

Defense Small Business Webinar Series  
PTAP: How Businesses Can Access Training to Help Them Contract with DoD  
Sherry Savage, PTAP Program Manager, Defense Logistics Agency  
October 21, 2020

Q&As

- How do I find my local PTAC?
  - You can find your local PTAC at <https://www.dla.mil/SmallBusiness/PTAP/PTAC/>.
  
- Is there a fee associated with a small business utilizing PTAC?
  - Most of the assistance the PTACs provide is free. Please contact your local PTAC for more information. DLA requires PTACs to limit services to businesses who have expressed their desire to receive PTAC services (at no cost) so PTACs will usually ask businesses to explicitly state their intent to become a PTAC client.
  - PTAC services must comply with the PTAP statute found at 10 USC Chapter 142 so they can't do everything a business might ask of them. They provide contracting-related technical assistance to US large and small businesses who are currently capable of performing on a US government contract or subcontract at any level or tier but lack information necessary to do so.
  
- What is the relationship between the of Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) and the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC)?
  - APTAC is the non-profit association managed and operated by Procurement Technical Assistance Center employees and funded through PTAC awards issued by the DLA PTAP.
  - APTAC is an organization formed by PTACs to support PTACs; they share knowledge with each other through newsletters, instant messaging, routine virtual training, and conferences focused on improving the success of PTAC employees in serving the needs of their business clients
  
- Do the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) offer assistance to small businesses with DoD SBIR proposal preparation?
  - Yes, but PTAC assistance in proposal preparation is limited to technical assistance; PTACs do not write proposals for businesses. PTACs assist by identifying the opportunity, reviewing the proposal requirements with the business, reviewing the completed proposal as a second set of eyes to identify errors or omissions, and assist with upload guidance where proposals must be submitted via software.
  
- Can large businesses use the PTACs?
  - Yes, PTACs serve US large and small businesses.
  
- Do the PTACs facilitate introductions to small business liaisons?
  - Yes, PTACs host events to facilitate introductions and they will identify points of contacts upon request for specific needs identified by their clients.

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- How do you suggest that contracting officers and agency leaders collaborate with PTACs?
  - I suggest contracting officers and agency leaders think of PTACs as their force multiplier, capable of disseminating their messages to industry and who can often provide in-person conference space for events and/or virtual meeting platforms at no cost. PTAC performance goals include providing events and one-on-one counseling to US businesses, they want to work with city, state, federal government agencies to bring the best information and training to businesses, which in turn increases responsive proposals and expands the industrial base. Agencies should consider partnering with PTACs on Industry days, pre-solicitation conferences, and annual procurement trend briefings. Agency-specific software, forms, and expectations are also great topics for PTAC-government collaboration with industry.
- Will the transition of FPDS-NG to beta.SAM necessitate new training for small business concerns?
  - PTACs regularly create reports from these repositories and share the data with clients, and teach clients how to create customized reports. Businesses who want help with any aspect of beta.SAM, including report generation, can get that help from their local PTAC.
- If an organization's official headquarters differs from a satellite office or team, are they able to use the local PTAC or will they need to reach out to the PTAC located at the company's headquarters?
  - Businesses should reach out for one-on-one assistance provided by the PTAC assigned to serve the county where their official headquarters resides. Businesses are invited and encouraged to attend any and all PTAC event without regard to their headquarters location.
- Are any PTACs providing CMMC assistance or certification?
  - Every PTAC provides CMMC preparation assistance. PTACs do not offer any type of certifications (neither socioeconomic nor CMMC). They help businesses understand the requirements, provide tips to make application processes easier and more successful, offer free training from recognized CMMC experts, and tell businesses how to submit their certification application.
- How can PTACs help with DoD sole source contracts?
  - DoD contracting officers can refer the provider to a PTAC for customized assistance specific to the needs of the sole source procurement. For example, sometimes DoD wants to buy from a supplier who invented something but doesn't have an established business yet. The PTAC will coordinate with another resource provider who routinely helps businesses become established, such as one of the Small Business Administration (SBA) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or SCORE award recipient. The PTAC would help the newly formed business register in SAM, help them find and understand the solicitation, understand accounting system requirements and proposal requirements (but don't write the proposal) as requested, in short, the PTAC would stay with the business and the government buyer each step of the way, helping the sole source provider as much as needed/desired to facilitate a successful contract. The PTAC can also teach the business how to invoice using DoD's Wide Area Workflow (WAWF) and encourage them to communicate freely with their contracting officer to mitigate performance and delivery issues.

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- PTACs can help sole source providers find subcontractors. PTACs can host matchmaking events to introduce capable subcontractors to the prime, they can host prime-specific events to teach the subcontractors how to meet the prime contractors requirements. PTAC engagement in this way increases the number of capable subcontractor a prime chooses from, and helps them meet their contractual subcontracting requirements. PTACs accept referrals from prime contractors, helping minimize subcontractor payment and administrative performance problems and helping them stay focused on the job.
- Do PTACs provide assistance to small business who applied for WOSB certification in [beta.certify.sba.gov](https://beta.certify.sba.gov)?
  - PTACs provide assistance to any US business who is capable of performing on a government contract or subcontract at any level or tier. They do not certify businesses but will help them apply for certifications and will help them follow up to receive status from the certifying agencies, and to correct any deficiencies identified, and to reapply.
- How long must a business be established before reaching out to the PTAC?
  - There is no time in service requirement, but a business must be able to be determined responsible by a government contracting officer or Government Purchase Cardholder at the time the PTAC provides counseling. This usually means the business has some experience selling their good or service to commercial or government customers. SBA is the federal agency responsible for helping individuals form businesses through their SBDC and SCORE programs. Generally, the only newly formed startup businesses served by PTACs include those providing cutting edge/technology solutions via SBIR/STTR or other transaction authority (OTA) awards. If a government procurement official needs a PTAC to help any particular business in order for the government to issue an award to them, the PTAC will help.
- Why are PTACs different and not standardized across the US?
  - DLA issues cost type cooperative agreements to non-profit entities, government agencies (including state funded colleges or universities) and Indian tribal entities. They are required to pay a percentage of the cost of operating their PTAC, usually 25% or 40%. Each award recipient has stakeholders who impact the area they serve and which aspects of government contracting they focus most on. For example, a PTAC funded in part by the state of Virginia will not use their taxpayers' funds to serve residents of any other state. The same applies to our county government-funded agreements. DLA issues awards that result from applications to provide PTAC services; sometimes applicants propose to receive the maximum federal funding value of \$1M per year, but more often, they choose to limit their investment. This results in a variety of sizes of PTACs, some with 1 employee and others with 10 or more. Additionally, although DLA requires awardees to provide a focus on DoD contracting-related topics, the awardee might also require a focus on contracting-related topics important to their funding stakeholders, such as specific city or state contracting goals. Each PTAC is unique but all help connect businesses and governments to bridge the gap between buyers and suppliers for win-win contracts.