Welcome to Lesson 2: Contract Registration! In this lesson, we will take a look at the different ways to register a contract and how to log into the CPARS system.

The first step in the CPARS workflow is contract registration. Contract registration is the entry of the basic administrative information. The first step in the CPARS workflow is contract registration. Contract registration is the entry of the basic administrative information for the contract or order into CPARS, such as vendor name, base and all options value, date signed, etc. All contracts and/or orders eligible for CPARS reporting must be registered within 30 days of award of the contract or order. Contract registration is almost always performed by the Focal Point or Alternate Focal Point.

The contract or order must be registered using CPARS Auto Register function if the contract or order is in the Federal Procurement Data System, or FPDS, and meets the reporting threshold. The Focal Point and the Alternate Focal Point may use the Auto Register function to view a list of contracts which require CPARS reporting and then choose which of these contracts they want to register.

When a contract is selected for Auto Registration, CPARS pulls in the basic contract information from FPDS. This information is locked and cannot be changed in CPARS. If changes to the basic contracting information are required, the contracting office must update the information through FPDS in order for it to reflect correctly in CPARS. The Organization block must be completed when Auto Register is utilized.

A detailed explanation of the Auto Register function is provided in the Focal Point and Agency Point of Contact Auto Register Function class.

If a contract is not available for Auto Registration, the Focal Point, Alternate Focal Point, Assessing Official Representative, or Assessing Official may register the contract manually. Manual registration should only be used in limited circumstances, such as when a contract does not meet the reporting threshold or a contract is not recorded in FPDS. You will not be able to manually register a contract if it appears on the Auto Register list. Let’s take a look at the options for logging in to CPARS.

When our CPARS account is created by the Focal Point or Alternate Focal Point, we will receive an email notification with instructions for obtaining a temporary password. Once we have obtained the temporary password, we will be able to log in to the system. If we are a DoD user or a Federal user with a Personal Identity Verification, or PIV card, a password is required only the first time that we log in. Following the first log in, we will begin using our Email Address and our Public Key Infrastructure, or PKI, certificate. If we are a DoD user, our PKI certificate is found on our Common Access Card, or CAC. If we are a Federal user, our PKI certificate is found on our PIV card. We will use our PKI certificate for all subsequent logins. It is important to note that when we receive a new CAC or PIV card, we must contact the CPARS Customer Service Desk for assistance with our next log in. If we are a government user from outside of DoD and do not have a PIV card, we will log in to CPARS using our Email Address and a password. If we are a contractor user, we have two options for logging in to CPARS. We may use our Email Address and a password to log in, or may purchase a DoD PKI certificate to use in conjunction with the Email Address for accessing CPARS. It is recommended that contractor users purchase a PKI certificate, as this method of log in is more secure and does not require a password. A list of vendors offering DoD PKI certificates is available on the CPARS website.

However, it is important to note that purchase of a DoD PKI certificate is optional and that contractor users may still access CPARS without one by using a password. Furthermore, to help prevent unauthorized access, users are required to enter a one-time access code when using a password to log into the system. The one-time access code is good for 24 hours and will be automatically emailed to the user when logging in.

We can access the CPARS website at https://www.cpars.gov. The CPARS website contains lots of useful information that will assist us as we prepare the evaluation. The bottom of every page of the website provides the CPARS Customer Service contact information. CPARS Customer Service is an excellent resource to assist us when we have questions regarding CPARS guidance, the workflow process, and how the automated system operates. At the top of the page there are options to view Help which includes the Federal Guidance for CPARS document as well as the software user manual. There is also an option to access the Learning Center. Which has links to available tutorials and training.

Now, let’s log in to CPARS by clicking the Sign In link.

Next we are presented with the Notice and Consent Banner. After reading the banner, we must choose if we wish to login with PKI or login with a password. Let’s select Accept/Login with PKI.

Next, let’s login as the Assessing Official Representative. The first time we log in to CPARS, we will use the Forgot/Reset Password link to obtain a temporary password, which will be provided to us via email. Once we have received the temporary password, we can enter our Email Address and the temporary password at the log in screen. We should remember that, if we are using a PKI certificate, we will only need a password for our initial log on. Once we have logged in for the first time, we will be able to use our Email Address and our CAC, PIV card or PKI certificate to log in in the future. Therefore, the Password block will no longer be displayed. Let’s login by clicking the Login With PKI button. The first time that we login, we will be prompted to enter our user profile information and change our temporary password. We will enter our Title and Organization. We will select our Citizenship from the dropdown list. Next, we will enter our Phone Number. We will enter our current temporary password and then enter a New Password. We should refer to the password specifications on the screen to assist us in creating our new password. Next we will confirm our New Password. When we have completed the information on this screen, we will click the Save User Password and Information button. We will receive a notification that our password and information have been changed and click OK.

Next we will read the Rules of Behavior and click Accept. Each screen of the CPARS application contains links to the Customer Service Desk, Guidance for CPARS document, and training opportunities.

Immediately after our contract was registered, that contract will appear on the CPARS To-Do List of either the Assessing Official Representative, if one is assigned, or the Assessing Official. Remember that we are currently logged in as the Assessing Official Representative.

Let’s click on the To-Do List and look at the information which was pulled into CPARS from FPDS at the time our contract was registered. Once we have opened our To-Do List, we will click on our Document Number to view the evaluation.

Now, we have opened our contractor evaluation. Notice that the evaluation is divided into sections. There are separate sections for Contractor Information, Contract Information, Miscellaneous Information, Small Business Subcontracting, Ratings, and Assessor. We’ll start by taking a look at Contractor Information. We can see that the Vendor Name, Street, City, State, and Zip have been pulled in for us from FPDS. We may manually enter the company’s Division Name if we wish. We will also notice that the company’s Unique Entity ID has been pulled in for us. We may manually enter the company’s Commercial and Government Entity, or CAGE, code, if desired. In addition, the Product/Service Code, Principal North American Industrial Classification System Code, or NAICS, for the contract have been pulled in for us. If we need to make changes to any of the information on this tab which has been pulled in from FPDS, we must make the changes in FPDS and let the updated information flow through to CPARS.

Next, let’s move to Contract Information. We will notice that the Evaluation Type and Period of Performance being Assessed have been automatically entered for us. While these two blocks are pre-populated, we can manually change the information if desired. However, we will note that CPARS automatically chooses the Evaluation Type and calculates the Period of Performance based on the other dates in the Contract Information section. Therefore, it is generally advisable to retain the pre-populated Evaluation Type and Period of Performance in lieu of making manual changes in order to prevent errors. Next, we’ll notice that the Business Sector and Subsector have been entered for us. The Business Sector and Subsector are determined based on the Product/Service Code for the contract, as pulled in from FPDS. Other information in this section which has been pulled in from FPDS includes the Contracting Office, Date Signed, Period of Performance Start Date, Est. Ultimate Completion Date/Last Date to Order, Base and All Options Value, Action Obligation, Extent Competed, and Type of Contract. The Organization was selected by the Focal Point or Alternate Focal Point when the contract was registered. While the Organization may be changed manually, it is generally not advisable to do so without first consulting with the Focal Point or Alternate Focal Point.

We have now reviewed all the information that was automatically entered for us when the contract was registered. Let's return to the Home screen by clicking the Home icon. Since we are finished working in CPARS for now, we’ll click Log Out.

Congratulations! You have completed Lesson 2: Contract Registration. In this lesson, we learned about contract registration, with the primary focus on automated contract registration by the Focal Point or Alternate Focal Point. We learned how to log into CPARS and reviewed the information that was automatically entered for us when our contract was registered. You are now ready to move onto Lesson 3: Enter Proposed Ratings.