

ITES-SW2 Contract Guide



FEDERAL
NEWS
NETWORK



Sponsored by [carahsoft.](https://www.carahsoft.com)



On DoD with Jared Serbu

All about the inner workings
of the government's **largest agency**

[Click to Listen Now](#)

Tune into **Federal News Network**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ITES-SW2: Ready for prime time 2
- A primer on all things Army PEO EIS and CHES 4
- Army keeps ITES-SW2 on constant refresh cycle, driven by customer needs 6
- CHES contract umbrella continues to expand to meet DoD tech evolution 11
- 10 things you might not know about CHES 14
- Federal News Network Q&A with CHES Product Lead Wayne Sok 16
- NETCOM looks to ensure interoperability and security across enterprise networks 28
- Reform takes center stage for Army's new acquisition boss 32
- Demographics of the Army's acquisition workforce slowly changing 36
- 8 questions with Stacy Watson, Enterprise Solutions Division director, Army PEO EIS 39
- ITES-SW2 offers agencies an 'easy button' for software solutions 41
- Vendor listing for ITES-SW2 44

DISCLAIMER: The appearance of Department of Defense (DoD), Department of the Army (Army), Program Executive Officer Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS), and Product Lead Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (PL CHES) information and interviews does not constitute an endorsement, express or implied, by DoD, PEO EIS or PL CHES, of any nonfederal entity, event, product or service, including Federal News Network or any contractor, or any product, service or event of Federal News Network or a contractor. The appearance of commercial advertising and hyperlinks inserted by Federal News Network also does not constitute endorsement by DoD, Army, PEO EIS or PL CHES.



Sarah Looyesen
 Director, Marketing and Vendor Relations
 (619) 497-6060
marketing@bluetech.com
bluetech.com

Blue Tech is an IT solutions company providing the hardware and software needed to help our federal customers solve complex technology challenges involving network security, infrastructure, Unified Communications, enterprise storage, video conferencing, mobility, and more.

We are an experience prime on the government's premier IT procurement contracts (including ITES-SW2, ADMC-3, 2GIT, SEWP, CIO-CS, FirstSource II, and GSA to name a few) and a trusted partner to leading IT manufacturers and software publishers spanning the IT industry.

Established in 1984, Blue Tech is a HUBZone and Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB), and ISO 9001 & 20243 certified.

ITES-SW2: READY FOR PRIME TIME



Vanessa Roberts,
 Custom Content
 Editor

Best tech at speed. That's the ultimate goal that the Army's Wayne Sok wants for the multi-award technology contracts his team manages. Sok is product lead for the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions program and its IT e-mart digital storefront.

"When you come and you see the catalogs that our vendors have, that's not the end all be all,

because we all know that technology and IT are constantly changing and evolving," Sok told Federal News Network Executive Editor Jason Miller.

"We are trying to make it even more automated, easier and faster," he said — both for customers to make purchases and request new technology additions, and for vendors to provide and add the most sought-after products and services.

In this guide, we're offering a deep dive into one of the hottest multi-award contracts on the CHES roster: the Army's Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2. ITES-SW2 is a 10-year, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity vehicle offering software, supporting hardware and services across 14 categories of products. With a ceiling of \$13 billion, the IDIQ is open to buyers across the government.

To provide insights on all things CHES and ITES-SW2, Miller sat down for a nearly two-hour chat with Sok.

Throughout this guide, Sok offers details about ITES-SW2. But we also provide a look behind the scenes at CHES and its continuing efforts to keep the technology and tech services offered through the Army IT e-mart current and relevant based on technology needs within the Army but also broadly across the Defense Department, and beyond.

In addition, we catch up with what's going on with Army network modernization efforts led by the service's Network Enterprise Technology Command, a large user of ITES-SW2, as well as find out the latest on initiatives to improve the service's acquisition capabilities.

We hope this guide can become a handy tool for your agency to learn about the scope of ITES-SW2, understand the array of CHES initiatives, and discover the buying options for products and services available from the 30 ITES-SW2 contract holders.

Vanessa Roberts
 Editor, Custom Content
 Federal News Network

carahsoft

Michael Adams
 Director, ITES-SW2 Contract Team
 (703) 871-8681
ITES-SW2@carahsoft.com
carahsoft.com/buy/federal-contracts/ites-sw2

Carahsoft Technology Corp. is The Trusted Government IT Solutions Provider®, supporting Public Sector organizations across Federal, State and Local Government agencies and Education and Healthcare markets. Founded in 2004, the company has established strategic, long-term relationships with the industry's leading software and hardware manufacturers.

As a Public Sector-focused distributor, Carahsoft delivers solutions for Cybersecurity, MultiCloud, DevSecOps, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Open Source, Customer Experience and Engagement, and more. Working with an ever-expanding array of resellers, systems integrators and consultants, the Carahsoft sales and marketing teams provide industry leading IT products, services and training through numerous contract vehicles, including ITES-SW2.

Over 100,000 products from more than 350 vendor partners are available through Carahsoft's ITES-SW2 Contract W52PIJ-20-D-0042, supporting all DoD and Federal agencies with software, services, maintenance and hardware. Additionally, Carahsoft and its reseller partners can provide additional support for deploying and implementing solutions across all 14 software catalogs.

A PRIMER ON ALL THINGS ARMY PEO EIS AND CHES

PROVIDED BY ARMY PEO EIS

The Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems, one of the Army's leading technology acquisition organizations, is responsible for modernizing and managing the service's network and enterprise business systems.

PEO EIS has a vast and diverse portfolio of 37 program offices and 71 acquisition programs that support and field Army and Defense Department communications, logistics, medical, finance, personnel, training and procurement systems for every domain, branch, unit and soldier in the Army.

PEO EIS manages an approximately \$4.3 billion annual budget.

What we do

PEO EIS has two strategic areas of operations:

- **Business mission area**, which encompasses the Army's data, finance and accounting, human capital and logistics programs
- **Networks, cyber and services**, which comprises the Army's defensive cybersecurity, enterprise services and network modernization programs

From logisticians managing the Army's depots, to commanders making important strategic and operational decisions and engineers building high-speed information technology networks at home and abroad, PEO EIS programs support every soldier, every day around the world.

"CHES contracts provide continuous vendor competition for best value and consolidation of requirements to leverage the Army's buying power and maximize cost avoidance."

— PEO EIS' Wayne Sok

CHES IT e-mart by the numbers

The Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions team implements and manages multiple indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts:

- 11+ software agreements
- 27 hardware contracts
- 30 software contracts
- 119 services contracts

Where CHES fits in

On the networks side of the house, PEO EIS' Enterprise Services Project Management Office oversees seven product offices that equip soldiers with IT. One of those offices is Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHES), the Army's designated primary source for commercial IT.

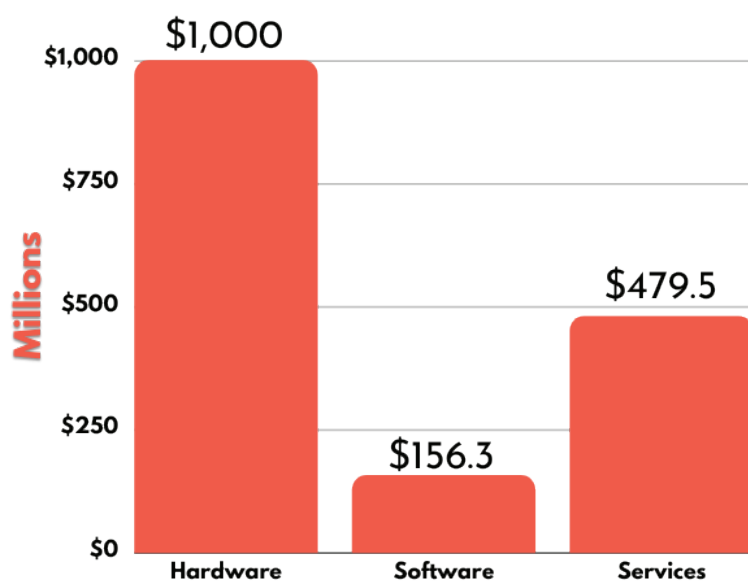
CHES provides a no-fee, flexible procurement strategy through which Army users can procure commercial off-the-shelf IT hardware, software and services via an ecommerce-based process — the **IT e-mart**.

CHES contracts provide continuous vendor competition for best value and consolidation of requirements to leverage the Army's buying power and maximize cost avoidance. Organizations can achieve further savings by using CHES' reverse auction tool for the procurement of COTS hardware and software.

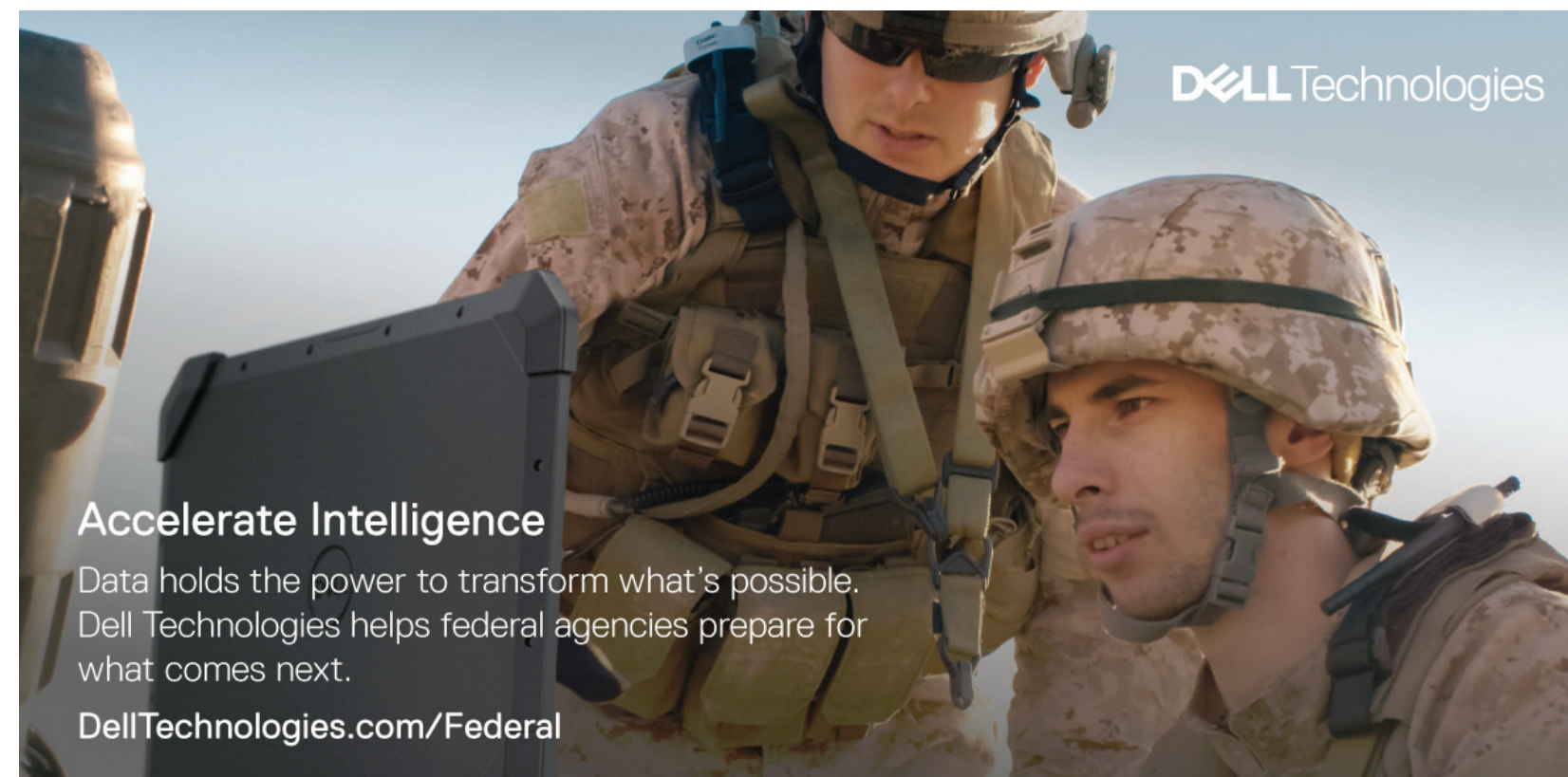
Additionally, CHES manages the execution of the year-round Army Consolidated Buy program, which mandates that all desktop and notebook computers be purchased through CHES, in accordance with Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplemental 5139 and Army Regulation 25-1.

CHES' success has been based in large part on maintaining close working relationships with both the Army's requirements-generating organizations and industry partners. CHES plays an important role in supporting the Army's Office of the Chief Information Officer, deputy chief of staff G-6 and Army Cyber Command efforts to execute the Office of Management and Budget's IT category management initiatives. ■

Fiscal 2021 CHES IDIQ purchases of \$1.6B by category



SOURCE: Army PEO EIS
GRAPHIC: Amelia Brust/Federal News Network



ARMY KEEPS ITES-SW2 ON CONSTANT REFRESH CYCLE, DRIVEN BY CUSTOMER NEEDS

BY JASON MILLER

With the Army's Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2 contract potentially lasting for a decade, the Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems knew it had to build in some gates to refresh and relook at the multiple-award ITES-SW2.

That first review gate occurred during the first 18 months. PEO EIS awarded the contract in August 2020 to **30 vendors** across 14 software and services categories, ranging from audio visual and business finance needs to cybersecurity and data management tools.

In the first year alone, the contract added several new products, said Wayne Sok, product lead for the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHESS) program in PEO EIS.

"One of the things that I really want to make sure that everyone understands is that when you come and you see the catalogs that our vendors have, that's not the end all be all because we all know that technology and IT are constantly changing and evolving," Sok said in an interview with **Federal News Network**. "What I'm excited about for 2022 and beyond is we are trying to make it even more automated, easier and faster for the vendors to add new products to their catalog. It's really driven all the way around, whether it be from the customer from the vendors themselves."

Through the ITES-SW2 website, vendors can add products and services to their catalog as necessary, of course as long as it meets certain cyber and other requirements. But sometimes, the need for a new product or service comes from the contract's customers — all the military services, Defense agencies and civilian agencies.

"I get calls directly sometimes asking, 'Hey, I don't see this particular product or capability. Can we get it on there?' And so certainly we work with our vendors to see if we can get those products onboard," Sok said. "Usually, we can add a new product or service to the catalog within a day or two. Of course, it depends on the complexity of it. But both from the publisher or original equipment manufacturer (OEM) side, they're both very motivated to add products."

"Usually, we can add a new product or service to the catalog within a day or two. Of course, it depends on the complexity of it. But both from the publisher or original equipment manufacturer (OEM) side, they're both very motivated to add products."

— Wayne Sok, CHESS Product Lead, Army PEO EIS

From 4 to 14 categories from ITES-SW to ITES-SW2

The availability of a wide range of software, hardware and services on ITES-SW2 is one of the biggest differences between the new contract and ITES-SW, which Sok dubbed a five-year pilot.

He said ITES-SW had only four categories and every product had to obtain a certificate of "networthiness," which required vendors to demonstrate that their products or services met or exceeded the Army's security, integration and reliability standards.

"I think a lot of folks were saying, 'How can I obtain this software so we could test it because we need it to test?' That's a challenge that we no longer have to face so that folks can purchase any type of software that they need to test or to do any other things with it that they need to do," Sok said.

The decision to move away from the certificate of networthiness requirement doesn't mean ITES-SW2 doesn't take supply chain risk management seriously.

Quite the opposite, Sok said. Not only does PEO EIS work with the Army Network Enterprise Technology

"When it comes to cyber supply chain risk management, I'm having more and more engagements with industry where they're coming out almost proactively to talk about their processes, how they track their supply chains and their processes within their companies."

— PEO EIS' Wayne Sok

GET COMPREHENSIVE AI TRAINING WITH NVIDIA DEEP LEARNING INSTITUTE (DLI)

From bundled self-paced, online courses and live, instructor-led workshops to executive briefings and enterprise-level reporting, DLI can help your teams build practical AI skills and hands-on experience.



Learn how to accelerate deep learning on NVIDIA DGX™ Systems with NVIDIA GPUS and AMD EPYC™ CPUS: www.nvidia.com/training



Command to ensure software products meet their needs, but Sok and his team stay in constant contact through working groups and other approaches to keep the **contract vehicle up-to-date** in how they address supply chain risk management.

“As far as the pandemic and everything, there’s been impacts to supply chain in general,” he said. “We’ve seen a lot of delays, but I will say to a lot of our customers that other contracts are also seeing those same delays. I mean, it’s not just impacting one. It’s impacting across the board.”

Data drives CHES decisions

CHES also ensures its authorized resellers are certified to resell the products, and there are no “gray” market products that create a potential cybersecurity risk in providers’ supply chains, Sok added.

“The biggest positive to our contracts is that we ensure that Federal Acquisition Regulation and Defense FAR clauses are added regarding any type of supply chain to reduce any of those risks that we might see,” he said. “When it comes to cyber supply chain risk management, I’m having more and more engagements with industry where they’re coming out almost proactively to talk about their processes, how they track their supply chains and their processes within their companies.

“Just as an example, they’ll only work with maybe two or three specific partners that are trusted partners that they know exactly where the product is coming from or where it’s being developed.”

The need to add more or new products or services as well as ensure they are secure is driven by the

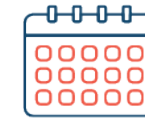
data that CHES collects. Sok said ITES-SW2 is collecting more data, and CHES is using it to better understand both vendor and customer needs.

“Right now, we’re still collecting to be able to make some of those analyses and [identify] trends — or try to figure out if something is just a one-off type of thing,” he said. “ITES-SW2 specifically has just been going for about a year so we’re excited to see what it looks like for 2022 and 2023 so we can make some other recommendations and maybe some other decisions on that,” he said.

ITES-SW2 contract: Just the facts



31 vendors:
8 small business,
23 large business



10-year IDIQ window:
Aug. 31, 2020 to
Aug. 30, 2030



Spending maximum:
\$13 billion



Total fiscal 2021 contracting actions:
1,918



CHES fee

NAICS code:
511210

SOURCE: Army PEO EIS
GRAPHIC: Amelia Brust/Federal News Network



Modernization
Zero Trust
Secure Cloud Services

Identity is at
the center of
everything

Available now through Carahsoft’s ITES-SW2 Contract

W52P1J-20-D-0042

Okta achieved a Provisional Authorization To Operate (P-ATO) at Impact Level 4 (IL4)

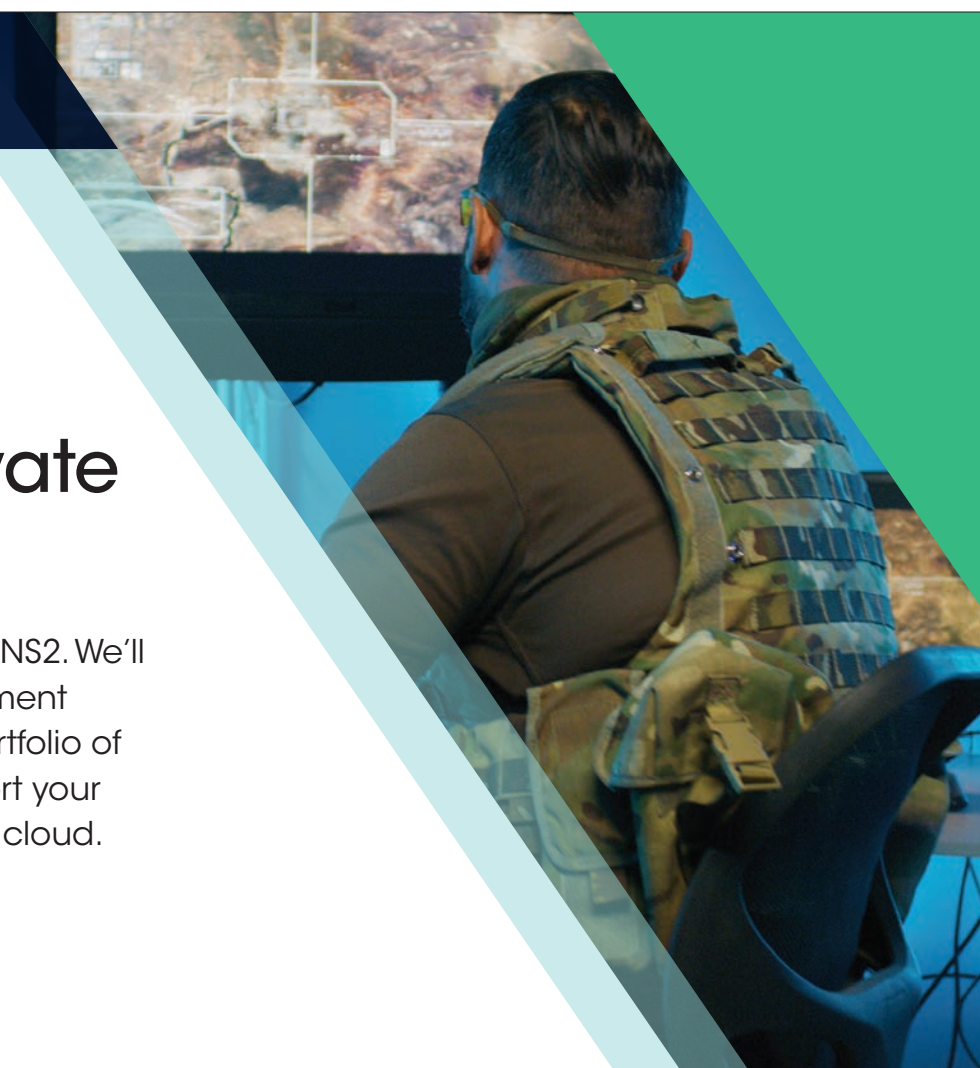
Learn more about Okta’s offerings under ITES-SW2
<https://www.okta.com/contact-sales/>
1-800-425-1267



We secure your cloud. You innovate and prosper.

Security is never an afterthought at NS2. We’ll keep innovating, to provide government and regulated customers with a portfolio of capabilities – all designed to support your unique security requirements in the cloud.

Learn more at www.SAPNS2.com



CHES always seeks to make its data sets better, asking vendors and federal customers for continuous feedback, Sok added.

“When it comes to market prices on whatever it is, if industry could give us the most accurate pricing of industry or market price, then we could really try to do that comparison of what we’re paying for and what are the cost avoidances and savings that we can calculate,” he said. “I think that as a government, and trying to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars, that’s what we’re really trying to do — is to try to maximize the efficiencies on those costs.”

Keeping ITES-SW2 innovative

That long-term data analyses also will help CHES ensure ITES-SW2 remains innovative and current with the technologies it’s offering.

With the contract potentially running until the end of fiscal 2030, ITES-SW2 must keep up with the constant and accelerated rate of change across the technology landscape.

“We know that we can’t and we don’t know everything now, but we certainly have made the contract flexible enough to add any types of changes to the technology. I think that’s a big change for ITES-SW2, and I’m really proud of that,” Sok said.

“I think the other way is that we’re trying to automate how the vendors are adding products to their catalogs. We’ve automated that through a website so that they can put it in there in a matter of a day or two. We can get capabilities to our customers as fast as possible.” ■



servicenow

Partnering with the Army for mission success

Remain ready and resilient with a connected platform

For more information, visit us online at: your.servicenow.com/Army

CHES CONTRACT UMBRELLA CONTINUES TO EXPAND TO MEET DOD TECH EVOLUTION

BY JASON MILLER

Eight different contracts make up the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHES) program. They range from software and hardware to desktop and mobile computing products.

Collectively, these contracts help the Army’s Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS) support a broad range of needs for the Army and the Defense Department.

But they don’t meet all of DoD’s needs.

CHES released a new solicitation for the fourth version of the IT Enterprise Services – Hardware (ITES-4H), a potential 10-year, multiple-award contract with a \$10 billion ceiling.

PEO EIS released the **solicitation** in August 2021, calling for a “full range of innovative, world-class commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) IT hardware in seven product catalogs, in addition to related incidental software and services.”

“We are making sure that we’re keeping up with technology changes.”

— Wayne Sok, CHES Product Lead, Army PEO EIS

CHES works to align contract offerings with IT needs

Although ITES-4H is months away from hitting full operational capability, it’s an example of how CHES continues to evolve to meet technology needs across DOD, said Wayne Sok, product lead for CHES in the Army’s PEO EIS.

PEO EIS extended ITES-3H for an additional 16 months in March 2021. Bloomberg Government says agencies have spent more than \$5 billion since fiscal 2016 under that contract.

Another example of CHES efforts to continually update is the ITES-3S contract, which is focused on services, such as program and project management, quality assurance, IT systems architecture and many others. PEO EIS recently added several new labor categories as well.

“We are making sure that we’re keeping up with technology changes. We added additional labor categories regarding artificial intelligence, data, cloud and other types,” Sok said. “I wouldn’t say they are emerging technologies, but newer technologies that people are trying to take advantage of. Now that we’ve appropriately identified those labor categories and tried to get the right skillsets available in that contract vehicle, we’re really excited.”

PEO EIS added 23 new labor categories across three task areas that include services ranging from cloud development and engineering to data architect and artificial intelligence/machine learning expertise.

With 120 vendors, ITES-3S is a nine-year contract with a \$12.1 billion ceiling. The Army added the new task areas and labor categories as part of the contract's annual refresh. Bloomberg Government says just more than \$1 billion has been obligated against 454 task orders on ITES-3S since the Army awarded it in 2018.

PEO EIS to begin work on Version 4 services buy

Although the contract likely will continue to September 2027, Sok said he expects CHES to begin working on a fourth version this summer.

"In the summertime, we are going to start to engage industry to have conversations about ITES-4S. It's five years away, but that's how long it takes to really get industry engagement and really flesh out a lot of things."

— PEO EIS' Wayne Sok

"In the summertime, we are going to start to engage industry to have conversations about ITES-4S. It's five years away, but that's how long it takes to really get industry engagement and really flesh out a lot of things," he said. "Because we are talking about an approximately \$13 billion ceiling and a 10-year period of performance, we'll be engaging industry shortly."

The one feature that many of the contracts under the CHES umbrella have in common is the ability to bring on new vendors if deemed necessary, Sok said.

"We don't do a lot of on-ramping or off-ramping of contractors, which means it's good news if you're on but not so good if you're not," he said. However, CHES would consider adding additional vendors

"It's just as much effort to do a new solicitation because everything we have to do to do an on-ramp would be the exact same thing if we to do a new solicitation."

— PEO EIS' Wayne Sok

if DoD has a specific capability that no current vendors can meet.

"If there was a gap that we needed to close or we saw a big demand but we didn't have that capability, I think that would be a consideration. Or if there were some other factors like all of our small businesses graduated and so now we don't have any small businesses," he said.

"The reason why it's not done often is because the amount of effort. ... It's just as much effort to do a new solicitation because everything we have to do to do an on-ramp would be the exact same thing if we were to do a new solicitation." ■



Monitor and Manage IT

Scalable, end-to-end IT monitoring software from solarwinds.com/government



Cloud complexity can kill innovation.



Splunk helps you manage complexity, so you can accelerate cloud-driven transformation and enable your teams to unlock innovation, enhance security and drive resilience.

Learn more at splunk.com



10 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT CHESS

BY NICKI WILSON, CHESS ITES-SW2 LEAD

1 We're making it easier to find things.

The search tool on the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHESS) website lets customers search for Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2 (ITES-SW2) catalog offerings in real time.

The catalog is customizable: Vendors can update their catalogs at any time to add requested products. Give it a try at chess.army.mil, and tell us what you think.

2 We're keeping our users in mind.

The software procurement navigation features an intuitive interface that breaks things down, making it easier for customers to find the right agreement or contract for the products they need.

3 We've done a lot of the order prep.

Use the **Master Software License Agreement** (MSLA) Template during ITES-SW2 delivery order (DO) negotiations. CHESS provides a government MSLA template that includes critical elements to be considered when negotiating software licenses at the ITES-SW2 DO level.

Although the ITES-SW2 base level contract terms and conditions flow down to the executed DOs, customers should use the template to ensure they are getting the best license agreement for their organization.

4 You can offer price feedback.

Although CHESS is the Army's mandatory purchasing source, customers are **invited to provide feedback** if they receive a lower price from a vendor outside of CHESS. This helps shape our acquisition strategies and how we approach industry engagements for future efforts.

5 It's all about the 'R-A' and no hidden fees.

The reverse auction (RA) capability, which uses the familiar framework of the user-friendly request for quote (RFQ) tool, allows customers to submit a requirement to vendors that then compete for the award by bidding the price down. The customer will evaluate the bids for technical acceptance and best value, just like a traditional RFQ, before making the award. An additional benefit is that CHESS contracts do not have usage fees.

6 We're thinking "big." CB big.

The consolidated buy (CB) compare tool — part of the Army Desktop Mobile Computing-3 (ADMC-3) contracts — provides additional temporary discounts on desktop and notebook computers from ADMC-3 vendors. Customers access the **CB compare tool** (listed under Consolidated Buy/ Products & Prices on the CHESS website) to view and compare available products, specifications, upgrade options and prices. Army organizations that take advantage of the CB net substantial savings regardless of the quantities procured.

7 If you see something, say something.

The **CHESS website** is the critical interface that lets our customers seamlessly navigate contract offerings. To ensure it continues to bring value to our customers, we provide a "report a bug" feedback mechanism. Our team is committed to providing our customers and industry partners a robust, accurate, and fully functioning online capability that facilitates streamlined IT procurements.

8 We're providing our best and final offer.

Customers who have submitted an RFQ can request a best and final offer (BAFO), also known as "final proposal revision," from the CHESS vendors that provided a quote once the RFQ has closed. The BAFO lets vendors provide updated quotes, which may yield more advantageous pricing.

9 Let us be your guide.

Ordering guides are provided for all CHESS indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contracts to make executing delivery orders as seamless as possible.

These guides provide a general scope and overview of each IDIQ, roles and responsibilities of the CHESS contract managers

and Army Contracting Command–Rock Island contracting team, and overall order issuance instructions. A delivery order checklist is included for customers to complete and provide to their ordering contracting officer for processing along with any associated attachments.

10 We're here to help.

CHESS offers bimonthly CHESS 101 training with detailed information about our hardware, software and services contracts. The training also covers many of the tools we offer, such as the "request for" process tools, statements of nonavailability and much more. Training is open to government customers, contractors supporting government customers and our industry partners. In addition to the bi-monthly training, CHESS offers ad hoc personalized training sessions that are tailored to specific customer needs. More **information regarding training** and registration can be found on the CHESS website.

BONUS: Meet with us! We're a team of dedicated Army acquisition professionals delivering capabilities for Army, Defense Department and federal customers. **Request a meeting** to learn more. ■



Karen Forrest
Program Manager - DoD
(703) 621-8218
karefor@cdwg.com
cdwg.com

A wholly owned subsidiary of CDW (NASDAQ: CDW), CDW Government (CDW-G) is a leading provider of integrated information technology solutions to government, education and healthcare organizations.

The company features dedicated account managers who help customers choose the right technology products and services to meet their needs.

The company's solutions architects and engineers offer expertise in designing customized solutions, while its advanced technology engineers assist customers with the implementation and long-term management of those solutions. Areas of focus include mobility, security, cloud, data center and collaboration.

For more information about CDW-G product offerings, procurement options, services and solutions, call 1.800.808.4239 or visit CDWG.com/federal.

FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK Q&A WITH CHESS PRODUCT LEAD WAYNE SOK

In the nearly two years since the Army awarded the Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2 contract, it has become clear that the Program Executive Office Enterprise Information Systems made the right decision when it moved its ITES-SW indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity vehicle out of the pilot stage with the award of Version 2.

ITES-SW2 is a firm-fixed-price, IDIQ vehicle with 30 vendors and a \$13 billion ceiling over 10 years. (Find a listing of all of the vendors on Page 42 and on the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHESS) IT e-mart [website](#).)

All military services, Defense Department agencies and civilian agencies can order from ITES-SW2.

Federal News Network's Jason Miller discussed the latest trends and opportunities around ITES-SW2 with Wayne Sok, product lead for the CHESS program, which sits within the Army's PEO EIS.

Federal News Network: Can you share the basics about ITES-SW2. What are the goals of the contract? What are the technologies offered? How many companies are included?

Wayne Sok: ITES-SW was kind of a pilot, kind of testing the IDIQ. ITES-SW2 is significantly larger and more robust as far as what it has to offer and as far as ensuring that we had the capability of bringing on new technologies specific to software.

We did increase it from four categories to 14 to try to encompass pretty much anything that's out there, so we can have that to offer to all of our customers.

About Wayne Sok

- 12 and a half years at Army PEO EIS — last 3 years as CHESS product lead
- 3+ years as a consultant in the private sector
- 5 years serving in the Army — led an Armor platoon during Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Master of science in program management from the Naval Postgraduate School and bachelor of science in biology from Middle Tennessee State University
- Recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Parachutist Badge, 2 Superior Civilian Service awards and Commander's Award for Civilian Service



Just to give you the scale, when ITES-SW was established as a pilot, it essentially had a \$49 million ceiling, and then we added another \$100 million and \$30 million to make it about \$179 million for the ceiling. But for ITES-SW2, it's a \$13 billion ceiling and has 14 catalogs.

FNN: Share some of the 14 categories. What are some of the ones that are most popular?

Sok: For fiscal 2021, the big trends were on network operations tools and IT utilities and security catalogs. For NetOps, we saw about 52% of our sales go toward that, or about \$87 million. And as far as the IT utilities, those were about 21%, which made up about \$35 million compared to our total spend that we saw, which was about \$167 million for 2021.

FNN: It's a fairly new contract, awarded in August 2020. Are you're starting to see an increase in the use of ITES-SW2? Are people getting excited about it?

Sok: Absolutely. And, and again, just to go back to ITES-SW, it was a five-year period of performance from 2015 to 2020. We were able to see about \$147 million in spend for the entire period of performance, as opposed to the

one year in 2021 when we saw \$167 million spend. We are seeing that obviously gain momentum right now.

FNN: Let's take a step back. Walk me through how the contract works because there are a lot of multiple-award, IDIQ contracts out there, and someone might wonder, "Well, why should I use that one instead of the 101 others?"

Sok: There are 30 prime vendors on ITES-SW2, with 22 of them being large businesses and eight being small businesses. When we were going through and putting together ITES-SW2 in our acquisition strategy, we really focused on the capability aspect.

A lot of the other vehicles that are out there are very focused on brand specifics, which we can accommodate as well on ITES-SW2. But what we were hoping for was a capability-based vehicle, so that when customers come in with their particular unique requirements that will give the vendors an opportunity to provide all sorts of solutions that meet customers' particular needs — no matter the brand.

Just to reiterate, you can ask for brand specifics as well. But I think that was kind of the unique twist for us to be on the capability side.

Connection
PUBLIC SECTOR SOLUTIONS
we solve IT®

Dana Noga
Federal Contracts Specialist
301.610.0753—Direct Line
1.800.800.0019 x78280—
Connection Main Line
dana.noga@connection.com
connection.com/fed

We Make IT Work for Federal Government

Connection® Public Sector Solutions is a rapid-response provider of IT products and services to the Federal Government and has been trusted by Federal agencies for decades. We help agencies design, enable, manage, and service IT environments to optimize investments. Our teams foster deep relationships around a solutions approach and exceptional service.

Our experts have decades of experience to help you build the right solution stack for your agency. Today's IT strategy is focused on outcomes, and there's no greater source than the software that manages the data and yields the insights that influence our daily work. Let our team show you where your infrastructure would benefit from rearchitecting the design and deployment of software solutions, including:

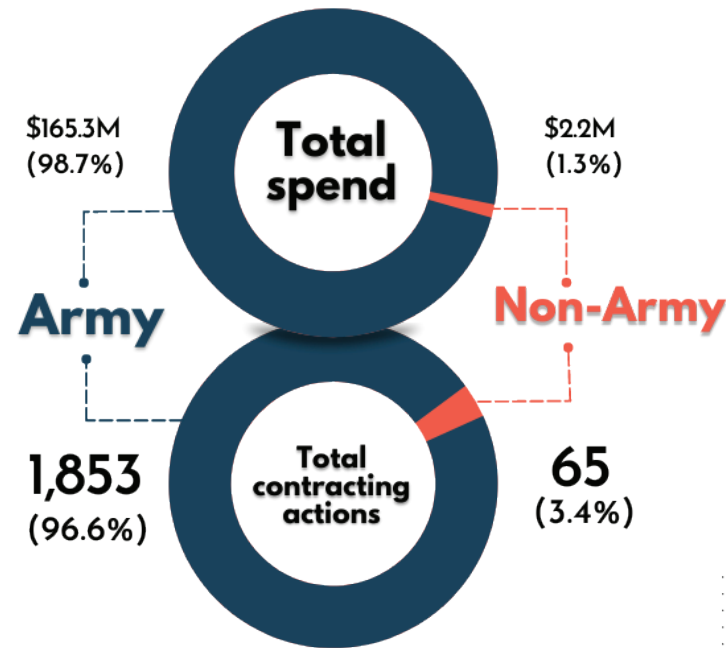
- Security Software
- Endpoint Monitoring
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Storage Virtualization

With extensive vendor partnerships and a broad selection of over 300,000 products, Connection combines the professional services, technical expertise, and purchasing power you need for any size project. As a holder of an ITES-3H contract, we can also help you procure complete hardware solutions, including servers, desktops, notebooks, workstations, thin clients, storage systems, networking equipment, network printers, video conferencing products, displays, scanners, power devices, and more. By navigating the technology landscape for every facet of agencies—from departmental levels to community end users—we employ IT for better outcomes. Connection delivers value through in-depth expertise, savings, and outstanding service.

“What we were hoping for was a capability-based vehicle, so that when customers come in with their particular unique requirements that will give the vendors an opportunity to provide all sorts of solutions that meet customers’ particular needs — no matter the brand.”

— *Wayne Sok, CHES Product Lead*

Army buys far outpace non-Army purchases in fiscal 2021



SOURCE: Army PEO EIS
GRAPHIC: Amelia Brust/Federal News Network

FNN: When you say customers can ask for a specific brand, there’s sometimes a concern about being too specific — say, Kleenex instead of tissues or Coca Cola instead of soda. How is CHES addressing any concerns that come up?

Sok: All of our actions are essentially done at the delivery order level with the commands or the customers that are leveraging the vehicle. We help them and guide them as far as how to leverage the vehicle. But a lot of those unique requirements and specificity that organizations are looking for, that is all done at the command or the customer level.

FNN: So that way you don’t necessarily have to worry about brand specificity because it’s a command making that decision. You’re just offering the ability for them to do it, but they have to justify it, correct?

Sok: Correct.

FNN: There are also other things about ITES-SW2 that people may not know. For instance, there’s no fee to use it. And that’s always a benefit. A lot of other multiple-award contracts that are enterprisewide or governmentwide have fees. Talk about that decision and why that’s a benefit.

Sok: We at the CHES organization are essentially funded. Once we establish the vehicles, there’s no fees associated, and anyone across the federal agencies and DoD can certainly leverage it as well as our Army customers.

We are aligned with all of the IT category management initiatives. We try to establish each vehicle to be considered a best-in-class type of contract vehicle that supports all of the initiatives that are happening at the federal level.

FNN: Let’s talk a little bit more about how ITES-SW2 was different from the ITES-SW, which was a pilot. What were you trying to do with the pilot? Walk me through the thinking and how you got to ITES-SW2?

Sok: As a pilot, we wanted to see how something like a capability-based type of IDIQ would play out and how well it would be used. When we first started, \$49 million was the initial ceiling. But we saw so much traction, and once people actually knew that it was out there, we had to increase that by \$130 million.

The other huge benefit that we’re bringing to the table is being able to see the purchase data. Our vendors provide us an order transaction report that basically lets us know the types of software that are being sold. We could take a look at that and do

our own analysis to see what the trends were and maybe where there were some gaps.

We also collect another set of data, called a statement of nonavailability. That also shows us some of our shortcomings and that helps us shape future acquisitions and contract structures as far as trying to make sure that we’re ensuring that all different types are being included in future acquisitions.

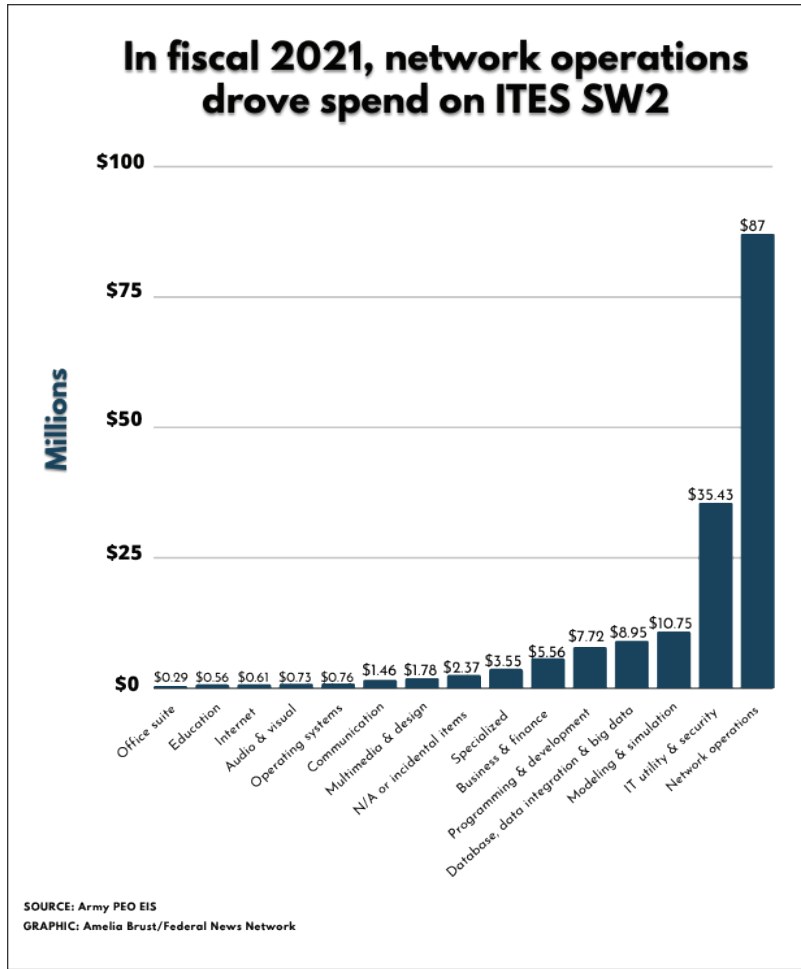
FNN: Do you get a sense that there are a lot of other non-DoD folks who are using ITES-SW2, or is mostly Army your biggest customer?

Sok: The Army is definitely still the largest customer. We do see some buys from other agencies. I think it’s really getting the word out so people understand that it’s out there. So once they hear about it and



**Data Focused.
Mission Ready.**

For more information, visit:
www.tableau.com/solutions/government-defense-analytics



FNN: I want to talk about some of the other buying trends. You mentioned, some of the big areas like network operations and IT utilities and security. What does that tell you about what the customers are looking for? What does that tell you about what the vendors are providing?

Sok: Network operations and IT utilities and security really have to do with monitoring and being able to see and secure. That's been a trend for a while. Actually, we've seen those with our ITES-SW trends as well, and it doesn't seem like it's changing right now.

Although, anecdotally, when I go to different conferences, speaking with our customers as well as our industry partners, there's a lot more interest in robotics process automation and other kinds of automated types of solutions.

they realize what it is, we do get some traction. But the more we can get the word out, certainly the better.

The other thing we do is offer CHES training. We do CHES one-on-ones. We already have a standard bimonthly training that we do synchronously through Microsoft Teams and these types of venues. But we also do ad hoc training sessions at the request of our customers. We'll emphasize ITES-SW2 or any of our IDIQ contracts, as well as any of our other agreements that we may have.

I think some artificial intelligence and RPA and those types of things may be starting to get a little bit more traction. We haven't actually seen the data as far as the sales data for that. But certainly there's a lot more interest in those types of capabilities.

"We have been getting lots and lots of notifications for more training. So we're definitely spending a lot of time doing that for all of our customers."
— PEO EIS' Wayne Sok

FNN: That's probably natural given how much we all are talking about security these days. Are you seeing the same thing so far in 2022? I know it's still fairly early.

Sok: In fact, we just got some new numbers in, and the trend still holds true as far as those two categories go.

FNN: Let's go through the ordering process for ITES-SW2. You said it's decentralized. So what does that mean? And how does it work?

Sok: All of our customers go through our CHES website. We tried to design and make the website intuitive for the customers to help them

6,237
ITES-SW2 requests for quotes in fiscal 2021
SOURCE: Army PEO EIS

walk through the process. You basically leverage everything on the website to put in your requirements and what it is you're looking for.

There are many ways of putting it, whether it's a request for quotes (RFQ). We have a tool called a reverse auction tool, which

essentially is an RFQ tool. But it's like a reverse, eBay situation where you put out your requirements and the vendors on the vehicle will start to bid down. They're not able to see any of the names but just the last bid, and they have a period of time that the customer will set. They have the opportunity to rebid until the time closes. That seems to be very successful, especially for larger buys or for larger volumes. That seems to work very, very well.

Q&A with Wayne Sok continued on Page 26

Enterprise Data Management for a Multi-Cloud World

Seamlessly manage and protect all your enterprise data and applications, at any scale, across any cloud model.

Learn more at veritas.com

VERITAS



ITES-SW2 & Carahsoft

Providing Federal Agencies With Fast, Fee-Free Access to IT Solutions

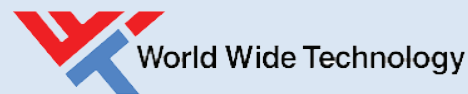
Carahsoft is honored to have been awarded an ITES-SW2 Contract. Today, technology from more than 250 vendor partners is available through Carahsoft's ITES-SW2 contract and our reseller partners, providing all Federal agencies with fast, no-fee access to thousands of IT software products, related services and hardware.

Carahsoft Solutions Providers on ITES-SW2 Contract

Carahsoft Solutions Providers on ITES-SW2 Contract

Carahsoft Solutions Providers on ITES-SW2 Contract

Contact the Carahsoft ITES-SW Program Manager at 703-871-8681 or ITES-SW2@carahsoft.com to learn more about leveraging this contract for your agency IT needs and small business set aside goals; or visit carahsoft.com/ITES-SW2.



Mackenzie Knight
Federal Contracts Specialist at
World Wide Technology
202-531-3817
Mackenzie.Knight@wwt.com
wwt.com/federal

World Wide Technology (WWT), a global technology solutions provider with \$14.5 billion in annual revenue, combines the power of strategy, execution and partnership to accelerate transformational outcomes for large public and private organizations around the world. Through its Advanced Technology Center, a collaborative ecosystem of the world's most advanced hardware and software solutions, WWT helps customers and partners conceptualize, test and validate innovative technology solutions for the best business outcomes and then deploys them at scale through its 4 million square feet of global warehousing, distribution and integration space. With over 7,000 employees and more than 55 locations around the world, WWT's culture, built on a set of core values and established leadership philosophies, has been recognized 10 years in a row by Fortune and Great Place to Work® for its unique blend of determination, innovation and leadership for diversity and inclusion. With this culture at its foundation, WWT bridges the gap between business and technology to make a new world happen for its customers, partners and communities.

Q&A with Wayne Sok continued from Page 21

FNN: Interesting. What made you decide that a reverse auction tool would make sense for ITES-SW2?

Sok: It essentially is the framework of lowest price, technically acceptable (LPTA). Typically when it comes to commodity items, whether it is hardware or software, where IT can be just capabilities and then you're looking for a price for that, LPTA suits it well for that type of environment.

We've seen great success in the hardware space with it. We're starting to see a little bit, but not as much, in the software space. But we are definitely trying to get the word out. It's nothing more than an RFQ tool. It gives vendors a chance to continue to rebid.

FNN: You mentioned the dreaded words, "lowest price, technically acceptable." Vendors tend to cringe at LPTA. But I imagine LPTA is not a big part of the ITES-SW2 world. Is that what you're finding?

Sok: It absolutely depends on what the customer is looking for. If it's literally, "I need some software licenses," I think it's pretty straightforward. But yeah, typically, as you mentioned, it's not just the licenses. You need the hardware

to put the software into. You need the services for training and other types of development and other things you're going to do with the software.

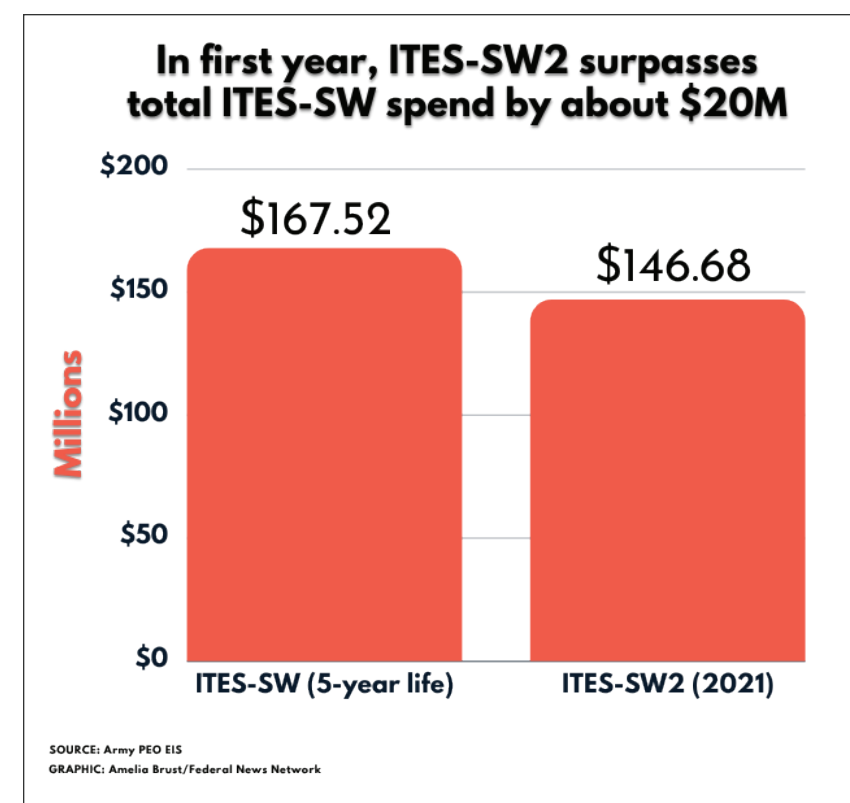
ITES-SW2 allows for that capability. ITES-SW stands for "IT Enterprise Solutions for Software," so that means that it allows for those ancillary supporting hardware and software services to be procured through the vehicle as well.

FNN: When customers are not using the reverse auction, what's the process by which they can place RFQs or task orders against the contract?

Sok: Typically, it would be a contracting officer that would be purchasing on behalf of the customer or their site.

FNN: As you mentioned, there's training. Have you seen an increase in the number of people who are asking for or were enrolling in the training over the last year or so?

Sok: Many folks are reaching out to me directly as well as our help desk. We have been getting lots and lots of notifications for more training. So we're definitely spending a lot of time doing that for all our customers.



FNN: Have you found in this virtual world, that it's been easier for people to take the training or are more people asking for it?

Sok: We've leveraged a virtual environment for a little while.

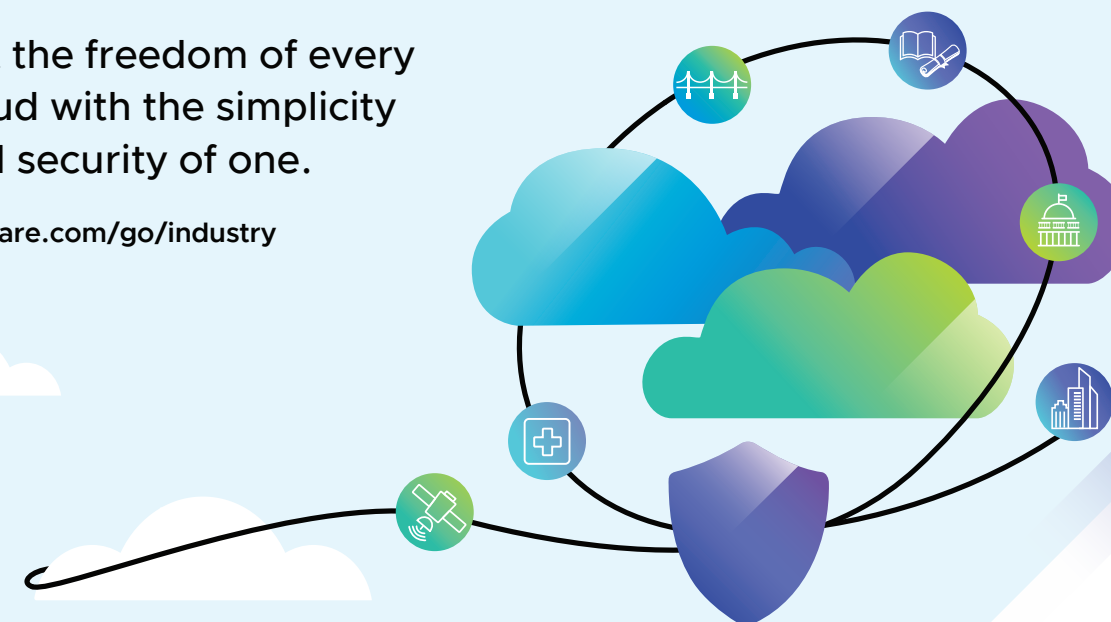
I think before Teams we were using the Defense Connect Online (DCO) or the Defense Collaboration Services (DCS) environments.

But I think maybe it's a little bit of both: The capabilities are there but also a lot more people are really looking for more training to understand the CHES contracts. ■

Multi-Cloud for Mission Success

Get the freedom of every cloud with the simplicity and security of one.

vmware.com/go/industry



NETCOM LOOKS TO ENSURE INTEROPERABILITY AND SECURITY ACROSS ENTERPRISE NETWORKS

BY JUSTIN DOUBLEDAY

The Army Network Enterprise Technology Command wants to leverage strong cybersecurity and interoperability standards as it modernizes and converges a network that spans more than a dozen countries and supports 1.4 million users.

NETCOM, a subordinate to the Army Cyber Command, operates the Army's portion of the Department of Defense Information Network, DoDIN-Army. NETCOM's vision for DoDIN-A is to provide "a seamless strategic-to-tactical network that provides assured global command and control and enables the Army's ability to fight and win in a contested and congested operating environment."

That mission means the command also has a critical role in overseeing Army IT spending, which is projected to reach as much as \$12 billion in fiscal 2022, according to the DoD's unclassified IT budget.

But the challenge of overseeing a global network ranging from the back office to the battlefield makes it even more important for Army users to leverage approved products lists and centralized purchasing vehicles.

That includes the Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHES) contract vehicles, the Army's primary source for commercial IT purchases. NETCOM is one of the key enablers of CHES' success, according to the Program Executive Office for Enterprise Information Systems.

"This simplifies the acquisition process and also ensures that the Army is utilizing best-in-class contract vehicles as part of category management efforts to reduce spending," NETCOM spokesman Enrique Tamez Vasquez told Federal News Network. "In addition, purchases from CHES help ensure baseline computing and interoperability across the Army, which reduces the workload at the local level and increases overall security, as well as reducing cost."

The command's Cyber Security Directorate is involved in reviewing contracts to ensure the right terms and requirements are in place before award, Vasquez said.

NETCOM doesn't develop the Army's cybersecurity requirements on its own. Instead, command officials leverage existing policy and guidance, meeting often with their counterparts from Joint Force Headquarters-DoDIN (JFHQ-DoDIN), Army Cyber

"We recognize that our industry partners are key and that this technology is key to being able to operate and defend at speed."

— Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett, former Commanding General, Network Enterprise Technology Command

Command, the Defense Information Systems Agency and other Army commands, he said.

The idea is "to ensure network and security compliance is met in a timely manner," Vasquez said.

Army focus: ability to 'defend at speed'

NETCOM has a staff of approximately 15,000 — soldiers, civilians and contractors — with an annual budget of approximately \$1.2 billion, according to Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett, former commanding general of NETCOM and now commanding general of the Army Cyber Command.

The Army is increasingly turning to the technology industry to take advantage of advances in cloud computing, artificial

NETCOM's 2022 priorities

Army DoDIN operations improvement

- ORGNET convergence
- Comply to Connect (C2C)
- Army Enterprise Data Center (AEDC) as a service
- Global enterprise fabric (GEF)
- Zero trust
- Migration to Army 365
- Commercial Solutions for Classified program (CSfC)
- IT service management tools as a service and Army Enterprise Service Desk

Readiness

- Army network operations, maintenance and security
- Execution of DoDIN-A authorities
- Sensor strategy
- Theater operations standardization

Network resourcing

- Fiscal 2022 spending plans
- Budget execution
- Future competency roadmap for the Army Talent Management Strategy

SOURCE: NETCOM Public Affairs Office

zoom for Government

Enabling the Hybrid Workforce

Keep your teams connected — no matter where you work. With solutions for meetings, chat, phone, webinar, and rooms that work on virtually any device, we help you manage your hybrid work strategy and enable seamless communication and collaboration between remote and in-office workers.

Let Zoom be your partner in building the future of government

FedRAMP@zoom.us

zoomgov.com



Zoom Rooms Empowers the Hybrid Office

Zoom Rooms is a software-based room system that leverages hardware appliances, kits, or customizable components to create an easy-to-use experience.



Zoom Phone Enables Federal Work from Anywhere

Zoom Phone is the cloud PBX solution built for the Zoom platform. It can replace your existing phone system and work seamlessly with video meetings and chat on the Zoom for Government platform.



Taylor Ham
 tham@thundercattech.com
 571-331-4569
thundercattech.com/contract-vehicles/army-ites-sw2/

Currently ranked #51 on the Solution Provider 500, the award winning ThunderCat Technology is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) that delivers technology products and services to government organizations, educational institutions, and commercial companies.

Led by a combat-wounded CEO, ThunderCat is a systems integrator that brings an innovative approach to solving customer problems in and around the datacenter by providing strategies for Data Storage, Networking, Cyber Security, and Cloud Transformations.

A proven leader, ThunderCat Technology provides and optimizes technologies from best of breed manufacturers.

Clients include DOD, DHS, VA, Treasury, FBI, State of Virginia, State of NY, Sony, VISA, and CareFirst.

thundercattech.com

intelligence and machine learning. During an event hosted by her alma mater Tufts University last year, Barrett said cloud computing can provide "a powerful advantage" for the Army's network operations.

"We recognize that our industry partners are key and that this technology is key to being able to operate and defend at speed in this area," Barrett said.

But the Army is also remaining vigilant about the security of the software supply chain, Barrett said, especially after the 2020 SolarWinds hack. In that case, hackers were able to inject malicious code into a SolarWinds software update that was installed by more than 18,000 of the company's customers, including federal agencies.

"We also have to think about, what is the process by which we obtain our software?" Barrett said. "How do we build our software? Can we use some of the public libraries that are out there for coding, or should we think through a different way of doing that?"

The Army's Enterprise Cloud Management Agency is leading the service's efforts on software supply chain security, she said.

"It is something that we take very seriously because if you're moving into more systems that are software-driven, that then is

the underpinning of what you're doing," she said. "You have to take the cybersecurity pretty seriously."

Network convergence a key priority

One area where NETCOM is placing a high priority in 2022 is converging organizational networks across the Army, an initiative referred to as "ORGNET convergence" at the command, Vasquez said.

"NETCOM's priorities for 2022 include improving the Army's portion of the Department of Defense Information Network, a focus on network readiness and increasing the efficiency of network resources," he said.

Collapsing both horizontal and vertical networks into a unified network, while consolidating network tools and personnel, is critical to Project Convergence, the Army's version of Joint All Domain Command-and-Control or JADC2. The new military doctrine envisions a joint force connected across all weapons and sensor platforms.

The network convergence piece is one of the major lines of effort under the Army's 2021 Unified Network Plan.

"The Army will deliver a resilient unified network optimized to increase speed and range while being maneuverable and defensible," the plan states. "This

objective collapses stove-piped, vulnerable networks into the unified network while integrating DoDIN ops capabilities across the Army and gaining fiscal efficiencies."

But along with a converged architecture and more seamless integration, NETCOM is also working through how network convergence can be applied across the Army's vast organizational structure.

"As we converge organizational networks and flatten things out, especially on the enterprise side, when do you off-ramp how this organization was doing business," Barrett said during AFCEA's TechNet August 2021 conference. "How do we make the licenses more uniform in terms of what we're using?"

NETCOM is rethinking how it will have to operate the network in the future by developing a "DoDIN ops framework" at each echelon, Barrett said.

"We also have to think about, what is the process by which we obtain our software? How do we build our software? Can we use some of the public libraries that are out there for coding, or should we think through a different way of doing that?"

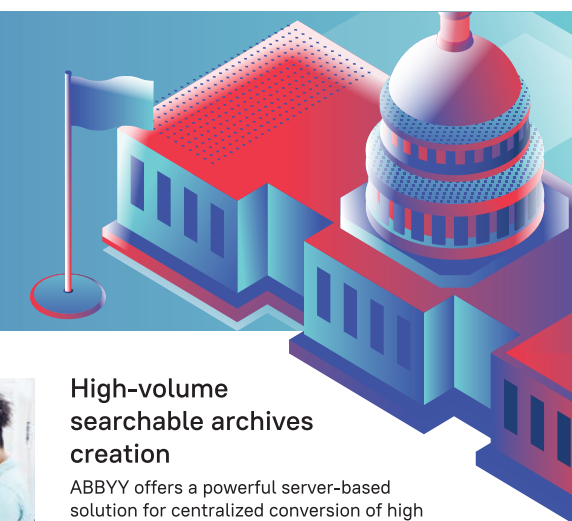
— Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett

The command would deliver the framework to the Army's Cyber Center of Excellence before it's disseminated across the force, she said.

The idea is to ensure the newly collapsed network doesn't become overly congested from a command and control perspective.

"There does need to be a framework for how we are going to fight using this network end to end," Barrett said. ■

ABBYY Intelligent Document Process Solutions for Government



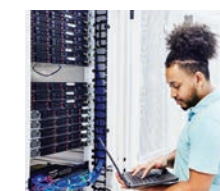
Intelligent Document Processing (IDP)

ABBYY automates and accelerates the processing of high volumes of various document types, classifying them, extracting valuable indexes, and exporting them as searchable files into business applications or archives.



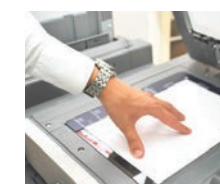
Process Discovery

ABBYY offers a Process Discovery platform featuring advanced task and process mining technology. Using the latest artificial intelligence (AI), it enables organizations to automatically build an interactive digital twin of their processes, analyze them in real time to identify bottlenecks, and predict future outcomes to facilitate decision-making.



High-volume searchable archives creation

ABBYY offers a powerful server-based solution for centralized conversion of high volumes of original paper or image documents into searchable archives and repositories.



Conversion of scanned paper, images, PDFs to editable documents

Quickly and accurately convert scanned paper, images, and PDFs to editable documents.

Looking to automate document processes?

Contact Heidi Houshmand (heidi.houshmand@abbyy.com) for more information.



REFORM TAKES CENTER STAGE FOR ARMY'S NEW ACQUISITION BOSS

BY JARED SERBU

The Army's newly confirmed top acquisition official says improving how the service buys and builds software is a top priority. That includes both procedural changes to the Army's traditional acquisition processes and funding software development.

But those changes are going to have to happen as part of a "conversation" with Congress, said Douglas Bush, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology.

Over the past few years in National Defense Authorization acts, Congress has been pushing the Defense Department to streamline its software development and purchasing processes — including by adopting the recommendations the Defense Innovation Board made in a 2019 software acquisition and practices study.

DoD, for its part, created a **new software acquisition pathway** within its new Agile Acquisition Framework. Bush said the Army currently has six programs using the new pathway.

The framework "seeks to get away from the waterfall approach to a more iterative, modern approach to software, trying to take advantage of the way industry is doing software," he told reporters during a roundtable. "It will also be an ongoing discussion with Congress in terms of how we're using that authority and whether they're comfortable with a different approach where the funding might have to be more flexible."

As one example, he noted that the private sector doesn't distinguish between R&D and procurement of software. "But we do. So does that make sense anymore? I'm not so sure," Bush said. DoD leaders will need to make sure lawmakers are also comfortable with changing up how the department budgets for software.

Congress has shown at least some openness to changing budgeting processes. At the urging of the department — and the innovation board — appropriators created a pilot program that lets software development programs use a single "color of money," rather than having to segment funds along the budget lines of traditional weapons systems: R&D, procurement, operations and maintenance.

Test driving new software budgeting approach

In the 2022 omnibus appropriations bill, Congress stopped short of approving the addition of new systems to the pilot, formally known as the Software and Digital Technology Pilot Program, but did allow DoD **to continue testing the colorless money approach** with eight systems that have already begun to use it.

So far, the Army has only requested permission to use that pilot authority for one of its programs: Defensive Cyber Operations within Army Cyber Command.

"We certainly need to, to the extent we can, further explore the flexible funding pilot to show what we

"We have a lot of software talent across the Army. ... But we've got to leverage all the talent across the Army to get better software."

— *Douglas Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology*

can do and maybe open the aperture with Congress for more authority in that way," Bush said. "I think there's some good efforts underway there, but it's certainly one of the things I want to try to do. That was a big deal for Congress to even create that pilot, and I'd like to see the Army as part of it."

Bush said one thing the Army needs to do to make sure it can make the best use of those authorities is to get people with the right expertise in the right acquisition positions.

Bush's plans align with DIB recommendations

In its 2019 software acquisition study, the Defense Innovation Board had four topline suggestions:

- Congress and the Defense Department should restructure statutes, regulations and processes for software.
- DoD and the military services should create and maintain a cross-program and cross-service digital infrastructure.
- The services and DoD need to create new paths for digital talent (especially internal talent).
- DoD and industry must change the practice of how the department procures and develops software.

SOURCE: "**Software Is Never Done: Refactoring the Acquisition Code for Competitive Advantage**," Defense Innovation Board, May 2019

alteryx

CUT TO THE CHASE: INSIGHTS.

Take time-consuming, repetitive processes out of the loop with analytic automation to drive **better decisions, a whole lot faster.**

Try Alteryx free for 30 days at alteryx.com/free-trial, or scan:



“We have a lot of software talent across the Army — a lot. Army acquisition officers are among the most highly educated in the Army,” he said. “But we’ve got to leverage all the talent across the Army to get better software. So there’s a people side to it, there’s an authority side and then there’s the money side. So I can’t say I’ve got a master plan, but I want to develop a plan to get us better than we are.”

Embracing software factories

One likely incubator for that talent is the Army Software Factory, which the service stood up as part of the Army Futures Command in Austin, Texas, in the summer of 2020. An objective of the project is to foster a culture and talent pool that lets software be developed in an agile fashion, at the “lowest tactical levels” of the Army.

A new software modernization strategy the Pentagon released in February makes clear that DoD sees the

more than two dozen software factories now up and running as a vital pillar in reforming its approach to software.

For now, the Army only has one, but Bush says it bears watching. “Army Software Factory is a pilot program that’s going to run at least five years, possibly longer. I think it’s early days, but the cadre is moving through, and they’re learning some very valuable skills about how to do software,” he said. “And I think the Army’s going get folks from the software factory who kind of ‘graduate.’

“We’re going to put them in different places across the Army and then see how they can contribute. I’m excited for the potential, for example, to have more people in my program executive offices who know about software and how to write it, helping advise the people trying to buy it.”

While Bush says it’s too early to judge one way or the other, he’s optimistic that the factory could create a way to spread more talent across many parts of the Army.

Beyond modernizing acquisition

Even though software is integral to almost everything the Army buys and builds, it’s only one of the potential bottlenecks in the service’s broader modernization strategy. That strategy, released in the fall of 2019, sets aggressive goals to develop new systems — ranging from aircraft and precision weapons to missile defense and networks, some of which also leverage new authorities from Congress to use other transaction agreements and prototyping authorities.

What’s critical in obtaining additional funding, Bush said, is that the Army needs to show Congress it’s using the authorities already provided effectively.

“We have to put some points on the board, and I think we will. And I think that will enable us to

“We give ourselves our best chance if we reform, and that’s my goal. We’ve got a lot of efforts that are right at that tipping point over the next couple of years.”

— ASA (ALT) Douglas Bush

compete with all the other needs of the Army to ensure we get enough funding and modernization to achieve the goals,” he said.

“The secretary and chief have to worry about the whole Army, not just modernization. We give ourselves our best chance if we reform, and that’s my goal. We’ve got a lot of efforts that are right at that tipping point over the next couple of years, so that will be my focus. A lot of great work was done before I got here to get us to this point. So now it’s about moving out from here to get it done.” ■

Accelerate Modernization with a Logical Data Fabric for Data Integration and Management

Your Data is Waiting... Access & Share it Securely Now!

As the DoD increases their use of multi-cloud and hybrid data platforms, data access and integration will continue to prove a data analytics and modernization challenge.

It’s critical for users and data-driven applications to gain real-time, integrated views of ALL relevant data, from ONE source of truth.

This is where Denodo’s logical data fabric powered by data virtualization is accelerating the Army’s progress toward IT modernization while maximizing time-to-value and achieving 480% ROI.

Learn how we can help you meet current and future data demands.

Visit denodo.com to learn more.

denodo



Let’s Get Future Ready

Build and Unlock the Potential of Your Workforce with Eightfold AI

Eightfold AI® delivers the Talent Intelligence Platform™, the most effective way for organizations to retain top performers, assess the capability of their existing workforces, create upskilling and reskilling programs for employees, recruit top talent efficiently, and reach diversity goals.

 eightfold.ai

Contact us | 888-325-8222 | www.eightfold.ai

Copyright ©2022, Eightfold AI Inc.



DEMOGRAPHICS OF ARMY'S ACQUISITION WORKFORCE SLOWLY CHANGING

BY SCOTT MAUCIONE

The Army's acquisition organization is starting to see a change in the demographics of its civilian workforce, moving slightly and slowly away from older, retirement-age employees.

The service, like other parts of the Defense Department, feared in the past that it would not be able to replenish its civilian workforce with younger blood.

The bell curve is slowly moving in the right direction, said Ronald "Rob" Richardson Jr., director of the Army Acquisition Support Center (ASC), which oversees the service's acquisition corps and workforce.

"For years, there was this concept of the aging workforce: We're going to have all these folks that suddenly are going to drop out of the picture. And we had nobody behind them to backfill," Richardson

told Federal News Network. "That's really not the case now."

Continued push to find talent in acquisition

Richardson attributes the change to outreach the Army has done to recruit college-age students into the acquisition field. ASC hires hundreds of college interns and is increasing its involvement with historically black colleges and universities.

"Our mission is really our secret sauce," Richardson said. "We have a really great mission. We have really cool toys."

Outside of bringing in younger talent, the Army also is finding that retirement-age employees are willing to stick around longer than expected.

"We don't know exactly why, but I think a lot of it probably has to do with COVID-19 and remote

work," Richardson said. "I tasked the team to go back out and see if we can tease out why that is. Is it just, 'I'm happy working at home, so I'm going to defer my retirement for a couple of years?' Is it that 'I love the mission so much, I'm just not ready to go yet?' Or, 'I have college-age kids that I'm waiting to get out?' It may be all those things."

Acquisition changes in a post-pandemic world

ASC needs to figure out the answer to some of these questions because acquisition employees shouldn't expect the work world to return to its former self even as the pandemic fades, Richardson said. He's proud of the way the Army's acquisition teams responded during COVID-19, when nearly everyone began to work remotely.

"We never dropped a beat or missed a mission," he said. "It was just incredible and really cool to be a part of." There are benefits that will continue

**FORTINET
FEDERAL**

Protect Agency Data and Infrastructure Against Cyber Threats. Everywhere you Need it.

Protect the possibilities with Fortinet Federal.



Kofax enables organizations to *Work Like Tomorrow.*™ — today.

Automate manual processes and mission-critical workflows across the organization.

Kofax's Intelligent Automation and Print Automation software provides government agencies with the most comprehensive platform to begin their digital transformation journey — from securely printing and scanning, to automated workflows, to leveraging AI and RPA to perform automation at scale.

Learn More, visit [kofax.com](https://www.kofax.com).

KOFAX



as people return to federal offices too, Richardson added. "We look forward to continuing a lot of the policies that we came up with and continuing these workflows that evolved in the course of COVID as a more flexible, hybrid work arrangement going forward."

Meanwhile, the acquisition workforce also has begun shifting how the Army acquires systems and software too. From 2015 to 2018, Congress pushed hard to revamp how the military services buy weapons by giving DoD new tools for using **other transaction agreements**, mid-tier acquisitions and commercial solutions.

Congress and DoD leaders have had to give their acquisition workforces a push to change their culture and use such new tools though. "We were slow to adapt, and I know Congress got a little

"We look forward to continuing a lot of the policies that we came up with and continuing these workflows that evolved in the course of COVID as a more flexible, hybrid work arrangement going forward."

— **Ronald "Rob" Richardson Jr., Director, Army Acquisition Support Center**

frustrated with us," Richardson said. "Part of it was just getting conflicting guidance. In a bureaucracy, when you have something new, people tend to default to what they know."

But changes are happening, he said. A key focus in helping people adopt new tools has been training. For instance, the Army has used the Defense Acquisition University to help upskill its workforce, Richardson said. ■

8 QUESTIONS WITH STACY WATSON



Photo courtesy of Army PEO EIS

BY SUSAN MCGOVERN, PEO EIS INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT LEAD

NOTE: This first appeared on the PEO EIS News blog.

An IT software expert with 32 years of Army contracting experience, Stacy Watson leads a 14-person team that manages the lifecycle of 177 **Computer Hardware, Enterprise Software and Solutions (CHES)** hardware, software and IT-services contracts worth more than \$23 billion.

Watson leads by example. "Everything that I ask anybody to do, I would do myself or have done myself," she said.

Watson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. She started her Army civilian career in college as an intern supporting the Army Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Alabama.

Raised on an Alabama farm with nine siblings, Watson inherited a green thumb from her father and uses it to grow vegetables and flowers in her backyard garden. "I still practice Southern hospitality and cook Southern dishes," Watson said. For #PEOEISTeammateTuesday, Watson answered eight questions.

"Technology makes contracting more efficient. We leverage automation to eliminate manual processes."

— **Stacy Watson, Enterprise Solutions Division Director, Army PEO EIS**

PEO EIS: CHES, the Army's designated primary source for commercial IT, leverages the Army's buying power to reduce acquisition and support costs. What do customers value about the CHES program?

Stacy Watson: Customers appreciate that CHES is a flexible, no-fee vehicle and very easy to use. They also appreciate that our standard contract terms and conditions ensure that Army customers are receiving safe and secure equipment.

PEO EIS: How does the CHES program benefit from industry outreach?

Watson: CHES meets with any vendor that **requests a meeting**. We value industry insights. Our conversations with industry help us develop better contracts and provide the best products and services to the Army.

PEO EIS: What advice do you have for small businesses seeking to enter the defense-contracting sector?

Watson: Find your niche. You can't be great at everything, but you can be great at one thing. Don't put all of your eggs in one program or organization. Have multiple revenue streams of income. Do your research. Don't market to the Army — market to the person who buys the product or service you provide.



Do More with Enterprise Advanced.

Empower your agency to build a modern intelligent operational data platform to unlock the value of siloed data.



PEO EIS: How has Army contracting changed?

Watson: We used to mail solicitations to vendors instead of posting them on a website. Technology makes contracting more efficient. We leverage automation to eliminate manual processes.

PEO EIS: How can leaders support inclusivity?

Watson: Follow the golden rule. Treat people the way you want to be treated. Care about your co-worker, your performance and making PEO EIS a better place.

PEO EIS: Do you have any book recommendations?

Watson: I am reading "The Power of Ten," a book written by my sister, Kim Caudle Lewis. She is the youngest of 10 children. The book focuses on the

lessons she learned from her siblings and husband. I am the ninth youngest and am discussed in the ninth chapter of her book. She knows that I will always go the extra mile to support her.

PEO EIS: If you could thank one person for the role they played in your life, who would it be and why?

Watson: My dad taught me the value of hard work. He taught me to care about others. He was my hero and inspiration. He made everyone feel special. He always said, "Use what you got." You may not have everything you think you need to accomplish your goals, but use what you have and make the best of it.

PEO EIS: What do you consider the most valuable virtue?

Watson: Be true to yourself. Don't sell yourself out. ■

ITES-SW2 OFFERS AGENCIES AN 'EASY BUTTON' FOR SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

PROVIDED BY CARAHSOFT



Michael Adams
Director, ITES-SW2 Contract Team, Carahsoft

While many know that the Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2 (ITES-SW2) contract is key for selling software into the Army, it's important to note that it is also available to all Defense Department and federal agencies. There's no fee and the contract includes a vast array of products and services.

"For any federal government agency that needs to implement a solution, this really is a one-stop contract for them since you can purchase software along with ancillary hardware, services and training," said Michael Adams, director of the ITES-SW2 contract team at Carahsoft. "It's open to all government agencies so I am hopeful it will be adopted more broadly."

ITES-SW2 is extremely quick and flexible to use, allowing vendors to add software solutions packages in some cases in just a matter of hours.

How ITES-SW2 can help with small business set-asides

Small business set-asides are going to be an even more important consideration for federal agencies in the near future. In December 2021, as part of an effort to increase opportunities for small business owners, the Biden administration asked agencies to raise their small business set-aside goals from 5% to 11% of all contracts. And a **White House Fact Sheet** noted that the intent is for those goals to go up again, to 15%, by 2025.

While this is a notable increase, it may not be as heavy a lift for agencies as it appears at first glance, said Mike Adams, contract manager for Information Technology Enterprise Solutions – Software 2 (ITES-

SW2) at Carahsoft. Over the last five years, small disadvantaged businesses accounted for an average of 9.8% of federal spending.

The ITES-SW2 contract is a prime opportunity for agencies to meet these goals, Adams said. Analyses of upcoming opportunities for small businesses, including **women-owned small businesses specifically**, have shown that IT is where the vast majority of spend on small businesses will occur in the near future. ITES-SW2 offers a quick, flexible alternative to more traditional contract vehicles for making those awards, he said.

PROVEN OPTICS

Financial Management Powered by ServiceNow

- ✓ Federal Leader of TBM on ServiceNow
- ✓ Budget & POM Formation 65% Faster Year-over-Year
- ✓ Showback & Chargeback IT Costs to Commands
- ✓ IL5 Compliant

Check out the Proven Optics Financial Management Application Suite on the [ServiceNow Store](#) today!

“If the government is trying to purchase a product, and they’re looking at another contract vehicle, or they don’t have a contract to use, or the product they need is not available on a certain contract, this is something where it could get added extremely quickly.”

— Carahsoft’s Mike Adams

This expedited process relies on contractor-submitted letters of authorization and price lists to ensure the latest software solutions are available for purchase.

Quickly gaining access to the product needed

Federal agencies that wish to use ITES-SW2 are equally empowered to launch fast procurements and to maintain direct award oversight.

Solicitation periods can be as short as 24 hours, and ordering agencies can tailor their necessary terms and requirements directly within delivery orders. The program employs a faster agency-led purchasing model rather than a centralized process.

“Adding products is quick and easy,” Adams said. “With ITES-SW2, Carahsoft and our reseller partners who also hold the ITES-SW2 contract can add new vendors and products within 24 hours — sometimes the same day.”

This speed and flexibility in adding products make the contract invaluable to agencies looking to meet their small business set-aside goals. With more than 300 vendors and 30 resellers on the contract, ITES-SW2 contains plenty of small business set-asides.

“So if a government agency wants to make an award to a small business, but it’s not already available through other schedules or governmentwide acquisition contracts, ITES-SW2 is the quickest way to get that product added,” Adams said. “That speed is something that will definitely benefit small businesses and government agencies, which will be able to meet their small business set-aside requirements.”

“With a wide range of software products, as well as the services and hardware needed alongside of it, the contract can support a complete solution.”

— Carahsoft’s Mike Adams

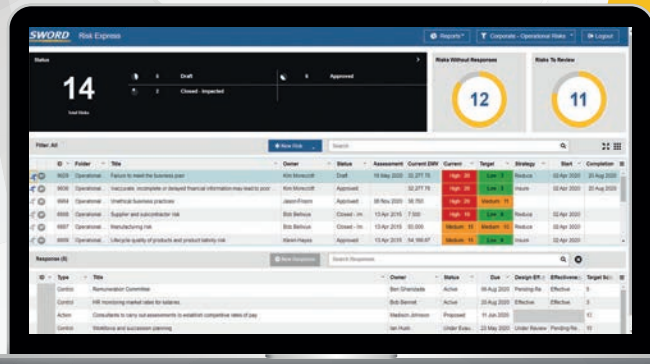
Meeting needs beyond software

ITES-SW2 is not strictly limited to software either, Adams noted. It includes related hardware and services as well, enabling an agency that is already procuring software to also purchase the hardware necessary to run the software, training about how to use the software and whatever else an agency might need to

deploy an all-encompassing solution.

“This includes everything from business and finance types of tools to modeling and simulation to IT utility and security,” he said. “With a wide range of software products, as well as the services and hardware needed alongside of it, the contract can support a complete solution.” ■

Leader in Program and Operational Risk Management



Active Risk Manager (ARM) is the award-winning Program and Operational Risk Management Software, powering Risk Management in core industries of Aerospace, Defense, and Government.

7 of the 8 global Aerospace and Defense companies and 4 of the 5 largest Federal Agencies use ARM. ARM accelerates mission success by maximizing situational awareness for organizations managing uncertainty. ARM delivers a single view of risk across the entire organization and is flexible to support new risk, governance and compliance processes including DOD RIO Guide, ISO, COSO and many more. A highly configurable Operational Risk Management Solution, available as a secure web-based solution that can be deployed in the cloud or the organizations on-premise environment, ARM’s capabilities include robust Risk Analytics, ERM & Control Integration, Reporting, Bow-Tie, and Risk Visualization, including Risk Normalization and Aggregation.

Trellix

Your living security partner

LEARN MORE

VENDOR LISTING FOR ITES-SW2

VENDOR	CATALOG	CONTRACT NUMBER	BUSINESS SIZE	PROGRAM MANAGER	PM PHONE NUMBER	PM EMAIL
Blazer Technology Solutions	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0039	Small	Kendra Nelson	720-220-7196	knelson@blazer-ts.com
Blue Tech	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0041	Large	Connor Grooms	800-456-1410	cgrooms@bluetech.com
Carahsoft Technology	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0042	Large	Mike Adams	703-871-8681	Michael.Adams@carahsoft.com
CDW Government	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0043	Large	Amy Kosatka	703-262-8053	amy.kosatka@cdwg.com
CounterTrade Products	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0044	Large	Angela Dumm	303-424-9710	adumm@countertrade.com
Cypher Analytics, DBA Crown Point Systems	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0045	Small	Jenna Howell	619-870-8642	jenna.howell@crownpointhsystems.com
DH Technologies	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0046	Small	Natalie Geno	571-257-0865	contracts@dhtech.com
DLT Solutions	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0047	Large	Kayla Hutson	703-708-9639	kayla.hutson@dl.com
Dynamic Systems	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0048	Large	Susie Bucher	310-337-4400, ext. 232	DirectSales@DynamicSystemsInc.com
Enterprise Technology Solutions	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0049	Small	Donny Sheikh	510-459-7911	donny@enterprisesol.com
Epoch Concepts	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0050	Large	Stephanie Bortz	703-727-4724	sbortz@epochconcepts.com
FedBiz IT Solutions	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0051	Small	Don Tiaga	703-343-6123	ditiaga@fedbizit.com
Sirius Federal	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0052	Large	Michelle Kincade	410-774-731	Michelle.Kincade@siriusfederal.com
Four	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0053	Small	Bree Burk	757-343-4795	bburk@fourinc.com
Connection	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0054	Large	Dana Noga	301-610-0753	dana.noga@connection.com
GovPlace	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0055	Large	Gabriella Hoffman	571-409-6224	ghoffman@govplace.com
ID Technologies	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0056	Large	Vanessa Joyner	703-554-1775	vjoyner@idtec.com
ImmixTechnology	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0057	Large	Amanda Mull	571-429-5264	ITES@immixgroup.com
Insight Public Sector	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0062	Large	Sarita Binsted	703-594-8161	sarita.binsted@insight.com
Integration Technologies Group	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0059	Large	Roberto Udasco	703-485-0766	roberto.udasco@itgonline.com
Iron Bow Technologies	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0058	Large	Max Moss	253-867-1908	Max.Moss@ironbow.com

DISCLAIMER: Army PEO EIS does not endorse Federal News Network or any particular contractor on the ITES-SW2 contract.

VENDOR LISTING FOR ITES-SW2

VENDOR	CATALOG	CONTRACT NUMBER	BUSINESS SIZE	PROGRAM MANAGER	PM PHONE NUMBER	PM EMAIL
MicroTechnologies	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0060	Small	Jeannine Willingham	571-730-4036	jwillingham@microtech.net
New Tech Solutions	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0061	Large	Rajesh Patel	510-353-4070, ext. 307	rajesh@ntsca.com
Red River Technology	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0063	Large	Allen Young	703-362-7102	allen.young@redriver.com
SHI International	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0064	Large	James Kman	708-420-9856	james_kman@shi.com
Strategic Communications	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0065	Small	Bambi Fox	502-813-8018	bfox@yourstrategic.com
ThunderCat Technology	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0066	Large	Matt Bausch	703-674-0240	mbausch@thundercattech.com
Vertosoft	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0067	Small	Michael DiPlacido	571-799-9562	michael@vertosoft.com
World Wide Technology	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0069	Large	Mackenzie Knight	202-531-3817	mackenzie.knight@wwt.com
York Telecom	URL	W52P1J-20-D-0070	Large	Stephen White	301-640-1683	swhite@yorktel.com

MILITARY-GRADE SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

Connection
we solve IT™



The world of IT is always changing, and your agency doesn't have time to waste on finding the right products. At Connection Public Sector Solutions, our Account Managers use their in-depth technical expertise to help deploy the software solutions you need for today's military landscape.

Contact us today to get started.

1.800.800.0019

www.connection.com/FED



FEDERAL NEWS NETWORK

Ask the CIO

with Jason Miller

Listen. Read. Engage.

[Click to Listen Now](#)

Tune into **Federal News Network**

