

The Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management Newsletter

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ELIMINATING DUPLICATE CONTRACTS THROUGH THE USE OF CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

We have all made purchases only to later find out that another contract vehicle existed that offered the same or similar item(s) at a lower cost. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) took on the effort of trying to eliminate duplication of contracts as a way of saving the government time and money. Agencies were required to submit a business case to justify establishing any new multiple award vehicles. OFPP’s initial task involved developing a catalog of existing contracts within each agency. However, this effort did not meet with great success. OFPP has now targeted a reduction of 13 percent of duplicate contracts by 2020 through use of Category Management and its sub category, Best-In-Class (BIC) solutions. Category Management is an approach the Federal Government is applying to buy smarter and more like a single enterprise. Category Management enables the government to eliminate redundancies, increase efficiency, and deliver more value and savings from the government’s acquisition programs.

Category Management includes products and services ranging from professional services, transportation and logistics services, to office management products and services. Those that are designated as best-in-class solutions have undergone a rigorous assessment to make sure they meet five key criteria.

1. Rigorous requirements definitions and planning processes
2. Appropriate pricing strategies
3. Data-driven strategies to change buying and consumption behavior (i.e., demand management)
4. Category and performance management strategies
5. Independently validated reviews

And include such products/services as the Next Generation Delivery Service, Building Maintenance and Operations, Office Supplies, and Government-wide Strategic Solutions (GSS) for Desktops and Laptops, which is mandatory for desktops/laptops. For the full list of Category Management and its designated best-in-class solutions visit the [Acquisition Gateway](#). You will also find the BIC designation for supplies and services on the [ASRB SharePoint](#) page under the Tools/Best Practices link entitled “Required and Priority Sources of Supplies and Services and Pre-Negotiated Instruments”.

To prevent contract duplication at the NIH, consider government-wide contracts for common goods and services to save money, avoid wasteful and redundant contract actions, and free-up acquisition staff to accelerate procurements for high-

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ELIMINATING DUPLICATE CONTRACTS THROUGH THE USE OF CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

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priority mission work. To the maximum extent practicable, especially for the acquisition of common goods and services, agencies shall use existing contract solutions such as:

- “Federal Supply Schedules
- “Government-wide acquisition contracts
- “Multi-agency contracts; and
- “Any other procurement instruments intended for use by multiple agencies.”

For a listing of current existing contract vehicles at NIH see: [Multiple Vehicle Contracts/NIH Wide Contracts](#).

With the renewed interest in category management, the government can expect a big return on its investment. OMB along with the Category Management Leadership Council (CMLC) developed a spend under management (SUM) that will help agencies appraise their progress.

The goal of this effort is to increase the spend by the BIC solution, thereby reducing the need for multiple contracts of the same commodity or service. The solutions already have pre-negotiated terms and prices as well as undergone a thorough vetting process.

FAR CLASS DEVIATION 2018-02—INCREASING THE MICRO-PURCHASE THRESHOLD AND THE SIMPLIFIED ACQUISITION THRESHOLD

The HHS Office of Grants and Acquisition Policy and Accountability (OGAPA) and Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) have issued a Class Deviation from the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Increasing the Micro-Purchase Threshold (MPT) and the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), effective June 1, 2018.

The NIH has been provided the opportunity to implement this new authority and is empaneling a cross functional group of NIH

acquisition and administrative staff members to address necessary changes to policy, training, and systems. The cross functional group will begin work toward implementation.

At this time, MPT and SAT **will not** change. Contracting Officers and Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card holders are to adhere to current thresholds and are not to deviate unless or until official notice is received from the NIH Head of the Contract Activity (HCA).

SKILCRAFT PENS TURN 50!



Yes, that ubiquitous pen, found in every desk and office building of the federal government, has been around fifty years. Although the Skilcraft brand and its connection with the employment of blind people predates the pen by another 22 years with the passage of the 1938 Wagner-O’Day Act.

The Skilcraft pen came out of necessity after another manufacturer made 13 million defective ballpoint pens, forcing the federal government to tap the National Industries of the Blind

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SKILCRAFT PENS TURN 50!

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(now known as AbilityOne) to begin the manufacture of those pens.

What's in a pen, some may say. Skilcraft pens are still made in accordance with the original 16-page specifications set forth by the General Services Administration in 1968, and includes somewhat impressive specifications, including:

- The pens must be able to write continuously for a mile
- The pens must operate in temperatures up to 160 degrees and down to 40 degrees below zero
- The pen ink cartridge shall be capable of producing under 125 grams of pressure a line not less than 5,000 feet long
- The pens will not produce more than 15 blobs per 1,000 feet of writing, on average, with a maximum of 25 blobs for any 1,000-foot increment
- The writing shall not be completely removed after two applications of chemical bleach

Even though people use fewer pens in the digital age, the Skilcraft pens are still in high demand, to a tune of 4 million pens being produced every year at their Greensboro, North Carolina plant.

Remember, you can meet the government requirements by ordering Skilcraft pens from the NIH Supply Store Center! In addition to keeping the NIH supply closet well stocked, you never know when someone at NIH will need to perform an emergency tracheotomy (trivia fact: Navy medics have used the pen barrels to perform emergency tracheotomies). Whatever your writing needs are, Skilcraft has a pen for you.

NIH SMALL BUSINESS OFFICE NEWS

The National Institutes of Health Small Business Program Office is facilitating and/or assisting with an array of events tailored to NIH employees and industry throughout the third quarter. Most of these events will feature Continuous Learning Points for participants. Please read the following event descriptions and register where appropriate.

Reverse Industry Day for the Acquisition Community

The Professional Services Council and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Small Business Office is hosting a Reverse Industry Day on ***Wednesday June 6, 2018 at the Natcher Conference Center from 9:00 AM-12:15 PM.***

is for government employees to better understand the parallel action industry is taking during the government's acquisition lifecycle and why decisions or information made available or not made available during pre-award impact bid/no-bid decisions among potential offerors and post-award contract administration.

This event is intended for the 1102 and 343 employees within the acquisition workforce. **All participants will receive Continuous Learning Points (CLP's) for attending this conference.** For registration click on the following link: <http://olao-test.od.nih.gov/content/nih-reverse-industry-day-registration>. ***Please note that this event is restricted to NIH employees.*** For additional information, contact Rachel Kenlaw at

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NIH SMALL BUSINESS OFFICE NEWS

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rachel.kenlaw@nih.gov and Maria Guardiola at maria.guardiola@nih.gov.

Vendor Cafe

The National Institutes of Health Small Business Office is hosting a Vendor Café Outreach event for small businesses on ***Tuesday, June 19, 2018 at the Neuroscience Center from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM.***

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is the featured IC for this café and industry

matchmaking sessions will be held with NCI acquisitions officials. Additionally, industry participants will have the opportunity to interact with a panel of acquisitions personnel from various institutes and centers.

This event is intended for industry. A registration link will be released on FedBizOpps in upcoming weeks. For additional information, contact Annette Owens-Scarboro at SCARBORA@nih.gov and Rachel Kenlaw at Rachel.Kenlaw@nih.gov.

COST ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (CAS)

CAS are a set of 19 standards promulgated to achieve uniformity and consistency in the cost accounting practices governing measurement, assignment and allocation of costs to contracts with the United States Government. CAS, when applicable, has the full force and effect of the law in accordance with 41 U.S.C. § 422(g)(2). When a prospective contract will be subject to full CAS coverage, the contractor must submit a CAS Disclosure Statement. Before the fully CAS-covered contract can be awarded, the CAS Disclosure Statement must be determined adequate by the Cognizant Federal Agency Official (CFAO) which is NIH Division of Financial Advisory Services (DFAS) for HHS commercial organizations.

The process for obtaining a CAS Disclosure Statement starts with the Contracting Officer's inclusion of FAR 52.230-1, Cost Accounting Standards Notices and Certification in the solicitation for proposed contracts subject to CAS. Further, the Contracting Officer must ensure the contractor made the

required solicitation certifications and that required CAS Disclosure Statements are submitted. After the Disclosure Statement is determined adequate by the CFAO, the Contracting Officer must ensure

the appropriate inclusion of the following citations, in addition to FAR 52.230-6 (Administration of CAS), in the contract:

1. FAR 52.230-2 (Full CAS Coverage)
2. FAR 52.230-3 (Modified CAS Coverage)
3. FAR 52.230-4 (Foreign Concerns)
4. FAR 52.230-5 (Educational Institutions)

For further assistance, please contact Ms. Emma Smith, IDC-A Branch Chief (NIH Contracts) at (301)-496-4495 or emma.smith@nih.gov, or refer to the DFAS Subject Matter Advisors page located at: <https://oamp.od.nih.gov/dfas/dfas-subject-matter-advisors>.

TIPS FOR CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENT

Did you know that one in five people in the U.S. have a disability? That equates to over 53 million people using some type of assistive technology. Did you also know that since the inception of Section 508 there has been multi-million dollar lawsuits against companies and government entities since 2000 for noncompliance with Section 508 guidelines?

Imagine how frustrating it would be to receive a Statement of Work only to find that the electronic document that you received has not been properly formatted for accessibility and your screen reader cannot read it. Making accessible documents allows individuals who use assistive technology, such as screen readers to have access to information that would otherwise be unavailable to them.

Please use the listing below to assist you in creating an accessible document.

- Add the **Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker** to the **Quick Access Toolbar**.
- Always use the **HHS Section 508 Checklist** along with the **Microsoft Accessibility Checker**.
- If the document is in **Compatibility Mode** you cannot use the **Accessibility Checker**, **Save** the document to the current version of the software; then run the **Accessibility Checker**.
- ****Remember**** to add appropriate alternative text to all non-textual content.
- It's best to flatten images instead of grouping them, especially if the document will be converted to PDF.
- Always add headers to tables, also if the table expands across several pages make sure to use **repeat the header rows** function.
- For documents longer than 9 pages a *table of contents* is recommended.
- Use the **Microsoft Word Style Gallery** to create document headings, use the paragraph function for spacing.
- Always add **Document Properties**, such as Title, Keywords, and Subject.
- Add **ScreenTips** to hyperlinks, ensure that all hyperlinks are active and linked to the targeted destination.
- Use **Color Contrast** tools to ensure sufficient background/foreground ratio.
- Minimum font point for an accessible document is **12pt**. You can set the default font for each application (Applies to **Word**, **Excel**, and **Outlook**).
 - **Do not** set a default font for **MS PowerPoint**.
- When creating a new document, start the **Accessibility Checker**, that way you can fix the errors as you are creating the document.
 - For **PowerPoint**; it is also a good idea to open the **Selection Pane** so that you can ensure the *logical reading order* of the slide.
- **Print Preview** your documents before distribution.
- Add **508** at the end of the *filename* for each document that adheres to **Section 508** guidelines.

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TIPS FOR CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENT

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On January 18, 2018 the [Section 508 Refresh](#) became effective. Since the inclusion of the new regulations; some of the [HHS Section 508 Checklists](#) have been revised to adhere to the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(2.0\)](#).

For more information check out the “[Resolving the HHS Section 508 Requirements – MS Office 2016](#)” document; which can be found on the Contract Data Management Program (CDMP) SharePoint site – [Section 508](#). Along with practice file for Microsoft Word it’s accompanying workbook.

RECAP CORNER

Below is a recap of recent OALM communications to the NIH acquisition workforce (3/26/18 – 5/7/18)

ID	Date	Title	Purpose
18-11	3/26/18	Reminder: FY 2013 Inactive Owners Deadline-March 30, 2018	Notice of options to address the Inactive Owners associated with FY 2013 Expiring Lines
18-12	4/1/18	DCIS/FPDS Reporting Requirement - Disabled	Departmental Contracts Information System (DCIS)/FPDS reporting requirement in PRISM has been temporarily disabled.
18-13	4/3/18	DCIS/FPDS Reporting Requirement – P-CARD	Format for award numbers issued when a log is created over the micro-purchase threshold (MPT) is changing to a new format. The format for the existing Procurement Instrument Identification (PIID) will be replaced by a new Uniform Procurement Instrument Identification (UPIID).
18-14	4/19/18	FY 2013 Cancel Year Lines and Expiring Lines	Cancellation of FY 2013 Year Lines and Expiring Lines
18-15	4/26/18	Uniform Procurement Instrument Identification (UPIID) Implementation	Crosswalk instructions for HHS implementation of new UPIID conversion solution in DCIS to meet the UPIID requirement
18-16	5/3/18	DCIS/FPDS Reporting of April 2018 Base Awards and Modifications	Attachment of listing of all actions (base awards and modifications) with Award Released Dates between April 1, 2018 through April 30, 2018, that have not been reported and finalized in DCIS/FPDS.
18-17	5/4/18	PRISM Solicitation Number Issue	Error message in processing FPDS-NG Record
18-18	5/7/18	Canceling Year Lines and nVision Canceling Year Lines Dashboard	Cancellation of Year Lines in the fifth fiscal year after the expiration of an appropriation’s period of availability for incurring new obligations with a budget year of FY 2013 must have funds de-obligated by August 20, 2018.

NIH BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENT (BPA) LISTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Lists of all NIH Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) can be found at the NIH Blanket Purchase Agreement [webpage](#).

This location contains Two BPA Lists:

1. Complete vendor alphabetical list;
2. Vendor list sorted by commodity; and

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact the BPA helpline at 301-496-5212 or [email](#).

ACQUISITION TRAINING INFORMATION

Acquisition Training at NIH

Acquisition Training Classes that are offered by the NIH Training Center can be accessed at the following link:

[Acquisition Management Training](#).

Federal Acquisition Certification Coursework

CON courses and other Federal Acquisition Certification required courses can be found at the [NIH Training Center](#), [Federal Acquisition Institute](#), and [Defense Acquisition University](#).

Section 508 Accessibility Training

Section 508 Accessibility Training courses can be accessed at: [CIT Section 508 Accessibility training website](#).

Green Purchasing Training

Green Purchasing Training and other Green Training courses can be found at: [OALM Green Purchasing Website](#).

As a reminder, per HHS policy, all contracting officers, contract specialists, purchase cardholders, card approving officials, CORs and acquisition staff in job series 1102, 1105, and 1106 are required to take the Green Purchasing training every two calendar years. The training includes online training modules for your convenience.

Questions regarding Green Purchasing Training should be sent to: GreenPurchasing@mail.nih.gov.

NGIYABONGA

“Thank You” in Zulu

SPECIAL THANKS

**We’d like to thank all those who contributed to this issue
and to future editions of the OALM Newsletter.**

The OALM Newsletter will be published six (6) times in calendar year 2018. OALM invites your comments and suggestions for future articles. We encourage staff to submit articles that would be of interest to our readers. We will do our best to include such articles in future editions of the OALM Newsletter.

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