Subtraction and Substitution

A $10 billion research vehicle deleted outright. A $626 million one pulled off the calendar with no replacement date. Eight companies — several of them federal primes — cut off from H-1B and PERM with no published rule. Against that, $6 billion of new science money and $2.4 billion of donated compute. The week took more pipeline off the table than it put on, and left four binding dates inside the next month.

Oct 16	Oct 19	Nov 4	Nov 12	Dec 11
4 DAYS	7 DAYS	23 DAYS	31 DAYS	60 DAYS
VA wants your bill of materials for 540,000 Microsoft seats	FAR overhaul batch-two comments close; GSA's LLM clause binds	CMS fraud-defense RFI, 11 a.m. ET; GSAR utility-services comments	AbilityOne must prove country of origin on every listed product	Continuing resolution lapses and TMF's authorization expires

CHANGED SINCE NO. 2

- **DHS NCCS 2.0 has slipped.** Last week this brief put October 6 on your calendar as a hard close and late November as the award. Both are gone, with no replacement dates. Item 03.
- **The FAR overhaul's October 19 comment close still stands** — and it now has its first GAO decision on what happens when codified FAR and overhaul class deviations appear in one solicitation. Item 05.
- **Correction to No. 2 on the GSA AI clause.** It is not a standalone memo. It is a GSAR class deviation (file RGO-2026-01) adding clause GSAR 552.239-7001, transmitted under a memo from Senior Procurement Executive Jeffrey Koses. The October 19 effective date and the section title — "Basic Safeguarding of Data within Large Language Model Artificial Intelligence Systems" — are confirmed. Some law firms are calling the instrument a final rule.
- **CIRCIA still has not landed.** As of today the CIRCIA final rule has not been published in the Federal Register, against a September 2026 target reported earlier this year.

01 Oct 16 CLOUD MODERNIZATION ACQUISITION

VA is pricing its way out of Microsoft, and it wants your bill of materials by Thursday

RFI posted Oct 5 | Responses due Oct 16 | 540,000+ users | No FedRAMP authorization required | 60-day ATO target

VA posted a request for information on SAM.gov on Monday, **October 5**, asking industry what it would cost to supply alternatives to parts of its Microsoft enterprise agreement. Responses close **October 16**. This is market research, not a solicitation — but the questions it asks are the ones an agency asks when it wants a price baseline it can use whether or not it ever recompetes.

- VA has more than **540,000 users** of its productivity and collaboration tools — email, file storage, video conferencing.
- Three capability areas are named under the current agreement: productivity and collaboration, identity and access management, and unified endpoint management. VA says separately that it is opening areas for specific non-Microsoft solutions in productivity, security and identity. Vendors may respond to any or all.
- VA wants a **detailed bill of materials** with part numbers, quantities and per-part pricing, plus should-cost data on infrastructure, labor and licensing drivers, and descriptions of how multi-vendor products would integrate.
- It also asks explicitly whether its own requirements are too restrictive or create **vendor lock-in**.
- Under a July 28 VA policy memo, an alternative **does not need an existing FedRAMP authorization**. Security is judged against NIST SP 800-53 Rev. 5 and VA directives, with a 60-day ATO decision that VA frames as a service-level target only and not a guarantee of a favorable outcome.

Market research only. VA has not said it intends to recompete or displace anything. sam.gov refuses automated retrieval from this environment, so the notice is read through trade reporting rather than the source document.

SO WHAT

Eleven days from posting to close favors whoever already has a bill of materials on the shelf. If you sell productivity, identity, endpoint or security into federal, this is the cheapest look you will get all quarter at a 540,000-seat estate — and the FedRAMP waiver removes the usual reason a challenger cannot bid at all. If you are a Microsoft reseller or integrator with VA exposure, read the should-cost question twice: VA is building a number it can put on the table in its next negotiation, and that number will be assembled out of whatever your competitors send in by Thursday.

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02 Deleted R&D ACQUISITION PIPELINE

AFRL has permanently deleted a $10 billion research vehicle, and will not replace it with one

Potential $10B | Discontinued Oct 5 | Second cancellation | Seven pathways instead

In a SAM.gov notice posted Monday, **October 5**, the Air Force Research Laboratory discontinued its planned multiple-award contract for a broad range of unclassified research-and-development support — a vehicle whose potential value had been reported at **$10 billion**. This is the second time AFRL has cancelled it. This time it is not coming back, and nothing single is replacing it.

- The sequence: final solicitation released **January 27, 2026**, proposals due February 27, competition cancelled around **April 13**, revived in **mid-May** after AFRL re-examined requirements and acquisition strategy, discontinued altogether **October 5**.
- AFRL cited "market feedback and evolving mission requirements," and said a single, overarching enterprise IDIQ "would introduce administrative friction and timelines" that would not align with its technology delivery benchmarks. Its needs, it said, are best served by "flexible, agile, and immediately available acquisition pathways."
- In place of one vehicle AFRL names **seven** paths: commercial solutions openings, pitch days, modular prototyping agreements, discipline-specific vehicles such as aerospace and information, other transaction authority contracts, SBIR/STTR Phase III direct awards, and governmentwide vehicles where broader commercial R&D services fit.
- AFRL said commercial solutions openings, pitch days and prototyping agreements can be executed in **weeks** rather than months or years.
- The notice does not say what becomes of proposals submitted into the revived competition, or of incumbents on the work it would have consolidated.

Washington Technology's May and October reports both date the first cancellation to January; that outlet's own April 14, 2026 story and GovConWire date it to April, with January 27 as the solicitation release. This brief uses April. AFRL's notice itself could not be read — sam.gov is unreachable here.

SO WHAT

If this vehicle sat in your FY27 pipeline, write it off and find out whether bid-and-proposal spend from the January and May rounds is recoverable. The strategic read is worth more than the write-off: a major Air Force buyer has concluded in writing that one large IDIQ is slower than seven small doors. Capture organizations built to win a seat on a big vehicle are now the wrong shape for this customer. The firms that will eat at AFRL in FY27 are the ones who can turn a commercial solutions opening around in weeks and who hold a Phase II SBIR that can be sole-sourced straight into Phase III.

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03 Slipped CYBER CLOUD ACQUISITION

DHS took the NCCS 2.0 clock off the wall and did not put up a new one

Was: proposals Oct 6 | Was: Phase 2 Oct 21 | Was: award late Nov | Now: no dates

In a Monday notice reported **October 6**, DHS revised the schedule for its Network Operations Security Center Network, Cloud, and Cyber Services 2.0 consolidation to "a later timeframe" and told industry to monitor SAM.gov. **No replacement dates were**

published. Last week's edition of this brief carried the old ones as hard dates; they are no longer operative.

- The superseded schedule: final solicitation October 1, Phase 1 proposals due **October 6**, Phase 2 proposals due **October 21**, award **late November 2026**.
- NCCS 2.0 would centralize IT service management across DHS network infrastructure, cloud and platform services, and cybersecurity functions — all currently bought at the component level.
- The vehicle has been reported in trade coverage of the earlier solicitation as a **$626 million single-award, department-wide IDIQ**. The October 6 reporting on the slip states neither a value nor an award structure.
- Legacy contracts held by **Leidos, General Dynamics and Peraton** are to be folded in. Leidos performs the core network security operations center work under a short-term bridge order.

The $626 million single-award characterization comes from trade reporting on the earlier solicitation, not from the slip notice; the slip notice itself is on sam.gov, which refuses automated retrieval here. The reporting does not state which legacy contract each incumbent holds.

SO WHAT

If you stood up a capture team and a pricing cell against a late-November award, you now carry idle cost against no date. Decide this week whether to hold the team warm or stand it down — "a later timeframe" with no date attached has historically meant a quarter or more, and a warm team burns through a quarter badly. For the three incumbents the slip is revenue: every month of delay is another month of bridge work and component-level spend that NCCS 2.0 exists to consolidate away. If you are a challenger, the useful move now is not proposal work but getting in front of DHS on what changed, because something did and nobody has said what.

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04 In force WORKFORCE DELIVERY RISK

Eight companies — several of them federal primes — just lost H-1B and PERM access, with no published rule

Announced Oct 8 | 8 companies | H-1B and PERM both | Zero FR documents | 20 CFR 656.31(b)

At a White House briefing on Thursday, **October 8**, Vice President JD Vance said the administration will not process new or pending H-1B or PERM applications for eight named companies: **Microsoft, Adobe, Cognizant, Tata, Wipro, Infosys, HCL and Capgemini**. Vance called Microsoft the "biggest abuser" of the program. Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling also spoke. No implementing document has published.

- PERM is the Labor Department's permanent labor certification process, typically the first step in sponsoring a green card. Suspending H-1B *and* PERM reaches the status of people already employed, not only new hires. Vance's framing: "H-1B is how they get in, and PERM program is how they stay."
- A Federal Register search for documents mentioning H-1B published on or after October 1, 2026 returns **zero results**. No proclamation or executive order has been identified. Practitioners point to **20 CFR 656.31(b)**, which permits DOL to suspend PERM processing where fraud or willful misrepresentation is possible, for an initial period of up to **180 days**, extendable.
- Vance said the suspensions would last "as long as it needs to." No duration, scope definition or exemption list has been published.
- **It is not clear whether workers assigned to federal contracts are affected.** Several of the eight are federal primes or major subcontractors.
- Microsoft said about **80%** of its roughly 6,000 H-1B applications last fiscal year were extensions or status changes for current employees, and that its remaining new-hire filings were for people already in the United States — about 1% of its U.S. workforce.

Everything above was said at a podium. With no published instrument there is no effective date, no scope language and no exemption process to read. Separately: Vance used a 6,000 figure in reference to Microsoft layoffs — a different number from Microsoft's 6,000 H-1B applications. Do not conflate them.

SO WHAT

If any of the eight is a subcontractor on one of your teams, your delivery risk changed on Thursday and your contract did not. This week, find out which billable positions are filled by their H-1B staff and whose authorization expires inside twelve months — an unprocessed extension becomes an unfillable cleared seat with no notice period and no cure. Prime-side the exposure runs the other way: a staffing-continuity obligation does not care that the cause was immigration policy. And the missing rule is itself the risk: no scope language means nothing tells you whether the engineer on your contract is in or out.

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05 Decided ACQUISITION RULES PROTEST

GAO says mixing the new FAR with the old one is confusing, lawful, and not its problem

`Denied Sept 21` `Released Oct 6` `4 protests` `$50B ceiling` `RFO class deviations`

GAO denied four protests against the Army's Marketplace for the Acquisition of Professional Services on **September 21** and released the redacted decision on **October 6**. The protesters were Kearney & Co., NextGen Federal Systems, Integral Federal, and Alpha Tech Alliance, a Synertex–Titan Technologies mentor-protégé joint venture. MAPS consolidates RS3 and ITES-3S, carries a reported **$50 billion** ceiling, and runs a five-year base with one five-year option.

- Alpha Tech argued the solicitation was internally inconsistent: some clauses were tagged as **Revolutionary FAR Overhaul class deviations**, others carried standard codified FAR text, and **one clause appeared in both versions**.
- The argument was untimely — raised more than a month after proposals closed — but GAO reviewed it anyway under its **"significant issue" exception**, because the intermingling of codified FAR and RFO class deviations is of widespread interest and GAO had not addressed it before.
- GAO sided with the Army: the challenged clauses were either unchanged by the overhaul or substantively identical in both versions. It called MAPS **"not a model of clarity"** but clear enough to pass muster.
- GAO acknowledged that the class-deviation process may leave offerors unable to tell from a solicitation which version of a clause applies — and characterized that as systemic frustration rather than a defect in this procurement.
- GAO also rejected challenges to how the Army bundled its requirements and to the effect on small businesses.
- Context on the rulemaking: the FAR Council's **second batch of eight overhaul proposed rules published September 18** and covers 16 FAR parts, including parts 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 27, 28, 35, 36, 38, 44, 47, 51 and 52. Comments on all four September 18 cases close **October 19**. Parts still outside formal rulemaking include **Part 19 (small business programs), Part 25 (Buy American and trade agreements), and Parts 30–31 (cost accounting standards and cost principles)**.

These four denials are not the whole docket. An earlier protest by Intelligence Consulting Enterprise Solutions was **sustained**, and Cinteot also lost in the same late-September group — MAPS has not run a clean table. gao.gov refuses automated retrieval from this environment, so the holding is reported through trade coverage rather than the decision text. Trade reporting that the overhaul "skips" parts 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 is incorrect; all six entered formal rulemaking on September 18 and were verified against the Federal Register for this brief.

SO WHAT

You now have precedent that the government may hand you a solicitation in which it is genuinely unclear which version of a clause binds you, and that this is not grounds for relief. Price that ambiguity. On every overhaul-flavored solicitation your proposal team has to resolve clause conflicts itself, in writing, inside the Q&A window — because GAO has told you plainly that discovering the problem after proposals close is both untimely and insufficient. October 19 is the last cheap opportunity this cycle to make the argument to the FAR Council instead of to a hearing officer, and the parts that most affect small-business and cost-accounting exposure are not even in rulemaking yet.

06 Open AI QUANTUM R&D

A $6 billion science summit, $2.4 billion of donated compute, and no door marked “apply here”

Summit Oct 8 | $2.4B compute credits | 11 companies | DoW $350M quantum | DOE $159M Phase II

The White House held an AI Science Summit on Thursday, **October 8**, which the administration described as a **$6 billion** push to advance U.S.-led scientific and technological innovation. The money arrives in three very different forms, and only one of them has a published process.

- **Eleven companies pledged $2.4 billion in compute credits** to a Genesis Mission Consortium: Nvidia $1B; AMD $500M; OpenAI $200M; Anthropic $150M; Google $150M; AMP $100M; Emerald AI $100M; and Amazon Web Services, Armada, Crusoe and Micron at $50M each. The White House said the credits will support "over 15 Federal agencies" working on national science and technology challenges.
- The **Department of War announced up to $350 million** in quantum computing initiatives, and plans an enterprise-wide framework to measure and improve the effectiveness of its labs and research centers.
- The **Energy Department announced $159 million** for 12 new Genesis Mission Phase II projects, bringing Phase II to 14 in all; **$96 million** for 67 early-career researchers across 39 universities and 11 national labs; and a Genesis Mission Graduate Fellowship pilot of **up to $100 million**. DOE says the broader Genesis portfolio spans 297 teams in all 50 states.
- DOE also named **eight Quantum Genesis Priority Applications** to steer development of the first fault-tolerant, scientifically relevant quantum computer. Its **Quantum Genesis Q Competition**, launched in September, plans up to **$215 million** for U.S. companies and requires proposals for machines with at least **100 logical qubits** capable of hundreds of millions of fault-tolerant operations.
- Quantum Genesis, launched in June, targets deployment of such a machine for scientific research by **2028**.

No solicitation, application process or deadline has been published for the consortium compute credits. The $6 billion is the administration's characterization of the summit total, not a single appropriation or vehicle. The DOE announcements are the only line items here with a published award mechanism.

SO WHAT

The compute credits are the piece with no door on it yet, and that is the opportunity: $2.4 billion of donated capacity routed through more than fifteen agencies will need people to build on it, and none of that integration, data-engineering or model-operations work is funded by the credits. Position against the agencies, not the chip vendors, and do it before a process exists to queue in. The quantum money is more tractable — DOE's Q Competition publishes technical gates you can measure yourself against today, and the Department of War's $350 million is new authority in a field where the federal buyer list is still short enough to work through in a week.

07 Nov 4 AI PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACQUISITION

CMS wants the steering wheel back from its fraud contractors, and is asking industry how to hand it over

Posted Oct 5 | Responses Nov 4, 11 a.m. ET | Notice ID 270536 | Informational only

CMS posted a draft Statement of Objectives and a request for information on SAM.gov on **October 5** describing a new contractor operating model for program integrity — one built around preventing improper payments rather than recovering them. Responses are due **November 4 at 11 a.m. ET**. The RFI is informational only and will not lead to awards.

- Under the draft model **CMS** would lead the development, prioritization and direction of fraud investigations — work it has traditionally run through private contractors that support investigations and actions such as payment suspensions.
- Contractors would develop investigations and administrative actions **under CMS oversight**; at CMS's direction they could review claims, interview providers and coordinate with other program-integrity stakeholders. They would document investigative methods in

a **central, CMS-designated system**.

- The RFI asks whether centralizing compliance tasks and provider site verifications is sound, whether **specialty firms should handle different provider types**, whether Medicare Advantage investigations should be integrated with traditional Medicare, and which data sources, analytics, AI and SQL methods CMS should use to generate leads.
- CMS says its Fraud Defense Operations Center, established in March 2025, has stopped nearly **$2.5 billion** in potentially fraudulent Medicare payments and taken action on just under **800** providers.
- Deputy Administrator Kimberly Brandt said the old model "worked in the past but new technology and new techniques mean it is time to see if it still works as well."

The $2.5 billion and roughly 800-provider figures are as reported by Nextgov. CMS's own published first-year fact sheet uses a different basis — over $371 million in suspended Medicare payments and 267 providers and suppliers between January 1 and June 30, 2026 — so the two sets of numbers measure different things. On the deadline: ExecutiveGov reports November 27; Nextgov and a third source that read Notice ID 270536 directly both give November 4 at 11 a.m. ET, which is what this brief uses. sam.gov could not be checked from here.

SO WHAT

If you hold a UPIC, ZPIC or any Medicare program-integrity contract, this RFI is the shape of your recompete and you have three weeks to influence it. The direction of travel is bad for margin: CMS taking over prioritization converts investigative judgment — the part you price highest — into government work and leaves you executing someone else's queue. The counter-move sits in the RFI's own questions. It asks whether specialty firms should handle different provider types and which analytics CMS should adopt. Answer both so your differentiation reads as a requirement rather than a preference, because whatever you leave unanswered gets written by someone else's answer.

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08 Nov 12 SUPPLY CHAIN ACQUISITION

GSA pulled 244 Chinese products off a mandatory buying list and called it the first wave

244 products | Reported Oct 9 | Commission deadline Nov 12 | EO 14392 / EO 14395

GSA has removed **244 Chinese-made products** from the AbilityOne procurement list, a GSA official said in reporting published **October 9**, describing the action as "a first wave of action, with more to come in the future." GSA says it intends to remove all of AbilityOne's Chinese product offerings from its catalogues.

- AbilityOne is a **mandatory source**: under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, agencies must buy listed AbilityOne products before turning to other companies. The list exists to create jobs for people with disabilities.
- Products named as examples include **flash drives, docking ports and portable charging packs**. The GSA official said many have been on the market for 10 to 15 years.
- The U.S. AbilityOne Commission has until **November 12** to verify that all products are listed with the correct country of origin, and to document how it will conduct continuous reviews.
- GSA ties the action to two March 2026 executive orders — **EO 14392** on truthful advertising of products claiming to be made in America, and **EO 14395** establishing the task force to eliminate fraud. It followed GSA's own call for an audit of AbilityOne.
- GSA has **not published the list** of 244 products, and the official could not say whether or how agencies will remove Chinese products already in inventory — only that GSA's control of governmentwide buying platforms will help agencies phase them out.

The GSA official is unnamed. GSA says only that the products were removed "recently"; no removal date has been published, so October 9 is the reporting date, not the action date. Fox News reported "around 240" products — an approximation that differs from the 244 figure, not a competing count.

SO WHAT

Mandatory-source lists are the part of the catalogue nobody audits, which is exactly why this is a compliance exposure rather than a news item. If you resell commodity IT through a MAS schedule or GSA Advantage, assume the country-of-origin data behind your own listings is now in scope and pull it yourself before someone pulls it for you — GSA has said more waves are coming and it controls the platforms. There is a revenue side too: 244 line items coming off a mandatory list creates demand for compliant substitutes on a timeline nobody has published, and the Commission's November 12 proof deadline is the signal for when the next wave becomes possible.

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09 This quarter MODERNIZATION CLOUD AI

The 2030 census will be bought through four BPAs worth about $2.5 billion — and two go to a single awardee

~$2.5B combined | 4 BPAs | 1 base + 9 option years | Solicitations before year-end

The Census Bureau has partially sketched the timeline for **CenTAM** — Census Bureau Transformation & Application Modernization — four blanket purchase agreements supporting the 2030 census, worth roughly **$2.5 billion** combined according to a July 21 industry day slide deck. Solicitation activity on two of them starts before the end of this calendar year.

- **Enterprise BPA: $1 billion**, multiple awards. **Decennial BPA: $1 billion**, multiple awards. **Geospatial BPA: up to $241 million, single award. Systems and Programs Support BPA: up to $311 million, single award.**
- The component ceilings sum to about **$2.55 billion**, slightly above the "roughly $2.5 billion" headline figure the bureau uses.
- Each BPA runs **one base year plus up to nine individual option years** — a decade of position.
- Solicitation activity for the **decennial and geospatial** BPAs will ramp up before the end of calendar 2026. Enterprise and SPS details follow after the bureau finishes reviewing those requirements and acquisition strategies.
- The bureau is reassessing parts of the CenTAM framework because AI and other technology areas have moved quickly since it was designed.

No firm RFP or award dates have been published for any of the four. The $2.5 billion figure and the component ceilings come from a July industry day deck rather than a solicitation, and the reporting does not state the deck's year.

SO WHAT

Two of these four go to a **single awardee**, which makes geospatial and SPS the highest-stakes small competitions in federal civilian IT this year: $241 million and $311 million with no second place. Teaming decisions have to be made now, because solicitation activity begins inside this quarter and a single-award BPA is won on the team you bring rather than the proposal you write. One base year plus nine options is the other reason to care — ten years of position in a program that comes around once a decade, and the bureau has said it is still rethinking the AI-heavy parts, which is an invitation to shape them.

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10 Live CYBER DELIVERY RISK

A missed Oracle patch cost a contractor its place at the FBI

CVE-2026-35273 | Patched June 10 | Claimed in September | Contractor removed

The FBI removed a contractor working for Accenture after an intrusion that may have exposed data on thousands of bureau employees, Reuters first reported late Monday. The initial access point was Oracle PeopleSoft, through a vulnerability Oracle had already patched four months earlier.

- **Brett Leatherman**, the FBI's cybersecurity chief and assistant director of its Cyber Division, said the incident occurred "after a contractor failed to implement a security patch explicitly issued to secure the platform."
- The vulnerability is **CVE-2026-35273**. Oracle issued an out-of-band security alert for it on **June 10, 2026**, after exploitation as a zero-day from late May. Google's Mandiant reported that ShinyHunters **resumed mass exploitation in September** using a modified

request path that evades web-application-firewall rules matching the literal one.

- ShinyHunters claimed the FBI intrusion in **September**. Reported stolen data includes addresses, phone numbers, spouse information, details of intelligence and surveillance roles, and private medical information. The group said it would not publish the data but did not say it had deleted it.
- A person with knowledge of the matter said **Accenture handles patch management and maintains custom code at the FBI**. Accenture's on-record statement is that it is "proud to support the mission of the FBI and will continue to do so."
- A Dutch arrest and a detention in Jordan have followed in the broader ShinyHunters investigation.

The removed contractor has not been named and no exact count of affected employees has been published. The CVE identification comes from Mandiant's threat-intelligence reporting, not from the FBI, which named no CVE.

SO WHAT

This is the cheapest available lesson in what a patch SLA is worth. A vulnerability patched in June, exploited in September, and the consequence landed on the contractor rather than the software vendor or the agency — removal from the engagement, inside a week, with no protest mechanism and no cure period. If you hold managed-services work where patching sits in your scope, the question to answer this week is not whether you are patching but whether you can **prove** it on demand: which patches, applied when, verified by whom, evidenced how. Flow-downs matter as much as your own hygiene — a sub who misses a patch creates a prime-level event, and "the sub did it" helped nobody here.

DATED ACTIONS

Every deadline above, in order. Red binds or lapses.

DATE	WHAT HAPPENS	ITEM
Oct 16	VA Microsoft-alternatives RFI responses due	01
Oct 19	FAR overhaul second-batch comments close (all four Sept. 18 cases)	05
Oct 19	GSA's LLM class deviation takes effect — GSAR 552.239-7001, file RGO-2026-01	Rules
Nov 4	CMS fraud-defense RFI responses due, 11 a.m. ET (Notice ID 270536)	07
Nov 4	GSAR utility-services proposed-rule comments close (FR 2026-20317)	Rules
Nov 12	AbilityOne Commission must verify country of origin on every listed product	08
Dec 11	Continuing resolution lapses; Technology Modernization Fund authorization expires	Funding
By Dec 31	Census solicitation activity begins on the decennial and geospatial BPAs	09
Jan 31, 2027	DFARS information-collection clearances (parts 219, 237, 245) expire absent extension	Rules
~Apr 3, 2027	Department of War limited automated classification capability due — 180 days from the Oct. 5 ACME memo	AI
2028	DOE target for a fault-tolerant, scientifically relevant quantum computer	06

WHERE THIS IS UNCERTAIN

Flagged because acting on the wrong version is expensive.

What this brief could not see

Bid protests are systematically invisible to this brief. gao.gov, cisa.gov, congress.gov, sam.gov, war.gov and breakingdefense.com all refuse automated retrieval from the environment it is compiled in. That means every SAM.gov notice here — the AFRL discontinuation, the NCCS 2.0 slip, the VA and CMS RFIs, the Census notice — is read through trade reporting rather than the source document, and the MAPS decision text was never read at all. CISA advisories and congressional text are likewise second-hand. The Federal Register is reachable and was used directly for every rule cited.

The CMS deadline

Two outlets disagree. Nextgov and an independent source citing Notice ID 270536 give **November 4 at 11 a.m. ET**; ExecutiveGov prints November 27. This brief uses November 4 and treats the later date as an error, but the notice itself could not be checked. If you are responding, verify on SAM.gov before you plan around either.

The H-1B instrument

There is no published rule. A Federal Register search for H-1B documents from October 1 onward returns nothing, and no proclamation or executive order has been identified. Practitioners point to 20 CFR 656.31(b) and a possible initial 180 days. Until something publishes there is no scope language, which means nobody can tell you whether staff on federal contracts are covered.

AFRL's first cancellation

Washington Technology has reported the original AMAC cancellation as January in two separate stories; its own April 14, 2026 report and GovConWire date it to April, with January 27 as the final solicitation release. This brief follows the April date. The discrepancy does not affect the October 5 discontinuation, which is not in dispute.

The NCCS 2.0 value, and unstated years

The $626 million single-award, department-wide IDIQ characterization comes from trade coverage of the earlier solicitation. The October 6 reporting on the slip states no value and no award structure, and the underlying notice is on sam.gov. Treat the figure as the last published number rather than a current one. Separately, several reported dates appear without a year and are read as 2026 from context: VA's July 28 memo, the October 16 RFI close, AbilityOne's November 12, TMF's December 11, and Census's July 21 industry day.

CIRCIA has still not landed

As of today the CIRCIA final rule **has not** been published in the Federal Register. A search across all document types for the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act returns no final rule; the most recent CIRCIA-specific documents are DHS town-hall notices from May and February 2026. The September 2026 target is attributed to earlier reporting, since cisa.gov could not be reached to re-confirm it.

Also this week, without a deadline

TMF put **$83.4 million** into four AI-enabled projects — State $17.3M for agentic AI, USDA $52.3M to replace high-risk payroll technology and $10M to consolidate ten environmental review systems, Transportation nearly $3.8M. GAO will audit DHS's Homeland Security Information Network across incidents from 2023 to 2026, including an intrusion in which activity began in mid-May and hidden access points and stolen credentials were found by June 4. FedRAMP's 20x overhaul is in phase three of five, with no calendar dates published.

SOURCES

1. Washington Technology — VA tests the market for Microsoft alternatives (Oct. 5) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/10/veterans-affairs-tests-market-microsoft-alternatives/416423/
2. Washington Technology — AFRL permanently deletes $10B vehicle (Oct. 6) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/10/air-force-research-laboratory-permanently-deletes-10b-vehicle/416439/
3. Washington Technology — AFRL cancels $10B vehicle (Apr. 14) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/04/air-force-research-lab-cancels-10b-vehicle/412827/
4. Washington Technology — DHS kicks NCCS 2.0 down the road (Oct. 6) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/10/dhs-kicks-its-network-cloud-and-cyber-consolidation-vehicle-down-road/416440/
5. Washington Technology — MAPS ruling exposes FAR overhaul's clause confusion (Oct. 6) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/10/maps-ruling-exposes-far-overhauls-clause-confusion/416443/
6. Washington Technology — GAO clears the protest deck for $50B MAPS (Sept. 30) — https://www.washingtontechnology.com/contracts/2026/09/gao-clears-protest-deck-50b-army-maps-vehicle/416342/
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