STACS Questions & Answers

Background

Who is providing the STACS Program?

The STACS Program is a service of the **National Association of Chapter 13 Trustees** (NACTT). The operation of the program has been contracted by the NACTT to Jacob & Sundstrom, Inc, an information technology services company based in Baltimore, Maryland.

What is the purpose of the STACS Program?

The STACS Program is a coordinated long-term program designed to mitigate the information technology security risks faced by the Standing Trustee community. The program offers a range of services and activities tailored to the needs of the Chapter 13 Standing Trustee community.

Who can participate in STACS?

The program is open to Chapter 13 Standing Trustees who are members of the NACTT.

Why is the NACTT sponsoring STACS?

The program is designed to combine the purchasing power of the Standing Trustee offices in order to implement a security solution tailored to the needs of these offices. The NACTT conducted a competitive selection process to help ensure that STACS is cost effective and appropriate.

Program Features

What are the major features of the program?

There are over a dozen different services within STACS. A separate document provides more detailed information about these features.

Will the STACS program take over an office's IT security responsibilities?

No. STACS is designed to provide each office with a variety of tools and information that will enable the office to improve its security posture.

Must I purchase specific equipment or software in order to participate?

No. However, many of the program's features are accessed most easily online, via the Internet. In order to use these features, participants need Internet connectivity and a reasonably current desktop computer. Although offline versions of most services are available, the Internet is the preferred method of access.

Is STACS a replacement for my current hardware or software vendor(s)?

No. STACS is primarily intended to provide services, not products.

Schedule

When was the STACS program started?

The program began on October 1, 2003. The initial contract period for the program was one year with two optional follow-on years. The NACTT has extended the STACS program for a fifth year.

How long must I commit to participate in the program?

One year. A key feature of the program is an annual cycle of assessment and mitigation. A major part of the value of the STACS program would be missed by those who choose to participate for significantly less than a year.

If I participate in STACS for a year, is there any reason to continue with it in future years?

Yes. As the Chapter 13 Standing Trustees increase their use of information technology, the STACS program will grow to assist with new security challenges. However, the decision to continue with the program can be made at the end of each year.

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Assessments

Does every participating office receive an onsite assessment?

Yes, every office will receive an onsite assessment at least once every 3 years. With the addition of a fifth year starting in October 2007, onsite assessments preference will be given to offices visited in the first and second year and new participants.

How does the onsite assessment compare to the web-based assessment?

The intent of the STACS program is that every office will complete the web-based assessment every year, and an onsite assessment once every three years. The web-based assessment provides useful information that helps the STACS support center understand each office and provide appropriate assistance. It also identifies a number of common security problems that STACS can help the office resolve.

Onsite assessments provide a much more in-depth view of the office's security posture and result in a more detailed and individualized analysis.

Must the web-based assessment be completed before the onsite assessment?

No. However, we strongly prefer that every office complete the online assessment because it is the gateway to a number of significant STACS services. Nonetheless, if circumstances prevent the completion of the web-based assessment, we can still conduct an onsite assessment at the office.

How many days is the onsite assessment?

The duration of the onsite assessments range from 1 to 3 days depending on the size, complexity and needs of each office. The number of days is determined by STACS and coordinated with each office prior to the on-site visit.

Fees

How is the STACS program priced?

The program is offered on an annual basis for a fixed fee. All of the standard features of the STACS program are available to a participating office during the year. A few of the features – such as on site assessments – have specific limits, but many features are available without limit.

What is the cost of the STACS program?

The cost of the program depends on how many Standing Trustees choose to participate. The average cost per office per year could range from about $4,000 to $6,000 depending on the participation level. The actual cost will be determined by the NACTT. A separate document provides more detailed information about the NACTT tiered pricing plan.

Enrollment

How do I sign up for STACS?

An enrollment packet will be sent in August to all Standing Trustees.

Will there be a contract covering the STACS program services?

Yes. Each participating Standing Trustee will sign a contract to participate in the program. In addition, the NACTT has a master contract with the service provider.

Must each employee in an office enroll in STACS?

No. When an office participates, all staff members in the office are eligible to use the STACS services that are appropriate for their role. Some STACS services will be used only by the Standing Trustee or by the system manager in the office.

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