

## From the Editor

Spring is upon us, which means green grass, longer days, and warmer weather. Just like the seasons, GSA is undergoing some broad changes as well. In this issue you can learn about some of the changes to key personnel that you interact with, including your Administrative Contracting Officers (ACOs) and Industrial Operations Analysts (IOAs). GSA is also changing its supply business model by closing the final two inventory warehouses it maintains. This edition also has information about GSA's new Reverse Auction tool, the development of a Sustainable Service Standard, and a few topics explaining some important contract administration tasks.

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](mailto:contract.relations@gsa.gov). ■



## In This Issue

Important News about GSA Administration of Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) Contracts

*Page 2*

Supply Transformation Brings Significant Change to GSA

*Page 3*

Upcoming GSA eBuy Webinar Education

*Page 3*

Industry Participation to Develop Sustainable Service Standard

*Page 4*

Reverse Auctions

*Page 5*

Choices for IFF Remittance

*Page 6*

How to Properly Handle Overcharges

*Page 6*

## Who is Your Designated Contract Administrator?

Every Multiple Award Schedule contract has a clause called “G-FSS-900-C, Contact for Contract Administration.” This clause states that each contractor must have a designated contract administrator that is responsible for overall compliance with contract terms and conditions. The contract administrator is also the responsible official for issues concerning clause 552.238-74, Industrial Funding Fee and Sales Reporting.

Odds are if you're reading this, you are probably the contract administrator for your contract (or you should be). Any changes to the designated individual must be provided to the Contracting Officer in writing, with the proposed effective date of the change. Keeping the contract administrator accurate is a critical part of proper contract maintenance. ■



## Important News about GSA Administration of Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) Contracts

GSA is operating in a time of significant change, one that is being driven by the fiscal realities of governmentwide spending cuts. In 2013, the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) undertook review of the Supplier Management Division's contract administrations functions. As a result, an internal realignment of resources is taking place in 2014. The changes will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness for supporting the GSA mission "to deliver the best value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to government and the American people."

In March, 2014, the Industrial Operations Analysts (IOAs) will assume all non-contracting responsibilities regarding sales reporting and the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF). This change will provide industry with one GSA contact who will visit contractors based on identified risk factors, assess contractor compliance with certain contract requirements, issue a report, and follow-up on sales adjustments and any matters related with IFF reporting.

In 2014, GSA will transition from MAS Schedule-based contractor visits to compliance-based assessments in order to provide greater efficiency, savings and service to our GSA customers. Some of the factors include amount of sales, number of sales adjustments, issues with sales tracking, prompt payment discount, and/or basis of award.

realignment  
of resources

provide:  
greater efficiency  
savings  
service

deliver the best value

In 2013, GSA conducted tests of virtual visits, resulting in significant reduction in travel expenses for GSA and cost to taxpayers, while also lessening the negative impact on the environment. The impact of budget constraints combined with advances in technology make it clear that moving to using virtual means as often as possible to conduct assessments with vendors is beneficial for all parties.

In summary:

### What is changing?

- The Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) will no longer manage the sales reporting and remittance of the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF). The IOA assigned to your contract will assist with all questions and transactions regarding sales and IFF.
- Traditionally, contractors received two Contractor Assistance Visits (CAV) during a five-year period. In the near future, the frequency of the assessment will now depend on various contract factors, such as sales volume, sales adjustments, previous assessments, etc. The format in which these assessments will be conducted will be in-person or virtual.

### What does it mean to me?

- Contact your IOA with all questions regarding the IFF and sales reporting.
- IOA locator will be posted soon on the [Vendor Support Center](#).
- The time frame for your IOA assessments will be varied based on your sales and other contract factors.
- Your assessment may be conducted virtually in lieu of an in-person visit.

Please refer regularly to the [Vendor Support Center](#) for ongoing updates on the administration of the MAS contracts in 2014. ■

## Supply Transformation Brings Significant Change to GSA

In recent years, GSA Global Supply has seen its business volume effected by several important factors, including the significant drawdown of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the increasing budget pressure felt by military and civilian agencies alike. In response, GSA has committed to a new business model for its wholesale and retail operations that will result in the closure of its Western and Eastern Distribution Centers (WDC & EDC).

The WDC, housed at the Sharpe Army Depot in French Camp, California will close by September 30, 2014 and the EDC, in Burlington, NJ, will close by December 31, 2014. GSA plans to transfer

several hundred National Stock Numbers to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), but the majority of its current stock will shift to commercial partners. GSA will continue to accept and process customer requisitions, but the material will be stored and shipped by its vendor partners. These changes will enable GSA to reduce customer costs and generate significant savings for the American taxpayer.

This change means that April 1, 2014 will be the last date for receipt of all replenishment orders at the WDC, and August 1, 2014 will be the last date for receipt of all replenishment orders at the EDC. During the transition period, GSA Global Supply will work with its suppliers to allow them, if desired, to fulfill individual requisitions via direct delivery to customers instead of sending bulk shipments to the GSA facilities.

GSA's objective is to move to long-term strategic partner relationships, enabling full electronic supply chain integration with key suppliers. Integral to this process, GSA is expanding its Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiatives and including requisition channel specific contract vehicles for Office Supplies (third generation) Janitorial and Sanitation items and Maintenance, Repair and Operating supplies. To learn more about these programs, visit [interact.gsa.gov](http://interact.gsa.gov). ■



### Upcoming GSA eBuy Webinar Education

**Free GSA Schedules webinar open to all vendors!**  
**March 20, 2014**

Register at [gsa.gov/masnews](http://gsa.gov/masnews)

Are you using GSA eBuy to search for request for quotes (RFQs)? If not, consider attending the upcoming GSA eBuy webinar to learn more about how you can leverage this powerful tool to help your business compete in the government marketplace. In this course, you will learn about the GSA eBuy program and how it functions to benefit both the government buyer and the vendor.



## GREEN CORNER

### Industry Participation to Develop Sustainable Service Standard

The Federal Acquisition Service has an internal goal to increase sales of green products and is seeking to increase the number of sustainable offerings available to customer agencies. This is a challenging but relatively straightforward process for sustainable products – work with our industry partners to add products that conform to product sustainability standards or ecolabeling programs. It is a much greater challenge to increase the number of sustainable services because of a general lack of standards for service categories.

To meet this challenge, GSA participated in an NSF International effort in 2011 to develop a protocol entitled NSF P391 General Sustainability Assessment Criteria for Services and Service Providers. Protocols are similar to standards but are developed using a faster and less resource intensive process. NSF P391 includes environmental, labor and social criteria and has bronze, silver and gold levels<sup>1</sup>.

Currently, NSF International is creating an American National Standard Institute (ANSI) accredited standard for sustainable services and service providers. The standard is using P391 as a starting point but is undergoing a much more thorough development process with an increased focus on transparency, consensus and – importantly – participation from diverse interest categories. A diverse committee with representatives from industry, government, academia and other perspectives is essential to achieve a balanced decision-making body.

The standard committee currently has several representatives from industry but NSF International is seeking more. Once completed, this standard could be used by GSA as a way to identify sustainable service offerings to federal customers. If your company wants to participate on the sustainable service standard committee please contact Jessica Slomka from NSF International at [jslomka@nsf.org](mailto:jslomka@nsf.org).

This is a unique opportunity for MAS contract holders to affect what constitutes a sustainable service. ■



<sup>1</sup> MAS vendors interested in reading or conforming to the Protocol may purchase it from NSF International for \$35 at [http://www.techstreet.com/standards/nsf/p391?product\\_id=1825426](http://www.techstreet.com/standards/nsf/p391?product_id=1825426).



## Reverse Auctions

On July 1, 2013, GSA launched the new Government-Managed Reverse Auction eTool. The Reverse Auction eTool is designed to facilitate and streamline the purchase of commercial items and simple services. Reverse Auctions are currently available for GSA Schedules, VA Schedules, and Multiple Award Schedule-based Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs), including the Office Supply 2 and Wireless Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative BPAs.

### The Reverse Auction eTool offers many benefits, including:

- **Visibility** – full visibility into the auction process and status with real-time pricing and no additional fees
- **Confidentiality** – your identity will not be visible to other sellers/bidders
- **Promotion of Small Business** – buyers can set aside purchases exclusively for small businesses
- **Communication** – bidders have direct contact with buyers via phone, e-mail or through real-time Q&A's
- **Proxy Bidding** – submit your lowest price and the system will bid on your behalf so you don't have to continually watch the auction
- **Auction Notifications** – the system can notify you when available auctions based on auction type, schedule, SIN and socioeconomic selections

The Reverse Auction eTool is only for vendors that hold active GSA Schedules or VA Schedules contracts. The Reverse Auction eTool requires an eBuy username and password. If you are not registered in eBuy, you can do so at: [www.ebuy.gsa.gov](http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov). The Reverse Auction platform allows all qualified vendors to participate within their awarded Schedule and special item number (SIN) categories. To add items onto your contract, contact your Contracting Officer.

If you have not yet received e-mail invitations regarding the GSA Reverse Auction eTool, you may need to verify or update your point of contact information. This will ensure you are able to receive the latest information and automatic notifications from the system. We recommend that you use a group e-mail to prevent notifications from going to invalid accounts. Contact your Contracting Officer to update your point of contact information.

Need more information? Check the Vendor User Guide on the Reverse Auction eTool website. It has step-by-step instructions on how to qualify for auctions, place and confirm bids, find out about awards, get auction summaries, and more. For general [ReverseAuctions.gsa.gov](http://ReverseAuctions.gsa.gov) website questions, assistance or training, please send an email to: [reverseauctionshelp@gsa.gov](mailto:reverseauctionshelp@gsa.gov) or call 1-855-372-1094. For questions about the GSA Reverse Auctions program, please send an email to: [gsareverseauctions@gsa.gov](mailto:gsareverseauctions@gsa.gov). ■



## Choices for IFF Remittance

Are you still remitting your IFF via paper check? GSA has electronic payment options that make it quick and easy to remit IFF payments. Remitting electronically makes it easier for you to pay and easier for GSA to process the payment, making it a win-win. Paper checks required manual intervention by each party, which increases the risk of reporting errors and lost checks.

If you choose to continue using paper checks, there are a few necessary steps you must take to ensure your payment is properly identified and accounted for. First, only one check per Schedule contract. If you have multiple contracts, you will need to remit IFF for each contract – which means a separate check for each contract. If you need to remit IFF for more than one contract, it will take more than one check. It's also necessary to include your schedule contract number and associated reporting quarter(s) on the check face. These steps are necessary to ensure that your payment is promptly and accurately applied to your appropriate contract.

The preferred (and easier) option is to make online IFF payments at the Vendor Support Center (VSC – <https://vsc.gsa.gov>). The VSC will automatically include your Schedule contract number and the reporting quarter with your online IFF payment, so you won't have to. Remitting online will also ensure your payment is received accurately, on time, and in the proper format. ■



*“Remitting electronically makes it easier for you to pay and easier for GSA to process the payment...”*

## How to Properly Handle Overcharges

**Ever charged higher than your approved GSA pricing?  
Ever forgotten to provide your prompt payment discount time frame?**

These are some of the factors that can lead to overcharging the government. When this occurs, it is your responsibility to reimburse the government. It is best to first contact the ordering agency and ask if they can accept a refund. If they can, refund the money and ensure you get a receipt. If they cannot accept a refund, you will need to send the amount of the overcharge via check to GSA's Miscellaneous Lockbox at:

**General Services Administration  
Miscellaneous Receipts for Non-Federal Claims  
Overcharge for GS-xxF-xxxxA  
P.O. Box 979009  
St. Louis, MO 63197-9009**

This address is only for miscellaneous payments, not your routine IFF payments. Make sure you put your contract number on your check. Keep a copy of your check prior to mailing and a digital image of the deposited check. This way you will have a record of refunding the overcharge. ■