



**Homeland  
Security**

DATE: October 16, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jaclyn Rubino  
Executive Director, Strategic Programs Division

FROM: James Lewis  
Executive Director Strategic Solutions Office

SUBJECT: Adoption of 8(a) STARS III Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) as a Mandatory Strategic Sourcing Vehicle.

### **Purpose**

Protecting the country from ever-evolving threats requires an array of robust Information Technology (IT) services. The ability to store, analyze, and securely share data across Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Components is critical. Having access to vendors who can provide innovative IT services-based capabilities is required for success. The DHS Strategic Solutions Office (SSO) recommends the adoption of the 8(a) STARS III GWAC into its Eagle NextGen IT Strategic Solutions portfolio.

### **Rationale**

This next-generation GWAC builds on the 8(a) STARS II framework, which was the most utilized IT strategic solution in the DHS Eagle NextGen portfolio. 8(a) STARS III is a small business set aside GWAC that provides flexible access to customized IT solutions. Adopting 8(a) STARS III will give DHS access to emerging, cutting-edge technologies unavailable in the current Eagle NextGen portfolio of small business GWAC's. Emerging technologies available under 8(a) STARS III include;

- Artificial Intelligence (including Machine Learning, Deep Learning/Neural Networks, Natural Language Generation)
- Autonomic Computing
- Blockchain / Distributed Ledger
- Quantum Computing
- Robotic Process Automation
- Technological Convergence
- Virtual Reality (including Augmented Reality, Extended Reality, Mixed Reality)

Protecting the DHS IT infrastructure is foundational, as cybersecurity is a growing concern worldwide. The theft of sensitive information and data using malicious cyber practices is a threat to national security. Vendors on the 8(a) STARS III GWAC must meet Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) standards. These standards set clear requirements for contractors when it comes to cybersecurity. CMMC compliance will support the DHS objective of promoting good cybersecurity hygiene standards.

As referenced earlier, 8(a) STARS III is a small business set aside. Adopting this GWAC into the Eagle NextGen IT portfolio is consistent with DHS's commitment to supporting Executive Order (EO) 13985 titled "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government." It also promotes the DHS commitment to ensuring Department-wide contract vehicles and adopted Best-in-Class contracts provide maximum opportunities for small and socio-economic designated businesses.

**Concurrence:**

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