

GovConcepts

GACO APEX ACCELERATOR QUARTERLY INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Unified Certification Program Changes

According to an Interim Final Rule (IFR) issued on October 3, 2025, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) now prohibits Unified Certification Programs (UCPs), including Pennsylvania UCP, from using race and sex-based presumptions as a means to determine Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) or Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) certification eligibility.

Due to this change, socially and economically disadvantaged owners of firms must write a Personal Narrative (PN) that demonstrates their disadvantage, socially and economically, based on experiences, not based on or reliant on their race or sex. Any existing DBE/ACDBE companies must be reevaluated in order to maintain certification.

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Letters were sent out to current DBE/ACDBE firms detailing the process that will take place and asking these businesses to submit the Personal Narrative (PN), Personal Net Worth Statement (PNW), and a copy of their 2024 personal federal tax return (including all schedules and forms) by February 5, 2026.

New applications for DBE/ACDBE certification are not currently being accepted.

To see the Interim Final Rule (IFR), please click here: [October 2025 Interim Final Rule | US Department of Transportation](#).

For guidance on writing a Personal Narrative (PN) statement, review this presentation: [PA UCP DBE Program IFR Certification Reevaluation - Creating a Personal Narrative Statement - YouTube](#).

Please feel free to contact your [GACO office](#) if you have any questions or need further assistance.

Reverse Auction Action

The word “auction” may evoke the rhythmic sounds of a traditional auctioneer selling off equipment or other goods, or online auction sites like eBay. A reverse auction is somewhat the opposite. A reverse auction is the process by which a government buyer solicits bids from sellers who submit one or multiple bids that **decrease** in price.

In reverse auctions, bidders (vendors) bid by offering progressively lower prices to provide the outlined goods or services. These platforms are tools small businesses use to sell commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) items and commercially available services to the federal government. They may serve as a jumping-off point for small businesses new to selling in the federal marketplace and an opportunity to gain past performance while avoiding the learning curve of the lengthy proposal writing process.

The federal government uses reverse auctions to increase procurement speed, save money, and help buyers meet or exceed set-aside goals. While these features are huge benefits for buyers, sellers participating in these auctions must avoid the “race to the bottom”. Knowing your company’s floor price when bidding on these opportunities is key. Over-aggressive bidders may win the auction, only to lose money on the transaction by undercutting their profit margin.

Currently, Unison Marketplace is the primary reverse auction platform used by the federal government. Buyers purchasing through set-asides ensure that even small businesses with socioeconomic certifications are given a fair chance while helping agencies meet or exceed their goals. There are no seller registration fees on Unison Marketplace, but post-award fees may be applied to the winning bid.

If you think reverse auctions could advance your company’s federal procurement goals, register at [Unison Marketplace](#) and get started. If you want more information about this topic, reach out to your GACO Counselor.

What is a CTA Under the FAR

According to Ian Patterson of Schoonover & Moriarty, there is no heartier bowl of alphabet soup than federal procurement. While efficient, acronyms can introduce confusion when similar things use the same abbreviation. A Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA) takes the confusion to a new level.

What is a CTA? It turns out that it is three related things. Generally, it’s a catch all acronym for various forms of business collaboration in federal procurement. It encompasses both joint venture and subcontractor team relationships. Concurrently, GSA leverages the acronym to describe a specific type of collaboration between Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contract holders.

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The Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) acknowledges that it may be advantageous for contractors to collaborate on federal projects. In this case, the regulations allow businesses to collaborate on submitting proposals. These relationships are referred to as “Contractor Teaming Arrangements” (CTAs). The FAR anticipates that agreements memorializing collaborative relationships between prospective contractors will be executed before the proposal submission. Therefore, CTAs can refer to either one of two contractual relationships.

Contractor team arrangement means an arrangement in which:

(1) Two or more companies form a partnership or joint venture to act as a potential prime contractor; or (2) A potential prime contractor agrees with one or more other companies to have them act as its subcontractors under a specified government contract or acquisition program.

In essence, CTA, under FAR (9.601), serves as an umbrella term for the two most common forms of business collaboration in the federal space: joint ventures and prime/subcontractor teams. Each arrangement has different compliance requirements and government evaluation procedures for contractors. Given the types of CTAs available, contractors must be vigilant in obtaining clarity when utilizing CTAs within government contracting and when collaborating with potential partners.

Updated Davis-Bacon Act Payroll Reporting Requirements

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division announced the availability of two important updates designed to improve compliance and reporting for contractors required to submit weekly payrolls under Davis-Bacon and Related Acts.

The updates for Form WH-347, Davis-Bacon and Related Acts Weekly Certified Payroll Form are intended to streamline and clarify the reporting process for contractors and subcontractors using the form to report their weekly payroll. Davis-Bacon and Related Acts require contractors and subcontractors to pay workers prevailing wages on government-funded or assisted construction contracts.

The new resources include an online, fillable version of Form WH-347, which provides contractors and subcontractors with an efficient way to submit accurate weekly payroll records and will help reduce common reporting errors by allowing users to enter required information directly into the form. The division also developed an annotated Form WH-347 to provide contractors, subcontractors, consultants, labor unions, and compliance professionals with a better understanding of the form and to give clear, visual guidance on how to fill out the form. Both the fillable and annotated forms are available and ready for immediate use on the department’s website. Contractors and subcontractors subject to DBRA requirements are encouraged to use the agency’s government contracts compliance assistance toolkit to learn about their responsibilities.

Upcoming Events

LEADING THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCES

February. 05, 2026 | Washington D.C. and Online

[REGISTER](#)**FIND NEEDS, NOT OPPORTUNITIES - STRATEGY TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: JUMPING TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE**

February. 24, 2026 | Webinar

[REGISTER](#)**FOCI (FOREIGN OWNERSHIP, CONTROL, OR INFLUENCE) PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

March 04, 2026 | Webinar

[REGISTER](#)**DOD MENTOR PROTEGE PROGRAM VIEW**

March. 11, 2026 | Webinar

[REGISTER](#)**MON VALLEY ALLIANCE PROCUREMENT WORKSHOP**

March. 30, 2026 | In-Person | Monongahela, PA

[MORE INFO](#)**RISE-8 2026 SHIP SUMMIT: BUILD, DELIVER, AND SCALE MISSION SOFTWARE FASTER**

March. 31 - Apr. 2, 2026 | In-Person | Park City, UT

[MORE INFO](#)**THE DEPARTMENT OF WAR MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM SUMMIT**

April. 7th - 9th, 2026 | In-Person | Arlington, VA

[MORE INFO](#)

Further Reading

[NOBODY CARES WHAT YOU DO](#)

[DLA CYBERSECURITY RESOURCES](#)

[2026 NDAA: DOD CPARS CHANGES COMING](#)

[INSIDE THE CONTRACTING OFFICER'S SEAT:
WHAT INDUSTRY NEVER SEES AND WHY IT MATTERS](#)

[BACK TO BASICS: COVENANT AGAINST CONTINGENT FEES:
KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING FAR 52.203-5](#)

[PRESIDENT TRUMP'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA - STAY INFORMED](#)

[CAN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS USE AGENCY LOGOS AND SEALS?](#)

What You Missed - Recent GACO Training Events Recap

Capability Statements: Taking Yours from Good to Great Workshop

At the Fall 2025 GACO Procurement Opportunities Fair, GACO APEX Accelerator Counselors provided a deep dive into best practices and valuable methods for revitalizing a Capability Statement into a winning networking and marketing tool. Government professionals critiqued participants' Capability Statements, providing them with indispensable feedback.

University Procurement: PA STATE SYSTEM ON HIGHER EDUCATION Webinar

PASSHE representatives shared insightful information for working with the 14 universities simultaneously through the centralized procurement system. It was an important event, aiding companies in determining which products and services fit the university's procurement needs: from equipment to laboratory supplies, and construction services.

Be Seen. Be Known.: Strategy to Marketing: Being Visible Before Opportunities

Guest presenter Guy Timberlake coached participants on why marketing matters for creating connections with the right people at the right agencies, and how building awareness strategically positions a company for government opportunities.



TRIVIA!!



Was February ever the last month of the calendar year?

A: While February is the second month in our Gregorian calendar today, it was originally the very last month added to the Roman calendar (c. 713 BC).



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