



# SEWP V Contract Guide

NASA's fifth iteration of the GWAC provides latest IT and communications products and services to agencies governmentwide







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NASA SEWP V CONTRACT:

Group B - HUBZone, #NNG15SD09B



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SEWP V: A duck of a different feather .....	2
Federal News Network Q&A with SEWP Program Director Joanne Woytek .....	4
How SEWP stays relevant 30 years in .....	20
Want to navigate NASA SEWP? Check out its customer-tested web tools .....	23
NASA aims to stay at forefront of supply chain risk management .....	26
Why digital accessibility is more than just a requirement for NASA SEWP .....	28
Enterprisewide services will drive evolution of SEWP VI .....	32
SEWP turns on the charm for its contractors .....	36
Vendor listing for SEWP V .....	39
Soup's on: No, really – 3 SEWPsters share their favorite recipes .....	47

# SEWP V: A DUCK OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER



Why don't ducks like reading directions? They prefer to wing it.

That little pun couldn't be more *unlike* the

approach NASA has taken to its Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement if it tried.

In truth, one of the hallmarks of this sweeping governmentwide acquisition contract is how in depth the team in the SEWP Program Office works to research and test every evolution of this IT and services GWAC, just two years from entering its staggering fourth decade.

And that's not to say that the SEWP leadership is hyper conservative either. It continuously reimagines and reinvents the program, not just with each iteration but year over year.

"From day one in 1993, every year we've grown in usage and, therefore grown the program and been able to see how we can leverage that to be better," SEWP Program Director Joanne Woytek says.

For this contract guide, we focus on SEWP V, which runs until May 2025. Since the contract's award in 2015, NASA has massively changed how it gathers and shares data about and with its agency buyers, as well as broadened SEWP's service offerings.

In the pages ahead, we talk with leaders across the program office to understand how its different teams work with both agency buyers and industry contractors. And we also provide a peek at what's to come as NASA gears up for SEWP VI.

We hope this guide provides helpful and handy information for your federal team.

Another pun seems appropriate here — one that sums up well the folks that NASA continually adds to its now 120-plus SEWP team: What do you call a clever duck? A wise quacker.

**Vanessa Roberts**  
**Editor, Custom Content**  
**Federal News Network**



## SCOPE: WHAT YOU CAN BUY THROUGH SEWP

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES OF IN-SCOPE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
IT and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Computer hardware</li> <li>▶ Network appliances: routers, modems and voice over IP</li> <li>▶ Storage</li> <li>▶ Security</li> </ul>
Software and cloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Software</li> <li>▶ Virtualization and cloud computing</li> <li>▶ Everything as a service</li> </ul>
Mobility and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Telecommunication devices and services</li> </ul>
Supporting technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Scanners, printers, copiers and shredders</li> <li>▶ Associated supplies and accessories</li> <li>▶ Sensors</li> <li>▶ Health IT</li> </ul>
Audio visual and conferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A/V equipment and accessories</li> <li>▶ TVs, display monitors, projectors and screens</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Maintenance and warranty</li> <li>▶ Site planning, installation and cabling</li> <li>▶ Product-based training</li> <li>▶ Product-based engineering services</li> </ul>



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# FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK Q&A WITH SEWP PROGRAM DIRECTOR JOANNE WOYTEK

It was 1992 when NASA decided to try something new. The following year, the agency awarded its first Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement contract to a single prime contractor. Today, the fifth iteration of SEWP has 142 contract holders and more than 9,300 products and services, and it accounts for more than \$10 billion a year in total sales.

NASA is in the eighth year of SEWP V's 10-year contract. Even so, the governmentwide acquisition contract continues to evolve and grow each year. SEWP V has five full-time contracting officers and a team of around 120, along with a host of tools to help agencies understand better than ever what they are buying from the contract, said Program Director Joanne Woytek.

Woytek sat down with Federal News Network Executive Editor Jason Miller to discuss the program's latest trends, opportunities and challenges.

## **FNN: Let's start with the basics of SEWP V. What are its goals? What is the technology being offered? How many companies are on the contract?**

**Woytek:** As SEWP V is about to finish since we're eight years into a 10-year contract, our main focus now is to transition to the next contract coming up.

Our main goal for SEWP V in the beginning, which we have succeeded and then grown,

was to change SEWP to a more strategic governmentwide acquisition contract versus just a catalog of products and services.

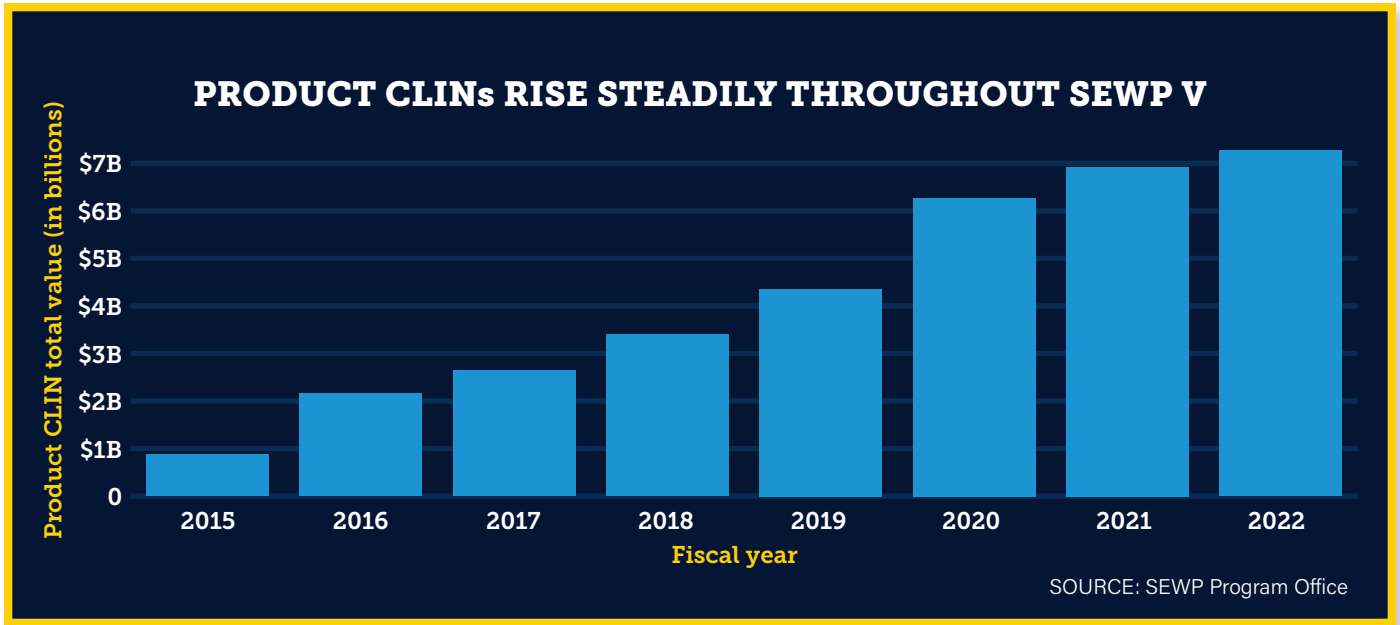
We wanted to make it something that agency chief information officers can utilize and chief experience officers can utilize to set strategic concepts, get reports to know what's going on and really have the best data we could possibly provide. This was a little ambitious probably. It took us a few years to get everything straightened out. But I feel like we really reached the goal of having a strong, more strategic presence than just being a place to go buy a product here and there.

As for the technologies, SEWP V includes information and communications technology, audio visual technologies — and we do an entirety of all the normal IT stuff people think about. It's a pretty broad scope of products, product solutions and product services.

SEWP V still primarily has a base set of products, even with the services we allow on the contract, which is greater than before.

As for the number of companies, it's about 142 contracts right now, of which about 100 are held by small businesses. Currently, we are





closing in on 9,300 companies who have products or services that they provide to the government.

**FNN: At the time of SEWP V's award in 2015, you said your main goal was to transition to a strategic product and services contract that gives CIOs the best data. You believe you've accomplished that goal to a large extent. How did you do that?**

**Woytek:** Through SEWP IV, our motto was always, "If you don't know anything, you can't ask us anything." So, we didn't know anything. We would see how many dollars were going through the contract and to which companies it was going to — really basic stuff.

When we started working on SEWP V, I went to my boss at the time, who was the CIO, and said, "You have an option here. I can either continue to not know everything, or I can switch everything up and say I'm going to know everything, and therefore I can tell you, the CIO, and other CIOs, what's being bought. I will know everything about anybody that we deal with."

He said absolutely that he wanted us to move in that direction. So, I took his direction, put our team together, and we worked on creating a new database and new processes.

Every product code that goes through our system is verified against our catalog. Every order that goes through our system is verified and tracked, and all the information is maintained as to what's been ordered. Then we collate that data, using different methodologies, for our customers.

A CIO can come to us and ask for various types of data. They actually have a narrower webpage they go to and do on-demand reports. We provide monthly reports and, in some cases, weekly reports. It's just really mostly about expanding our data gathering and then improving the data quality to go with it so that we can ensure that we have possibly the best data set around for part number providers or other equipment manufacturers to get that verification process.

We know exactly what's getting bought and how it relates to the rather vast 10 million things that are on our contract.





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**FNN: It's such a big change. I imagine that the tools are much different today than they were five or even three years ago. How big of a lift was it to get all that data standardized?**

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**Woytek:** We're not perfect yet, and we've learned lessons, but what we focused on was making sure that we knew exactly who each manufacturer was.

We spend a lot of time and effort to ensure that we know exactly who the companies are that are selling those 9,300 company's products, what types of products they are. There's a lot of effort put into that method.

Then, we try to ensure that our tools are built so that we can track part numbers as they are added and make sure that part numbers match back to manufacturers.

It's partly developing an internal audit with a semiautomated system and then adding in the tools that allow us to watch it and use the SQL and database tools that we've built.

Over the years, we've built up a vast knowledge base of how part numbers are done by manufacturers. I feel like we know more about part numbers than most manufacturers know about their own part numbers.

It was a heavy lift. We actually got lucky because SEWP V was delayed, so we did what we call SEWP 4.5. While doing SEWP IV, we brought in a lot of the concepts and tested them out. I think we had about a year and a half of testing in real life using SEWP IV. It gave us a chance to test out theories and build up the processes that we needed.

"Every product code that goes through our system is verified against our catalog. Every order that goes through our system is verified and tracked, and all the information is maintained as to what's been ordered."

— **Joanne Woytek, SEWP Program Director, NASA**

**FNN: How are people using this data today? Give me a sense of how many CIOs get reports, how often do they get reports? I realize everyone's a little different, but what are some trends? How valuable is the data from your perspective and from your customers' perspective, which is even more important?**

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**Woytek:** We have, I would guess, at least a dozen CIOs — and these are typically at the higher level — that regularly get reports.

NASA obviously gets them and some of the other key major customers that we have look at them too. CIOs are actually looking at what is being bought by their agency. They can maybe step in and say, "Wait, this isn't right," or understand what's going on.

They also use the data to correlate against what their agency strategy is in terms of standardizations or if anybody is buying something that's not on their approved list. I know the Department of Veterans Affairs is using it also to track against the **Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool** registry for sustainability information.



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Founded in 2011 as a minority-owned and Certified Veteran-owned Small Business (VOSB) operating in a HUBZone, BahFed Corp provides IT products, services and support solutions – all backed by our unmatched customer service. As a NASA SEWP V contract holder and recently named participant of the Navy High Performance Computing Catalog, we continue to meet the growing demands of government agencies and organizations with our technical expertise – specializing in the areas of system design, layer 2/3 networking, storage, cybersecurity, high-performance computing, machine learning, AI, tactical and airborne communications and SATCOM.

Our staff brings decades of experience within the federal IT marketplace. We have supported several major deployments for the US military, NATO, Departments of State, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, as well as NASA. These deployments have ranged from a network outfitting for the consulate in Erbil, Iraq to a block refresh of all hardware for a DOD first responder program – and have always executed with exemplary performance records.

Additionally, BahFed maintains well-established relationships with vendors, suppliers and manufacturers, including NVIDIA, Pure Storage, Forcepoint, Dell, HPE, Microsoft, Cisco, VMWare, Adobe, Keyfactor and more. These partnerships help us provide effective solutions for our SEWP customers at the best possible value.

So, it's a variety of different reasons. It's so much information, and some of it's trends. Some of it is actually enforcing their own requirements. Because it's so inclusive of the data for them, it gives them the option to play with it as they want.

**FNN: How do you use some of this data to ensure that you have the right variety of products or know when products are not selling?**

**Woytek:** We don't actually do that because we don't make any decisions as to what goes on the contract. We decide what *can't* go on a contract much more than what *can* go on. Anything that's in scope can go on.

Everything we do is customer- and industry-driven. Either industry says, "We want to add this," or our customers come in and say, "We want this product, and it is not yet on so can you add it?" Of course, we can. We do it all within a day. It's very interactive and changeable.

The data that we do use is primarily to help our customers out. We do track how much usage we're getting, and we do have more work being done

strategically in terms of going out to agencies and helping them out.

Another change is we are having more one-on-one meetings with our liaisons. We have a team that we started early in SEWP V, now called the Start Team. The idea is to send people to brief – not necessarily to provide training – on how to use SEWP V for higher-level agency officials. We talk about the benefits of these reports, the benefits of using SEWP and what this gets them. We want to make sure that we're targeting where the most usage is or the most issues are coming up to make sure we're resolving them.

**FNN: The data is one example of how SEWP V is different than the first SEWP contract awarded 30 years ago. How different is SEWP V than other versions of the GWAC?**

**Woytek:** I tell the story of SEWP where we sat in a room at NASA and the 13 companies that we had on the contract at the time would come by every month and drop a piece of paper in a cubby hole. That was their request to add products to the contract. We'd pick each

paper up and do some magic to have that happen.

It took a few years to make it more automated, and today we can add a product within a day. It's a combination of technology and people. The technology has changed, and our staff has evolved.

We are 120 or so strong now. At the beginning of SEWP V, we were at 30 or so employees. We've grown, as has our usage, and that has allowed us to grow in terms of what we can provide our customers.

We are stronger from an industry point of view as we have an industry team that we didn't used to have. Recently, we've added a much larger procurement team of contracting officers. Probably when we started out, we were lucky to have a contracting officer attached to us, and then we didn't really have a lot of federal civil service support. We now have about 15 civil servants. So that's quite a change. But that makes a big difference. It lets us do things that we would be limited in doing in the past because we didn't have the people for it.

We always try to figure out what the next thing is that we want to



do. We recently became more strategic, which has helped. We're now somewhere around \$10 billion to \$12 billion a year in sales. We started SEWP V at \$3 billion, so that's quite good and afforded us the ability to provide more than we did before.

We've always grown. From day one in 1993, every year we've grown in usage and, therefore, grown the program and been able to see how we can leverage that to be better.

### **FNN: That growth is incredible. What is it emblematic of? Why is that?**

**Woytek:** I think it was the change in our strategy. We would go out during SEWP IV and be training all the time. We would help a customer get what he wants when he wants it.

Now, we split our time. We still train a lot. But then we also



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have that briefing with agencies and say, "Look, don't just buy one product here. Let's make this a strategy for you. How's this going to help you deal with EPEAT or to deal with sustainability?"

We also are not just reporting the information, as our tool set has improved. When a quote comes in, customers get a boatload of information about what's on that quote, not from the contract holder or from industry, but from us. We tell them all about what's being quoted to them with a

**"When a quote comes in, customers get a boatload of information about what's on that quote, not from the contract holder or from industry, but from us. We tell them all about what's being quoted to them with a contractual point of view that helps them feel comfortable with using us."**

**— NASA's Joanne Woytek**

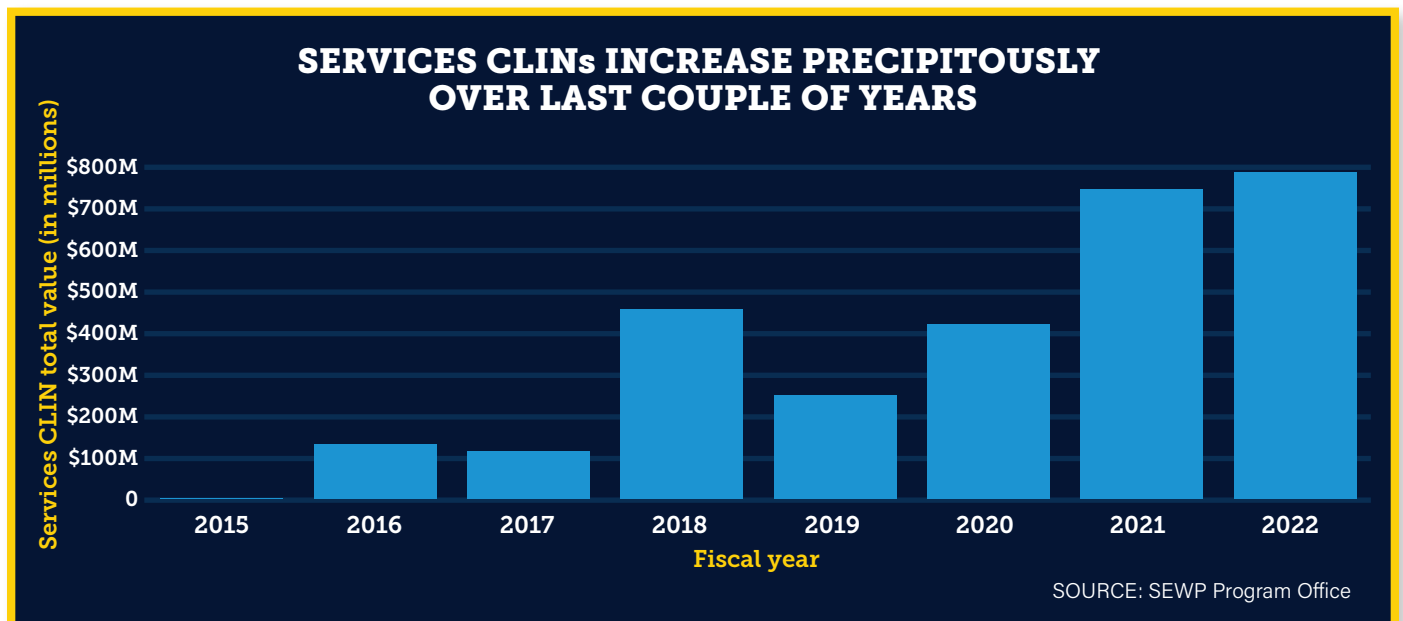
contractual point of view that helps them feel comfortable with using us.

We did change the scope too. We added services of a broader scope than in previous SEWPs. It's not fully services but product-based services, which increased the options there in terms of there's more that can be done now from that point of view.

If you want to really make it work, you also have to be in tune with what the industry is doing. We've hired people from industry to come in and help us understand that process.

It is not one thing that happened, but it was combinations that converged and got people's attention and understanding of how we can make their acquisition easier and also better.

As I always like to say, we're very flexible. The fact that we track everything helps us know what's going on so we can report it to the customer, provide them with a sense of security and provide them with the technology they want. And, we really try to balance those two.





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Norseman Defense Technologies was awarded a prime contract by the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in 2015 and aims to continue the tradition of outstanding customer service and attention to detail customers have grown accustomed to using the SEWP Contract.

NNG15SC83B  
 Group C - Small Business

"We are limited in how we set it up. It's firm-fixed-price, which cuts out a lot of services that agencies want to do. It wasn't perfect. But even just opening up that conversation and allowing some services was a big deal."

— **NASA's Joanne Woytek**

**FNN: You just noted that you changed the scope and added services for SEWP V. Can you talk about what that's been like, and how that's changed the way agencies buy from SEWP now?**

**Woytek:** In some ways, it was a big change. In some ways, it wasn't big enough, and SEWP VI will be a bigger one.

In SEWP V, we wanted to make sure that we weren't saying no to basic services that really helped with the products. I don't put that ever as first in terms of why our growth is super high because we still are fighting against the old idea that all we do is products. We are limited in how we set it up. It's firm-fixed-price, which cuts out a lot of services that agencies want to do.

It wasn't perfect. But even just opening up that conversation and allowing some services was a big deal.

**FNN: That was frustrating for a lot of people because almost all IT that you buy needs a service with it. I think that's one of the reasons why the federal procurement community has started to move into services and continues to evolve. Is that what you saw from your customers saying, "Hey, we need some help with this product."?**

**Woytek:** That type of service actually always has been available, but again maybe not as well understood as it was when we increased it. What we added on was more of the, "OK, I got it installed now. How do I use it?" It was that next step of answering, "How do I make it useful?"

So it's not finished, and that was pretty basic. But let's say we have a major command center being put into a Defense Department site, and there is all



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Contract Number(s):  
 Group A: NNG15SD51B  
 Group C: NNG15SD85B

of this audio visual equipment and technology going in. How's it going to actually integrate into all that they do? That we can do. We can't run the command center though.

**FNN: What are some of the big areas of products or services being purchased from SEWP V? Which agencies are among the biggest users? Any data you can share?**

**Woytek:** One of the problems with that question that we've always had is that we do 60,000 or so orders a year — from across every government agency. What's the biggest thing being bought? It's cables because cabling is so ubiquitous. It's boring in that regard.

Then, on the flip side, of quantity and where most dollars go to is to the product solutions world that is going to be maintained — like Microsoft licensing, Oracle licensing, Cisco network technology, HP, Dell and those folks who have always been at the top of our list. The top four pretty much have stayed the same: Cisco, Microsoft, Oracle and Dell.

What is interesting, I found, was that we added a little bit more communications. L3Harris, for



example, is doing well. In the current fiscal year, we have seen an increase in understanding of that ability for us to provide that type of telecommunications — even Airbus, which doesn't just do planes but sells communications too.

We saw an increase in the use of Amazon Web Services.

Not surprisingly, security continues to be a hot topic. CrowdStrike is another one that's recently in our systems, and they do security.

It's the technology that is going to be the most costly, that's going to get you the most money — the technology, software, software licensing, maintenance of that, and then all of the networking and cloud and security that people need — that seems to be pretty much a constant.

Salesforce has moved up over the years. They're actually pretty high.



Of the 9,300 companies that have, at one point or another, had products added to the contract, we have about 3,500 of them get an order every year. It's pretty constant, and that's a pretty high percentage.

We are still adding products, which still surprises me, about five new companies a day. That's a big part of our growth, getting industry to buy into that and to understand our methodology, which is different from the General Services Administration. It's two different methodologies. Sometimes you really want to have a direct provider link and that's GSA Advantage on the GSA schedules. Sometimes using a reseller or an integrator is the better choice.

### **FNN: What is the breakdown of vendors on SEWP V, resellers versus integrators?**

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**Woytek:** The way SEWP is set up is primarily for resellers and value-added resellers. A little bit of integration is good. Certainly, the more knowledge that the companies have about what they sell is going to help. But in the current iteration of SEWP, while we still had a manufacturer category, where a Dell and IBM would be, we have found that most of the major manufacturers don't even want to contract. They'd rather sell to resellers and not have to deal with all the paperwork.

We have a hard time getting the smaller companies to understand that and, as all companies, want to sell only direct. But we definitely get a lot more pushback from smaller companies or companies that are very niche in what they do. They don't want to have to deal with the reseller and sometimes will not come on to our contracts, and they'll just get a GSA contract. It depends on what both the customer and the industry want to do.

### **FNN: There is a fee to use SEWP. You have been one of the few GWACs that continues to lower your fee. What is the current fee? How do you keep lowering it?**

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**Woytek:** It is 0.34%. It is a balance of if we make enough and we feel like we don't have more to get out of that money by getting more staff or buying more technology. Then, we look at lowering it. It is the lowest in the government.

As much as I would love to lower it some more, are we going to be able to lower it any more? Maybe not.

We continue to get requests from our customers to do more, so we are trying to make sure that we're balancing that. They want more data. They want more tracking, or we need to get better at it. We're happy that we're able to continue to increase our staff to provide that to them.

### **FNN: Let's talk also about the ordering process for SEWP V. You mentioned that you've improved it.**

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**Woytek:** Well, the biggest change actually starts with the RFQ itself and the tool that we have set up for our customers. When a customer comes in, they have one place to go to type in what they want or to attach documents for what they want to get quotes from.

It's really easy to determine which companies are available, whether it's based on business size or other certain key elements, like EPEAT. Then we track against other elements like: Is it on a contract? Is it priced correctly? And similar things. When they're all done, they will get a quote back, and they can do questions and answers with the contract holders.

We provide them with a lot of power in terms of what they can do. They can share with other colleagues. If they're a technical person, they can create a request for quote and share it with procurement to make that RFQ actually go out and produce the final order.

Then, we get the quotes back. We give them a summary and a color-coded tab and other noted tabs so that they can say this one meets everything that they asked for or this one meets most of what they asked for. They can quickly know which quotes are meeting those requirements that we're tracking against. It's a very robust system.

Our biggest problem right now is we have so much information that they go through, so we were trying to find ways to simplify while still allowing them all the options that we give them. Because of the audit process, no order can be fulfilled until it's gone through our system. While we allow the customers to send it to the contract holder directly, the contract holder has to then turn around and get it to us. We have an order processing team that makes sure that the order is correct, and we do another verification to make

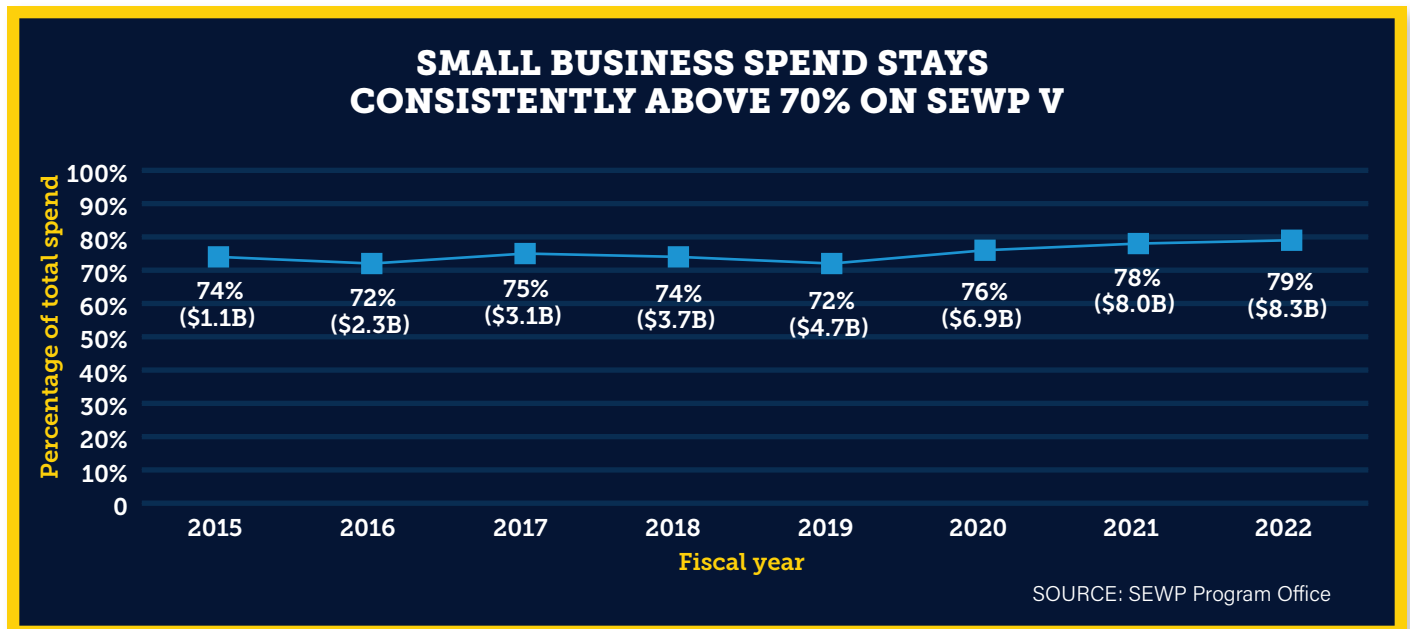
sure everything is on the contract, and everything is priced at or below the contract price.

If anything has changed between the quote and the order, we double check at that point and that's how we do all the reporting. That is all turned around typically within hours, never more than a day — unless there's an issue that that we have to resolve.

**FNN: One thing that comes up often when we talk about other big contracts is price reasonableness. How do you deal with price reasonableness?**

**Woytek:** It's price reasonableness, not best price. Best price is a hard thing to determine in IT because the best price today will be a different price tomorrow because technology and pricing is so dynamic.

We have multiple methodologies set up. One simple one is: If a contract holder has a GSA contract, you can't sell for more on SEWP. In fact, it has to be lower because our fee is lower. The base price can be the same, but industry doesn't get to keep the difference in fee.



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We have built-in, semiautomated checks as items are added. We look at the pricing against other prices on the contracts. It gets flagged for us if the prices are very different. There was one the other day that was 40 times higher. It got flagged so that I could say, "No, you can't add this until you tell us why it's different."

Or even if it's the same item that comes in, but it's got five different prices, you have to tell us why. We have the ability to exclude products at the item level because products have come in that were either not in scope or not priced correctly or not described sufficiently.

Then finally, there is this robust competition afterward. Theoretically, in a FAR Part 16 world, you don't have to get three quotes. But the world has more and more turned to, "We want two or three quotes for every situation, even though you don't legally have to do that." I think that's fine, and it keeps everybody even a little bit more honest.

**FNN: You mentioned that usually you turn around quotes within a couple hours, maybe a day. We know each quote is different, but generally speaking what's the timeframe for award?**

---

**Woytek:** Everything we do is less than a day because we don't want to get in the way. But business does take longer, so usually it's three to five days for a really simple requirement.

I should note the other reason why we've grown, which I haven't talked about yet, is something called strategic catalogs. It's a new term that we're introducing, which is a strategic marketplace. This also started with SEWP V, and it came in because the Office of Management

and Budget wanted us to standardize on laptops and desktops for the government.

The idea there is if you know you're going to buy the same set of printers for your agency, we can set up a strategic catalog for that agency with those printers. Then the customers don't even have to do an RFQ and go out and find it. If they're buying a lot of them, then they can click a button and say, "I want to compete this." They get to see the pricing and then can decide if they want to compete it through their strategic catalog versus starting from scratch.

For really simple cases, you can probably go three days and still give time for some turnaround. We've done our best. But I always say it's like the unemployment rate: You can never get to zero.

I would love us to always have multiple quotes for every requirement. I think we're averaging somewhere around 93% to 94% that get at least one quote. That means 6% to 7%, don't get any responses.

We actually do go back and help our customers when that happens to see if we can figure out why. Maybe they didn't give enough time or didn't provide enough information or maybe it's out of scope.

**FNN: One concern that we hear on these large multiple-award contracts or GWACS is if you let too many companies on, you're going to get too many quotes. Have you ever gotten 80 or 90 companies responding to an RFQ?**

---

**Woytek:** There are two reasons why there'd be a lot of quotes. One is it's so simple that everyone

just submits a quote. Now that's not likely to happen because some companies see it as too simple and expect everyone will submit a quote so why should they bother. The other one is if it's a really complex multiyear contract. But that doesn't happen too often either.

Our average order size is \$100,000 to \$120,000. We do occasionally get that \$100 million requirement, and that's going to increase the likelihood of getting a large number of quotes.

In fiscal 2022, we averaged five quotes per RFQ. About 68% had more than three quotes. I believe we've had a few that got into the 30-quote level. But 5% of the RFQs had gotten more than 16 quotes. It's actually very evenly broken down, 5% of the RFQs got two quotes, and 5% got three quotes. If you're getting 16 quotes, that probably means you're putting out something pretty big, and people want to make sure that they participate.

**FNN: You previously mentioned the strategic catalog and marketplace. Talk a little bit about what those are, and how that's a big change for the program.**

**Woytek:** It started at the beginning SEWP V when we wanted a place where we could put laptops and desktops that meet the technical specifications out there and say, "We're not going to change this all the time. We're just going to have it out there, and people can come buy them."

As we went out to our customer base, it caught on pretty well in terms of an opportunity for them to not have to keep going out and asking, "Do you have this?"

That is another big tool for agencies in terms of strategy. They want to make sure that they consolidate what's being purchased. They don't want to just have to get it from everywhere. They want to know exactly where it's coming from. They want to make sure it's from reliable sources. They might have some basic criteria about it in terms of authorized resellers or even Trade Agreements Act (TAA) compliance — or whatever compliance they need to track against.

The marketplace lets us then create a place on our website that only that agency's customers can go to see what has been set up for them. They can still go off and do an RFQ to the bigger SEWP V contract, and we will tell the agency what's been bought, and we give them the catalog reports. They know exactly how well the catalog is getting used.

**FNN: I imagine it's probably something that agencies have appreciated as it makes buying easier. What are you hearing from customers?**

**Woytek:** It's getting more and more usage as we've gone along, and particularly as we now split it between a strategic catalog where an agency might say they actually want to just look at what's

**"In fiscal 2022, we averaged five quotes per RFQ. ... If you're getting 16 quotes, that probably means you're putting out something pretty big, and people want to make sure that they participate."**

**— NASA's Joanne Woytek**



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available and then do some assessment of the offerings and down select from the broader SEWP catalog.

That's the strategic catalog.

That takes a lot more procurement work. It takes a lot more dedication and sets up the ability for the customer agency to carve out a piece of that in the marketplace. We're spending a fair amount of time developing that concept so it works well — both philosophically and documenting it by presenting it to our customers and getting feedback from them — and then really getting into what we think is going to be a big piece of SEWP moving forward.

**FNN: You mentioned early on about the number of small businesses that are on the contract. Talk about your progress adding small businesses and how you ensure that small businesses remain involved in SEWP V.**

**Woytek:** Basically 80% of our dollars go to small businesses. It hasn't changed that much, and we always get asked, "What are you doing to make it better?"

What we do primarily is just having that contract holder

team and industry relationship team out there. Their goal is to be the customer service to our industry partners, and that just makes a big difference.

Of the 9,300 companies that have products on SEWP V, 3,500 of them do get an order. We did a statistical sampling and came up with 60% of those 3,500 companies as small businesses. We don't have an exact dollar amount. It's hard for us to track at that level. But we did some generalizations and some tracking, and it seems like about 80% of our dollars go to small businesses.

**FNN: Obviously, SEWP has been around for some time, and it's very popular. But what should agency customers keep in mind and what should vendor customers keep in mind as they use and participate on the SEWP GWAC?**

**Woytek:** The biggest problem we have as we head toward the summer and the end of the fiscal year is customers must recognize that we can't take the money without it being on contract. We can't just do orders for people. But we do have ways to help them get to assisted acquisitions. It is important,

# Superior Performance of AMD/HP Elite Book 645\* vs. Dell Latitude 5430/542C laptops



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\*Based on the results of these tests and others, the HP Elitebook 645 G9 Notebook PC could help business users work longer, wait less for applications to perform tasks, and stay cooler with the device on their laps.

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and we just continue to have a very robust customer service team. We are happy to do scope reviews.

From a customer point of view, you still have to also work within your own agency, and we'll help you as best we can.

From an industry point of view and a noncontract holder, that doesn't keep you from being part of SEWP. We add the products of five companies a day on average, and it gives you one of many possible different routes in the government. We have an industry team who helps you navigate that world and hopefully that makes it easier for everybody, which is our main goal. ■



## About Joanne Woytek

30+ years working on the SEWP team — including the original GWAC awarded in 1993

24+ years serving as SEWP program director

45+ years at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland — where she initially worked as a mathematician focused on systems administration, database management and user application programming

Bachelor's degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology

Recipient of the Acquisition Improvement Award, Customer Service Excellence Award, Group Achievement Award, The 2016 Federal 100 Award, Coalition for Government Procurement's 2014 Lifetime Acquisition Excellence Award, MAGIC 2013 Acquisition Excellence Award and the Government Industry Cooperation Award



# HOW SEWP STAYS RELEVANT 30 YEARS IN

**BY TOM TEMIN**

Only a few governmentwide procurement programs can boast a history going back 30 years. NASA SEWP — the Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement governmentwide acquisition contract — now in its fifth iteration, ranks high among them.

The secret to both its success and longevity lies in how little SEWP V resembles the original SEWP. Its program managers constantly look ahead to ensure the GWAC remains relevant in terms of customer technology requirements, contractor capabilities and acquisition realities. And, they continually emphasize ease of use for customers.

In recent years, NASA created a small SEWP Customer Odyssey team. SEWP Program Director Joanne Woytek once described it as an R&D arm within the program management office whose members “research, develop and vet innovation opportunities that could potentially feed current SEWP enhancements or lay the foundation for the future SEWP experience.”

## **SEWP’s customer-focused R&D team**

Here’s how Marcus Fedeli, the team’s leader, explained Odyssey: It is not so much a customer experience team as a group within SEWP’s staff of roughly 120 people that is not operationally focused.

Most people working on SEWP concentrate on tasks to accurately fill the more than 50,000 orders the NASA program processes each year, totaling roughly \$10 billion worth of transactions, he said.

“There are teams that help agencies learn how to use SEWP,” Fedeli said. “There’s training and education. There are people that do order processing.”

That leaves Fedeli’s Odyssey team of just three people to focus on discovering future ways to ensure SEWP’s relevance and market acceptance. That can include everything from the entire CX to appearance and functionality of the program’s home page.

They also explore ways to automate processes required of contractors or agency customers, such as order fulfillment or updating contract line items (CLINs). The Odyssey crew’s findings might drive changes in the current program, or they might fold into plans for the follow-on, [SEWP VI](#).

The Odyssey team includes a technology researcher, a user interface designer and an information architect (at the moment an open position). Together, they look at ways to condense information and create a better information hierarchy so that buyers and sellers can easily



**"We take an unconstrained approach to exploring new potential**

**opportunities and offerings that SEWP could take."**

**— Marcus Fedeli, Customer Odyssey Team Leader, NASA**

get the information they need, Fedeli said. He identified information management and presentation as an ongoing challenge for the program because of how much information daily activities generate.

Fedeli said that the SEWP Program Office, under Woytek's direction, traditionally starts thinking about the next generation of the contract at the outset of the current one. Concepts and planning for SEWP VI, for instance, started as NASA was awarding and launching SEWP V in May 2015.

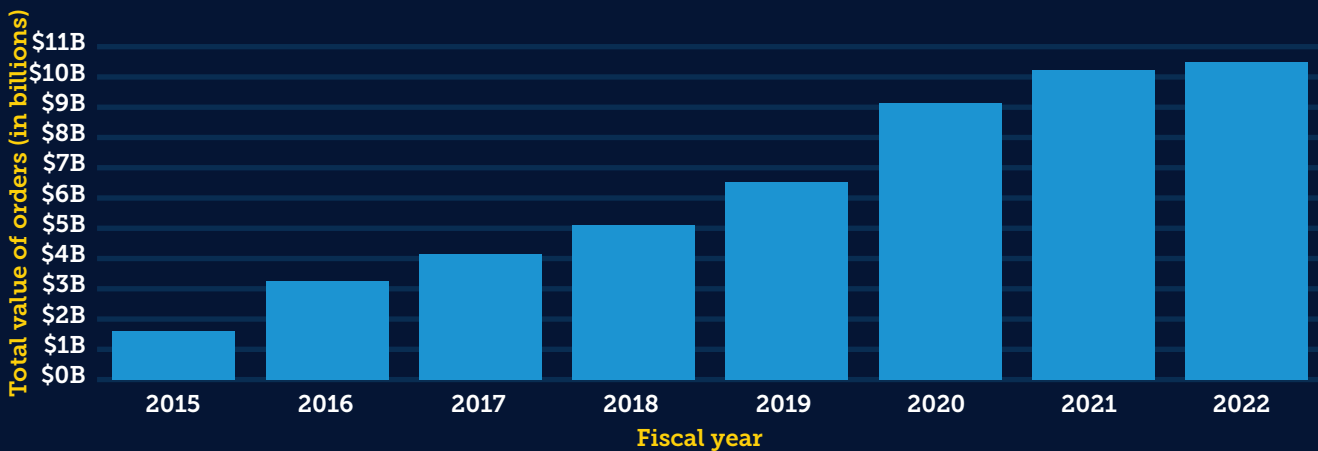
"We take an unconstrained approach to exploring these new potential opportunities and offerings that SEWP could take," Fedeli said. "We take off the constraints. We don't think about what we could — or couldn't do — based on the resources we have or the limitations of software."

### **Always looking toward SEWP program's next iteration**

At the moment, Customer Odyssey is working toward a website prototype with "a better information architecture that creates a hierarchy based on who's coming to the site, what they are looking to do and taking in that stakeholder perspective," he said.

Longer term, the team is exploring a revised storefront approach to presenting products and ordering options that will make purchasing easier and faster while also consistent with Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements. The idea is to further condense and automate discrete functions the buying agencies must perform, Fedeli said.

### **BETWEEN FISCAL 2015 AND 2022, TOTAL SPEND ON SEWP V ORDERS GREW BY ~7X**



SOURCE: SEWP Program Office



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SEWP now offers its Quote Request Tool as the main point of entry. QRT lets people launch a market research request, request for information, request for quotes and final RFQ.

“Currently, you have to go one place to check your questions and answers. You have to go someplace else to look at the status of your order or check delivery,” Fedeli said. “By condensing the different services we currently provide, we’re really going to improve that experience for our customers.”

Expansion of the storefront view will give buyers better exposure to the range of products available for a given requirement, as opposed to issuing the requirement and waiting to see how contractors respond. For buyers looking for answers in a hurry, Fedeli said, the SEWP help channels respond within a day, if not immediately. Plus,

**50K**  
SEWP V orders,  
totaling roughly \$10  
billion, that NASA  
processes each year

SOURCE:  
SEWP Program Office

NASA staffs the site’s chat function with real people, not bots, he said.

Ultimately, the Customer Odyssey team wants to maintain characteristics it believes further SEWP’s enduring success, whatever the particular form the contract takes in future iterations. Fedeli ticked off some of these items: general speed, ease of use for agency buyers, industry partners with a depth of knowledge of how to work with SEWP — plus, “its continual focus on innovation via feedback and a willingness to change and make it work.”

**“By condensing a lot of the different services we currently provide, we’re really going to improve that experience for our customers.”**

**— NASA’s Marcus Fedeli**

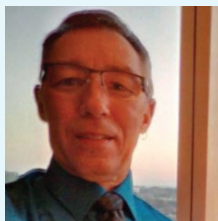
# WANT TO NAVIGATE NASA SEWP? CHECK OUT ITS CUSTOMER-TESTED WEB TOOLS

BY JORY HECKMAN

NASA's Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement may be one of the oldest and most popular governmentwide acquisition contracts around, but the SEWP team aims to offer the latest in online tools to both its customers and its suppliers.

The latest iteration, SEWP V, includes about 10,000 product offerings, with changes and new products being added every day. That's why the NASA SEWP Program Office provides web tools to make it easy for customers to discover products, said Kenneth "KG" Woltz, SEWP technical operations manager.

"The main thing that we're doing for the customers, on all sides, is either gathering or supplying information that comes in or out of the database. So those applications all have to have



**"We've always strived to create both a user-friendly tool set, building them so that they're easy to understand, easy to follow, and a process that flows smoothly."**

**— Kenneth "KG" Woltz, Technical Operations Manager, NASA**

their security boundaries, so that we don't provide the wrong information to the wrong people," said Woltz, who has worked on the SEWP team for nearly its entire 30-year lifecycle.

In his current role, he coordinates across the software team, security personnel and employees working on the SEWP database to ensure the program's web tools are safe and effective.

## **Creating apps that help internal and external SEWP users**

Federal agency customers benefit from the SEWP web tools but so do internal NASA staff and the contract holders, Woltz said.

"We build our applications to support all those user bases, but each has a different focus or dataset that will be provided to them," he said. "We've always strived to create both a user-friendly tool set, building them so that they're easy to understand, easy to follow, and a process that flows smoothly."

The Quote Request Tool, the most-used application on the SEWP website, lets customers create requests for quotes or information for the products that they seek, get quotes back and then turn those requests into orders.

Among its other tools, SEWP's Product Lookup Tool lets users search to learn what kind of products are





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already on the contract, from which makers and from which contract holders.

The Contract Holder Listing shows all the contract holders that are supplying products, as well as their information and capabilities.

With agency strategic catalogs, senior agency CIO staffs can work with NASA to create predetermined sets of software and hardware products they have pre-approved and then let their agency customers expedite acquisitions.

"We're also aware of the changes in the procurement industry, so we try to tap into those, as they're approved across the board. And we'll incorporate in the tools the different validations and/or business logic, so that people don't have to do a lot of their own legwork to think through the application of those different requirements," Woltz said.

## **Continually updating SEWP's web tools**

Woltz said his team regularly updates the suite of SEWP web tools to ensure they meet security standards and deliver an optimal customer experience.

"We're always trying to maintain high security standards across our platform. We never want to have the security folks look at our applications or find out that people have found ways around or broken into them. We have to maintain pretty high security standards," he said.

The SEWP Program Office also wants to ensure that its web tools remain compatible with modern web browsers.

"The browsers today versus what they were 15 years ago are drastically different, so we have to stay current, otherwise the browsers themselves are not going to really support what we're providing in the capabilities of those tools," Woltz said.

NASA bases many changes on customer feedback and testing too.

"We're always asking people, 'Does it work? Do our tools provide what you need?' If we make some changes in the web applications and the customers don't really like it, or they don't understand, we will get plenty of feedback," he said. "Then, we start making adjustments to make things more simple or clearer."



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To help keep pace with tech modernization, Woltz's software development team has grown in the last year, adding several coders dedicated to front-end development and design.

"Those new team members have helped us round out some skills that we didn't have" and reduced the workload on the back-end dev staff, Woltz said. The larger team should make it possible to develop and push out changes and updates faster, he added.

## Partnering to evolve customer experience

Woltz's team also works with the Customer Odyssey Team, a new group focused almost

entirely on improvements based on the customer.

"Their focus is almost entirely the customer perspective. The customer, the path that the customer is going to take when they're using the tools," he said. "The communications with SEWP itself. Is the process that we have clear? They actually go out and ask the customers questions."

The IT team then works closely with the Odyssey team to make CX improvements, Woltz said. "They come up with these ideas. We figure out how we can make code changes, or visual or textual changes on the website, and turn them into reality." ■

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The NASA SEWP Program Office names all its computers after soups.

"All of the laptops, desktops, servers, they all have these names, like Chicken Noodle," Woltz said. "My current computer is Chestnut. In the early days, when we didn't have as many machines, we didn't have to come up with so many soup names."

But with a program office of more than 100 employees, Woltz said the SEWP team needs to get more creative with the soup names for their devices.

"Back in the day, I chose for my computer in the office to be Gazpacho. I liked it because it's a very unique name," he said. "Then there was the laptop that I carried with me back and forth, and I named it Du Jour. It was my soup of the day."

When asked about his favorite soup, Woltz replied, "A really good, hearty chicken noodle soup is always awesome."

**Check out some SEWP-er soup recipes on page 47.**

# NASA AIMS TO STAY AT FOREFRONT OF SUPPLY CHAIN RISK MANAGEMENT

**BY JUSTIN DOUBLEDAY**

Supply chain security is one of the hottest topics in federal technology, with agencies across government considering new policies and programs to reduce risks in their software, hardware and other services.

NASA SEWP's supply chain risk management approach, meanwhile, has been two decades in the making, said Jon Johnson, strategic advisor to the program.

Johnson noted that SEWP Program Director Joanne Woytek has long been a member of The Open Group Trusted Technology Forum, a leader in crafting global supply chain integrity programs and frameworks for information technology.

And Johnson said important lessons were gleaned after NASA and The Open Group began working with the Defense Department to address concerns about counterfeit and tainted hardware. The result was some of the first commercial supply chain risk management (SCRM) standards in the marketplace.

"The lesson learned was an understanding of the complexities around manufacturers' supply chains and embedding workable best practices into the program itself," Johnson said.

"Some of those best practices include recognizing the established authorized reseller program," he



"SEWP has transaction reporting requirements from both agencies as well as vendors to ensure that the program has an accurate account of what's being bought and sold through this particular vehicle."

— **Jon Johnson, SEWP Strategic Advisor, NASA**

continued. "This allows NASA SEWP to work with the original equipment manufacturers to ensure that there's a line of sight between what an agency is asking for and what the original equipment manufacturer has approved for sale within the federal marketplace. This helps protect both buyers and sellers from counterfeit hardware or malicious tainting of their products before delivery."

## **Making data SCRM centerpiece of SEWP**

Data is also a crucial piece of the puzzle.

Johnson said SEWP adds products from about five to 10 new companies every day.

"For every single one of those providers that is added on to a subcontract itself, part of our

process is to ensure that we have all the accurate information on that company, to ensure that to the best of our ability that we know who the company is and where they are located," he said. "This has been a best practice for the program since SEWP IV."

And while there is a lot of "digital exhaust" in the Federal Procurement Data System, the database that captures government contracting transactions, Johnson said the real crown jewels for SEWP is data captured at the time of transaction.

"SEWP has transaction reporting requirements from both agencies as well as vendors to ensure that the program has an accurate account of what's being bought and sold through this particular vehicle," he said.

The reports generated by that data can then be provided to federal chief information officers and chief financial officers so they know "what they bought, who bought it, where it went," Johnson said. Those are key questions for both CIOs and CFOs these days when seeking to verify their supply chains.

The reports can provide "all that necessary inventory information that any agency requires,

as they're maintaining a line of sight on their own assets and inventory that they themselves have to protect," he said.

Still, with supply chain security challenges on the rise, Johnson said managing agency expectations can be a challenge for SEWP. "The program is intimately involved with a number of governmentwide conversations, particularly around cyber supply chain risk management," he added.

### **Providing tools through SEWP to reduce supply chain risks**

The SEWP program recently received a suite of zero trust cyber supply chain applications with a request to review whether they could be offered through SEWP. But as it turns out, they were all already sold through SEWP, Johnson said, meaning agencies were already taking advantage of those products to harden their cyber postures.

"They've been using our mechanism as a way to help address their mission needs, which is exactly what the program was set up to do to begin with," he said.

Still, supply chain risk management is difficult, and "sometimes the need to address the problem outpaces the ability for industry to address it," Johnson noted.

"The program has kept its finger on the pulse of this topic area for over 20 years. It's obviously not something that's easy to do. We stand ready to add our voice to the federal conversation, while also bringing those sound practices that make sense into the program the best we can for our customers, based on their requirements and needs." ■

**"The program has kept its finger on the pulse of this topic area for over 20 years. It's obviously not something that's easy to do. We stand ready to add our voice to the federal conversation."**

**— NASA's Jon Johnson**



# WHY DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY IS MORE THAN JUST A REQUIREMENT FOR NASA SEWP

**BY DREW FRIEDMAN**

It's no secret that the government struggles to meet digital accessibility requirements for some of its products and services. But the bigger question is, why?

The challenges aren't from a lack of care from agencies, but rather from gaps in both knowledge and implementation of Section 508, a now 25-year-old provision that Congress added to the Rehabilitation Act in 1998.

Section 508 requires agencies to comply with accessibility standards for all their online resources — and that includes meeting the same standards for commercial products that agencies use.

For the largest governmentwide acquisition contract, NASA's Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement, the space agency's IT and accessibility experts are trying to close those digital accessibility knowledge gaps.

## **Failure on accessibility falls on both government and industry**

For Betsy Sirk, director of governmentwide digital accessibility and strategic sourcing for SEWP, the biggest pitfalls to reaching better accessibility in federal contracts are misunderstandings, with some contractors not seeing the value of completing a Section 508 conformance report. The root cause may not be what most expect, she said.

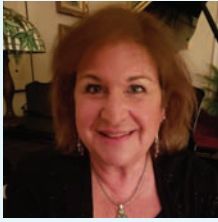
"The most common problem is actually not the technical evaluation of the product itself," Sirk said. "Still, 25 years since the law went into effect, you have inconsistent enforcement on the government side, and you have widely inconsistent knowledge and support on the industry side."

Even though products from commercial vendors aren't inherently held to the same standards as the federal government, for Sirk, there's still the potential for a win-win situation.

"It's important to industry because they want to sell to as many people as possible, and the government wants technology that it buys to be as accessible as possible," Sirk said.

For SEWP, adding more resources and training has been key to ensuring better compliance with Section 508 and ultimately better accessibility as a whole. It all starts with encouraging more contractors to fill out Section 508 conformance reports and do it correctly, Sirk said.

To help that goal along, [SEWP's Demystifying Section 508 Guide](#) aims to get contractors and agencies familiar with the process and why it's important. Two NASA interns, Ellen Doll and Aishwarya Krishnakumar, took the lead on the project.



“The most common problem is actually not the technical evaluation of the product itself. Still, 25 years since the law went into effect, you have inconsistent enforcement on the government side, and you have widely inconsistent knowledge and support on the industry side.”

— **Betsy Sirk, Director of Governmentwide Digital Accessibility and Strategic Sourcing for SEWP, NASA**

“The very fact that we are facilitating getting these accessibility conformance reports, and we have the training available to not only all the contract holders but on the SEWP website, that does so much. It’s beyond words,” Sirk said. “It’s one thing to say, ‘Here’s a list of resources.’ ... The training that we do within SEWP is unparalleled.”

### **SEWP sees uptick in Section 508 conformance reporting**

Because of the resources and information now available, SEWP has a nearly 100% success rate in getting valid accessibility conformance reports, she said. With the availability of the guidance, the success rate is holding too.

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### Program Manager

**Talon Raph**

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The program also sets a requirement in all of its contracts for companies to provide Section 508 information. But one challenge beyond just putting together the report is ensuring the actual accessibility of the products.

Only about 10% to 15% of commercial IT products fully meet all the Section 508 accessibility standards, Sirk said. But by filling out the conformance report, contractors can locate areas for improvement and make changes in the next iterations of their products, Sirk said.

“By doing the report, we’re asking them to disclose — to declare, to be aware and share that information with the customer — how accessible they are,” she said. “And that’s going to benefit them. They can keep that in

mind, and the next update that they do, they can also correct for accessibility.”

SEWP V has 142 contract holders, thousands of subcontractors and millions of contract line items. Although it’s not a requirement that her office take the lead on spreading information about accessibility, Sirk personally views that as a broader responsibility.

“Being the largest governmentwide acquisition contract, we are in a leadership position on accessibility,” she said.

### **Seeking collaboration on Section 508**

Sirk encouraged other agencies with large GWACs to take steps to offer more training and resources on accessibility compliance.

**“While there is a recognition with the DEIA executive order that accessibility is a part of this, you often still have a gap in the resources that are being assigned to clearly look at digital accessibility. But you cannot have inclusion, you cannot have diversity, without accessibility — period.”**

**— NASA’s Betsy Sirk**

“You don’t need developers to do this,” she said. “They could in effect change by making it a requirement that the contractors that engage with them provide this information upon request.”

As accessibility becomes a larger part of the workforce environment as a whole, with more disabled individuals entering the workforce and a growing need for accessible digital assets, Section 508 conformance is becoming more important, Sirk said.

“You’re going to need to think of ways to improve customer service, to improve the experience. What better way to improve the experience than to make it accessible?” she said. “You’re designing with

people in mind. The more people that you have in mind, the better your product is going to be.”

Additionally, the Biden administration has placed more emphasis on improving accessibility in the federal workforce, as part of a 2021 executive order on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. But for Sirk, it will take much more than just the letter. The “A” in DEIA shouldn’t stand for “afterthought,” she said.

“While there is a recognition with the DEIA executive order that accessibility is a part of this, you often still have a gap in the resources that are being assigned to clearly look at digital accessibility,” Sirk said. “But you cannot have inclusion, you cannot have diversity, without accessibility — period.” ■

**10%  
to 15%**  
**Percentage of commercial  
products available  
that fully meet all  
the Section 508  
accessibility standards**

SOURCE: NASA's Betsy Sirk



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# ENTERPRISEWIDE SERVICES WILL DRIVE EVOLUTION TO SEWP VI

BY JASON MILLER

If there is one thing agency customers and vendors know about the NASA Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement, it's that the governmentwide acquisition contract is always evolving.

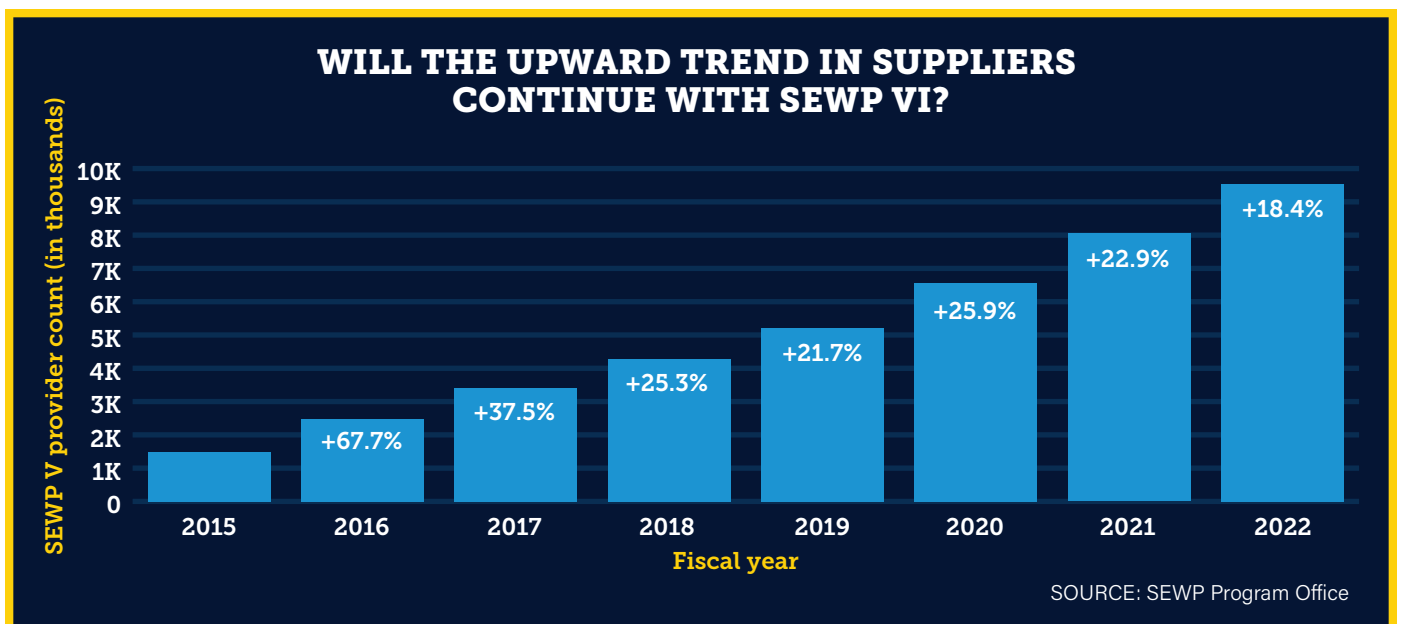
To be sure, the sixth version of the 30-year-old program will look nothing like the previous five. The **SEWP VI request for information**, released in March, signals another major change for the popular IT contracting program.

"Of course, we're always going to have our traditional products and IT stuff, but it's exciting times about the direction that we're going

and bringing in that full solution for all federal agencies," said Theresa Kinney, SEWP senior deputy program director. "People should be really excited about this, and it's just going to open up a lot of opportunities."

The current SEWP VI plan includes three categories or pools of deliverables:

- IT products and services similar to SEWP V, such as IT and networking, software and cloud, audio visual and conferencing, and related services
- Enterprisewide services
- Task-oriented, small IT services





“SEWP VI is going to jump into enterprisewide types of services. Those are really going to open up widely for SEWP VI.”

— **Theresa Kinney, SEWP Senior Deputy Program Director, NASA**



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## Building on service options added to SEWP V

“After we’ve done research with NASA headquarters and the government’s needs, SEWP VI is going to jump into enterprisewide types of services. Those are really going to open up widely for SEWP VI,” Kinney said.

It’s an expansion of what NASA began with SEWP V in adding more types of services. “It’s exciting to look forward to SEWP VI because looking at those services, people should be excited about the fact that those are really going to open up,” she said.

NASA held two reverse industry days last fall to help begin to understand industry capabilities and where the technology environment was heading.

Its plans call for release of a SEWP VI draft request for proposals in summer 2023,

followed by an industry day in the fall.

NASA will continue to gather and review comments on the draft and then release the final RFP in mid-2024.

The space agency expects to make final awards by May 2025. SEWP V sunsets on April 30, 2025.

## Covering all the SEWP procurement bases

Kinney said her team’s goal during the RFP’s development is to make sure it isn’t missing anything, overlooking a technology or approach, or including anything that isn’t achievable.

“As the draft gets put out there, I highly encourage all industry to please read it and read it in detail. We need them to make sure that we’re not asking for something that can’t be done. That’s really important,” she said.



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The feedback provides a check on the SEWP team's research.

"I think there's too many times that private industry feels like the government mandates something, so they have to figure out how to work within that arena," Kinney said. "What we're asking here with the draft is for their feedback. Let us know where we've hit the mark, where we haven't hit the mark."

The changes planned for SEWP VI come from two main sources.

First, NASA's chief information officer and other technology experts across space agency headquarters, which is the GWAC's biggest NASA buyer, have been asking for enterprise services, Kinney said.

Second, federal customers as well as the Office of Management and Budget have suggested there is a need for SEWP to play a larger role in helping evolve federal IT acquisition.

"I will tell you in the past, we've never really said, 'Oh, let's do services.' The more we take on, the more we keep increasing the scope, and that comes with a lot more work within our office. We think we're ready now," said Kinney, who has been with the program since SEWP III.

With each iteration, the goal is to make SEWP better — for customers and for the product suppliers, she said.

### **Revving up for busy SEWP VI pre-awards phase**

Even though SEWP V still has two years left, NASA recognizes that April 2025 isn't far off. Kinney said she expects 2024 to fly by as the planning and feedback process for SEWP VI accelerates.

She encouraged vendors interested in SEWP VI to not just provide feedback on the draft RFP but to also pay attention to the questions

**"With my lack of a crystal ball, I have no idea if there's going to be a protest for SEWP VI or not. I just know we're going to do our best to set it up to run as smooth as possible."**

**— NASA's Theresa Kinney**

NASA answers for other vendors. Too often, SEWP gets the same questions over and over, which takes time and resources away from developing the final solicitation because they have to answer all of them, Kinney said.

The feedback process also helps NASA do what it can to avoid protests.

"We struggled setting up SEWP IV. We struggled setting up SEWP V. You get down that road, and all of a sudden somebody comes up with something and you're like, 'Oh, whoops, I didn't think about that.'"

These GWACs are complex and have so many facets that it's tough to make sure they include every single necessary detail, she said.

"As much as the government tries to make sure that everything is in there, to make sure that everything makes sense and everything is doable, that is one of the reasons why the draft is so important," Kinney said. "That really does help us out on how we're going to set up the final RFP. With my lack of a crystal ball, I have no idea if there's going to be a protest for SEWP VI or not. I just know we're going to do our best to set it up to run as smooth as possible." ■

**200+**  
**The number of proposals submitted to NASA in response to the SEWP V RFP**  
SOURCE: SEWP Program Office



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# SEWP TURNS ON THE CHARM FOR ITS CONTRACTORS

**BY TOM TEMIN**

An acquisition program won't sustain unless it works for both of its two major stakeholders: the buyers and the sellers.

NASA's Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement program has worked well for 30 years because of its almost obsessive focus on service to its agency customers. But the SEWP Program Office also pays detailed attention to ensuring things run smoothly for the 142 contractors that fulfill roughly 50,000 orders a year.

True to government, SEWP has a name for the effort: CHRM, pronounced charm. The acronym stands for "contract holder relationship management."

The CHRM team "is responsible for making sure that as our contract holders, when companies are awarded SEWP, they have a help desk or team dedicated to their performance and work on the contract," said SEWP Deputy Program Manager George Nicol.

Specifically, the nine CHRM team members assist contractors in navigating issues concerning policies, quotes, order processing, deliveries and submitting technology refreshes to their contracts. Nicol said the idea of a contractor help desk got started during SEWP IV, the predecessor vehicle to the current contract. SEWP V is in its eighth year.

## Acting as liaison between SEWP agencies and contractors

CHRM acts as a go-between for contractors and federal agency customers, Nicol said. In fact, many of the questions the team deals with originate with agency buyers.

"The questions we get often from our customers concern the status of their orders, or they need some clarification on a quote," he said. The questions transfer from the customer-facing help desk, which hands them off to the contractor-facing CHRM team.

In such cases, CHRM will contact the supplier to ask for the needed status report.

### SEWP V'S TOP 5 VENDORS IN FISCAL 2022, 2021

	2022	2021
<b>1</b>	ThunderCat Technology	ThunderCat Technology
<b>2</b>	FCN	FCN
<b>3</b>	Carahsoft	Four Points Technology
<b>4</b>	V3Gate	Colossal Contracting
<b>5</b>	Four Points Technology	Minburn Technology

SOURCE: SEWP Program Office



**“If suppliers are not selling on our contract, or if it’s not beneficial to them, why would they use it? Or why would they bid this contract?”**

**— George Nicol, SEWP Deputy Program Manager, NASA**



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The Q&A process also works in the reverse direction. Questions arrive from contractors puzzled, for instance, by a requirement in a customer’s request for quotes, Nicol said.

“We’ll help the supplier get that response or get some clarification from the customer or the federal agency on what they’re looking to purchase, or if they fully understand what they’re requesting,” he said.

The goal is to ensure the agency gets what it actually needs and to avoid expediting delivery of something that the contracting officer might have ordered but that the technical people say doesn’t match the need.

## **Keeping contractors as satisfied as agency buyers**

Nicol suspects that few other governmentwide acquisition contracts have supplier help desks as extensive as the CHRM team.

## **SEWP V’S TOP 5 AGENCY BUYERS IN FISCAL 2022, 2021**

**2022 & 2021**

<b>1</b>	Defense Department
<b>2</b>	Department of Veterans Affairs
<b>3</b>	Justice Department
<b>4</b>	Treasury Department
<b>5</b>	State Department

SOURCE: SEWP Program Office

While NASA wants to ensure that SEWP contractors meet the IT and services needs of federal agency customers, it’s equally important that the contractors profit from selling through SEWP, Nicol said.

“If they’re not selling on our contract or using the contract, or if it’s not beneficial to them, why would they use it?” he said. “Or why would they bid this contract?”



**Michael Gasparino**

**Program Manager**

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**"If we're there monitoring that information, ensuring that our contract holder is getting back to the customer, keeping track of all communication, our contract holders know that."**

**— NASA's George Nicol**

To help contractors successfully navigate the policies and procedures of SEWP, CHRM provides all suppliers with a resource called CHUM, the "Contract Holder User Manual."

The team also helps suppliers when they have questions about policy that may transcend the SEWP V contract. As an example, he pointed to Section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019, which imposed restrictions on the federal acquisition of telecommunications equipment and services of Chinese origin. Such laws always spur complicated regulations, and Nicol said Section 889 produced a lot of questions from SEWP contractors.

Agency contracting officers also have questions about

compliance topics too, for that matter, Nicol said.

The liaison work that CHRM does between SEWP's sellers and buyers ultimately leads to better contract performance, he said. It lets the CHRM team keep tabs on contractor performance, both in detail and in aggregate.

"If we're there monitoring that information, ensuring that our contract holder is getting back to the customer, keeping track of all communication, our contract holders know that," Nicol said.

Referring to an online performance website SEWP maintains, he added, "They don't want to be the contract holder who is not meeting a requirement or shows up on that page as less than excellent." ■

# VENDOR LISTING FOR SEWP V

VENDOR	CONTRACT NUMBER	GROUP & BUSINESS DESIGNATION	PROGRAM MANAGER	PM EMAIL	PM PHONE NUMBER
<b>A GROUP CONTRACT HOLDERS</b>					
ABBA Technologies	NNG15SD46B	A (small business)	Ron Davis	rdavis@abbatech.com	505-889-3337
ABF Data Systems (dba Direct Systems Support)	NNG15SD46B	A (small business)	Amy Thompson	amy@directsys.com	858-547-8300 ext. 5526
Alliance Technology Group	NNG15SC02B	A (WSOB)	Karla George	karla.george1@alliance-it.com	443-561-0312
Better Direct	NNG15SD45B	A (HUBZone, SDVOSB, VOSB)	Marlene Gonzales	marlene@betterdirect.com	480-921-3858 ext. 283
Carahsoft Technology	NNG15SC03B	A (other than small)	Stacey Wieczorek	stacey.wieczorek@carahsoft.com	703-871-8500 ext. 8606
CDW Government	NNG15SC04B	A (other than small)	Marianne Swann	marianne.swann@cdw.com	703-621-8220
CounterTrade Products	NNG15SC05B	A (WSOB)	Angela Dumm	adumm@countertrade.com	303-424-9710 ext. 236
Dell Federal Systems	NNG15SC06B	A (other than small)	Derryan MaGill	Derryan.MaGill@federal.dell.com	737-587-6480
DLT Solutions	NNG15SC07B	A (other than small)	Michael Bekampis	michael.bekampis@dlt.com	412-605-7247
DRS Network & Imaging Systems	NNG15SC08B	A (other than small)	Parvinder Bhatt	parvinder.bhatt@drs.com	321-622-1327
Dynamic Systems	NNG15SC09B	A (WSOB)	Lisa Jensen	Lisa.Jensen@ DynamicSystemsInc.com	310-337-4400 ext. 222
Emergent	NNG15SC10B	A (other than small)	Cheryl Burns	cburns@emergent360.com	757-226-7704 ext. 4114
General Dynamics One Source	NNG15SC12B	A (other than small)	Tad Laszewski	Tad.Laszewski@gdit.com	703-995-5377
Greenbrier Government Solutions	NNG15SD49B	A (HUBZone, SDVOSB, VOSB)	Nathan Johnson	njohnson@ggswv.com	304-767-1366
Hewlett Packard Enterprise	NNG15SC14B	A (other than small)	Cindy Page	cindy.page@hpe.com	404-648-0227
HPI Federal	NNG15SD47B	A (other than small)	Chris Welter	christopher.lee.welter@hp.com	505-349-9853
IBM	NNG15SC15B	A (other than small)	Pete Chaplin	chaplincio@us.ibm.com	720-395-1463
ID Technologies	NNG15SD48B	A (other than small)	Apryle Edelblute	aedelblute@idtec.com	703-554-1634
Immixtechnology (dba ImmixGroup)	NNG15SC16B	A (other than small)	Marcelino Lake	Marcelino_Lake@immixgroup.com	703-639-1560 ext. 1560
J.C. Technology (dba Ace Computers)	NNG15SC01B	A (WSOB)	Leyda Golemo	lgolemo@acecomputers.com	847-952-6918
Koi Computers	NNG15SD50B	A (EDWOSB, WOSB)	Catherine Ho	catherine@koicomputers.com	630-627-9638



VENDOR	CONTRACT NUMBER	GROUP & BUSINESS DESIGNATION	PROGRAM MANAGER	PM EMAIL	PM PHONE NUMBER
Merlin International (dba Merlin Technical Solutions)	NNG15SC17B	A (VSOB)	Melika Naghizadeh	mnaghizadeh@merlin-intl.com	703-915-6898
NCS Technologies	NNG15SD51B	A (small business)	Robert Rose	rrose@ncst.com	843-441-3454
PCMG	NNG15SC18B	A (other than small)	Melissa Turner	Melissa.Turner@insight.com	703-594-8122
PetroSys Solutions (dba Psi Technology)	NNG15SD52B	A (WSOB)	Irene Griffith	ireneg@petrosys.com	713-355-2202x219
SAIC	NNG15SC21B	A (other than small)	Joseph Kewer	Joseph.R.Kewer@SAIC.com	571-430-2675
SEWP Solution	NNG15SC19B	A (other than small)	Elizabeth Turpin	elizabeth.turpin@sewpsolutions.com	703-969-1795
SHI International	NNG15SD53B	A (other than small)	YaAdam Nzima	yaadam_nzima@shi.com	609-480-7584
Sirius Federal	NNG15SC11B	A (other than small)	Cheryl Hill	SEWPPM@siriusfederal.com	410-774-7238
Sterling Computers	NNG15SC20B	A (WSOB)	Kristina Drost	kristina.drost@sterling.com	854-201-9134
Transource Services	NNG15SD55B	A (WSOB)	Curtis Wescott	curtisw@transource.com	623-879-8882 ext. 124
Unicom Government	NNG15SD56B	A (small business)	David McLean	david.mclean@unicomgov.com	703-502-2753
World Wide Technology	NNG15SC22B	A (other than small)	Lindsey Miller	lindsey.miller@wwt.com	618-797-5765
Zivaro	NNG15SC13B	A (small business)	Tyler Mathis	tmathis@zivaro.com	720-836-7406
Zones	NNG15SD57B	A (other than small)	Asad Ijaz	asad.ijaz@zones.com	253-288-6318

#### **B, C & D CONTRACT HOLDERS**

4 Star Technologies	NNG15SD06B	B (HUBZone, SDVOSB, VOSB)	Larry Ebeling	larry.ebeling@4star-tech.com	757-965-9034
A&T Marketing (dba AT Networks)	NNG15SD58B	C (EDWOSB, WOSB)	Tony Gharbawi	tonyg@atnetworks.com	410-312-9900 ext. 301
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Advanced Computer Concepts	NNG15SE01B, NNG15SD60B	D (WOSB)	Azher Salikuddin	azher@acc.net	513-265-4088
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SEWP V Group B Contract #NNG15SD08B (HUBZone)

SEWP V Group C Contract #NNG15SD64B (SB)



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# SOUP'S ON: NO, REALLY — 3 SEWPSTERS SHARE THEIR FAVORITE RECIPES



Do you know what inspired NASA's Solution for Enterprise-Wide Procurement acronym SEWP and eventually its logo, that little rubber duck soaking in steamy broth?

Program Director Joanne Woytek recounted during an [interview with Federal Times in 2015](#), not long before NASA launched SEWP V, that the contract's acronym and logo harken back

to a phrase said in 1993 by someone she called one of the original program's godfathers.

Legend has it, Woytek shared, that he said: "It will be as easy as duck soup."

In the acronym and logo's honor, here are a few enticing soup recipes (no duck amongst the ingredients though) shared by SEWP team members.

## Jon Johnson's Super-Secret and Simple Chowdah

*(Pssst: He says it's so good that he never orders clam chowder in a restaurant.)*

### Ingredients

- ▶ 4 16oz bottles of clam juice
- ▶ 3 to 4 cans of chopped clams
- ▶ 2 cans of whole belly clams
- ▶ 4 strips of bacon, crumbled
- ▶ 4 large potatoes, roughly chopped
- ▶ 1 cup of celery, chopped
- ▶ 1 cup of onion, chopped
- ▶ ½ pint of heavy cream
- ▶ 3 to 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- ▶ Fresh thyme, chopped
- ▶ Green onions, sliced
- ▶ Flour

### Directions

1. Empty the juice from the four bottles and strain the juice from the cans of clam into a large pot.
2. Cut and clean potatoes.
3. Bring the juice to a boil on medium heat, add potatoes and gently boil until potatoes are soft.
4. Cook the four strips of bacon through thoroughly. Remove and dry bacon but leave the bacon grease.
5. In the bacon grease, cook the garlic first until fragrant over medium heat, then add the celery and onion mixture until all is cooked soft.
6. Add a bit of flour to absorb the bacon grease in the pan and create a roux. Then, add the potatoes.
7. Add fresh thyme to mixture and let sit on low heat for a few minutes.
8. Using a good masher, mash the potatoes while in the chowder to serve as a thickener. Then, add the clams and cream. Let sit and get happy on low heat for another 5 minutes.
9. Cut bacon into bits and chop green onions.
10. To serve, add green onions and bacon bits.

Notes: Have made it with white fish, crab, lobster and scallops added too. So, it can double as a sea food chowdah as well! Can make with turkey bacon in lieu of pork fat. It has a different flavor but is also pretty good.



## Marcus Fedeli's Easy White Bean Chicken Chili

### Ingredients

- ▶ Chili powder
- ▶ Hot sauce of your choice
- ▶ 1lb ground chicken
- ▶ 1 can of great northern or cannelloni beans (drained)
- ▶ 2 cans of diced tomatoes
- ▶ 16oz salsa of your choice
- ▶ 2 cups of water
- ▶ Grated cheese of your choice

### Directions

1. Add chili powder and hot sauce to a large pot. (Start with 3 tablespoons of each and add to preferred heat level.)
2. Cook the ground chicken in the pot (drain fat if preferred), add in the remainder of the ingredients.
3. Cover the pot and cook over medium heat for two to three hours, stirring every 15 minutes. If it's a bit too watery, let it cook a while longer uncovered.
4. Add more chili powder or hot sauce to your liking.
5. Serve with fresh grated cheese.

## Betsy Sirk's Simply Satisfying Vegan Tomato Soup

### Ingredients

- ▶ 15oz can of tomato sauce or pureed tomatoes (or use fresh tomato sauce)
- ▶ 8oz unsweetened nondairy milk of choice (soy or oat milk recommended)
- ▶ Fresh basil (can substitute dried if necessary)
- ▶ 1.5 teaspoons of sugar or stevia (optional)
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Add tomatoes to pot on stove top.
2. Add nondairy milk and whisk. Heat over medium until soup simmers.
3. Add fresh basil leaves or substitute dried herbs. Stir and reduce heat.
4. For a touch of sweetness if desired, add sugar or stevia.
5. Salt and pepper to taste.



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