addresses the government's market research obligations. [Review the latest updates to FAR Part 10 and market research requirements.](#)

CMMC & FOCI RESOURCES AND NEWS

This section highlights items of special interest and importance to the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs (DOD OSBP). Please take a moment to visit the sites listed below for additional information.

Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)/Cybersecurity Compliance Resources

[DOD CMMC Resource Page](#) – Resources to assist government contractors with understanding and complying with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

[Project Spectrum](#) – Project Spectrum is working with APEX Accelerators to assist small businesses in achieving compliance with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence (FOCI) Resources

[FOCI Frequently Asked Questions](#) – FOCI is a status or situation in which a contractor with access to classified information has some foreign investment or association with foreign interest. Learn more about the federal government's requirements relating to FOCI.

<https://business.defense.gov/> – The official website of DOD OSBP. It contains additional information, news, events, and other items for those interested in doing business (or currently engaged) with the DOD.

Defense Contractors Get a Head Start on CMMC Audits

Many federal contractors are initiating Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification audits even before the Pentagon's assessment program fully takes effect, according to a newly published report. [Learn how federal contractors are preparing early for CMMC audits.](#)

CMMC: Defense Industry Gears Up For Cybersecurity Program Implementation

While many defense contractors are moving forward with preparations for the CMMC program’s implementation, some are still taking a “wait and see” approach. [Discover how defense contractors are responding to the CMMC rollout.](#)

DCSA announces approval of the updated Form 328 (Certificate Pertaining to Foreign Interests)

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency has announced the updated Standard Form (SF) 328, Certificate Pertaining to Foreign Interests, which includes several improvements to increase users’ clarity and understanding of the questions and subsequent requirements. The updated form features better-scoped questions, comprehensive instructions, definitions, and a Statement of Full Disclosure of Foreign Affiliations used to report foreign employment. [View the updates to SF 328 and what they mean for defense contractors.](#)

847 Awaiting Takeoff: DCSA Issues Guidance on Expanded Scope of FOCI Assessments

The DCSA intends to publish, in the next 12-18 months, a rule that would require bidders and subcontractors participating in DoD contracts valued at over \$5 million, subject to certain exceptions, to disclose FOCI details during the bid or proposal stage and update those details when changes to their ownership structure that implicate FOCI concerns occur. Under the rule, which is required by Section 847 of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, the number of defense contractors subject to FOCI requirements could rise from approximately 2,000 to 40,000. [Read about the upcoming FOCI disclosure rule and its impact under Section 847.](#)

About Nebraska Indian Community College APEX Accelerator:

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E-mail us: APEX@thenicc.edu

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