



# Steps

Office of Acquisition Management  
GSA Federal Acquisition Service

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## FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue, you'll find articles covering a wide range of current topics: GSA's initiative with *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> files, a newsletter resource for small businesses' tax-related questions, a review of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as it relates to Schedules contracts, and much more. If you would like to provide feedback and/or have suggestions for subjects to cover in future newsletters, please feel free to contact Linda L. Smith at [lindal.smith@gsa.gov](mailto:lindal.smith@gsa.gov). Enjoy this summer issue!



## FOR SMALL BUSINESSES: E-NEWS FROM THE IRS

Are you a small business Federal Supply Schedules contract holder? Are you interested in finding answers to some of your tax-related questions? If so, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has a resource for you with its e-News. Below is e-News information provided by the IRS:

### IRS e-News for Small Businesses: a Time Saver for Small Businesses and the Self-Employed

IRS e-News for Small Businesses offers small businesses and the self-employed a real time-saver. e-News is a bi-weekly newsletter that alerts them to what's new, hot, and important for small business owners to know. It's quick to read, easy to subscribe to – and it's free.

This IRS e-newsletter for businesses includes specialized content consisting of:

- Important upcoming tax dates for small businesses and the self-employed

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**GSA Steps: [lindal.smith@gsa.gov](mailto:lindal.smith@gsa.gov)**

- What's new for small businesses and the self-employed on **IRS.gov**
- Reminders and tips to assist small businesses with tax compliance
- IRS news releases and special IRS announcements
- Direct links to a variety of websites and resources
- Availability of IRS products, services, and training opportunities

Subscribe to e-News for Small Businesses on **IRS.gov** at [www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=154825,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=154825,00.html). Click on "Subscribe Now" and enter your e-mail address.

## THE ALL-IMPORTANT TRANSPORTATION CONTROL NUMBER VITAL FOR SHIPMENTS DESTINED FOR OVERSEAS

If you are a vendor who ships items to either the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Tracy Depot or the DLA New Cumberland Depot, destined for military installations overseas, you are reminded to comply with the labeling requirements of military standard MIL-STD-129.

Exterior labels and all shipping documents (Bills of Lading, Packing Lists, etc.) must include:

- Transportation Control Number (TCN),
- GSA Purchase Order number, and
- Customer name, telephone number, and e-mail address (when available)

Items received into the DLA depots that do not have the proper TCN are brought “offline” until the appropriate TCN is determined. The first six digits (combinations of letters and numbers) of the TCN signify the Department of De-

fense Activity Address Code (DODAAC). DLA determines where to ship the items by knowing the TCN. (In a way, it is similar to zip codes that the US Postal Service uses to sort mail.) Without the TCN, the DLA depots do not know where to send the shipments and ultimately, the customer may never receive the products.

So *please*...be sure to include the TCN, the GSA Purchase Order number, and the customer name, telephone number, and e-mail address (when available) to facilitate the delivery of these parcels.

## COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST – ALIGNING GSA SCHEDULES WITH HOW INDUSTRY SELLS

The General Supply and Services (GSS) Office of Acquisition Operations has created an innovative, customer-focused approach by promoting Multiple Award Schedule offerings through its Communities of Interest concept. To date, there are three functioning Communities: Financial, Facilities, and Security. Each is organized by its scope of supplies and services.

The Communities are a step towards better aligning GSA's Schedule offerings with how Federal customers want to buy and how industry actually sells products and services in the commercial marketplace. This innovative alignment serves two purposes: 1) to help customers find information in an organized and relevant format; and 2) allows contractors to gain further visibility and see how customers are categorizing their overall requirements. Each Community has established subcategories specific to its grouping. Special Item Numbers within each of the schedules have been selected based on their interrelationships to the overall Community.

A wealth of information is presented as you enter a Community platform. Vendors are grouped by similar offerings and are listed under special subcategories. Each subcategory has a hyperlink to the GSA eLibrary where your contact information, catalogs, and price lists are readily available. Having quick and direct access further increases your ability to reach your target customers more effectively. Common language promotes the understanding of commitment and facilitates compliance. Communities also act as a resource database and include community specific links and information that are useful to both customers and you.

**Please visit all three  
Communities of Interest:**

[www.gsa.gov/financialsolutions](http://www.gsa.gov/financialsolutions)  
[www.gsa.gov/facilitiesolutions](http://www.gsa.gov/facilitiesolutions)  
[www.gsa.gov/securitysolutions](http://www.gsa.gov/securitysolutions)



## USE OF ONLINE PAYMENTS FOR IFF MORE POPULAR THAN EVER

If you are currently remitting your Industrial Funding Fee electronically, then you are in the majority of GSA Schedule contract holders. Approximately three-fourths of all IFF payments received by GSA arrive electronically.

We reported in the last newsletter that GSA had published a proposed change in the *Federal Register*. It would mandate the use of electronic payments for IFF due on your GSA Schedule contracts. The time for public comment has passed on that proposed change, and GSA will soon be taking steps to update clause 552.238-74 (Industrial Funding Fee and Sales Reporting). This clause is part of every GSA Schedule contract, and paper checks will no longer be accepted once it is updated.

Electronic payments can be made by using either a credit card or bank account (online check). GSA uses the Department of the Treasury's secure online payment website to process all payments. Your account information is not stored by GSA or the Department of the Treasury.

You can make an online payment either by using the "Pay Online Now" option immediately following the reporting of your quarterly GSA sales, or at any time by

## GSA NEW CONTRACTOR ORIENTATION (NCO) IGUIDE

The NCO iGuide is a handy resource, whether you've just recently obtained a GSA contract or have had one for many years. It is a compact source of information broken into major topic areas such as administrative requirements and business development. The iGuide can be found on the Vendor Support Center website under the "Publications" section (<https://vsc.gsa.gov/index.cfm>).

GSA attempts to provide you with the tools needed to successfully perform under your Multiple Award Schedule contract. The iGuide consolidates several administrative and marketing topics into one comprehensive guide that you can use to navigate your road to success. Any contract clauses listed or referenced within are used for illustration purposes only. Remember that clauses are updated periodically and are sometimes tailored for specific solicitations, so always refer to your contract for specific clauses that apply to you and your business.

**ADMINISTRATIVE**  
Administrative Topics

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**  
Business Development Topics

**ADDITIONAL**  
Other Important Resources

**WEBCAST**  
New Contractor Webcast

using the "Make a Payment" option from your contracting menu at <https://72a.gsa.gov>. More information and frequently asked questions can also be found at this website.

If you have any questions or comments about electronic payments, please contact your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO). You can locate your ACO using the following website: [http://vsc.gsa.gov/vsc/pco\\_aco.cfm](http://vsc.gsa.gov/vsc/pco_aco.cfm).

# AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) AND FEDERAL SUPPLY SCHEDULES

## Background

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. The Recovery Act imposes a number of requirements on Executive Branch departments and agencies receiving Recovery Act funds, in order to meet the broader goals and objectives of the Act, i.e., job creation, economic benefit, and unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability.

On February 19, 2009, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued Memorandum M-09-10, “Updated Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” and supplemented it with M-09-15, “Updated Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” dated April 3, 2009, to provide standard processes for spending and overseeing Recovery Act funds. Five Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) interim rules were published in the *Federal Register* on March 31, 2009, as FAC 2005-32. A technical amendment to FAC 2005-32 was published in the *Federal Register* on May 14, 2009. The interim rules provide authorities, policies, and procedures for governmentwide implementation of the Recovery Act and special contract provisions in the OMB Guidance.

## Changes to Federal Supply Schedules

A key component of the implementation of the Recovery Act in Schedules contracts and solicitations is the incorporation of specific clauses. **Only those of you with Schedule contracts who have incorporated the Recovery Act clauses into your contracts are eligible to receive orders funded in whole or part by Recovery Act.** The Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) distributed Mass Modification FX75 to all Schedule contract holders beginning the week of June 15 to provide you with this option.

If you, as a Schedule contractor, have agreed to accept Recovery Act clauses – either at time of award or as

a result of accepting mass modification FX75 – you will be identified in our external customer-facing systems: GSA eLibrary (See Exhibit 1) and GSA *Advantage!*®. On GSA *Advantage!*®, the “ARRA” icon (see Exhibit 2)

will be displayed so that purchasers can easily identify you as being eligible to receive Recovery Act funds.

On July 2, FAS implemented system enhancements to eBuy and GSA *Advantage!*® to facilitate compliance with the Recovery Act. eBuy now allows buyers to designate Request for Quotes (RFQs) as being made with Recovery Act funds. **You will be eligible to view, quote, or receive notices involving these RFQs on eBuy only if you have accepted the Recovery Act clauses for your Schedule contract. If you have not accepted the clauses, you will not see these opportunities.**

GSA *Advantage!*® now has a checkbox in the shopping cart for a buyer to indicate that ALL items present are being bought with Recovery Act funds. If the buyer checks the box, it is assumed that every item is being bought with Recovery Act funds, and the purchase order will be marked as such. GSA *Advantage!*® will not allow buyers to combine ARRA purchases and non-ARRA purchases in the same shopping cart.

## Recovery Act Acquisition Source: Government Point-of-Entry - FedBizOpps

FAR Subpart 5.7 addresses the publicizing requirements under the Recovery Act.

FAR 5.704 (Publicizing-preaward) requires the posting to FedBizOpps of a notice of a proposed contract action of \$25,000 (including Schedule orders) or more that is





Exhibit 1. eLibrary Example

Category	Description					
70	GENERAL PURPOSE COMMERCIAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, AND SERVICES					
132 60C	Digital Certificates, including ACES (Assurance Level 3 and 4 / OMB M-04-04) - SUBJECT TO COOPERATIVE PURCHASING Managed services that include the issuance of digital certificates to access government online systems. This service includes the requirement to know the true identity of the user. Agencies will rely on the validation by the Certification Authority (CA) as proof of certificate validity and grant access to the user.					
NOTE: Integrated access control systems including planning, design, installation, monitoring and service, as well as products are found on Schedule 84						
2 contractors						
<a href="#">Download all contractors for this Category (Excel)</a>						
Display: <input type="text" value="All Socio-Economic Indicators"/> <input type="button" value="Go"/> <small>Small Business Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business SBA Certified Small Disadvantaged Business</small> <small>Hold the 'Ctrl' key to select all that apply</small>						
Contractor	Contract #	Phone	(Sort by) City, State	Socio-Economic	Contract Terms & Conditions	View Catalog
IDENTRUST SERVICES, LLC	GS-35F-0852R	(301)921-5977	SALT LAKE CITY ,UT	s		GSA Advantage!
OPERATIONAL RESEARCH CONSULTANTS	GS-35F-0164J	(703)246-8535	FAIRFAX ,VA	s/d/dv		GSA Advantage!

Exhibit 2. ARRA Symbol



funded in whole or part by the Recovery Act. FAR 5.705 (Publicizing-post-award) requires posting to FedBizOpps if either the contract action exceeds \$500,000 or if it is not both fixed-priced and competitively awarded. The FAR (see previous text) specifically requires BPAs or orders placed against Schedules to be posted on FedBizOpps. Requirements may also be posted on eBuy in addition to the synopsis on FedBizOpps.

Requirements for Recovery related work are specially presented on FedBizOpps so that the opportunities are easily identifiable and include descriptions that are clear and unambiguous to the general public.

## Vendor Reporting

The ARRA requires significant reporting from both government and industry. GSA wants to ensure you have the information you need to accurately identify and record your Recovery-related work to meet approaching deadlines for reporting.

Full reporting requirements will be effective on October 10, 2009. Contractors are required to submit reports

for all work funded in whole or in part by the Recovery Act. All data in each quarterly report must be cumulative and encompass the total amount of funds spent to date. In the initial report, be sure to include data on all of your organization's activity since the Recovery Act's passage. Thereafter, reports must be submitted no later than the 10th day after the end of each calendar quarter.

Federal contractors will use the online tool at [www.FederalReporting.gov](http://www.FederalReporting.gov) to report required information. Unfortunately, detailed reporting instructions may not be available on the site until October 2009. Your organization can establish tracking mechanisms even though complete data reporting formats may not be immediately available. To facilitate this process, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provided instructions for reporting requirements and formats in the appendices of recent guidance ([www.recovery.gov/sites/default/files/m09-15.pdf](http://www.recovery.gov/sites/default/files/m09-15.pdf)).

**F**or a summary of reporting requirements, please refer to FAR 52.204-11, a Recovery Act clause. In addition, check out the following GSA sites for more information on ARRA:

- The special Recovery Act section of GSA's Vendor Support Center website (<http://vsc.gsa.gov/arra/ARRA.cfm>)
- GSA's home page ([www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)). Click on "GSA Recovery Act" on the left side

## GSA INITIATIVE WITH GSA ADVANTAGE!<sup>®</sup> FILES

**A**t the beginning of this year, GSA reviewed ways to improve the accuracy of data being displayed on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>. This initiative was in response to customer feedback and experience with old catalogs and out-of-date pricing on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>.

### Background

Customers have the reasonable expectation that the purchase price of orders placed through GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> will be no higher than what has been posted by the contractor. All too often, however, customers had the unfortunate experience of being advised by the GSA contractor that the posted price had, in fact, changed. Understandably, the customer questioned the change and sought assistance from GSA to obtain the posted price. Resolving pricing discrepancies and conflicts was a time consuming process for the customer, the contractor, and GSA. While the immediate situation could be resolved, the resultant damage in the business relationships between customers and contractors was more long-lasting.

### GSA Initiative

In response, GSA sent an e-mail message last January to those Schedules contractors who had not updated their GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> product descriptions within the past two years. In the e-mail, contractors were advised to update their files in one of the two ways listed below within 90 days to avoid removal of their catalog information from GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>:

1. Enter the Schedule Input Program (SIP) application and update any current products.
2. Enter the SIP application and click the “Validate” button from the drop-down menu.

Contractors can easily go into SIP and within minutes, upload a new text file or click the “Validate” button.

As it is the buying season, it is more important than ever that item listings and pricing information on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> be accurate and complete.

GSA will continue to identify contractors on a *weekly* basis who have not updated their catalogs within the past two years. Please remember that removal of these GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog files does *not* result in automatic cancellation of the contract or removal from eLibrary. However, if the contractors have not kept their GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> information updated, the Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) may review other relevant performance information and consider the most appropriate action to take.

The initiative appears to be working in a positive manner. Over 1.5 million items have been updated since the e-mails began going out to industry. As it is the buying season, it is more important than ever that item listings and pricing information on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> be accurate and complete. We appreciate your cooperation and continued support of GSA’s efforts to ensure customers have a positive buying experience on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>.

