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Progress Through Regional Cooperation In The Alleghenies

State of the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator – April 2025

by James Gerraughty
SAP&DC APEX Accelerator Program Manager

A lot of flowers (and weeds) are blooming at the moment! Quite a bit of change in both my garden at home and in government contracting. APEX Accelerators and our economic and stakeholder partners are doing our best to stay on top of these changes and to provide strategies and tools to help our clients and our communities. Stay tuned and keep in touch!

Speaking of training, please review our training opportunities that are coming up in April 2025 (and beyond for our APEX Accelerator and PREP Partners, once our funding is confirmed). A big one is our continued work on monthly Cybersecurity webinars, and some planned PA Contracting workshops. You can review and register for upcoming events on our **eCenter page**. Stop back often, as the training events do update regularly!

Finally, if you have ideas for topics, or would like to learn more about something, please drop us a line at (814) 949-6500 or by **email.** We'd love to hear from you!

Agencies may have to pay more for late contractor invoices due to Trump payment system overhaul

By Stan Michael, Staff Reporter, Government Executive

Stakeholders warned that the late payment issue could prompt companies to avoid doing business with the federal government.

Agencies could be on the hook for interest on late payments to government contractors, as President Donald Trump seeks to overhaul the contractor payment system.

On Feb. 26, the president signed an executive order requiring agencies in conjunction with the Department of Government Efficiency to build centralized technological systems to record all payments issued under their contracts and grants, as well as a justification for each such payment, to increase oversight of *government contracting.*

Since then — the Professional Services Council, a trade association for federal contractors — has reported that there's been a slowdown, and cessation in some cases, of disbursements. While this hurts businesses, it also could ding agencies that must then pay interest on the late invoices under the Prompt Payment Act.

The interest rate under such law for the first six months of 2025 is 4.625%.

"The scope is growing, so this, I think, might be an unintended consequence of pausing payments and revamping and having a centralized technological system to handle it," Stephanie Sanok Kostro, PSC executive vice president for policy, said during a press roundtable on March 27. **Continue Reading**

(Accessed 4/3/2025)

State and local leaders look to FedRAMP changes as potential inspiration
By Chris Teale, Managing Editor, Route Fifty

The federal government is looking to cut red tape around its security assessment program and embrace automation. State and local leaders believe they can learn a lot from the revamp.

News that the federal government will revamp its cloud security assessment and authorization program already has state and local leaders thinking about lessons their own program can learn.

The General Services Administration late last month launched a new version of its Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program, known as FedRAMP. This accelerated effort, called FedRAMP 20x, looks to use more automated security validations and compliance, and work more closely with cloud vendors.

Those involved in the equivalent program for state and local governments, educational institutions and others — known as GovRAMP, previously StateRAMP — see these changes as being potentially exciting for their own future, especially when it comes to improving efficiency.

"We are always innovating, we're always thinking about how we improve security," Leah McGrath, GovRAMP's executive director, said during a webinar last week. "How do we improve that process, and really importantly, without sacrificing security, because that's something that I'm so proud of." **Continue Reading**

(Accessed 4/3/2025)

US-Europe defense divorce unlikely—absent a new crisis
By Patrick Tucker, Science & Technology Editor, Defense One

The European Union wants more defense autonomy from the United States. But they still want a partnership with Washington.

Growing concerns about the U.S. relationship with NATO allies—fueled by Donald Trump's overtures to Russia and attacks on Ukraine and Denmark—have spurred European officials to biweekly meetings about replacing American defense goods, according to a European diplomat with knowledge of the discussions. But those increasingly intense discussions have highlighted that it wouldn't be easy, fast, or cheap.

"Nobody actually wants to be autonomous. They all want to keep the ties with the Americans. Always have and always will," the diplomat said.

French president Emmanuel Macron described the urgency of the situation in March: "I want to believe that the United States will remain at our side. But we must be ready if that is not the case."

No U.S. representatives have participated in the meetings thus far, according to the diplomat. But the engagements are helping to flesh out details for increased cooperation—such as which nations can produce which arms—and have led to four higher-level meetings between European leaders about joint weapons development, support for Ukraine, and other "big-picture" questions, the diplomat *said.*

In March, the EU published a 22-page white paper on closing capability gaps. The plan, agreed to by European Union members, includes a joint commitment to spend 800 billion euro by 2030 on joint defense capabilities via a 150-billion-euro loan instrument, debt sold on capital markets, and other vehicles. **Continue Reading**

(Accessed 4/3/2025)

About US

The Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC is an economic development entity that bridges the gap between supplier and buyer in the government marketplace. The APEX Accelerator stands ready to support businesses in the central PA Alleghenies region in the pursuit to secure contracts with local, state and/or federal government agencies nationwide.

Due to the generous support of our Commonwealth and Federal funding partners, services provided by the APEX Accelerator are free of charge.

Whether you are an experienced contractor or new to the government marketplace, the APEX Accelerator will provide one-on-one counseling utilizing all of the program resources necessary to increase your share of contract awards. We will also coordinate assistance, if needed, with our PA PREP partners.

Contact us today at the Southern Alleghenies APEX Accelerator at SAP&DC to get started!

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