Procurement Times

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Director's Corner

GSA's Alliant information technology GWAC celebrates its three year anniversary on April 30th, 2012, and there appears to be no slowdown in federal agencies using the Alliant GWAC for complex Information Technology (IT) service requirements. Cloud computing, cyber security, information assurance, and data center consolidation are all contemporary and prominent IT issues that each agency is grappling with. Addressing all of these IT challenges are 100 percent within scope of GSA's Alliant GWAC.

When GSA aligned the scope of the Alliant GWAC with the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) and Department of Defense Enterprise Architecture (DoDEA), the contract truly transformed the manner in which agencies obtained access to cost-effective complex IT solutions by creating an extremely robust, broad spectrum, technologically driven contract that evolves with emerging technology. Additionally, all contract types are allowed; and ancillary products and services, whether they are IT or non-IT, are also permitted as long as they are an integral and necessary requirement to the overall IT solution. This all makes the appeal of Alliant very attractive.

Casey Kelley, Director Enterprise GWAC Division

To date, 207 Task Order (TOs) have been issued under Alliant with an estimated value of $9 Billion by 39 agencies; and averaging 3.6 number of Offers received per RFP with no Protests being sustained by GAO. All the many value-added features available on the Alliant website should not be overlooked (gsa.gov/alliant). The features below contribute much to the customer experience when using this IT GWAC to streamline the acquisition process:

✓ Three hundred twenty-four customers have taken advantage of the complimentary scope compatibility reviews where our acquisition/technical team members review Statement of Work (SOWs)/Objectives (SOOs), and Performance Work Statements (PWS') within one to two days and formally respond in writing whether or not a requirement is within scope. The Benefit: Assurance in knowing your task order is considered within scope of the Alliant contract from GSA's Alliant Program Office.

✓ Twelve redacted sample SOWs from actual awarded TOs under Alliant are available and categorized according to the FEA's IT component description, as well as 16 acquisition templates that are provided to assist with the TO procurement phases when using Alliant. The Benefit: No need to reinvent the wheel, as these are substantial time saving templates and proven reference guides that can be used to tailor an agency's specific SOW. In turn, the quality and standardization of proposals received increases.

✓ An Alliant Ordering Guide that is current and often updated. The Benefit: Aids and assists agency customers with soliciting and awarding TOs under Alliant.

Finally, with the entire buzz lately on cloud computing and data center consolidation, our technical team led by Richard Blake has been extremely busy the past several months aiding and assisting many agencies that have awarded and are considering awarding Cloud related services off of the Alliant GWAC. We are confident when we state, "Alliant is uniquely positioned as the vehicle of choice to meet the administration's Cloud First Initiative."

- Casey Kelley

WEBINARS — The Next Best Thing to Face-to-Face

"Webinar" is the newly adopted lingo used to describe a web-based seminar that allows conferencing events shared with those at remote locations. It has become today's communication tool that is growing in popularity not only due to its costs-savings benefits, but also because it's the most efficient means of reaching a wider audience at a single session. No need to rent a facility to speak to 50 people or a stadium if you're trying to reach thousands. All you need is a computer, conferencing software, an internet connection, a voice with a microphone, and maybe a telephone. To participate as a listener, there's no need to take time away from your desk and/or home, pack a suitcase, get on a plane, or do all the other things you need to do to get from point A to point B. Furthermore, unlike in a stadium-sized venue where interaction is nearly impossible, in webinars, live question and answer sessions allow for that capability. Participants can speak during Q&A sessions; or text chat to either all attendees or privately between two. Using the many accessible webinar tools, including slide show presentations, live or streaming videos, Voice over IP, web tours, whiteboards, surveys/polls, and chat, there's no need to leave your desk to benefit from a worthwhile meeting. And if you had not benefited, as is occasionally the case for anyone who travels to attend training or meetings, "Oh well." The loss would be negligible to both you or your employer.

Here at GSA's Enterprise Acquisition Division, the Contracting Officers continue to take full advantage of this costs-savings technology. We create and deliver webinars to our Alliant GWAC Industry Partners (IPs) on training topics such as understanding Contractor Past Performance Assessments (CPAR) and using CPAR Systems. We even partner with other experts in the field such as Naval Sea Logistics Center to complement GSA's presentations. Our IPs additionally have been provided periodic "Alliant GWAC - Orientation to Contract Administration," a two-hour training webinar on the execution of their GSA GWAC contracts. Recently, our Director of Client Services in collaboration with the Alliant Small Business division in Kansas City initiated a series of webinars titled "GSA's Next Generation GWACS - 2012 Refresher Training" available to all Contracting Officers throughout the federal government that have a GSA Delegation of Procurement Authority (DPA) to issue orders off the Alliant GWACS. These programs mentioned above are among others we offer and continue to develop for the benefit of our IPs and client agencies. In short, webinars may not be as socially satisfying as a face-to-face meeting greeted with a handshake and a smile, but they are quick, convenient, educational, inexpensive, and highly effective for the appropriate types of meetings or training sessions.

- John Cavadias

> *"All you need is a computer, conferencing software, an internet connection, a voice with a microphone, and maybe a telephone."*

From The Tech

"*The Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) is a government-wide program that provides a standardized approach to security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring for Cloud products and services. This approach uses a 'do once, use many times' framework that will save cost, time, and staff required to conduct redundant agency security assessments.*"

The above quote is the first sentence of the *FedRAMP* definition taken from the *FedRAMP* web page found at http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/102371. The website also lists a number program goals and benefits worth noting and is well worth a visit if you would like to quickly learn more about *FedRAMP*.

As a technologist and a taxpayer, I could not be more excited to see a panel of likeminded government professionals reach a consensus concerning the basic requirements to secure the Cloud Computing (Cloud) while allowing enough "wiggle room" for federal agencies to meet their specialized requirements and piggy back on the work already done. In other words – save time and reduce costs!

Hans Manzke and Katie Lewin at GSA's Federal Cloud Computing Program say, "*From a procurement standpoint, FedRAMP offers an opportunity to streamline processes for all parties involved in the authorization of information systems. By providing a standardized approach for Cloud security, the program should improve cloud procurement timelines for the federal government while also reducing the amount of time, effort, and CSPs (Cloud service providers) expend. It is important to note that net-net, FedRAMP creates no new procurement processes or FAR requirements; instead, it relies on existing frameworks as a structure.*"

A lesser known benefit to the Alliant GWAC Program is derived through the Alliant prime contractors (Industry Partners) that have been through the evaluation process necessary to obtain their authorizations under the recently announced GSA's Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Basic Purchasing Agreement (BPA). Although the two are clearly distinct and separate, the *FedRAMP* team has seen the wisdom of allowing those contractors with an Authority to Operate (ATO) under the BPA to leverage the process toward a more expedited *FedRAMP* ATO. Since a half dozen or so Alliant Industry Partners fall neatly into this group, at some level of the process, we have a leg up as we continue to socialize Alliant GWAC as a Cloud friendly vehicle and one that should be considered before we, the government, jump out with all sorts of new Cloud specific IDIQ's.

In short, this is one of those times government has "hit one out of the park," and I think the *FedRAMP* team deserves our gratitude for a job well considered and very well done!

- Richard Blake

FedRAMP…

"Provides a standardized approach to security assessment, authorization, and continuous monitoring for Cloud products and services"

Alliant 3C Approach

Alliant's approach to success comes from **C**ollaboration, **C**ommunication, and **C**ompetition, or the 3C Approach. Implementation of the 3C Approach is made possible through the use of various tools and processes.

Collaboration happens when Alliant Industry Partners (IPs), the GWAC Program and clients meet at various Client Outreach events or participate in Shared Interest Groups (SIG) to tackle current IT challenges. The mission of the Alliant SIG is to provide open discussion and informational exchange concerning all aspects of the partnership between GSA and the IPs. The SIG is intended to provide representatives with a voice to directly impact the success of the Alliant program in a significant and meaningful way. Results from the SIG meetings include group recommendations submitted to and discussed with GSA leadership.

Communication happens when clients and the GWAC Program are communicating early in the procurement process. Alliant offers free scope compatibility reviews which is popular with Ordering Contracting Officers and Requiring Activities. Over 300 of these reviews have been performed on statements of work provided to us by clients before clients choose to use a GWAC.

Competition happens when clients choose Alliant seeking competitive pricing. Alliant consists of a qualified and healthy pool of 58 Industry Partners, all of which are entitled to a fair opportunity process. Thus far, using Alliant has resulted in a robust 3.6 average number of Offers received using competed procedures.

As you tackle your next requirement, consider the 3C Approach to your procurement. Contract information is available on the Alliant website (www.gsa.gov/alliant) and agency questions/comments can be sent to the Alliant e-mail address (alliant@gsa.gov). A dedicated Client Support Director is available to assist you every step of the way.

- Bob Sheehan

Alliant Has The Competitive Edge

The Alliant GWAC is trending upward in the number of Offers received as a result of the fair opportunity process. To date, Alliant has averaged 3.6 Offers per Request for Proposals when clients choose to go the route of competition. The "number of Offers received" is as stated in the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) and used in this analysis. The DoD points to the benefit of competition as "healthy competition is the lifeblood of commerce – it increases the likelihood of efficiencies and innovations."

By using online tools, such as GSA's e-Buy, or our email to all, AliantAwardees@gsa.gov, clients help to promote effective competition and automates some aspects of the contracting and acquisition process leading to substantial savings, increased efficiencies, and greater transparency and accountability.

How do agencies choose to achieve contract savings under Alliant? By increasing competition through the fair opportunity process, avoiding limited competition, and by using an interagency contract vehicle, such as a GWAC. This results in streamlining the procurement lead time vs. doing a full and open competition; and, by leveraging technology to improve contract management.

To quantify dollar savings when using labor-hour type contract line items, clients can request discounts from the posted GWAC hourly rates. They can also calculate the awardee's overall price subtracted from the average overall price of all viable Offers received for their requirement.

Competition provides many benefits not readily obvious in limited source procurements. Make the right choice and get the competitive edge on your next procurement.

- Paul Martin

Determining a Fair and Reasonable Alliant Task Order

The Ordering Contracting Officer (OCO) is responsible for analyzing Task Order proposals and documenting the cost or price evaluation to include a determination that the final agreed to price is fair and reasonable, regardless of contract type. In accordance with FAR 16.505(b)(3), if the contract did not establish a price for a specific task, or established only hourly labor rates, the contracting officer must establish reasonable prices for each order using the policies and methods in FAR subpart 15.4. The OCO may evaluate labor category mix and number of hours, plus any other additional price/cost analysis deemed appropriate for their specific requirement.

Alliant's comprehensive and flexible scope allows for all contract types. Labor categories and rates have not been established for Cost or Fixed Price Orders because these contract types establish a fair and reasonable price IAW with the FAR 15.4, Pricing, FAR 16.3, Cost-Reimbursement Contracts and FAR 16.2, Fixed-Price Contracts respectively. However, Alliant has established 80 fully burdened labor hour rates that should accommodate most circumstances. These T&M/LH rates represent a single, blended composite loaded-hourly labor rate per labor category inclusive of rates for the prime as well as divisions, subsidiaries, or affiliates of the contractor under a common control. Generally these rates should not be exceeded except when unique circumstances such as geographic area (e.g. OCONUS) or security clearances are explained by the contractor to the satisfaction of the OCO (See Basic Contract B.7.4). The OCO is also authorized to establish unique professional skills (See H.3 Basic Contract) at the Order level to meet their unique Order requirements.

Ultimately the OCO is responsible for determining that the total price for the order is appropriate given the requirements of each individual order as well as the level of effort and mix of labor proposed to perform the task. As with all contractual matters, the OCO's job is to be fair and reasonable to all parties and use sound business judgment in making decisions.

- Roger Chapin

Transparency in Action - GSA FEDSIM Holds Alliant Open House

As part of the Alliant GWAC Outreach Event, GSA FEDSIM hosted an Open House for all Alliant Prime Contractors on November 4th, 2011 in Arlington, VA. FEDSIM has a long history of supporting GSA GWACS and is demonstrating continued support by using Alliant. The agenda for the session had three primary themes: (1) Summary of all existing FEDSIM contracts and task orders, (2) Future business development opportunities for Alliant, and (3) a detailed explanation of FEDSIM's standard acquisition practices for Alliant. GSA acquisition group managers broke down the entire acquisition process from requirement definition, proposal instructions, oral presentations, technical and cost evaluation, debriefings, and protests.

Steve Viar, FEDSIM's Director, summarized the goal of the event at the outset: "FEDSIM recognizes the importance of openness in the acquisition process. The better informed our industry partners are of our activities, the better proposals we will receive".

Chris Hamm
Operations Director, GSA FEDSIM

ITS Portfolio Corner

GSA Awards 21 Companies Connections II Telecommunications Contract

Enhanced Sustainability Requirements, Supply Chain Risk Management and Global Reach Provide Improved Solutions to Federal Agencies

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) recently awarded 21 companies a spot on its Connections II telecommunications contract valued at up to $5 billion. Connections II, an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract (ID/IQ) with a 39 month base period plus six one-year options, provides the federal government with a one-stop-shop for global-reaching telecommunications infrastructure solutions. This contract gives agencies access to all labor, products and solutions necessary to support the integration of telecommunications, networking, and network-centric applications at the LAN, building, campus, and enterprise level. The Connections II contract provides highly qualified, pre-competed contractors, nine of which are small businesses. Past customers found the contract's ease of use, flexibility, and customer choice very helpful.

Debbie Clark

"Connections II rounds out GSA's offerings in network services and integrates with established GSA telecommunications vehicles, like Networx, to ensure that customers receive end-to-end solutions" said Mary Davie, GSA Assistant Commissioner, Office of Integrated Technology Services. "This contract provides great value to our customer agencies, and the enhanced supply chain and sustainability requirements in the contract drive a more secure and energy efficient telecommunications infrastructure for the federal government."

The contract mandates that equipment purchased by federal agencies comes from sources that are compliant with supply chain risk management requirements designed to eliminate counterfeit components in the federal IT architecture. It encourages the intelligent use of resources and promotes energy efficient, environmentally safe products through compliance with LEED and EPEAT standards as well as options to purchase refurbished equipment.

More information is available online at: www.gsa.gov/connectionsii, or you can reach us at fasnetworkservice@gsa.gov.

Debbie Clark
GSA Connections Program Manager

Alliant STATS (as of February 2012)

Top Ten Agencies Using Alliant:

1. Department of State
2. Department of Homeland Security
3. Air Force
4. Army
5. Department of Agriculture
6. Defense Cyber Crime Security
7. Environmental Protective Agency
8. Navy
9. Department of Justice
10. Department of Veteran Affairs

	Total Orders Issued	Total Estimated Dollars
GSA Assisted Services	107	$ 5,136,719,127.30
Direct Order Direct Bill	100	$ 3,674,473,271.84
Totals:	207	$ 8,811,192,399.14

Employee Highlight

Shirlee Rivera Retires After 40 Years of Public Service!

In February, Shirlee Rivera retired from GSA after serving for 40 years within the organization. Shirlee came to the Enterprise GWAC Center about four years ago, after having served a big portion of her government career in GSA's Assisted Acquisition Services. She contributed tremendously to the success of the GSA Alliant GWAC by using her strong customer relationship skills to inform and educate customers of the Alliant GWAC and being the primary lead that has resulted in close to 1900 people completing Alliant Delegation of Procurement Authority (DPA) training.

Shirlee developed some very loyal customers to GSA over her 40 year career by being very customer service oriented, responsive, and helpful in assisting customers with the information and services they needed to perform their mission. She will be dearly missed by all of us here at GSA and by all those that had the pleasure of working with her throughout the Federal Information Technology community.

Shirlee Rivera

Alliant Contract Information

If you are interested in learning more about the Alliant GWAC Contract, please visit: www.gsa.gov/alliant. Everything you need to know can be found with a click of a button!

If you wish to speak to someone, you can contact our Client Support by dialing (877) 534-2208. Another way to reach out would be to send an email to the Alliant mailbox: alliant@gsa.gov

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

Alliant, The Go-To Provider for The Customized IT Needs of Agencies

Agency procurement offices are facing new challenges stemming from the rapid pace of technological change, new contracting requirements, and shifting administration priorities. These challenges have led to customers demanding Information Technology (IT) solutions and not merely contracts. The Office of Integrated Technology Services (ITS) is now orienting itself as a solutions provider. ITS is speaking the customers' language and helping them on various fronts including Cloud, Data Center Services and Telecommunications.

The solutions orientation provides a unique opportunity for the Alliant GWAC and the Alliant Small Business GWAC to reach a new set of customers who generally rely on full and open competition. Budget cuts, new technology, and the administration's IT Reform plan mean that agencies now have less bandwidth, yet increased responsibility to implement smart IT investments. Alliant has the opportunity to become the go-to provider for customers seeking fast, easy, cost-effective, and smart IT procurements.

The administration's Cloud First policy is just one example of new policies that impact agency procurement strategies. Customers are looking for support in complying with these requirements, and Alliant is strongly positioned to offer customized solutions. Alliant is already helping agencies move services to the cloud. Four Cloud-based task orders with customers such as the Treasury and Department of Energy have been awarded by Alliant in just the last quarter.

Cloud solutions are just one way Alliant is helping new customers seeking specialized assistance. Alliant will also find opportunities with customers seeking similar customized solutions on Data Center Services, Green IT, and Telecommunications. As ITS continues to grow more customer-oriented, Alliant will have a fundamental role to play in providing the flexible and customized solutions that agencies will need to excel in the face of the changing Federal IT market place.

Ida L. Moore
GSA Office of Customer Engagement and Communications/ITS

"Alliant has the opportunity to become the go-to provider for customers seeking fast, easy, cost-effective, and smart IT procurements."

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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

Upcoming Events

GSA Expo
May 15— 7, 2012
San Antonio, TX

DoD Procurement Conference
May 21—25, 2012
Orlando, FL

NCMA World Congress
Jul 29—Aug 1, 2012
Boston, MA

We Want Your Feedback

The Enterprise Newsletter has been a tradition since the inception of the ANSWER Contract.   We believe the Procurement Times newsletter adds value by providing Government and Industry insight into current Alliant trends, activities, and key 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