



Recipe for Success

How CDW·G uses SEWP to support federal modernization

Federal agencies face a modernization challenge and must overcome a range of roadblocks on the way to IT modernization. Often, the right contracting vehicle can make the difference.

“A lot of them have technologies that are archaic at best, they don’t meet the requirements of some of the modern technologies, and they aren’t able to upgrade as quickly as they would like to,” said CDW·G CTO for Defense and Intel, Peter Dunn.

The NASA Solution for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) contracting vehicle can help: In 2020 feds turned to SEWP for some \$9 billion in key purchases. With support from a capable partner like CDW·G, agencies can leverage SEWP to access a wide range of technology products and services faster and more cost-effectively.

The roadblocks

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need for modernization. While federal agencies generally were able to support a rapid shift to

remote work, many also struggled to adapt.

“They had legacy equipment or legacy data center environments,” Dunn said. “They had classified environments where they needed to access these secured networks from home, and that proved challenging. And they had older solutions that weren’t in any way mobile.”

Even before COVID became a complicating factor, federal entities were struggling to move forward on their modernization efforts.

“They need to be placing things inside containers or leveraging Kubernetes, to start moving towards rapid scalability in a hybrid cloud or even a multi-cloud environment. That isn’t happening as fast as it could,” Dunn said.

Some have struggled to align their legacy architectures with emerging cloud capabilities. Others have been stymied in their efforts to refresh key infrastructure elements.

The SEWP contract vehicle offers the means to overcome these and other hurdles on the way to federal IT modernization.

The gold standard

Widely regarded as the gold standard in customer service among federal contracting vehicles, SEWP provides agencies with an easy-to-use, flexible, and affordable means to acquire new technologies.

It offers competitive pricing at low fees — as of October 1, 2020, the SEWP surcharge for all orders is 0.34 percent — along with an online repository of information that helps to ensure a high degree of usability.

“The NASA Team has done a very good job of putting together a portal that makes it simple for customers,” said Sheryl McCurnin, senior manager of federal programs at CDW·G. Buyers can find helpful tools on the portal, including training videos as well as a streamlined capability to request a quote.

“When a customer navigates the SEWP portal, they will discover all kinds of documentation needed to ensure compliance, ensure that they achieve competition, and that everything was appropriately priced,” she said. “They’ve

provided the customer with a really good arsenal of tools they can use to leverage the SEWP contract vehicle.”

For customers still in the market-research phase, SEWP offers the ability to query vendors in order to discover what options are available. Overall, the ability to access pre-vetted sellers and products via SEWP can significantly speed the technology buying process.

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“Without this, you might have to go to full and open competition, and that is a very long and arduous process,” McCurnin said. “For the program manager who has money to spend today, they can request a quote through the SEWP contract, and they will right away be able to buy the latest and greatest.”

All this can have a direct impact on an agency’s ability to meet mission, enabling IT leaders to deploy cutting-edge solutions both quickly and affordably.

In one instance, CDW·G supported a federal agency that was looking to refresh its inventory of desktops and notebooks across the entire enterprise. The agency pursued a solution with SEWP, “and because it worked so well, they were actually able to increase the size, scope and quantity of that deal more than threefold,” McCurnin said. Thanks to SEWP, a lot more people got needed upgrades, faster.

Depth of experience

Agencies looking to leverage SEWP can make best use of the vehicle by

teaming with a capable partner in the reseller community. CDW·G has the depth of experience needed to ensure a smooth and successful SEWP experience.

“CDW·G’s account management team is trained on this contract vehicle multiple times per year, so that they know the rules and what the mechanics are behind the

contract. They’re fully aware and informed, so they can help to guide the customer,” McCurnin said.

For those looking to make micro purchases, the CDW·G team can facilitate direct contacts with the SEWP program manager and deputy program manager. Having third-party support in those interactions can be crucial to driving success.

“In many cases, the customer may think that they want something very particular, without realizing that it may not work on their network, or it may not be compatible with the systems that they have,” McCurnin said. “Our account management teams can ask those pertinent questions to make sure that they get the right technology and the right way.”

Best practices

In addition to ensuring one-off transactions hit the mark, the account management team can help to position agencies for long-term success with SEWP. The contract allows for repeat orders of commonly

used items, for example, and CDW·G can help to implement that mechanism.

“If the customer has repetitive needs, where they’re buying the same technology all of the time, they can actually put out a request for an agency catalog, which is analogous to a blanket purchase agreement or your favorite online shopping site. With a SEWP Agency Catalog you can just go click and buy it whenever you need to,” McCurnin said.

“We can help them to put that in place, and we can try and achieve a more discounted price on that catalog based on the fact that you’re going to be buying these repetitively,” she said. “We can work with OEM partners to achieve that.”

Beyond the potential cost savings, agencies that choose to leverage SEWP may find that it significantly speeds their modernization journey.

“With this, you don’t have to wait six months to a year to get a contract established by which time it would already be outdated,” Dunn said. “You need to get to the cloud. How do you get there? What are the needed items? The biggest element in IT modernization is speed: The faster you can answer these questions, the more effective the organization or agency is going to be.” When it comes to modernization, velocity matters.

Visit www.cdwg.com/federal to learn more about CDW·G, our capabilities and contracts. Contact us at 800.808.4239 to orchestrate a secure solution customized to your agency’s needs.

