

NEWSLETTER

March 2026



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TIP OF THE MONTH

Strict Compliance With Proposal Formatting Instructions

Recent GAO bid protest decisions make one thing clear: strict compliance with proposal formatting instructions is not optional. Even minor deviations—such as using an unapproved font, exceeding page limits, adding an extra cover page, including prohibited text in a logo, or submitting pricing in the wrong format—can result in outright exclusion from the competition, regardless of the proposal’s technical merit. These cases highlight the risks of making assumptions about formatting requirements and underscore the importance of carefully following the solicitation’s instructions—or seeking clarification through formal Q&A—to avoid preventable disqualification.

Don’t let a preventable formatting mistake cost you a contract opportunity. [Read the full blog post to see what these recent GAO decisions mean for your proposal strategy](#), and how to protect your next submission.

NICC APEX ACCELERATOR NEWS YOU CAN USE

FPDS.gov to Be Retired; Contract Award Data Moves to SAM.gov

The Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS.gov) is being retired as a standalone public search site, and its functions are being consolidated into SAM.gov as part of the General Services Administration’s ongoing modernization of federal procurement systems. On February 24, 2026, the FPDS.gov public search (including the ezSearch feature) will be decommissioned, and all contract award data search and reporting capabilities will be available exclusively through SAM.gov. This transition means contractors and the public

should now use SAM.gov for federal award data and contract research. For more details, see the official [FPDS.gov Decommission announcement on SAM.gov](#).

Incumbent Not Entitled to Special Re-Compete Notice

An incumbent contractor is not entitled to any special treatment when it comes to notification of a re-competitively of the incumbent contract. In a recent bid protest decision, the GAO held that when an agency followed FAR procedures by posting a re-competitively solicitation on System for Award Management (SAM), the agency was within its rights not to provide the incumbent contractor with any additional notice of its decision to re-competitively. The incumbent, GAO determined, was legally on notice of solicitations posted on SAM—just like everyone else. [Read more about the decision](#).

Would you like assistance with understanding how to more effectively use SAM to find and track government opportunities of interest to your business? Your APEX Accelerator can help! Contact your APEX Accelerator counselor today to arrange an appointment.

GOVCON ROUNDUP LIVE

GovCon Roundup Live is a free monthly webcast hosted by Carroll Bernard and Steven Koprince of [Govology](#). The webcast covers policy changes, legislative updates, and industry shifts that signal strategic opportunities for contractors to pivot, reposition, and stay one step ahead. Learn more about [GovCon Roundup Live](#) and register to attend future live sessions (with the opportunity for live Q&A).

Recent GovCon Roundup Live webcasts include:

- [The State of the 8\(a\) Program: Suspensions, Appeals, and Ask Us Anything](#)
- [A Look Into the 2026 Crystal Ball for Federal Contractors](#)
- [GovCon's AI Wake-Up Call: What Smart Contractors Are Doing Now](#)
- [WOSB Program Under the Microscope: Data, Roadblocks, and the Path Ahead](#)
- [The FAR Revolution: Three Proposed Procurement Reforms Contractors Should Watch](#)
- [Counting What Matters: Small Business Contracting Goals & Metrics](#)

GOVOLOGY WEBINARS

Please use the new code **NICCAPEX26** when registering for Govology webinars.



Step-by-Step GSA: From Readiness to Award

Dates: March 10-12, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Brittany Opoku (First Foster Consulting, LLC)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Winning Strategies and Proven Best Practices for Government Prospecting (2026 Update)

Date: March 17, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Joshua Frank (RSM Federal)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Unlocking DoD Industrial Base Opportunities: Navigating IBAS, OTAs, and the Cornerstone Consortium

Date: March 19, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Dolores Kuchina-Musina, Ph.D. (REXOTA Solutions, LLC)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Defense Production Act Title III (2026 Update)

Date: March 26, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Steven Koprince (Govology)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Foreign Ownership, Control or Influence (FOCI) Rules for Federal Contractors (2026 Update)

Date: March 31, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Steven Koprince (Govology)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

RECOMMENDED INSIGHTS & UPDATES

Can Government Contractors Use Agency Logos and Seals?

Visit a federal government contractor's website, read its brochures and capability statement, or follow its social media accounts, and you may see the logos and seals of the contractor's federal government customers prominently displayed. But although contractors' use of agency logos and seals is widespread, it's often prohibited under agency policy, federal law, or both. [Read the full article here to understand when using agency logos and seals could put your company at legal risk.](#)

You're Hired! Restrictions on Hiring Former Government Employees for Government Contractors (Video)

Government contracting is an inherently competitive enterprise, and employers frequently seek to hire former government personnel with valuable acquisition and contract administration experience. However, both the Procurement Integrity Act and the U.S. Criminal Code impose strict limits on what former government employees may do when working for a government contractor. [Watch this webinar to learn what former government employees—and the contractors who hire them—need to know to stay compliant.](#)

End of an Era: State of Recertification Regulations Grace Period

An SBA-imposed one-year regulatory grace period has ended, with significant implications for many government contractors considering a merger or acquisition. [Read more about what the newly-effective rule provides.](#)

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.

CMMC Frequently Asked Questions (Updated)

The Department of War has released an updated version of its CMMC Frequently Asked Questions publication. [Read the publication here.](#)

CMMC Affirmation Trap: FCA Exposure for Defense Contractors and Acquirers

Defense contractors subject to Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification compliance under government contracts will be subject to False Claims Act liability risks going forward. The U.S. Department of Justice settled seven cybersecurity fraud cases in 2025 alone, including the first enforcement action against a subcontractor and a case holding a business liable for violations by a federal contractor it acquired prior to the acquisition. [This article explains the risks and offers suggestions for how defense contractors can mitigate them.](#)

CMMC for AI? Defense Policy Law Imposes AI Security Framework and Requirements on Contractors

In an important first, the yearly defense policy law, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, directs the Department of Defense to develop and implement a framework addressing the cybersecurity and physical security of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies acquired by the Pentagon—and incorporate it in CMMC. [Read the full article to learn how the FY 2026 NDAA could expand CMMC requirements to cover AI security.](#)

GSA Quietly Rolls Out CMMC-Like Cybersecurity Framework for Contractors

The General Services Administration (GSA) is placing new cybersecurity requirements on contracts that parallel the Defense Department's CMMC program. [Read the full article to see how GSA's new cybersecurity requirements could impact your existing and future contracts.](#)

About Nebraska Indian Community College APEX Accelerator:

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Address (Santee Campus):

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