

# DHS Tries Again to Build a Contract for Agile Development

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**The department is pushing components to buy more off governmentwide contracts—except when it comes to the cloud and agile development.**

The Homeland Security Department's future IT acquisitions are governed by a new strategy that relies on governmentwide best-in-class contracts, with in-house contract vehicles to be created for specific needs. Agile development will be among those special areas, though a department-specific contract is likely years away.

In December, Homeland Security Chief Procurement Officer Soraya Correa announced the third iteration of the Enterprise Acquisition Gateway for Leading-Edge Solutions, or EAGLE, contract would actually be **more of a procurement strategy than a single marketplace**. The new strategy, dubbed Eagle Next Gen, pushes Homeland Security programs and offices to use five established governmentwide acquisition contracts, or GWACs.

The approved GWACs include the National Institutes of Health's CIO-SP3 and CIO-SP3 Small Business and the General Services Administration's Alliant 2, 8(a) STARS II and VETS 2. The initial strategy also included Alliant 2 Small Business, but awards on that vehicle **were rescinded in March**.

Any IT requirements that cannot be serviced by one of those vehicles will be covered by contracts built in-house at Homeland Security.

The department has yet to identify all potential special cases but started building an in-house contract for cloud and data center optimization. The agency **issued a request for information** in February and received 105 responses, according to Kshemendra Paul, the cloud action officer who leads the new DHS Cloud Steering Group.

"The centerpiece—I think it's safe to say, the flagship of Eagle Next Gen is going to be the resultant family of RFPs that come out of that RFI across DHS," Paul said during a panel Tuesday hosted by ACT-IAC.

Paul said the department is in the midst of reviewing those responses now and hopes to have a set of RFPs out to market this fall.

But agile was also an early consideration, as evidenced by [a request for information released by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in February](#) asking for industry feedback on whether GSA schedules could meet its needs.

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While fielding a question about agile development, Jaclyn Rubino, director of DHS' Strategic Sourcing Program Office, noted that's another area that will likely require a specialized DHS-built contract.

"From the department's standpoint, we've been talking about agile for a while," she said, citing the failed Flexible Agile Support for the Homeland, or FLASH, contract. The \$1.5 billion software development contract was slammed with protests over the evaluation process and pricing, prompting the agency to [cancel the contract](#) months after it was awarded in 2017.

Rubino, who is also executive director of the Shared Services and Governmentwide Security Category, said Homeland Security components have been using EAGLE II to support their agile development work, with different programs and offices currently at different phases of the procurement process.

"What you're going to see is different components coming out with their procurements to support their agile development requirements over the course of the next couple of years while we are pulling together a departmentwide agile contract vehicle," she said.

Rubino said that DHS-specific vehicle is still a few years out, at this point.

"We're working with the CIO community to establish what really is the requirement," she said. "How are we going to approach agile from a departmentwide viewpoint?"

As with the requirements, the exact procurement strategy is still pending, as well, Rubino told *Nextgov*. While the contract will be specific to Homeland Security needs and components, it might be a full and open competition or a blanket purchase agreement using pre-vetted vendors from existing sources, such as the GWACs offered by GSA and NIH.