The Need for and Benefits of Standard Past Performance Forms:
Past Performance Information Forms (PPIFs)

Background
The Smart Contracting Working Group was formed under the Acquisition and Business Policy Council (ABPC) of the Professional Service Council (PSC) to work with government to improve the contracting process and ultimately to reduce the cost burden on the taxpayer. Commonsense policies and consistently applied procedures for how and when the government acquires services can greatly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal acquisition system. In many areas, improvements to government business and buying policy—whether through statute, regulations, or agency guidance—will lead to positive outcomes that far exceed the magnitude of the changes themselves. This initiative was undertaken to focus on improving the inconsistent solicitation of past performance information from professional services contractors.

Current State
Every time a services acquisition is made of almost any magnitude, past performance of the offerors is considered in the purchase decision. The majority of government acquisitions are competed, both at the Contract/Agreement and again at the Task Order level. Typically, past performance information in the form of three to five past performance citations (plus in many cases past performance questionnaires) is collected directly from the offerors as delineated in the solicitation.

Solicitation preparers devise past performance solicitation instructions, tailoring the format and content requested to meet the perceived needs of each solicitation. This is in spite of the availability of the current system of contractor (past) performance information available in CPARS/PPIRS.

Offerors spend considerable time and resources interpreting solicitations, including the past performance instructions, and developing, formatting, reviewing and finalizing their past performance citations practically from scratch in response to each of these unique solicitation requirements.

Cost Impact
The estimated $3.3B annual aggregate cost of this activity (see Attachment C calculation) is primarily borne by the government, directly through acquisition and program personnel costs and indirectly through contractor overhead and general and administrative costs. While we strongly believe that evaluation of past performance information is a crucial component of a well-executed acquisition, there is an opportunity to conduct this process in a more efficient and cost effective manner. Adopting and institutionalizing standard past performance solicitation data, forms and formats would drastically reduce the burden caused by the unnecessary uniqueness observed across the government professional services market on both the government and industry. Savings based on widespread adoption are calculated at $1.6B per year (see Attachment C calculation).

Other Impact
Bids and proposals in the government contracting market have become a specialized profession in the same manner that government acquisition has. Time, energy and resources devoted to this “art and science” are time, energy and resources not devoted to other things such as enhanced proposal solution development, direct mission accomplishment or advancing technologies. The opportunity costs

associated with unnecessary uniqueness in our business and procurement processes are not easily quantifiable but their presence and impact are widespread.

Recommendation

Industry representatives on our working group have evaluated dozens of past performance templates from actual solicitations and consolidated their requirements into a standard format. Adoption of the Standard Past Performance Information Form (PPIF) (see Attachment A) will save enormous resources for both the government and industry to be used in more productive pursuits and to reduce the overall burden to the taxpayer.

Accomplish widespread use of this standard format through the following actions:

- Publish and provide the Standard Past Performance Information Form where it can be easily found and accessed by all government and industry personnel.
- Provide brief, practical, clear, always accessible and virtual how-to-use guidance alongside the published form.
- Prescribe the use of the Standard Past Performance Information Form and flow this down into agency and acquisition activity instruction and guidance.
- Manage and monitor actual use with automated exception reporting.
- As the use of the Standard Past Performance Information Form takes hold, integrate the form and process into the PPIRS/CPARS system and governing regulations (and subsequently the Integrated Award Environment (IAE)) of collecting and using past performance information.

Attachments:

A) Standard Past Performance Information Form
B) Standard Past Performance Information Form Field Instructions
C) Past Performance Information Form Cost Calculation