

From the Editor

Summer is here! Let's see what's HOT in this issue of *GSA Steps*. If you are an AbilityOne Distributor, you may be interested in the 2nd AbilityOne Training. In this article you will find a virtual training link that provides guidance on how to be a successful compliance and marketing driven distributor. Please take the CPARS Merge course to familiarize yourself with the new process regarding CPARS consolidating past performance systems. If you would like to know more about training regarding Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) and Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), there is a wealth of webinar training available within the newsletter. This issue will also provide information on how to remit your IFF payment. Finally, if you're interested in helping FAS re-launch the Contractor Teaming Arrangements Tool (CTAT), there's an e-mail in one of the articles you may use to sign up.

Enjoy this 40th issue of *GSA Steps* and have a safe and enjoyable summer! 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. ■



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Change is here!

As described in the last issue of *GSA Steps*, the Supplier Management Division in the FAS Office of Acquisition Management began an internal realignment 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.”



As a first step, in March 2014, the Industrial Operations Analysts (IOAs) assumed all sales reporting and the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) responsibilities. This change provides you with one GSA contact for most of your contract administration needs.

What has changed?

The Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) no longer manages the sales reporting and remittance of the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF). The IOA assigned to your contract will now assist with all questions and transactions regarding sales and IFF.

What does it mean to me?

Contact your IOA with all questions regarding IFF remittance and sales reporting.

You can locate your IOA by logging into the 72A Reporting System. Your IOA's name and e-mail is listed on the home screen displayed upon login. ■

AbilityOne Training: Doing Business as an AbilityOne Distributor—Compliance and Successful Marketing

The AbilityOne Program is the largest single provider of jobs for people who are blind or have other significant disabilities in the United States. The AbilityOne Program uses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy products from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies nationwide dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. Authorized AbilityOne distributors are a vital part of our mission and we strive to provide as much training and support as possible.

This virtual training event will provide detailed instruction on the AbilityOne Program and how to effectively market AbilityOne products in the government marketplace.

Topics covered include:

- AbilityOne Program (history/regulatory/social impact)
- Identification of AbilityOne and ETS (Essentially the Same) products
- Compliance

As a result of this virtual training event, participants will be able to:

- Identify AbilityOne products for procurement
- Improve marketing efficiencies for AbilityOne products
- Increase AbilityOne sales
- Effectively market AbilityOne products on virtual marketplaces
- Facilitate transparency, accountability, and compliance for AbilityOne products

To access the training, please click on the following link: <https://cc.callinfo.com/play?id=gh002q> ■

AbilityOne



online training

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 require 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, please remit one check for each Schedule contract. If you have multiple contracts, you will need to remit a separate check for each contract. 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.

Second, if you are remitting your IFF by using Automated Clearing House (ACH) network, please list your contract number and report quarter in the Addendum Detail section. If the ACH amount covers multiple Schedule contracts, please also list each of your contract numbers in this section. These additional steps will ensure proper processing of your payments and avoid any delays.

The preferred (and easier) option is to remit your IFF electronically 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. You can use your credit / debit card or e-check to remit IFF at the VSC using pay.gov. 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...”

GSA Seeks Early Adopters for CTAT

FAS will be re-launching the Contractor Teaming Arrangements Tool (CTAT) later this year, with some drastically improved functionality and a streamlined interface. This tool is a simple, yet powerful message board dedicated to helping contractors form teaming arrangements. Contractors may either browse existing teaming opportunities, or post their own opportunities to seek responses from others.

The Office of Acquisition Management is looking for contractors who are interested in helping prepare the site for relaunch. Interested parties may be called upon to post opportunities, test functionality, or help publicize the launch date. The time requirements would be minimal.

If you are interested in helping with the re-launch, please send an e-mail to amsystemssupport@gsa.gov and mention CTAT and this GSA Steps article. ■

The Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) is Consolidating and there are Changes You, the Contractor...Need to Know

Beginning, July 1, 2014 a new CPARS is scheduled to roll out which will consist of two modules: CPARS and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS.) The Architect-Engineer Contract Administration Support System (ACASS) and Construction Contractor Appraisal Support System (CCASS) modules are being rolled into the CPARS module. The FAR governance on ACASS and CCASS reporting thresholds will remain the same. However, there is an important new evaluation process change you need to know about.

After July 1, 2014, when an Assessing Official (AO) forwards the Contractor Representative (CR) a CPARS evaluation to review, the CR will have 14 days to respond. During that time, the CR will receive daily e-mail notices to respond to the CPAR evaluation. If the CR concurs with the evaluation, the AO will forward the completed report to PPIRS.

If the CR has not provided comments/concurrence on the CPARS evaluation, it will be forwarded to PPIRS as a “pending” evaluation. A “pending” evaluation in PPIRS can be viewed by source selection officials.

On day 15 through day 60, after being forwarded an evaluation by an AO, the CR will receive weekly reminder e-mails to submit a concurrence/comment on the evaluation.

On day 61, the evaluation will be closed as a completed past performance report and the CR will no longer be able to send comments on the evaluation. The pending notice will be updated in PPIRS with the “Pending” marking removed.

Contractors are encouraged to sign up for the CPARS Merge Course listed under training at www.cpars.gov. ■



CPARS FEEDBACK

2014 GSA Schedules Webinars & GWACs too!

FAC 023 Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules

Thursday, June 5, 2014
10:00 a.m. EDT – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Open to all. This comprehensive training course covers Federal Supply Schedules contracting and ordering procedures. This course fulfills the FAC 023 requirement for a FAC-C Level I certification. It addresses placing orders against Multiple Award Schedules, as outlined in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 8.4. In this course you will learn about the unique flexibility within the GSA Schedules program. Four (4) CLP credits. Training is in two parts and includes a one-hour break.

DPA Training for GSA Alliant and Alliant Small Business

Thursday, June 19, 2014
1:00 p.m. EDT – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Open to all, but geared to Government Contracting Officers (COs). GWACs enable federal agencies to buy cost-effective, innovative solutions for their information technology (IT) requirements on a worldwide basis. GSA offers delegation training to all agency users. Although delegation training is mandatory for all warranted COs, we highly encourage all members of the acquisition team to attend. The DPA training begins with an overview of GWACs and then becomes more detailed, discussing the key terms and conditions for Alliant and Alliant SB, the ordering process, and the roles and responsibilities for both GSA and the delegated user. Two (2) CLP credits.

FAR Subpart 8.4 vs Open Market

Thursday, July 10, 2014
1:00 p.m. EDT – 2:15 p.m. EDT

Webinar open to all. This course will familiarize you with commonly-used methods of acquisition: issuing task or delivery orders under GSA's Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) (FAR Subpart 8.4), and the Simplified Acquisition Procedures of FAR 13 or negotiating a stand-alone contract under FAR Part 15. This course will explore the differences and similarities between Subpart 8.4 and Parts 13 & 15 procedures, advantages and disadvantages for various situations, and help you analyze the alternatives as you develop your acquisition strategy. One (1) CLP credit.



GSA Schedules eBuy

Thursday, July 24, 2014
1:00 p.m. EDT – 2:15 p.m. EDT

In this course, you will learn about the GSA eBuy program and how it functions to benefit both the government buyer and the vendor. Learn how to use this electronic Request for Quote (RFQ) tool. One (1) CLP credit.

GSA Schedules Small Business Utilization

Thursday, August 7, 2014
1:00 p.m. EDT – 2:15 p.m. EDT

Open to all. Learn how to achieve your socioeconomic goals with the GSA Schedules program. And learn how the FAR was changed to provide agencies with discretionary authority to set aside orders against multiple award contracts for small business. One (1) CLP credit.

GWAC Overview (DPA Training)

Wednesday, August 13, 2014
1:00 p.m. EDT – 3:00 p.m. EDT

Open to all, but geared to Government Contracting Officers (COs). Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) enable federal agencies to buy cost-effective, innovative solutions for information technology (IT) requirements. Because most, if not all, government agencies have a need to buy IT services and solutions, GSA has made this purchasing convenient through its GWAC Programs. In this continuous learning module, you will learn about the four GWAC programs offered through GSA: 8(a) STARS II, VETS, Alliant, and Alliant Small Business. Training also prepares warranted contracting officers to request and be granted a Delegation of Procurement Authority to use the GSA GWACs. Two (2) CLP credits.