



Steps

Office of Acquisition Management
GSA Federal Acquisition Service

Issue No. 23

Winter 2009

FROM THE EDITOR

Happy holidays! In this issue you'll find articles with information on improvements to the MAS Mod Program, a policy change in support of public health emergencies, and reminders about meeting Contract Sales Criteria and updating *GSA Advantage!*[®] to ensure accuracy. Also included is an update on vendor reporting for customers who receive Recovery Act funded orders, and the increasing use of eMods. It's packed full of good information to save and use in the coming year!



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. Enjoy this issue of *GSA Steps*!

RAPID ACTION MODIFICATIONS ARE HERE!

Rapid Action Modifications (RAM) Phase I went into effect on November 16th, 2009. The implementation of RAM is a part of the Multiple Award Schedule Modification Process Improvement Program's (MAS Mod Program's) ongoing efforts to improve the way MAS contracts are managed in terms of speed, efficiency, and customer service.

The RAM program will reduce the amount of time needed to modify existing MAS contracts. RAM Phase I modifications will be unilateral on the part of government. What this means for you is that after you submit certain types of modifications (listed below) using the eMod system, you will be notified when your modification has been approved or rejected. If your modification is approved by the Contracting Officer (CO), you will be awarded a modification. For RAM Phase I modifications, you do not

IN THIS ISSUE	
From the Editor.....	1
Rapid Action Modifications are Here!	1
Federal Grantee Access to Schedules in Support of Public Health Emergencies	2
Supplier Management Sends Sales Reminder to New Contractors	3
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) Update - Vendor Reporting	4
<i>GSA Advantage!</i> [®] Takes 'Steps' to Become More Accurate Than Ever	5

GSA Steps: lindal.smith@gsa.gov

need to sign the SF-30 with a digital signature. You will, however, still need your digital certificate to log into the eOffer/eMod system in order to verify your identity and authority to perform actions on behalf of the contract.

The types of modifications included in RAM Phase I include some administrative and all deletion modifications. The detailed list is as follows:

Administrative Modifications

- Change of contract administrator
- Change of phone number
- Change of fax number
- Change of web URL

- Change of e-mail address
- Change of authorized negotiator
- Change of (addition/deletion) authorized reseller

Deletion Modifications

- Deletion of labor category
- Deletion of product
- Deletion of Special Item Number (SIN)

Administrative and deletion modifications account for 30% of the modification actions processed by our MAS Acquisition Workforce. By streamlining the actions needed to submit and approve or reject these

modifications, RAM will assist your CO in performing their duties more efficiently, allowing them to spend more time on higher value-added activities.

What does this mean for you? Your CO will have more time to analyze and work through complex contracting issues, while still efficiently processing and approving simple administrative contract actions.

In the interest of quality, efficiency, and customer service, the MAS Mod Program is committed to automating all of our contract modifications processes and in the coming months, all RAM I modifications (the administrative and deletion modifications listed above) will *only* be processed electronically through the eMod system.

FEDERAL GRANTEE ACCESS TO SCHEDULES in Support of Public Health Emergencies

Responding to world-wide pandemics such as H1N1 requires support and response from all levels of government, as well as the contractor community. In order to allow Schedule contractors to support response to the current H1N1 flu pandemic and future Public Health Emergencies, GSA, with support from the White House, National Security Staff, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Homeland Security, recently made a policy change. This policy change allows state, local, territorial, and tribal government entities access to Federal Supply Schedules to purchase both goods and services in response to Public Health Emergencies (PHEs) declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under the authority given to the Secretary under section 319 of the Public Health Services Act, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 247d.

Based on the policy change, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments can now place orders via Schedule contracts, when expending Federal grant funds, in response to declared PHEs. Participation in this program is voluntary for both government entities and for Schedule contractors. Eligible ordering entities have full discretion to decide if they wish to make a Schedule purchase, subject to any limitations that may be established under state and local laws and procedures.

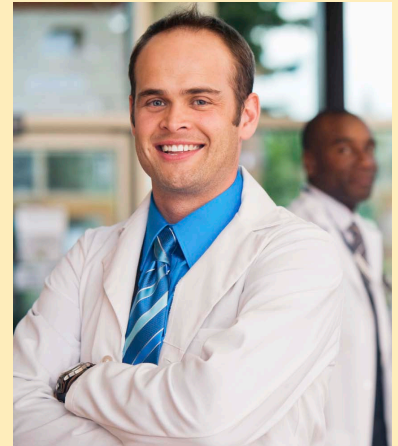
You have the option of deciding whether to accept orders placed by state and local government buyers. You will retain the right to decline orders received from state and local government entities on a case-by-case basis.

You may decline an order, for any reason, within a five-day period after receipt of the order; however, credit card orders must be declined within 24 hours (GSAR 552.232-79).

Eligible ordering activities are responsible for ensuring compliance with all rules, regulations, and requirements stipulated in the grant funding, by the granting agency, as well as any applicable state and local procurement regulations.

Ordering activities may include terms and conditions required by statute, ordinance, regulation, or order to the extent that these terms and conditions do not conflict with the terms and conditions of the GSA Schedule contract.

For additional program information, please visit www.gsa.gov/vsc. For questions, please e-mail masstateandlocal@gsa.gov.



SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT SENDS SALES REMINDER TO NEW CONTRACTORS

The Federal Acquisition Service's Supplier Management Division, with its team of Administrative Contracting Officers and Industrial Operations Analysts, is dedicated to providing ongoing education about Schedule contracts' terms and conditions.

As part of our vendor outreach efforts, Supplier Management recently implemented a low sales reminder. This courtesy reminder is sent automatically to contractors who have reported zero or very low sales at the one year mark as a reminder of the minimum sales criteria clause in their contract. Clause I-FSS-639 *Minimum Sales Criteria* is incorporated into all Multiple Award Schedule contracts and requires you to achieve \$25,000 in MAS sales during the first two years and \$25,000 each year thereafter. The objective of the new notification is to provide you ample time to review and improve marketing efforts to increase sales before the contract reaches its second anniversary of award.

At the end of each month our sales database generates messages to all low-sales contractors who have hit the one year mark during that month. The reminder is formatted as an e-mail message from the Administrative Contracting Officer. In addition to explaining the requirement, the email also suggests sources for assistance in reaching Government buyers. A sample e-mail is shown here for your information:



Dear Contract Administrator:

An important element of your General Services Administration (GSA) Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contract is meeting the Contract Sales Criteria. This requirement refers to the total dollar amount of 72A Contract Sales made to eligible users of the company's contract and reported to GSA. The established threshold is \$25,000 for the first 24-month period following contract award and \$25,000 in sales each 12-month period thereafter. The clause (I-FSS-639) also indicates the Government may cancel contracts not meeting the criteria.

This e-mail serves as a reminder that the company's GSA MAS contract recently reached the 12-month mark, and may not meet the initial 24-month sales criterion. Although there are approximately 12 additional months left to meet the established threshold, I wish to ensure awareness of this contract requirement, with time for additional sales to prevent the possibility of contract cancellation.

To increase your company's exposure to all federal agencies ordering from GSA MAS contracts, your firm's current contract price-list must be in *GSA Advantage!*® Not only is this a contractual requirement, it is also an excellent marketing tool. Additional marketing tools and strategies may be found at the GSA Vendor Support Center website (<http://vsc.gsa.gov/>).

Again, the intent of this letter is a courtesy reminder of the contract's sales criteria and is not a cancellation notice. Please disregard this message if your firm has sales to report or will be generating sales in the next year that will enable your firm to meet the Contract Sales Criteria. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions concerning this contract component.

Sincerely,

ACO NAME HERE
 Administrative Contracting Officer
 ACO PHONE NUMBER HERE

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) Update - **VENDOR REPORTING**

As mentioned in the Summer 2009 GSA *Steps* Newsletter, the Recovery Act requires reporting from both government and award recipients. Contractors who receive Recovery Act funded orders are required to submit cumulative reports for all work funded in whole or in part by the Recovery Act. All contractors receiving Recovery Act funded awards are required to use the online tool at www.FederalReporting.gov to report their specific Recovery Act award information.

The initial Recovery Act report quarter ended October 30, 2009. Listed below are key fields at www.FederalReporting.gov that seemed to present reporting issues during the initial reporting quarter.

1. Funding Agency and Awarding Agency Code: Many Recovery Act award recipients listed GSA as the funding and awarding agency for Recovery Act orders placed by various Federal agencies. While it is true that GSA is the awarding agency of the Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) or contract, for purposes of Recovery Act reporting at www.FederalReporting.gov, recipients must list the Federal agency that placed the order to you. If you are uncertain as to which agency actually placed the order, you should contact the Contracting Officer whose name is identified on the actual order form.

2. One-to-one: Each Recovery Act funded order placed is required to have its own Recovery Act report at www.FederalReporting.gov. MAS schedule holders cannot submit a consolidated Recovery Act report for various orders placed by various Federal agencies. Each Recovery Act order must have its own Recovery Act report submitted at www.FederalReporting.gov.

3. Program Source/Treasury Account Symbol (TAS): The TAS code is important, as it directly associates the Recovery Act award to the Recovery

Act funds received by the Federal agencies. The Contracting Officer who signs the Recovery Act funded order will be able to provide you with the correct TAS to be included in your Recovery Act report at www.FederalReporting.gov.

4. Number of jobs: Recipients are reminded to apply the formula to calculate jobs created/retained as prescribed in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Recovery Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Federal Contractors on Reporting. This formula can be accessed at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_faqs_contractors/.

Additional information on Recovery Act reporting, including a user manual on how to submit Recovery Act reports can be found at www.FederalReporting.gov. From the report home page click the “Download” section at the top of the screen then scroll to the “Documentation” section. Past webinars held on recipient reporting may also be retrieved.



GSA ADVANTAGE!® TAKES “STEPS” TO BECOME MORE ACCURATE THAN EVER

In order to increase pricing accuracy, GSA is now requiring all Federal Supply Schedule contractors to verify awarded contract pricing and catalog information on GSA Advantage!® at least every two years. This initiative will help ensure that GSA Advantage!® is accurate and complete, so customers may be able to better fulfill their mission and save taxpayer money.

Background

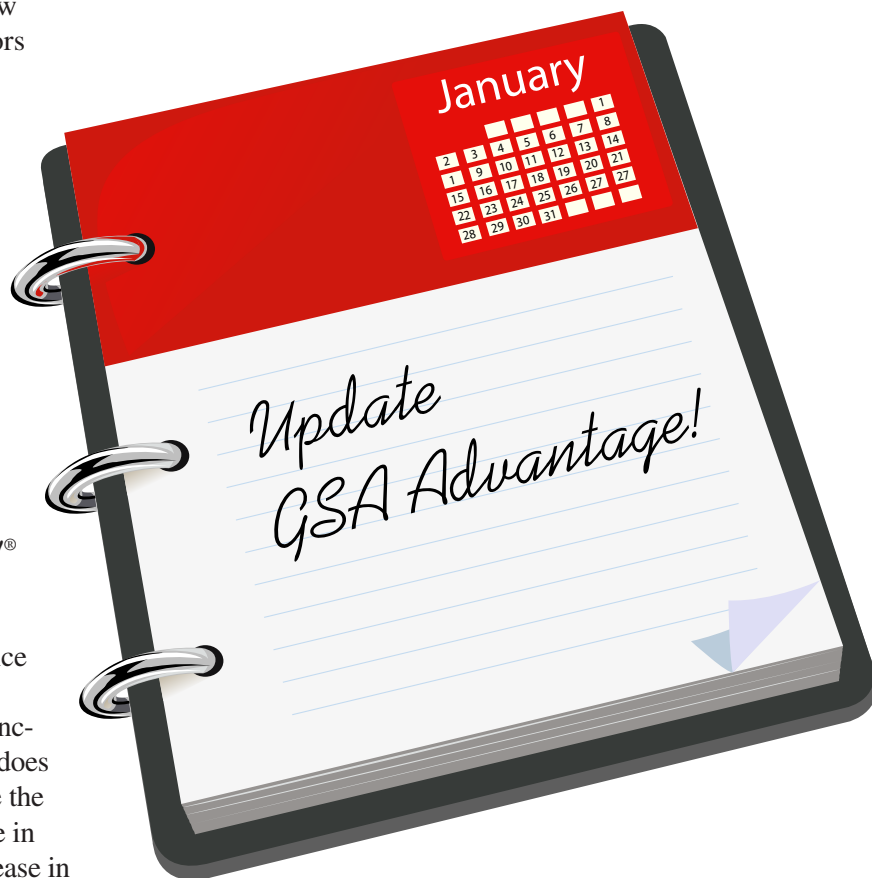
All Federal Supply Schedule contracts require awarded pricing and catalog information to be posted on GSA Advantage!®, an electronic pricing tool, and be kept current, accurate, and complete. You have six months from contract award to post pricing and catalog information to GSA Advantage!®. Any contract modification that results in changes to the pricing or catalog information posted on GSA Advantage!® must occur within 30 days of acceptance of the modification.

GSA Advantage!® customers have been experiencing instances where pricing and catalog information does not reflect the current contract price or catalog. Since the information is not accurate, there has been a decrease in the integrity of GSA Advantage!®, as well as an increase in conflicts between contractors and customers. The process to resolve these conflicts is time consuming and could lead to damaged business relationships between parties involved.

GSA Initiative

In response to this issue, GSA has begun an initiative to require you to verify your GSA Advantage!® posting if it has not been updated for two years. On a weekly basis, GSA identifies and e-mails those of you who have not updated your pricing and catalogs within the past two years. This initiates a 90 day period where you must verify or update the information on GSA Advantage!® or risk having your account suspended. No extensions to the 90-day period will be granted. Suspension does not mean the contract has been cancelled.

To verify or update pricing and catalog information, you should utilize either Schedule Input Program (SIP) or



Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), depending on which method was used in your original submission. Step-by-step instructions for both methods can be found under the “Getting on Advantage” menu on the Vendor Support Center website (<http://vsc.gsa.gov>). If your account has been suspended, you will be unable to do business through GSA Advantage!®

It is in everyone’s best interest to ensure that suspensions do not occur, so that continuity of business is maintained and customers do not experience any lull in service. This initiative will improve the overall integrity of GSA Advantage!® and will increase the level of service that GSA and you, the Schedule contractors, provide to customers. GSA appreciates your cooperation and continued support to ensure customers have a positive buying experience on GSA Advantage!®