

From the Editor

Fall is around the corner and GSA is wrapping up another successful year in serving customer agencies. Much of our success is due to hardworking contractors like you! This issue of *GSA Steps* will assist your company with starting off fiscal year 2012 on the right foot. Inside you will find information on the Enterprise Acquisition Solution (EAS) Pricing Pilot, one of the Federal Acquisition Service's (FAS) modernization initiatives to improve acquisition capabilities. This issue also highlights the 1122 Program expansion, introduces a new potential "Integrations" contract vehicle; in addition to updates on contractor past performance information, the latest on environmental icons, and a new contractor report card for fiscal year 2012.

If you would like to provide feedback and/or have suggestions for subjects to cover in future newsletters, please feel free to contact contract.relations@gsa.gov. Enjoy the Fall and this issue of *GSA Steps*! ■

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Mass Mod Reminder

To avoid error responses when accepting Mass Modifications to your GSA Schedule contract, please review and accept them in the order they were received (example: review and accept modification #13 from May 2011 BEFORE modification #14 from August 2011).

FAS to Modernize Pricing Submission and Evaluation for MAS Schedules 520 (FABS) and 599 (TSS) in Fall 2011 Pilot

The Enterprise Acquisition Solution (EAS) Pricing Pilot is one of several Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) modernization initiatives designed to improve acquisition capabilities across FAS through the implementation of optimal, innovative technology services. Implementation of the EAS Pricing Pilot is planned for Fall 2011.

Pricing Pilot at a Glance

The EAS Pricing Pilot modernizes technologies and streamlines business processes that support the electronic submission, evaluation, negotiation, award and publishing of pricing information for contractors currently working on Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) program Schedules 520 – Financial and Business Solutions (FABS) and 599 – Travel Services Solutions (TSS).

The Pilot will require Schedule 520 and 599 contractors use a Formatted Price List (FPL) template to support their proposed pricing. The use of the FPL template is a new way of electronically submitting proposed pricing under the GSA Schedules Program. The template provides a standard, data-driven method to submit complete pricing information upfront with the initial offer or price-related modification through eOffer/eMod. Once awarded, the pricing information captured in the template and the pricing related terms and conditions are combined

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FAS to Modernize Pricing Submission *(continued from page 1)*

and automatically loaded in *GSA Advantage!*[®], as the authorized GSA Schedules price list. This process helps ensure that pricing information is complete and up to date, eliminates the Schedule Input Program, and simplifies future contract modification pricing actions.

The Pilot implementation includes three releases with all existing Schedule 520 and 599 contractors notified through two Mass Modifications (issued approximately 30 days apart) prior to the release of the FPL functionality.

- Release 1 – Pilot Overview with FPL Specifications Published to the Vendor Support Center Website
- Release 2 – Mass Modification 1 is Executed
- Release 3 / Go-Live – Mass Modification 2 is Executed

Summary of Releases

Release 1 – Pilot Overview and FPL Specifications Published to Vendor Support Center (VSC) Website

As part of the plan to prepare Schedule 520 and 599 contractors to submit their currently awarded pricing in the FPL template, a message that includes an overview of the EAS Pricing Pilot, frequently asked questions, and an embedded PDF of the FPL was posted on the VSC on July 20, 2011. The FPL specification files are the “instruction manuals” that identify the required data elements and provide data descriptions and sample values for the FPL template. These specifications are for information only at this time.



Release 2 – Mass Modification 1 is Executed

A Mass Modification in September will require current Schedule 520 and 599 contractors to take the EAS Web-based instructional training (to be posted on the VSC website) to learn about the use and benefits of the FPL to baseline their currently awarded pricing. Upon successful completion of this instructional training the contractors will receive an email with their completion certificate and Schedule specific FPL template attached. The contractor may download the FPL template at this time and prepare/populate pricing data, but not upload to the system.

Release 3 / Go-Live – Mass Modification 2 is Executed

A follow-on Mass Modification in October will initiate the pricing software to go live, requiring existing contractors to submit their respective FPLs to their PCO for review and approval. Once approved, the pricing information captured in the template and the pricing related terms and conditions are combined and automatically loaded in *GSA Advantage!*[®], as the authorized GSA Schedules price list. This process helps ensure that pricing information is complete and up to date, eliminates the Schedule Input Program (SIP), and simplifies future contract modifications involving price.

Expected Contractor Benefits

GSA FAS looks for opportunities to improve the overall experience of conducting business with its contractors. This pilot expects to deliver the following short-term and long-term contractor benefits:

- Reduced time to market
- One-time pricing information capture upfront
- Auto generation of Final Proposal Revision
- Elimination of SIP
- Less cumbersome to get on Schedules

Where Can I Learn More About the EAS Pricing Pilot?

Visit the Vendor Support Center at <http://vsc.gsa.gov>.

If you have any questions please contact the VSC:

Toll Free: (877) 495-4849

E-mail: vendor.support@gsa.gov ■

1122 Program Expansion

Section 1122 of the fiscal year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act established the authority for states and units of local government to purchase law enforcement equipment through federal procurement channels, provided that the equipment is utilized in the performance of counter-drug activities. The Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 amended 10 U.S.C. 381, to expand the procurement authority under the 1122 Program beyond counter-drug activities, to include equipment for homeland security and emergency response activities.

In August 2009, additional Schedules and Special Item Numbers (SINs) were made available to six pilot states (California, Arizona, Nevada, North Carolina, Florida and Georgia) for homeland security and emergency response activities. Starting

July 11, 2011, the 1122 Program expanded to all states that choose to participate in the program and have certified State Points of Contact (SPOCs) (see below). These authorized SPOCs will now be eligible to purchase under the 1122 Program, in support of homeland security, emergency response, and counter-drug activities. The national Schedule and SIN list for the expansion in the 1122 Program catalog will be the same list of equipment previously approved under the 1122 Pilot Program. This program is still limited to the purchase of equipment only.

The authority for the 1122 Program resides with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Army is the executive agent of the program. In addition, under this program, DoD and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) also provide equipment available to state and local units of government. The Army currently defines the requirements for the expansion of the program and the certification of the SPOCs.

The FAS Office of Acquisition Management, the Army, and DLA held training for the SPOCs in June. We have currently trained 24 SPOCs and will be conducting more training in the near future. The Army will determine the new training dates.

Participation by each state is voluntary and determined by the Governor's office in each state. The SPOC in each state manages and places orders under this program. The SPOC also determines that the purchase falls under the appropriate scope of the program, the items are available from one of the three sources of supply, and that funds are available to make the purchase.

GSA Order 4800.2G, *Eligibility to Use GSA Sources of Supply*, has been updated to reflect this new eligible ordering activity. For a list of approved SPOCs and a copy of the 1122 Program catalog, please visit www.gsa.gov/1122program. ■



GSA Hosts Industry Outreach Event to Introduce Potential “Integrations” Contract Vehicle

On July 13, 2011, the Office of Acquisition Operations hosted a virtual Industry Outreach event introducing a potential new acquisition vehicle called Integrations. This new contract vehicle would be an innovative addition to the governmentwide solutions GSA currently offers and address the needs of the administration, taxpayers, and our customers with complex, multi-disciplinary (integrated) professional services (including Information Technology (IT) components), who cannot use the Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) or Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) for a total solution.

The virtual Industry Outreach event invited industry partners to access presentation slides which introduced the Integrations concept, provided background information, and solicited feedback on this potential program. The presentation included 16 specific questions for industry partners and also requested additional feedback regarding the Integrations program.

GSA asked that industry partners submit any desired responses by July 20, 2011 and committed to utilize this feedback while drafting a Business Case for Integrations. In addition, GSA requested written submission of any additional questions to ciad.innovation@gsa.gov by July 30, 2011. Answers to the submitted questions will be posted by GSA on FedBizOpps.

This Industry Outreach event serves as a testament to GSA's effort to gain sufficient input and feedback from industry partners regarding the development of Integrations as the next generation vehicle of choice. Ultimately, this contract will provide agencies with streamlined purchasing procedures, drive process improvement and cost reductions, and capture transactional level data to support program management efficiency.

For more information on Integrations, please visit our website: www.gsa.gov/integrations. ■



Contractor Past Performance Information

Federal Acquisition Regulations now require past performance be reported for every contract, including task and delivery orders against a Federal Supply Schedule contract, or under a task order contract or a delivery order contract awarded by another agency, exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold currently set at \$150,000.

Past performance information can decrease the Government's risk in contracting by rating, at a minimum, the quality of work, timeliness, cost, and business relations of contractor work. Past performance is an indicator of how a company may perform on future projects and is required to be evaluated for all negotiated competitive acquisitions expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold.

Most agencies use the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) to enter past performance information. For future acquisitions, Contracting Officers review past performance information on the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS). PPIRS stores information for three years once posted by an agency.

As contractors, you have an opportunity to comment on past performance information regarding your company before it is posted in PPIRS. During the comments phase, you will receive an automated email from CPARS with information on accessing the system. Discrepancies are settled by an agency Reviewing Official.

Understanding that information on current acquisitions will be reported for future acquisitions; it is important that as GSA contractors you continue to communicate freely with the agencies you provide products or services for. While all acquisitions do not always go as planned, this is an opportunity to indicate how contractors and agency customers solved problems as they arose.

You may visit <http://www.cpars.gov> and <http://www.ppirs.gov> for more information. ■



GREEN CORNER

Environmental Icons

In previous editions of *GSA Steps*, we reached out to the vendor community to educate and communicate some significant changes to the Environmental Aisle on *GSAAdvantage!*[®]. The changes went into effect in March of 2011, and since that time, we have been requesting that vendors ensure that all items sold through *GSAAdvantage!*[®] have the appropriate environmental icon associated with it.

Now, more than ever, it is essential that each item sold through *GSAAdvantage!*[®] has the correct environmental information so that our customers can make accurate procurement decisions. On May 31, 2011 a new interim final rule amending the FAR took effect, and various FAR Parts were amended in order to fully implement Executive Order 13514 “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy and Economic Performance” (2009), as well as Executive Order 13423 “Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management” (2007). Both of these Executive Orders address a wide array of sustainability requirements for the government, and they specifically outline and strengthen the government’s green purchasing requirements. As a result, agencies are to ensure that 95 percent of new contract actions, including task orders and delivery orders, provide for green products and services, where applicable. Our customer agencies are relying on GSA and our supply chain to assist them in meeting these requirements. In June 2011 alone, sales of green items through *GSAAdvantage!*[®] totaled over \$61 million! Currently, we estimate that there are at least 547,808 distinct green items on *GSAAdvantage!*[®]. This number is on the rise, but there is more work to be done in order to meet customer demands as well as positively impact the environment through the sale of items on *GSAAdvantage!*[®]. We want you to ask yourself the same questions that we are: what can we do to help our customers?

GSA is taking several steps in order to increase the number of green items available. Through research and engagement with industry and government partners,

we are mandating the sale of certain green products at the Schedule level. To make these determinations, we use a two part test to see if we can integrate a green requirement at the Multiple Award Schedule level. First, we ask ourselves if there is an acceptable existing U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, or independent third party standard that can be applied to a product or product category that would be appropriate for incorporation at the Schedule level. If the answer to that question is “yes”, we then determine whether there is a sufficient source of supply of that product that meets the chosen standard from countries with reciprocal trade agreements. Where the answer is “yes” to both of these guiding questions, a refresh to the Schedule solicitation will incorporate the new green requirement. By using this process, we will phase out brown (non-green) items from our Schedules over time. We will not be canceling new offers, but they will have to meet all requirements of the updated solicitation.

Updating the environmental icons on *GSAAdvantage!*[®] is one way GSA hopes to green its supply chain. To recap, you can aid in this effort by:

- 1 Verifying that all items you offer have the correct environmental icon associated with it in *GSAAdvantage!*[®], and make appropriate changes through SIP.
- 2 Talk to your Contracting Officer about adding additional green items to your Schedule contract.
- 3 If you have information about a green product that is not currently being sold through *GSAAdvantage!*[®], please let us know! We welcome ideas as we are always looking to expand our green offerings.
- 4 Ask yourself how you can make your supply chain more sustainable. Let’s work together to improve the quality and quantity of green items offered to our customers through *GSAAdvantage!*[®]. ■

New Report Card in Fiscal Year 2012

The purpose of the Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Report Card is to help you successfully manage your contract, and work toward solutions for identified problem areas. As contract terms and conditions change over time, the same applies to the topics covered on the MAS Report Card. The adjustments that will be in place in FY2012 will include the addition, rewording, removal and category movement of questions.

Topics with additional questions are as follows:

- Proper identification of noncontract products/services on Schedule orders
- Name changes and novation identification
- Subcontracting plan reporting timeliness
- Substantiating environmental attributes including greenhouse gas emissions
- Up-to-date, approved price lists
- Prompt payment discounts and second tier discounts

The following topics will be reworded to remove ambiguity:

- Delivery timeliness
- Attributes related to teaming arrangements

Overall MAS Report Card ratings will not change. The ratings include: Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal and Serious Concerns. You can view the current sample Report Card at <https://vsc.gsa.gov/reportcard/reportcard.pdf> to review how the ratings are achieved.

See page 7 and 8 to view the new MAS Report Card to help you start planning for future success in 2012. ■

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New Series of Videos Help Vendors Market More Successfully to the Federal Government

As promised in our last issue of *GSA Steps*, the new series of informational videos designed to help GSA Schedules vendors market to the Federal Government are now available. To view these videos visit <http://interact.gsa.gov/groups/contractor-success>. ■



New Report Card in Fiscal Year 2012 *(continued from page 7)*

Revised Administrative Report Card		
Category 1		
1	Did the contractor demonstrate compliance with the scope of their awarded SINs?	Yes/No/NA
2	Did the contractor identify noncontract products/services to their GSA contract customers?	Yes/No
3	Did the contractor demonstrate compliance with the Trade Agreement Act?	Yes/No
4	Is the contractor up-to-date on GSA Advantage!®?	Yes/No/NA
5	Does the contractor have a system in place that substantially identifies, tracks and reports GSA sales accurately and completely?	Yes/No
If #5 "No"	Do contractor sales records match GSA reported sales?	Yes/No
If #5 "No"	If there are dealers, are dealer sales being collected in the contractor's system and included in the 72A report?	Yes/No/NA
6	Is the contractor meeting or exceeding minimum contract sales requirement in accordance with the Contract Sales Criteria clause?	Yes/No
7	Does the contractor have a system in place to monitor the "basis of award" customer discount relationship?	Yes/No/NA
8	Did the contractor charge customers the contract price or lower?	Yes/No
9	Has the contractor had a change of name and/or change in ownership?	Yes/No
If #9 "Yes"	Has the contractor notified GSA to initiate requirements for a change of name and/or novation?	Yes/No
10	If a Commercial or Individual Subcontracting Plan is required, did the contractor meet the goals specified in the plan or is the contractor progressing toward meeting the goals specified in the plan?	Yes/No
11	If a Commercial or Individual Subcontracting Plan is required, is the Contractor submitting the subcontracting plan reports timely in eSRS?	
12	Does the contractor possess evidence or rely on a reasonable basis to substantiate items identified with environmental attributes on GSA Advantage!®?	Yes/No/NA
The above items are deemed critical. Failure to meet any one (1) of these items will result in a rating of SERIOUS CONCERNS EXIST.		

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New Report Card in Fiscal Year 2012 *(continued from page 8)*

Revised Administrative Report Card (continued)		
Category 2		
13	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, are the contractor's Reports of Sales on time?	Yes/No
14	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, has the contractor remitted the Industrial Funding Fee on time?	Yes/No/NA
If #14 "No"	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, is the contractor free of ACO issued claims?	Yes/No
15	Is the contractor's authorized price list current with contract requirements?	Yes/No
16	Was the contractor able to demonstrate timely delivery?	Yes/No/NA
17	Is the contractor identifying items on <i>GSA Advantage!</i> [®] that have environmental attributes?	Yes/No/NA
18	Is the contractor capable of accepting the Governmentwide Commercial Purchase card?	Yes/No/NA
19	Is the contractor's records location and administrative representative information correct? (e.g., address, phone, fax, e-mail, etc.)	Yes/No
20	If there are participating dealers, are the dealers listed and current in the contract price list and <i>GSA Advantage!</i> [®] ?	Yes/No/NA
21	Does the contract include prompt payment discounts?	Yes/No
If #21 "Yes"	If the contract includes prompt payment discounts, are the prompt payment terms shown on the invoices?	Yes/No
Items in Category 2 are mandatory, but not critical. If all Category 1 items are met: failure in one (1) item in Section 2 will result in a VERY GOOD rating; failure in any two (2) or three (3) items from this section will result in a SATISFACTORY rating; failure to meet four (4) or more items in Category 2 will result in a MARGINAL rating.		
Category 3		
22	Does the contractor offer second tier pricing discounts against this contract?	Yes/No/NA
23	If there are contractor teaming arrangements, do they address how customer service, sales and IFF issues will be handled?	Yes/No/NA
24	Is the contractor free from bankruptcy proceedings?	Yes/No
25	Has the contractor conducted a GHG emissions inventory and established GHG reduction goal (s)?	Yes/No
EXCEPTIONAL rating: Must be VERY GOOD and no more than one (1) failure in Category 3.		

OPEN (Option Process to Ensure iNtegrity) is Launching in September 2011

As you may have read in previous issues of *GSA Steps*, OPEN is the new process for exercising options to extend the term of your Multiple Award Schedule contract.

GSA employed lean six sigma methodologies to revise and streamline the option modification process — reducing extraneous paperwork and upgrading system functionality to standardize the experience. The improvements are founded on the input of our acquisition workforce and our industry partners. GSA has hosted live training for the entire MAS acquisition workforce.

Timeline

OPEN will impact contracts with expiration dates approximately 250 days after October 1, 2011.

Find out More

Making sure that all of these requirements are in place when your contract is being considered for an option will ease the process. If you have any questions, please reach out to your Procurement Contracting Officer, or e-mail us directly at MASOPEN@gsa.gov. Further communications and updates will be available through the Vendor Support Center at www.vsc.gsa.gov, future issues of *GSA Steps* and the GSA Interact blog (www.interact.gsa.gov/groups/multiple-award-schedules). ■

Tips for Success

In order to ensure your option review process runs smoothly, we have collected a few tips to help you.

- 1 Make sure your Authorized Negotiator and all other Points of Contact associated with your contract are up to date via eMod. For example, if your Authorized Negotiator has left the company and their e-mail is no longer valid, you will miss out on critical contract updates.
- 2 Notification that your contract is being considered for an option will arrive via e-mail from your Contracting Officer approximately 210 days prior to the contract's expiration. This letter requires you to respond within 45 days of receipt and a timely response will help keep the option process flowing.
- 3 The option modification is a unilateral modification which means that any changes such as Commercial Sales Practices, Basis of Award, Novations, Economic Price Adjustments or Terms and Conditions will need to be completed separately. If you know that you have any changes to your current, approved contract which will require a bilateral modification, please contact your Contracting Officer to begin the process now.
- 4 Update CCR, ORCA, and *GSA Advantage!*® and go to the Vendor Support Center (www.vsc.gsa.gov) to accept any outstanding mandatory mass mods. You can get ahead of the process by carrying out routine contract maintenance now.
- 5 If you have a Subcontracting (SubK) plan — of any type, it will need to be up to date when your option is being considered. If you know that your SubK plan will expire before your contract end date, you should submit a new plan now.
- 6 Some contracts are chosen for audit. If one of your contracts is selected, you will be notified by your Contracting Officer with instructions on additional data requirements. Responding to these in a timely fashion will help make the process run more smoothly.