

From the Editor

The weather is heating up and summer will soon be upon us. In this 36th issue of *GSA Steps* you can learn about updates to the Green Procurement Compilation site, how to properly display Prompt Payment Discount terms, upcoming vendor webinar sessions, and how to become eligible for Virtual CAVs. This issue also introduces upcoming changes to the Schedules Input Program improving environmental icon accuracy, reminders to update your vendor profile in the Vendor Education Center, how to access the correct System for Award Management site, as well as submitting past due Summary Subcontracting Reports.

As you are all aware, GSA Expo 2013 was suspended but we still want to share some of the educational presentations that were created for you! Check out the Vendor Support Center to view the presentations.

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 your summer! ■

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GSA Expo Education on the VSC

It was announced several weeks ago that the 2013 GSA Expo was suspended. The main attractions at each year's Expo are the array of education opportunities available for all attendees. Rather than let these opportunities go unused, a selection of presentations scheduled to be delivered during this year's Expo have been posted on the Vendor Support Center (vsc.gsa.gov) website under “Education”. Although it won't replace the experience of attending GSA Expo, these presentations may answer your questions and help enable your success within the federal market. ■





GREEN CORNER

Green Procurement Compilation Site Updates

GSA recently updated its Green Procurement Compilation (GPC) – formerly Green Products Compilation – to include several new features, including a portal devoted to green services. The GPC is a publicly available website that allows users to identify applicable federal green purchasing requirements for products and services.

The new services portal contains green procurement guidance for eight services: Cafeteria & Food Services, Electronic Leasing, Fleet Maintenance, Janitorial Services, Landscaping Services, Laundry Services, Meeting & Conference Services, and Pest Management. The guidance addresses green product requirements and optional green practices that federal buyers may incorporate into contracts. In addition, a “Where to Buy” section directs potential buyers to the applicable GSA Multiple Award Schedule for each service.

The green products portal identifies all product types covered by the BioPreferred (biobased), Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (recycled content), Design for the Environment, Energy Star, EPEAT, Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP), Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP), and WaterSense programs. When compliant products are available under MAS contracts, users may also link directly to a pre-populated search in *GSA Advantage!*[®] for each product type. Since the search results only return compliant products, it is critical for MAS vendors to accurately identify product offerings with environmental attributes. With the exception of EPA’s Design for the Environment program, all environmental programs in the GPC are also included as environmental icons in *GSA Advantage!*[®].

Additional features of the GPC include:

- Allows users to search by keyword or browse by product/service categories.
- Distinguishes between mandatory purchasing programs and others that support the achievement of agency sustainable acquisition goals.
- Identifies applicable Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requirements for each product type.
- Identifies potential purchasing options for each product type, including GSA Multiple Award Schedules, GSA Global Supply, Ability One, UNICOR, and Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative (FSSI) solutions.
- Offers direct links to environmental program websites.
- Allows users to download the entire GPC database into a single Excel, Text, or CSV file.
- Allows users to create customized product lists, allowing users to download green product information for selected items.
- Remains current with the latest changes in green product designations.

Visit the GPC today at www.sftool.gov/greenprocurement to learn more! ■





GREEN CORNER

Improving Environmental Icon Accuracy – Upcoming SIP Changes

The General Services Administration (GSA) continues to strive to ensure that the Multiple Awards Schedule (MAS) program provides customers with access to products that comply with the green purchasing requirements of statutes, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and Executive Orders 13423 and 13514. You can find the list of green purchasing requirements in GSA's Green Procurement Compilation at <http://sftool.gov/GreenProcurement>.

One of GSA's sustainability goals is to increase the accuracy rate of the environmental icons used on *GSA Advantage!*[®] to identify green products. Earlier this year, GSA conducted a review of the use of environmental icons and determined that widespread inaccuracies exist. The inaccuracy rate was particularly high for environmental icons that rely on vendor self-designation through the Schedules Input Program (SIP), such as BioPreferred, Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG or recovered content), and the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP)¹ energy efficient products. In order to reduce the number of inaccuracies, GSA intends to change SIP so that only relevant green icon(s) are available for each Special Item Number (SIN). In general, this will entail limiting the icons in SIP from what is currently available (though for some SINs, the CPG icon has been erroneously unavailable and GSA will be adding it back as an option in SIP).

Here's an example: SIN 852 1 Toiletries includes items with a BioPreferred requirement, such as hand cleaners and lip care products. SIP currently allows vendors to indicate that these products meet other green requirements, including CPG, FEMP (energy-efficiency), and WaterSense (water-efficiency). This change will remove these other green requirements as an option in SIP and only allow vendors to select the BioPreferred icon for SIN 852 1.

GSA has posted a list of the SINs that will be available in SIP for each green icon on the Vendor Support Center website (<https://vsc.gsa.gov/>) located under the "Updates and Info" tab. Vendors are encouraged to review the list and e-mail Brennan Conaway at brennan.conaway@gsa.gov if there are additional SINs that should be included or if there are questions about any of the icons. GSA will review any submitted SINs and determine if products included in the SIN are within the scope of the green requirement. ■



¹ GSA assigns icons on *GSA Advantage!*[®] for the ENERGY STAR and EPEAT programs using a list of compliant products received from EPA and the Green Products Council, respectively.

Proper Treatment of Prompt Payment Discounts

Prompt payment discounts (PPD) provide customer agencies using the Schedules greater discounts on products and services if they take advantage of special payment terms. Many Schedule contractors have PPD terms negotiated on their base contract with GSA. If your company is not properly displaying the PPD terms appropriately, this could potentially result in thousands of dollars of overpayments by customer agencies.

If your contract has PPD terms, you are required to list them on invoices for applicable items. Orders paid by government purchase cards are exempt from PPDs. There is a question on the Schedules Contractor Report Card that addresses whether PPDs were applied appropriately. Therefore, it is important to examine your processes to ensure you are following the terms and conditions of your contract.

How do I know if my contract has PPD terms?

- Look at your contract's Standard Form 1449 award document and any attached pages.
- If GSA exercised a five-year option period for your contract, consult the Standard Form 30. Your firm may have renegotiated the terms of your contract when the option was exercised. These changes will be reflected on this form.
- If still unsure, your contract's assigned Procurement Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist will be able to help. Locate your PCO/CS by searching for your contract on GSA eLibrary (<http://gsaelibrary.gsa.gov>).

How should I display my contract's PPD terms?

- Each invoice for Schedule orders should display the terms on the invoice. Orders placed with a government purchase card are exempt.
- Ensure the terms appear on your *GSA Advantage*® text file, and approved Schedule price list. Update them if necessary. ■

Upcoming Webinar Education

FREE GSA Schedules Webinars open to all vendors!

Register at www.gsa.gov/masnews (bottom of page)

June 6, 2013 – 10:30am ET

Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules – This comprehensive webinar provides an overview of GSA Schedules contracting and ordering procedures. Learn about placing orders against Multiple Award Schedules, as outlined in FAR Subpart 8.4. You will also learn about unique flexibilities within the GSA Schedules program.

July 11, 2013 – 1:00pm ET

FAR 8.4 vs Open Market – This webinar explores the differences and similarities between Subpart 8.4 and Parts 13 & 15 procedures, advantages and disadvantages for various situations, and will help you analyze the alternatives as you develop your acquisition strategy.

August 1, 2013 – 1:00pm ET

GSA Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) – Learn how Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) leverage buying power by taking advantage of quantity discounts, saving administrative time, and reducing paperwork.



Are You Ready to go “Virtual”?

The Contractor Assistance Visit (CAV) is the process through which a contractor receives personal attention from one of GSA’s Industrial Operations Analysts (IOAs). It’s an opportunity for GSA to measure each contractor’s progress and provide the guidance necessary for continued success in the government marketplace. GSA’s increased reliance on technology and dedication to savings and efficiency has led to the introduction of “virtual” CAVs.

A virtual CAV is one in which the IOA and contractor are at different locations, and is an option when it is in the best interest of both parties. Utilization of virtual methods is completely optional, and will only be used when all parties are comfortable and in agreement that it represents a beneficial alternative to the traditional onsite visit. IOAs use three criteria for determining if a virtual CAV is possible:

1. **Willingness:** All parties must be willing to conduct the visit virtually. Virtual CAVs are not mandatory; they are an option when it is in the best interest of both the supplier and the government.
2. **Capability:** The contractor must possess the necessary technological tools and competency required for the effective utilization of virtual tools.



3. **Availability of Documentation:** The contractor must have all required documentation available electronically to be either shared via e-mail or during a virtual meeting. Required documentation means all documentation that would need to be available during an in-person CAV. This includes contract documents, sales data, and any internal documentation related to the maintenance of the contract.

This is only the minimum criteria for determining the feasibility of a virtual CAV and is the starting point IOAs use when determining whether a virtual CAV is an option. Each contractor’s individual circumstances will ultimately determine whether or not a virtual CAV is possible. If you are interested, make sure you meet all of the above criteria and talk to your IOA during their next visit. ■

Update Your Profile in the Vendor Education Center!

Recently changes have been made to the Vendor Education Center (VEC). All VEC accounts are now required to have a DUNS number associated with them. To update your profile in the VEC with your company’s DUNS number follow these steps:

1. Log into the VEC: <https://gsafas.secure.force.com/MASTrainingHome> or go to the Vendor Support Center: <https://vsc.gsa.gov/> and click on “Training” then “Pathway to Success” OR “New Contractor Orientation”.
2. Under “Profile”, click on “My Profile” on the left of the page.
3. Click “Edit” then enter your DUNS number.
4. Upon completion, press “Save”.
5. You can then log out of your VEC account and your DUNS will be registered. ■

Attention Subcontracting Plan Administrators: Do You Have Past Due Summary Subcontract Reports (SSRs)?



Companies having one or more contracts with the GSA containing a Company-wide Subcontracting Plan for commercial products or an Individual Subcontracting Plan must submit reports on goal achievement. In accordance with FAR 52.219-9, each plan requires submission of an annual “Summary Subcontract Report” (SSR) into the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS) by October 30. To access the eSRS, visit www.esrs.gov. Please make sure that the correct Subcontracting Plan Administrator information is up to date, should we need to contact you by telephone or e-mail. You can find answers on how a contractor can make changes to their registration data under “Frequently Asked Questions” on the eSRS homepage.

The eSRS homepage has Quick Reference Guides, Webinars, and Sample Reports with step-by-step instructions to assist you in filling out your SSR. If you need further help, you can contact the Small Business Administration (SBA) located in your area.

In addition, federal government contractors are required to file their Year-End Supplementary Report for Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs). Pursuant to 48 CFR 52.219-9(l)(2)(iii), all Summary Subcontract Reports (SSRs) submitted at the close of each fiscal year (both individual and commercial plans) shall include a breakout, in the contractor’s format, of subcontract awards, in whole dollars, to small disadvantaged business concerns by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Industry Subsector – this can be accomplished by submitting a Year-End Supplementary Report for each related SSR.

Please make an effort to submit any overdue reports as soon as possible, so that your accomplishments can be included on SBA’s Annual Scorecard that is reported to Congress. We appreciate the contractors who have submitted their reports and their support of Small Business Programs. Please call your Contracting Officer or Administrative Contracting Office with any additional questions. ■

Are You Accessing the Correct Website for the System for Award Management?

The System for Award Management (SAM) is a free website that consolidated the capabilities you used to find in CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS.

Recently, contractors reported being charged a registration fee for SAM. If you are asked to pay \$599, you are viewing the wrong website, as there should not be a fee associated with the SAM.

The correct website is www.sam.gov, and can be identified by the “Uncle Sam” hat logo.

When searching for “SAM” or “www.sam.gov” in search engines such as Yahoo or Google, pay close attention to the results generated. In some cases, it may appear as though you are accessing the correct site; however, remember to ensure the web address is actually www.sam.gov and you will be able to register without a fee!

For more information about SAM, please visit www.sam.gov. ■