U.S. General Services Administration

Doing Business with GSA

Office of Small Business Utilization

www.gsa.gov/sbu

The General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) is pleased that you are taking the time to use this guidebook as a resource for your business. At GSA, we work hard to ensure your interactions with us are positive and beneficial to you and the American taxpayer.

I would like to acknowledge the OSBU staff at GSA, who work tirelessly to assist Small Businesses every day and continue to look for ways to improve our service to you.

We produced this guide as an on-line resource for Small Businesses wishing to learn more about doing business with GSA. As you review the enclosed information, please let us know how we are doing and what we can do to improve this resource to better serve you. Please email us at small.business@gsa.gov or call us at (202)-501-1021.

Please feel free to follow up with our office if you would like an in-person meeting or if you seek additional information relative to your specific line of business. Our office is passionate about the many small businesses that we have come in contact with throughout the years and believe in the work that you do for us. Thank you and best of luck in your efforts to do business with the federal government and GSA in particular.

Sincerely,

Mary Parks

Mary Parks
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of Small Business Utilization
General Services Administration

please note:

While this handbook provides information regarding GSA's contracting vehicles, and gives you helpful guidance, it should not be construed as to replace applicable procurement regulations and policies.

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chapter 1 important sources of support

Office of Small Business Utilization, Central Office and Regional Contacts

GSA's Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) advocates for small, minority, veteran, HUBZone, and women business owners. Its mission is to promote increased access to GSA's nationwide procurement opportunities. OSBU's outreach activities make it possible for the small business community to meet key contracting experts and obtain important information regarding the procurement process.

The OSBU is responsible for overseeing the agency's small business programs which are mandated by law. Every federal agency is required by the Small Business Act of 1953, as amended by Public Law 95-507, to establish an office that reports to and advises the head of the agency. GSA's Central Office OSBU and Regional Offices are noted below.:

Central Office

Washington, DC
1800 F Street, NW, Room 6029
Washington, DC 20405
Telephone: (202) 501-1021
Fax: (202) 208-5938
Email: small.business@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/sbu

Regional Contacts

New England (1AB)
(Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island)
Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Federal Building
10 Causeway Street, Room 901
Boston, MA 02222
Telephone: (617) 565-8100
Fax: (617) 565-8101
Email: nesbucr1@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r1smallbusiness

Northeast and Caribbean (2AR)
(New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands)
26 Federal Plaza, Room 18-110
New York, NY 10278
Telephone: (212) 264-1235
Fax: (212) 264-2760
Email: r2@sbuc@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r2smallbusiness

Mid-Atlantic (3CR)
(Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey-Princeton)
The Strawbridge Building
20 North Eighth Street, 9th floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3191
Telephone: (215) 446-4918
Fax: (215) 446-5130
Email: r3.smallBusiness@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r3smallbusiness

Southeast Sunbelt (4AE)
(Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Mississippi)
77 Forsyth Street, 6th floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
Telephone: (404) 331-5103
Fax: (404) 331-1721
Email: r4smallbiz@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r4smallbusiness

Great Lakes (5ADC)
(Illinois, Indiana, Ohio*, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin)
230 South Dearborn Street
Room 3718, mail stop: 37-5
Chicago, IL 60604
Telephone: 1 (888) 353-5383
Telephone: (614) 374-0133 (Ohio*)
Fax: (312) 886-9893
Email: r5.smallbiz@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r5smallbusiness

The Heartland (6ADB)
(Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska)
1500 East Bannister Road, Room 1161
Kansas City, MO 64131-3088
Telephone: (816) 926-7203
Fax: (816) 823-1167
Email: business.counseling@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r6smallbusiness

Greater Southwest (7ADE)
(Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma)
819 Taylor Street, Room 1E13A
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Telephone: (817) 978-0800
Fax: (817) 978-0440
Email: r7smallbiz@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r7smallbusiness

Rocky Mountain (8AB)
(Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, South Dakota, and North Dakota)
Federal Center #41, Room 210
Post Office Box 25006
Denver, CO 80225
Telephone: (303) 236-7409
Fax: (303) 236-7552
Email: r8sbuc@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r8smallbusiness

Pacific Rim (9ADB)
(California, Arizona, Hawaii, and Nevada)
300 N. Los Angeles Street, Room 3108
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Telephone: (213) 894-3122
Fax: (213) 894-7658
Email: r9sbconference@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r9smallbusiness

Phillip Burton FOB and Courthouse
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Room 5-6880
San Francisco, CA 94102-3400
Telephone: (415) 522-2700
Fax: (415) 522-2705

Northwest/Arctic (10AB)
(Washington, Idaho, Alaska, and Oregon)
400 15th Street, SW
Auburn, WA 98001
Telephone: (253) 931-7956
Fax: (253) 804-4887
Email: r10.sbuc@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/r10smallbusiness

National Capital (WCAB)
(District of Columbia and the nearby Metropolitan Areas of Maryland-Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties; Virginia-Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church; and Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties)
7th and D Streets, SW, Room 1050
Washington, DC 20407
Telephone: (202) 708-5804
Fax: (202) 205-2872
Email: bscncr@gsa.gov
www.gsa.gov/ncrsmallbusiness

Small Business Technical Advisors (SBTAs)

In addition to small business activities supported by program experts at GSA headquarters through Small Business Utilization Centers in 11 Regional Offices, our vendors are also supported by the SBTAs. SBTAs are agency appointed representatives designated by the Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) to assist small business in the procurement and maintenance of government contracts.

Below are the locations for GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) and our Public Building Service (PBS). These offices have nationwide coverage.

Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) – Commercial Products And Services
(Nationwide)
2200 Crystal Drive
Crystal Plaza #4, Room 802
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone: (703) 605-2587
Fax: (703) 605-9961
www.gsa.gov/fas

Public Buildings Service (PBS) – Construction, Architecture, Real Estate And Interior Design
(Nationwide)
1800 F Street, NW, # 4322
Washington, DC 20405
Telephone: (202) 501-3455
Fax: (202) 501-2035
www.gsa.gov/pbs

Small Business Advisory Committee (SBAC)

The General Services Administration's (GSA) Small Business Advisory Committee (SBAC) was created by a charter filed with Congress on August 29, 2005. The SBAC's mission is to provide recommendations to the Associate Administrator for Small Business Utilization that will allow GSA to advance and improve its small business procurement program.

As with all Federal Advisory Committee Act groups, our meetings are announced at least 15 days in advance in the Federal Register and the public is welcome to attend and observe. The public is also welcome to submit written comments and may request time to address the committee in person.

The Committee anticipates conducting meetings two or more times per year, both in Washington, DC and elsewhere. Recommendations formulated by the Committee will be submitted on an ongoing basis instead of through a final report. Members have been selected based on their individual experiences in small business or as recognized experts and advocates for their program areas.

For more information about the Small Business Advisory Committee, please visit www.gsa.gov/sbac.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the Federal Government to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns; to preserve free competitive enterprise; and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands, and Guam.

SBA programs and services support you, the small business person. Learn about SBA-backed loans, government contracting opportunities, disaster assistance, and training programs to help your business succeed.

SBA is a major supporter of the OSBU's outreach initiatives. To learn more about the SBA, please visit www.sba.gov or call SBA GSA Representative on (703) 605-1801.

Customer Service Directors (CSDs)

GSA offers a worldwide network of knowledgeable Customer Services Directors (CSDs). Whatever the location, there is a CSD to provide assistance, resolve a problem, or answer questions. CSDs also host seminars on a variety of useful topics and are a valuable source of information on all of GSA's supply programs.

To contact a CSD in your area, please visit www.gsa.gov/csd.

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)

Centers across the nation form a network of procurement professionals dedicated to providing you support in understanding the requirements of government contracting with minimal or zero cost to the customer.

To learn more about PTACs, please visit www.aptac-us.org .

chapter 2 GSA as a buying customer

What GSA Buys

GSA has a variety of choices when purchasing products and services. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) provides ordering procedures depending on the contract type. To learn more about policy and regulations for Federal contracts, please review FAR Part 16 by visiting www.acquisition.gov/far .

The agency's objectives are twofold. First, a stronger GSA is able to offer faster contracting services at a lower cost, yet remain fully compliant with existing procurement regulations. Our second objective is to move beyond saving agencies money and provide them with innovative solutions and the right services – at the right time and at the right price – so that they are free to concentrate on their core missions. These goals align with the President's challenge for all Federal agencies to find new and smarter ways to do business. The more effectively GSA performs, the more efficiencies we create. That's good all around. It saves money, enables us to better serve our customers, and moves us toward the President's vision of government that is citizen-centered and results oriented.

GSA is comprised of two departments that have separate buying needs. The Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) focuses on establishing contracts that provide commercial products and services to our buyers. The Public Building Service (PBS) focuses on meeting customers' needs for construction, architecture, and interior design.

Understanding what GSA does for its customers should help you identify what we will need to purchase in the future.

How GSA Buys

Over $25,000

Government buyers use the Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) website to publicize their business opportunities. The following identifies the procedure for purchasing services through FedBizOpps outside of the GSA MAS program:

1. Post a synopsis identifying the intended purchase and solicit input from vendors.
2. Post a formal solicitation with a Statement of Work (SOW) requesting proposals from vendors to be submitted by a certain date and time.
3. Offeror submits a timely proposal responding to the specific requirements and needs in the solicitation.
4. Offers are reviewed which may require an additional oral presentations
5. An award recommendation is given to the Contracting Officer who makes the final award decision.
6. The awarded contractor will be contacted with instructions

Below $25,000

GSA post an annual public report called "Forecast of Contracting Opportunities" which is available online at www.gsa.gov/sbu.

The GSA Forecast of Contracting Opportunities informs businesses of anticipated contracts offered by GSA for each fiscal year (October 1 through September 30).

GSA's regional offices submit their forecast, which is then sorted by category. This information is made available pursuant to Public Law 100-656, Business Opportunity Development Reform Act of 1988. For more information about GSA's Forecast, please visit www.gsa.gov/smbusforecast.

For guildelines on purchases under $25,000 please see FAR 5.101 (a) 2)

GSA Advantage!®

GSA Advantage! ® is our online shopping service for all Government customers. It is mandatory and advantageous for all GSA Contractors to load their information to the system upon award. It is also required that all GSA Contractors maintain the updates necessary to keep this information accurate at all times. Please visit www.gsa.gov/advantage to learn more about this buying source.

chapter 3 Small Business Contracting Opportunities with GSA

GSA is comprised of both the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) and the Public Building Service (PBS). FAS oversees the commercial acquisition part of GSA while PBS manages construction, architecture, real estate and interior design.

Federal Acquisition Service

The Federal Acquisition Service (www.gsa.gov/fas) develops procurement programs for products, services, and technology. Some of these programs and their contact information include:

Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) Program

Under the GSA Schedules (also referred to as Multiple Award Schedules and Federal Supply Schedules) Program, GSA establishes long-term Governmentwide contracts with commercial firms to provide access to over 11 million commercial supplies and services that can be ordered directly from GSA Schedule contractors or through the GSA Advantage!® online shopping and ordering system. To learn more, please call the MAS Helpdesk on (800) 488-3111 or visit www.gsa.gov/schedules.

Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)

GWACs offer a complete list of Information Technology solutions for our government customers. These solutions are provided through several procurement vehicles such as:

- 8(a) Streamlined Technology Acquisition Resources for Services (STARS)
- Alliant
- Alliant Small Business
- Applications and Support for Widely-Diverse-End-User Requirements (ANSWER)
- Commerce Information Technology Solutions – NexGen (COMMITS NexGen)
- Millennia
- Millennia Lite
- Veterans Technology Services (VETS)

For more information about GSA's GWAC program, please visit www.gsa.gov/gwac.

GSA Global Supply

GSA Global Supply provides easy and flexible requisition based ordering for office supplies to tools, to safety and cleaning products. To learn, more please call (800) 525-8027 or visit gsaglobalsupply@gsa.gov.

The GSA Nationwide Great Seal Program

The Great Seal Program is offered by GSA's Region 4 Office of Management Services (OMS) to supply customized seals to elements of the judicial branch of the Federal Government, as well as other Federal agencies. For additional information, please call (404) 331-3246 or (404) 331-3200.

Vehicle Buying/Leasing* Program

The Office of Vehicle Acquisition and Leasing Services provides Government agencies with quality vehicles and fleet management services at economical rates. For more information, please call (703) 605-CARS, visit www.gsa.gov/vehiclebuying or email gsafleet@gsa.gov.

AbilityOne (formerly Javits Wagner O'Day Program)

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act, 41 U.S.C. 46-48c, established a procurement program to increase employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or have severe disabilities. For more information, visit www.abilityone.gov or call 703-603-7740.

City Pair Program

In addition to the tremendous price savings, the Airline City Pair Program has many features that allow Government travelers all the flexibility possible in planning official travel. For more information, please call (703) 872-8588 or email onthego@gsa.gov.

Lodging Program

GSA has partnered with the lodging industry to provide Federal travelers with Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) compliant accommodations within per diem allowance for selected high-volume travel destinations, both within and outside the Continental United States. For more information, please call (877) 836-4859 or email gsalodging@gsa.gov.

E-Gov Travel Program

There are thousands of civilian employees who travel for business every day. The common E-Gov Travel Service will replace more than 250 travel-booking practices at various agencies cutting travel management costs. For more information, please call (703) 605-2173 or email egovtravel@gsa.gov.

Public Buildings Service

The Public Buildings Service (www.gsa.gov/pbs) develops procurement programs for Construction, Architecture, Real Estate and Interior Design. Some of these programs and their contact information include:

Design and Construction

To assure a high standard of excellence for the American public, GSA engages the best private-sector architects and engineers to design, renovate, and construct Federal buildings through its internationally renowned Design and Construction Excellence Programs. To learn more, please call (202) 501-1888 or visit www.gsa.gov/newconstruction.

Historic Preservation
GSA's historic preservation program provides technical and strategic expertise to promote the viability, reuse, and integrity of historic buildings GSA owns, leases, and has the opportunity to acquire. To learn more, please email historic.buildings@gsa.gov.

Property Management
GSA provides property management services for more than one million Federal workers, including the following: cleaning, ground maintenance, utilities, building systems, and equipment maintenance. For more information, please call (202) 501-0638.

Workplace Solutions
GSA is developing new ways of approaching and evaluating space as a tool and has created WorkPlace 20|20 as a methodology to help clients determine the most effective environment to reach definitive corporate goals. For more information, please call (202) 253-2042.

chapter 4 Contracting Details

The Multiple Award Schedules Program

While the Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) Program is only one of GSA's procurement vehicles, it is one of our largest programs and most preferred for commercial products and services.

The MAS Program was designed to provide discount resources to all our Federal Agencies and some State and Local Governments. When these customers are purchasing products and services with citizen's tax dollars, they have optimum choices to save money.

When you have a contract with GSA under this program, you may sell to any Government agency with just one source instead of having separate contracts with each agency.

Steps to Obtaining a GSA MAS Contract

Vendors may seek a contract with the GSA under the MAS Program by submitting an offer to the appropriate acquisition office. The acquisition offices are located nationwide. The following information will assist you in applying for a contract in the office that handles the products and/or services your company wants to offer GSA.

The following check list identifies some of the basic steps to the contract award process. Notice what "YOU" are responsible for and what "GSA" is responsible for.

- YOU will complete online registrations and start the "Past Performance" review.
- YOU will obtain and complete the GSA MAS solicitation for the correct product or service category.
- YOU will sign and submit the correct solicitation, which from this point forward will be your offer to GSA.
- GSA will review and evaluate your prices, discounts, terms and conditions.
- YOU and GSA will negotiate your offer for the "Best Value" to the government.
- YOU will complete negotiations and submit a "Final Proposal Revision."
- GSA's Contracting Officer will reject or accept your offer.
- If rejected, YOU must request a debriefing.
- If accepted, YOU will receive a GSA MAS Contract Number and a copy of your awarded contract.
- YOU will load information to GSA Advantage!®.
- YOU will market your new GSA MAS Contract Number.

Special Note: It is important to realize that an unacceptable offer may be rejected before the negotiation phase. See MAS solicitation clause A-FSS-11, Consideration of Offers Under Standing Solicitation. (please check with the Contracting Officer periodically to verify all clauses in case of a rewrite due to policy changes)

Sales Criteria

GSA will expect your company to exceed $25,000 in sales within the first two years after your contract is awarded, if sales do not exceed $25,000 within the first two years, the contract may be canceled due to low sales. Based on acquisition center research, it takes approximately this length of time to market products and services, establish a name, build relationships, or particularly for services, complete performance on orders. GSA will then expect sales to exceed $25, 000 in each successive 12-month period (See MAS solicitation clause I-FSS-639 Contract Sales Criteria.

Other sales criteria apply to the GSA MAS Express Program. (See www.gsa.gov/masexpress)

Registrations, Certifications, and Past Performance

Registering with all entities designed to enhance business opportunities and track procurement data is important. Please review the following sites and register your company where applicable.

Central Contractor Registration (CCR) The CCR is the primary vendor database for the Federal Government. All companies working with the Government must be registered. The CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions (www.ccr.gov or call 1 (888) 227-2423).

Small Business Administration (SBA) The SBA certifies businesses that claim disadvantaged, 8(a), and/or HUBZone designations. All paperwork must be filed through the SBA for business program recognition (www.sba.gov or call 1 (800) UASK-SBA).

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) The NAICS has replaced the U.S. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. NAICS was developed jointly by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to provide new comparability in statistics about business activity across North America. All vendors must use the appropriate NAICS code for the product or service they want to offer (www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html or call (301) 763-INFO (4636)).

Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) D&B provides a unique nine-digit identification called a DUNS Number. This number provides a business link for more than 70 million corporate family members around the world. It is recognized and required by the Federal Government (www.smallbusiness.dnb.com or call

(866) 472-7362 or email sbsSupport@dnb.com).

Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)
ORCA is a Federal requirement for vendors (FAR Subpart 4.12, Representations and Certifications). The purpose of ORCA is to reduce the administrative burden on vendors to submit the same paper-based representations and certifications for each solicitation. ORCA was developed as part of the Business Partner Network (BPN), which is a component of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) E-Gov initiative (https://orca.bpn.gov).

Past Performance Evaluations with Open Ratings Inc. Open Ratings is a private contractor GSA has hired to evaluate Past Performance under the GSA MAS Program. Open Ratings will survey customers and assign a score to a company, according to the customer's reply, for a nominal fee of $125.00. www.openratings.com .

Please contact Open Ratings Inc. to begin your Past Performance assessment:
600 First Avenue North, Ste. #200
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Customer Service Hotline: (727) 329-1184
Fax: (866) 743-4239
Email: reports@openratings.com
Web: www.ppereports.com

You will need to:

- Update or obtain DUNS Number BEFORE starting this process.
- Provide 6-20 customer contacts.* All customers provided MUST have an email address for contacting.
- Pay Open Ratings, Inc. $75.00 (includes one copy to your company and one to GSA). The report is good for a 12 month period.

* The contracting officer can evaluate past performance information provided by the vendor if an open ratings report cannot be obtained. Vendors must provide sufficient past performance information on which contracting officers can make a determination of responsibility in accordance with FAR Part 9.

GSA MAS Solicitations
A GSA Schedule or Multiple Award Schedule is a list of vendors that supply different generic categories of products and/or services. Each "Schedule" identifies the type of business the vendor performs. For example, companies that provide information technology products or services may apply to GSA Schedule 70, General Purpose Commercial Information Technology Equipment, Software, and Services. First you must identify which Schedule is appropriate for your company's products and/or services and then review the applicable solicitation.

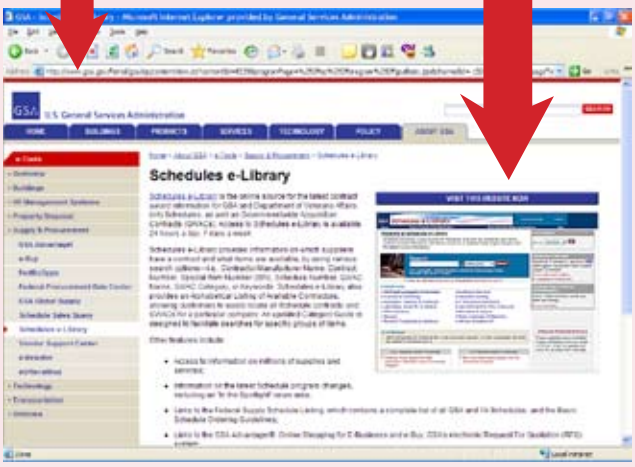
In some cases, a company may come across more than one GSA Schedule that seems suitable. If this happens, it is acceptable to apply for more than one contract, or apply for a single contract under the Consolidated Schedule. To learn more about the Consolidated Schedule, please visit www.gsa.gov/consolidated.

However, consider focusing on the one GSA MAS that would be most lucrative and apply for additional GSA MAS contracts after the first award. The following instructions will help with downloading the correct GSA MAS solicitation for your company:

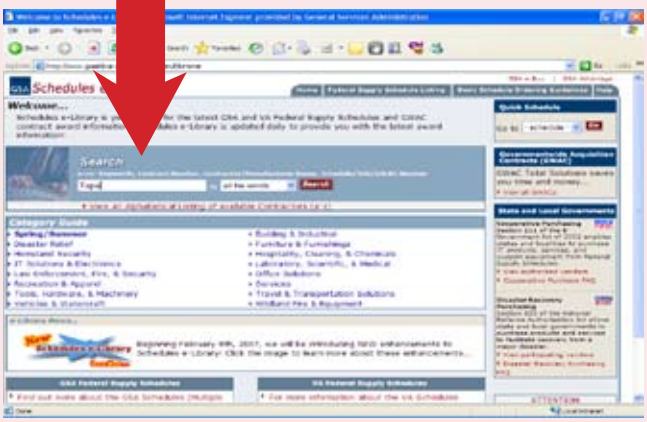
Instructions for downloading GSA MAS Solicitations
1. Identify the GSA MAS solicitation that MOST closely matches the products and/or services to be offered.

a. Visit www.gsa.gov/elibrary.

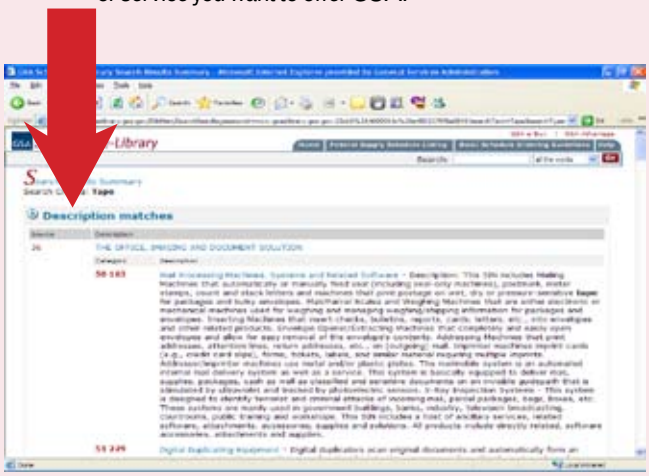
b. Enter the site by clicking on the blue bar.



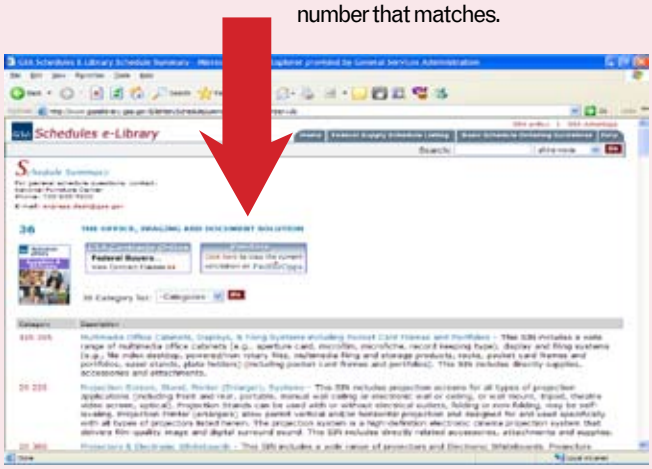
c. Type the company product/service in the search bar. For this example the product is "tape." Click on "Search."



d. Scroll down to read each description to determine the Schedule source or Schedule number that matches the product or service you want to offer GSA.



e. Click on the source or Schedule number that matches.



f. If you have any questions regarding the Schedule match, please call the number listed under "Schedule Summary" to clarify your choice.

g. If the source or Schedule number is clearly identified, click on the box that reads, "Vendors: Click here to view the current solicitation on FedBizOpps."

h. Download the solicitation and follow the instructions in the document.

The document may be filled out on the computer. Please see details in the solicitation for submission directions as they may vary between Acquisition Centers.

For questions about the downloading process, the solicitation requirements, or anything regarding the award process from this point forward, please contact the representative listed for the solicitation or call the National Customer Service Center on (800) 488-3111.

Submission, Evaluations, and Negotiations

Complete, sign, and date (see blocks 30a, b, and c of Standard Form 1449) and submit (see block 9 of Standard Form 1449 for address information) the solicitation/offer to GSA. The solicitation will be considered an "offer" once it is received by GSA. Only the person legally authorized to commit the company to a contract should sign and date the document. Your offer package may be returned if the offer does not include the appropriate signature.

GSA will review the offer to make sure it is complete. Negotiations are typically based upon the vendor's commercial prices. In order to determine the negotiation objective, GSA will review the vendor's commercial pricelist and pricing/discounting practices. Each offeror should provide discounts from its commercial prices that are comparable to the company's Most Favored Customer (MFC). The MFC is usually the customer currently receiving the highest discount. Contracting officers determine whether prices are fair and reasonable by comparing the prices, discounts, terms and conditions that the vendor offers the Government to the prices, discounts, terms and conditions the vendor provides to its commercial customers.

Once the offer has been reviewed and an analysis made regarding the prices, discounts, terms and conditions, GSA will set up a time to negotiate the offer. A Final Proposal Revision will be requested at the conclusion of the negotiations. This document will state the final offer including

concessions, additional discounts, or other changes. Award or Rejection, at this point in the process, will be based upon this final offer.

Offer Rejection or Contract Award
A company with a rejected offer may request a debriefing immediately upon notification, within 3 days, to determine why the offer was not acceptable for award by GSA (see FAR 15.5). Since GSA MAS solicitations are open continuously, you may make corrections and resubmit your offer at any time as a new application. However, the new submission will go through the normal review process.

If the offer is accepted, GSA will provide a contract number to the vendor, along with a copy of the contract.

Responsibility of Contractors Awarded a GSA MAS Contract
Awarded contract holders must prepare a GSA Schedule Pricelist for distribution and upload all pricing information to GSA Advantage!® (www.gsaadvantage.gov). Your GSA Schedule Pricelist contains those products and/or services, and prices, terms and conditions accepted by the Government. You will provide your GSA Schedule Pricelist to Government customers who are seeking to procure your products and/or services under the GSA MAS Program. See your GSA contract for pricelist format and other directions.

Also, visit the Vendor Support Center at www.gsa.gov/vsc and e-Buy at www.gsa.gov/e-buy for additional contracting support and benefits.

Market Your New GSA MAS Contract
GSA does not market vendors directly to Federal customers. Marketing is the biggest part of being successful under the GSA MAS Program. Please see Chapter 5, "Expanding Business Opportunities".

MAS Express

The Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Express Program is a specialized program established under the GSA Schedules Program. It is designed to simplify, streamline, and ultimately accelerate the process for vendors to obtain MAS contracts (also known as GSA Schedule and Federal Supply Schedule contracts).

Participation in the MAS Express Program is open to all business concerns, regardless of size, that meet specific criteria for certain products.

For those Schedules included in the MAS Express Program, vendors may access the online solicitations on FedBizOpps (www.fedbizopps.gov). Included in the online solicitation files for each Schedule is an "MAS Express Program Instructions" file that explains the criteria and procedures for submission of offers under the MAS Express Program, and identifies the Special Item Numbers (SINs) under each Schedule that are part of the program.

For more information about the MAS Express Program, please visit www.gsa.gov/masexpress.

FedBizOpps

FedBizOpps is a mandatory source for posting/advertising Federal Government procurement opportunities over $25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business requirements by posting information directly to this site.

If you are looking to find procurement opportunities from agency sources, please visit FedBizOpps on www.fedbizopps.gov.

Developing Partnerships

There are many great resources for partnering to increase experience and visibility.

Contractor Team Arrangements (CTAs)
A GSA Schedule Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA) is an arrangement between two or more GSA Schedule contractors to work together to meet agency requirements. The CTA document is a written agreement between team members detailing the responsibilities of each team member. The CTA allows the contractor to meet the Government agency needs by providing a total solution that combines the supplies and/or services from the team members' separate GSA Schedule contracts. It permits contractors to complement each other's capabilities to compete for orders for which they may not independently qualify. A customer benefits from a CTA by buying a solution rather than making separate buys from various contractors.

To learn more about CTAs please visit www.gsa.gov/cta.

Subcontracting Relationships
If you are a small company, there are many benefits to working with a large business. The visibility and experience alone are worth the effort much less the mentoring and growth of your employees.

Pursuant to the Small Business Act, as amended by Public Law 95-507, large business prime contractors receiving Federal contracts valued at over $1 million for construction, $550,000 for all other contracts, are required to establish plans and goals for subcontracting with small business firms.

To learn more about subcontracting opportunities and find potential partners, please visit www.gsa.gov/subdirectory.

Partnerships and Agreements
Contractor Team Arrangements (CTAs) and Subcontracting are both useful tools for partnering. However, there are also partnerships of more than one small company or more than one large. There are companies who act as a Parent/Mentor to another company and other agreements that happen in the business community.

To find GSA Schedule partners, please visit www.gsa.gov/elibrary

Sealed Bidding

Sealed Bidding is a method of contracting that uses competitive bids, public opening of bids and awards. Information regarding Sealed Bidding is available in FAR Part 14 (www.acquisition.gov/far)

chapter 5 Expanding Business Opportunities

Marketing Tools for Small Businesses

There are a myriad of tools available to companies to help navigate the information sources. However, locating those tools can be challenging. We hope the following will shed some light on these resources.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides information to all categories of business. Some of the information provided by SBA includes, SBA office locator, financial consultation, training and much more – www.sba.gov.

FedBizOpps is the online resource for Federal solicitations and other business opportunities – www.fedbizopps.gov.

USA.Gov is an easy, one-stop access to all online Federal Government resources with keyword search capability – www.usa.gov.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) aids in formation, growth, and success of small business – www.score.org.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) provide management, finance and planning support – www.sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html.

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) provides access to markets, capital, assistance, training and more – www.mbda.gov.

The Department of Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) promotes contracting activity between small business, Government prime contractors, and the Government - www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm.

GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), and Public Buildings Service (PBS), provide information on all GSA Business Lines - www.gsa.gov/fas, www.gsa.gov/pbs,.

The Vendor Support Center is a special place for getting GSA Schedule sales information, links to important downloads and more – www.gsa.gov/vsc.

Office of Management and Budget has information on Federal spending and other valuable items of interest – www.whitehouse.gov/omb/index.html.

SBA's SUB-Net is an excellent resource for marketing and business opportunities . sba.gov/subnet.

GSA Advantage!® is the one-stop online shopping service developed by GSA for Federal customers. e-Buy, a component of GSA Advantage!®, allows Federal customers to request quotations from contractors who are registered on GSA Advantage!® www.gsaadvantage.gov.

Proposal Basics

When responding to a solicitation, we suggest considering the following:

- Consider, as a courtesy, contacting the contracting office, if you do not plan to submit a proposal.
- Follow the instructions provided by the Statement of Work (SOW) and read the proposal thoroughly. This instruction might seem elementary, but not following directions is an easy mistake to make.
- Respond to the solicitation in the manner in which the solicitation requires; i.e., past performance requirements, length of proposal, font, etc. Ensure that the final product is neat, easy to read, and is submitted prior to the due date.
- Follow up on the receipt of your offer within two weeks of the submission date to identify points of contact while going through the award process.

The Capability Statement

While a statement of your abilities is a positive inclusion in any correspondence, it may or may not be desired. Please contact your Contracting Officer before submitting any documents that are not requested. However, for general marketing effort, consider including one or more of these points in a one page insert or pamphlet:

- Company Overview (what you do)
- Specialties (what makes you different)
- Clients (name dropping)
- Contract Types
- Certifications
- Bonds, Warranty, Clearances or Insurance (as applicable)
- Company Highlights
- References (short quotes of customer comments)
- NAICS (Federal codes with descriptions)

Seeking Subcontracting Opportunities

While having a contract for your company is the most ideal situation for both financial and autonomous reasons, consider subcontracting as an alternate source of revenue.

- Register with the CCR to be easily identified as a potential subcontractor or to find companies to create subcontracting relationships – www.ccr.gov.
- Review a detailed list of subcontracting opportunities around the nation - www.gsa.gov/subdirectory
- Find partners under the GSA MAS Program - www.gsa.gov/elibrary.
- Utilize www.gsa.gov/elibrary to develop subcontracting opportunities with GSA MAS Vendors. Large companies participating in the GSA MAS Program have subcontracting requirements.

That means they have formal plans to utilize small businesses in the course of fulfilling their requirements. Each plan identifies the percent of work they will give to small business.

Contractor Team Arrangements (CTA)

CTAs provide opportunities for companies to work together to respond to a procurement. In the case of the GSA MAS Program, Schedule contractors are considered prime contractors regardless of their business size. Each Schedule contractor can have a piece of a project and get paid individually according to the company's GSA Schedule contract. Visit www.gsa.gov/cta for more information.

Participating in Outreach Activities

Visibility is the best way to make an impression. It's hard to convince agencies to try your product or service if they have never heard of you. GSA offers many events for all business sizes. Our largest annual event is the GSA Expo, which hosts more than 10,000 agency customers every year. Please visit the following event sites for more information:

- General Services Administration - www.gsa.gov/events
- GSA EXPO - www.expo.gsa.gov
- Small Business Events - www.gsa.gov/sbu

Steps to Success

To succeed with Government contracting, you must ask the right questions. Below is a list of questions to consider before contacting a potential customer:

- What products or services will this customer likely buy?
- Who will be our competition?
- What marketing techniques will work best?
- Who can help with the research?
- Where are the contracting opportunities for this office?
- Who has the authority to purchase in this office?

Plan your strategies carefully. There are definite steps to take. The following highlights the key steps to success in contracting with the Federal Government.

- Define your expertise.
- Determine those products and services that reflect your expertise.
- Provide quality products and/or services. The Federal Government is seeking best value for its contracted dollars, not just the lowest price.
- Bookmark www.acquisition.gov/far in order to access the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and familiarize yourself with the parts of the FAR that are referenced in this handbook such as Subpart 4.11, Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and Subpart 4.12, Representations and Certifications. Make sure to review Subpart 19, which refers specifically to small business programs. The FAR is the primary regulation that all Federal executive agencies follow when purchasing products and services. However, be sure to review agency supplemental regulations to the FAR, since some agencies may have deviations from the FAR to better fit their agency missions.
- Register at the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) www.ccr.gov. All Government agencies require vendors to be registered in the CCR prior to doing business with the Government.
- Before you submit a proposal, please read the solicitation carefully to be sure your company can meet the requirements of the contract. Respond to all information requested in the solicitation. If help is needed, contact the Contracting Office identified in the solicitation.
- Make certain that your submissions are current, complete and accurate.
- Additional assistance to consider:
  SBA - www.sba.gov

  Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) -sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html

  Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) - www.score.org

  Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) - www.aptac-us.org/new/index.php

  GSA's SBTAs and Regional SBCUs - www.gsa.gov/sbu
- Focus your marketing efforts and identify appropriate buying activities by checking on past history of procurements for your products and services based on award data. The Federal Procurement Data System, Next Generation, found at https://www.fpds.gov, reports statistics on Federal agency procurements.
- The GSA Schedule Sales Query (SSQ) enables you to easily access the sales reported by the GSA Schedule contractors. To create reports, please visit ssq.gsa.gov.

Tips to Increasing Revenue

Small businesses are striving more than ever to change the standards of expectation in the Federal market. These businesses are keenly aware that the key to satisfying a customer is exceeding the customer's expectation. The following tips will provide a good start in doing just that:

- Provide quality products and services.
- Obtain SBA Certification for all eligible programs, such as:

  8(a), HUBZone, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB).
- Develop an effective marketing plan.
- Identify your business type on brochures and business cards.
- Have multiple contracting vehicles in place, such as:
  State, Local, and Federal contracts

  Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) (Technology)

  GSA Schedule Contracts (Commercial products and services)

  Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) (Reccurring requirements)

  Micro-purchase (Up to $3000 with exceptions)

  Simplified acquisitions (Up to $100,000 with exception)

  Private sector contracts (Other than Government)
- Accept the Government's purchase card

- Accept Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).
- Monitor agency websites for useful contracting information, events, and opportunities.
- Network! Network! Network!

Top Ten Federal Spenders

The Federal Government spends billions of dollars annually in the acquisition of products and services. We suggest you use these websites to find out more about Federal contracting opportunities specific to these agencies.

- Department of Defense - www.dod.gov or www.defenselink.mil
- Department of Homeland Security - www.dhs.gov
- Department of Veterans Affairs - www.va.gov
- Department of Health and Human Services - www.hhs.gov
- Department of Agriculture - www.usda.gov
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration - www.nasa.gov
- General Services Administration - www.gsa.gov
- Department of Justice - www.usdoj.gov
- Department of the Interior - www.interior.gov
- Department of Energy - www.doe.gov

Contracting Basics

- Attend vendor training sessions provided by Government agencies.
- Conduct market research to identify potential customers, end users and competitors.
- Assess your ability to compete in the Federal marketplace.
- Identify current contract holders in your industry for partnering and teaming opportunities.
- Respond to synopses and solicitations from FedBizOpps (www.fedbizopps.gov).
- Look at historical data and ask questions.
- Submit your proposal and other required information before the due date — follow all instructions.
- Attend agency conferences, workshops and seminars.
- Use Federal information resources to identify events and opportunities.
- Gain an understanding of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) by visiting www.acquisition.gov/far.
- Expedite the award process by checking status regularly.
- Request a debriefing immediately after any offer is rejected.

Suggestions for Optimizing Competition

- Be innovative
- Practice quality management
- Invest in human capital - employee retention
- Provide superior customer service
- Ensure financial soundness
- Practice social responsibility - charity, fundraisers
- Employ technology to:
  - Reduce cost
  - Reduce inventory
  - Speed product delivery
  - Identify value perspective for customers, employees and suppliers
- Be flexible and seek out new markets
- Participate in conferences, expos, workshops, and seminars

Agency Locator Help

GSA developed a one source location for all Government information. Whatever you want or need from the U.S. Government, it is available on one site. You will find a treasure of online information and services. Please visit www.usa.gov to explore this extensive resource.

Suggestions for Meeting with Agency Officials

While one-on-one meetings are an excellent resource for visibility and sharing information about your company, there are positive and negative ways to this approach. The following is a list of suggestions for making the best of meeting face-to-face.

Do your homework:

- Know the agency and its buying practices
- Understand that each office is individual and, therefore, has individual needs
- Make sure there is a need for what you have to offer
- Call ahead
- Speak to the person with whom you are interested in meeting
- Do not push a meeting if that is not the customer's desire
- Meet at a time and place of the customer's convenience

Showing Up

- Be on time – not early, not late
- Give a warm and firm but gentle handshake
- Introduce yourself and anyone with you
- Have a business card available after the handshake

The Meeting

- Listen more than you speak
- Answer questions thoroughly
- Have questions prepared in writing (provide ahead of time if possible)
- Make eye contact while speaking and listening
- Monitor your time and try to leave when scheduled
- Be respectful
- Avoid foul language and coarse joking

Leaving

- Note the time
- Be gracious for the time spent
- Give a firm but gentle handshake good-bye
- Understand that some meetings are more for visibility than for sales
- Plan to follow up on all suggestions

Follow-Up

- Send a "Thank You" note to the persons with whom you met and their boss within

one week of the visit.

- Follow up with all suggestions that were provided to you and send an email outlining the areas that you chose to follow and any positive outcome that was a direct result of the advice.
- Plan to meet again if appropriate to ask additional questions and discuss future plans.

Obtaining Grants and Other Financial Support

A Grant means an award of financial assistance, including cooperative agreements, in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible grantee.

GSA does not provide grants to small businesses. However, due to frequent requests for information, we have provided the following helpful resources.

SBA

www.sba.gov

Under Section 7(j) of the Small Business Act, SBA is authorized to provide management and technical assistance, through grants and cooperative agreements to qualified service providers. The Agency is not authorized to award grants to assist individuals to start, operate, expand, rebuild, or purchase a business. The management and technical assistance includes specialized training, professional consulting, and executive development. The qualified service providers deliver the training and technical assistance to eligible firms and individuals participating in SBA's Business Development Program, other small disadvantaged businesses, low income individuals, and firms in either labor surplus areas or areas with a high proportion of low-income individuals.

Please see www.sba.gov/gcbd/7j.html for more information on the 7(j) program.

In addition, SBA provides a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses including 7(a), 504, and disaster assistance loans. Eligibility requirements vary with SBA's loan programs, surety bonds, and other programs.

Please visit www.sba.gov/services/financialassistance/index.html for more information.

Grants.gov

www.grants.gov

Grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for more than $400 billion in Federal grants.

CFDA
(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance)

www.cfda.gov

chapter 6 Purchasing Federal Property

The online Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance gives you access to a database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; Territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.

GSA Auctions®

The sale of Government Property can provide big savings to a small business. Below are some conditions of purchasing Federal property at auction. For more information, please visit www.gsaauctions.gov.

Eligibility of Bidders

Bidders must be at least 18 years of age.

Registration

A credit card is required for all registered users in our online community. Credit card validation assists in the prevention of fraudulent bidding activity and ensures that bidders are prepared to accept responsibility for their bidding activity and all submitted bids are valid. This card number is recorded but will not be automatically charged if a bidder is the successful bidder of an item. For security reasons and to prevent fraudulent bidding activities, all registered bidders are subject to billing address verification. No P.O. Box address will be accepted unless accompanied by a street address. By entering the credit card information, you are attesting you are an authorized user of the card.

Submission of Bid

Bids are only accepted in whole U.S. Dollar amounts. Do not enter dollar signs ($) commas (,) or cents (¢). Bidding will begin and end at the dates and times specified for each lot in the GSAAuctions.gov website. Please note: The times displayed at GSA Auctions® are in Central time. In addition, certain auctions are designed to extend the closing time if there is bidding activity. Bidders are urged to review the bidding rules and enhanced bidding logic at GSA Auctions® for auction details. It is the responsibility of the bidder to follow up on the status of his/her bid.

Tax

Purchasers of Federal personal property may be subject to payment of a State sales and/or use tax. The U.S. Government is not responsible for collection of State taxes. Purchasers may obtain information from a State tax office.

chapter 7 Electronic Business

Doing business electronically consists primarily of the distributing, buying, selling, marketing, and servicing of products or services over electronic systems such as the Internet and other computer networks. The information technology industry might see it as an electronic business application aimed at commercial transactions; in this context, it can involve electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, e-marketing, online marketing, online transaction processing, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), automated inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. Electronic commerce typically uses electronic communications technology of the World Wide Web, at some point in the transaction's lifecycle, although of course electronic commerce frequently depends on computer technologies other than the World Wide Web, such as databases, and email, and on other non-computer technologies, such as transportation for physical products sold via e-commerce.

Sources

GSA uses many sources for electronic business. Some of these include:

- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
- Data Interchange Standards Association (DISA)
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)
- Governmentwide Point of Entry (GPE)
- To learn more about electronic business sources, please visit www.egov.gov .

GSA SmartPay®

The GSA SmartPay® Program Office manages contracts that allow agencies to obtain purchase, travel, and fleet charge cards to support their mission needs. Vendors are encouraged to accept the Government credit card. GSA Multiple Award Schedule Contractors are required to accept the Government credit card for purchase up to the micro-purchase threshold.

The GSA SmartPay® Program website is designed to provide program related information for cardholders, card program managers, and the public.

To learn more about this program, please visit www.gsa.gov/smartpay.

GSA Advantage! ®

With over 11 million state-of-the-art high-quality commercial products and services, GSA Advantage!® provides the most convenient one-stop shopping source to meet agencies' procurement needs.

To learn more about GSA Advantage!® please visit www.gsaadvantage.gov .

Chapter 8 Regulatory Controls

GSA like other Federal agencies is governed by policies and regulations. While extensive in nature, many of the resources for understanding the regulations have become more accessible. To learn more about the policies and regulations that affect contracting opportunities, please visit www.acquisition.gov. Some of the more direct regulatory controls include the:

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)

www.acquisition.gov/far

The FAR was established to codify uniform policies for acquisition of supplies and services by executive agencies. It is issued and maintained jointly, pursuant to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Reauthorization Act, under the statutory authorities granted to the Secretary of Defense, Administrator of General Services, and the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Statutory authorities to issue and revise the FAR have been delegated to the Procurement Executives in DoD, GSA and NASA.

The GSA FAR Secretariat publishes the FAR on behalf of all three FAR issuing agencies. The GSA Federal Acquisition Policy Division maintains the FAR Secretariat to act as the publication and administrative support arm of the FAR. The webpage www.acquisition.gov/far is produced by the FAR Secretariat using material that has been published in the FAR loose-leaf edition. The official FAR appears in the Code of Federal Regulations at 48 CFR Chapter 1.

General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM)

www.gsa.gov/gsam

The General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM) consolidates the General Services Administration (GSA) agency acquisition rules and policies.

The GSAM incorporates the General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation (GSAR) as well as internal agency acquisition policy. GSAR material is shaded. The shading helps users to distinguish and identify those parts that are regulatory from those that apply internally to GSA.

The shaded parts are those subject to section 22 of the Office Federal Procurement Policy Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. 418b). GSA must publish these rules in the Federal Register and codify them in 48 CFR Chapter 5 in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3051 et seq.) and the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). The rules that require publication fall into two major categories:

(1) Those that affect GSA's business partners (e.g., prospective offerors, contractors).

(2) Those that apply to acquisition of leasehold interests in real property. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) does not apply to leasing actions. GSA establishes regulations for lease of real property under the authority of 40 U.S.C. 490 note.

Non-shaded material is non-regulatory, but occasionally includes requirements that are mandatory for GSA personnel. These requirements are necessary to ensure uniformity or for other reasons.

To the extent practicable, acquisition directives have been integrated into one document to eliminate the burden of checking multiple sources for related acquisition guidance.

Federal Register (FR)

www.gpoaccess.gov/fr

Published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. It is updated daily by 6 a.m. and is published Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. GPO Access contains Federal Register volumes from 59 (1994) to the present.

Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP)

www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement

The Federal Government spends approximately $350 billion annually for a wide range of products and services to meet mission needs. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) in the Office of Management and Budget plays a central role in shaping the policies and practices Federal agencies use to acquire the products and services they need to carry out their responsibilities. OFPP was established by Congress in 1974 to provide overall direction for Governmentwide procurement policies, regulations, and procedures, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in acquisition processes. OFPP is headed by an Administrator who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Through a variety of statutory authorities and results-oriented policy initiatives, OFPP seeks to ensure the Federal acquisition system provides the best value to the taxpayer. Current priorities are designed to provide for a better skilled and more agile workforce, consistent and effective use of competition, contract vehicles that reflect the Government's buying power, and a data system that gives Federal managers the information they need to evaluate results and plan effectively for the future.

Section 508 Compliance

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology

accessible to people with disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals.The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508 (29 U.S.C. 794d), agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others. To learn more about Section 508, please visit www.gsa.gov/section508.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits any person to request access to Federal agency records or information. Federal agencies are required to disclose records upon receipt of a written request, except for records that may be protected from disclosure under the Act.

To learn more about requesting a FOIA, please visit www.gsa.gov/foia.

Protest, Disputes, and Appeals

The Federal Acquisition Regulation specifically identifies policy regarding the process for filing protest, disputes, and appeals. Please see FAR Part 33, Subparts 33.1 and 33.2 by visiting www.acquisition.gov/far.

Chapter 9 Educational Opportunities

The following is a list of resources available to obtain contracting information in a classroom or online training medium.

General Services Administration (GSA)

GSA provides a myriad of educational opportunities for all business sizes. For more information about GSA outreach and other events, please visit www.gsa.gov/events.

GSA's Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU)

OSBU's outreach activities make it possible for the small business community to meet key contracting experts and be counseled on the procurement process. These activities include:

- Procurement networking sessions
- Marketing strategies and techniques workshops
- Electronic commerce/electronic data interchange training sessions
- Interagency networking breakfasts
- Trade missions
- Roundtables
- Procurement conferences

Business activities are supported by program experts at GSA headquarters through Small Business Utilization Centers in 11 Regional Offices as well as by small business technical advisors in the GSA National Office. GSA Regional Offices are located in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Denver, San Francisco, Auburn (Washington), Washington, DC. (See Chapter 1 for details.)

For a copy of the OSBU's calendar of events, please visit www.gsa.gov/sbu and access "GSA Events."

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA provides numerous and inexpensive resources for educating the small business. Training is held both online and through counseling sessions.

Online

"…The Small Business Training Network (SBTN) is a virtual campus providing quality and targeted online training to meet the information needs of prospective and existing small business owners.

It is an E-Government initiative, powering a comprehensive menu of business courses, designed to serve more customers, more efficiently. The Training Network operates like an electronic umbrella under which many SBA and agency resource training programs are captured, aggregated, sorted by content and made available in multiple formats…." (www.sba.gov/services/training/index.html)

Counseling

"…The SBA provides small business counseling and training through a variety of programs and resource partners, located strategically around the country…." (www.sba.gov/services/counseling/index.html)

Vendor Support Center

"The Vendor Support Center (VSC) is the online source for vendors to obtain information, review and report sales, and more. The VSC website contains a wealth of information to assist both GSA Schedule and Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) contractors in fulfilling the contract administration requirements of their respective contracts. Online information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." www.gsa.gov/vsc

Center for Acquisition Excellence

The Center of Acquisition Excellence is available free of charge, 24 hours, 7 days a week to provide all customers with information that is relevant to GSA procurements. For more information, please visit www.gsa.gov/cae

Appendix A Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between GSA Schedules, Federal Supply Schedules, GSA Contracts and Multiple Award Schedules?

The actual name of the program is "General Services Administration Multiple Award Schedules Program" (GSA MAS Program). "GSA Contracts" of course can refer to far more than GSA Schedule contracts, however for the purpose of clarifying the GSA MAS Program name, please note that we do use these names interchangeably. The original name of the program was Federal Supply Schedules Program (under which we have both Single Award and Multiple Award Schedules). The term "Federal Supply" in "Federal Supply Schedules" does not relate to the former Federal Supply Service, but, rather to the Federal Supply Classification System. However, since the program name is extremely long, many short versions of the name have developed over time. Once a vendor is on the "Schedule" they have a contract, therefore "GSA Contract" indicates a GSA MAS Contract that is current under the program.

When do you need a GSA MAS Contract?

You need a GSA MAS contract when you are trying to sell your products or services to Federal agencies that only want to buy from the GSA MAS Program. Without a contract from GSA in your company name, you are not authorized to sell under this program.

What are the differences between GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contracts, Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), and Multi-Agency contracts (MACS)?

There are many contract types with GSA. The following identifies three different contract types:

GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS)
GSA awards and administers GSA MAS contracts pursuant to Title III of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 USC 251, et. seq) and 40 USC 501. Commercial vendors provide millions of commercial services and products through these contracts.

MAS contracts are available to Federal buyers worldwide. Additionally, certain MAS contracts are available to State and Local Governments for certain products and services. These agencies place orders directly with GSA MAS contractors. See FAR Subpart 8.4 (www.acquisition.gov/far).

Government Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC's)
Task order or delivery order contracts for information technology established by one agency for government wide use. Each GWAC is operated by an executive agent designated by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to section 5112(e) of the Clinger-Cohen Act. See FAR 2.101 (www.acquisition.gov/far)

Multi Agency Contracts (MAC's)
Task order or delivery order contracts are established by one agency for use by government agencies to obtain a variety of supplies and services. The Economy Act [Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 17.5] applies to orders placed under MAC's, with the exception of MAC's for information technology that are established pursuant to the Clinger-Cohen Act. See Far 2.101 (www.acquisition.gov/far)

Who is eligible to use GSA MAS contracts?

The GSA Order ADM 4800.2E, 1/3/2000 identifies eligible users of the GSA MAS contracts:

- Executive and Other Federal Agencies
- Mixed-Ownership Government Corporations (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Federal Home Loan Banks, etc.)
- The District of Columbia
- Cost Reimbursable Government Contractors authorized in writing by a Federal agency (48 CFR 51.1)
- State and Local Governments through Cooperative and Disaster Recovery Purchasing. www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing

How does GSA determine if vendors are offering prices that are fair and reasonable to Federal Customers?

GSA MAS contracts are negotiated with the goal of obtaining "Most Favored Customer" (MFC) pricing/discounts. While the MFC is often the vendor's best commercial customer and receives the highest discount, such is not always the case. Per GSAR 538.270(a), "The Government will seek to obtain offeror's best price (the best price given to the most favored customer). However, the Government recognizes that the terms and conditions of commercial sales vary and there may be legitimate reasons why the best price is not achieved." Paragraph (c) of the GSAR language contains factors that are considered when the Government determines its price negotiation objectives. GSA's goal is to acquire equal to or better than the MFC's discount. (www.acquisition.gov)

How easy is it for customers to purchase from GSA Schedule contracts compared to procurement on the open market?

Purchasing from GSA MAS contracts offers the following advantages over procuring on the open market:

- GSA has determined prices under MAS contracts to be fair and reasonable.
- Synopses are not required for MAS

purchases.

- MAS contracts have been awarded in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Administrative time is reduced.
- MAS contracts offer a wide selection of state-of-the-art commercial products and services.

How are the procedures for ordering supplies under GSA Schedule contracts different from the procedures for ordering services?

Although the Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work (SOW) (FAR 8.405-1) differ from the Ordering Procedures for Services Requiring a Statement of Work (SOW) (FAR 8.405-2), both sets of procedures are designed to simplify the acquisition process.

- **For orders of supplies and/or services at, or below, the micro-purchase threshold:**

  Place the order with any Schedule contractor that can meet the agency's needs. Though not required to solicit from a specific number of Schedule contractors, ordering activities should attempt to distribute orders among contractors (FAR 8.405).

- **For orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, but not exceeding the maximum order threshold:**

  Supplies, and Services Not Requiring an SOW: Survey at least three Schedule contractors through the GSA Advantage!® online shopping service or review the catalogs or pricelists of at least three Schedule contractors and seek additional price reductions where appropriate; evaluate; and make a best value selection.

  Services Requiring an SOW: Prepare a Request for Quotation (RFQ) that includes the statement of work and the evaluation criteria; transmit the request to at least three Schedule contractors; evaluate responses; and make a best value selection.

Note: Each Schedule contract has a maximum order threshold, which will vary by special item number. The maximum order threshold represents the point where, given the dollar value of the potential order, the ordering activity shall seek a price reduction.

- **For orders exceeding the maximum order threshold or when establishing a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA):**

  Supplies, and Services Not Requiring an SOW: Follow the same procedures for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, except review additional Schedule contractors' pricelists (the GSA Advantage!® online shopping service may be used to facilitate this review); evaluate; seek price reductions; and make a best value selection.

  Services Requiring an SOW: Follow the same procedures for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, except transmit the RFQ (including the statement of work and evaluation criteria) to additional Schedule contractors that offer services that will meet the needs of the ordering activity; evaluate responses (using the evaluation criteria provided in the RFQ); seek price reductions; and make a best value selection. When determining the appropriate number of additional Schedule contractors, the ordering activity may consider the complexity, scope, and estimated value of the requirement, and the market search results.

Note: Department of Defense (DoD) offices and non-DoD activities placing orders or establishing Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) for supplies and services on behalf of DoD must comply with the additional requirements under Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 208.405-70.

What is GSA Advantage!® and are all GSA MAS contractors required to participate?

GSA Advantage!® is an online shopping and ordering system that includes products and services under all of the GSA Multiple Award Schedules, Veterans Administration (VA) Schedules and GSA Global Supply items . With over 11 million products and services currently available, electronic ordering through GSA Advantage!® allows a customer to send an order directly to the GSA Schedule contractor, creating a direct customer-contractor relationship.

All GSA Schedule contractors must be registered with GSA Advantage!®

To learn more about GSA Advantage!®, please visit www.gsaadvantage.gov.

What is e-Buy?

e-Buy is an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool designed to facilitate the request for submission of quotations for a wide range of commercial supplies and services offered by GSA Schedule and Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) contractors.

e-Buy allows Federal agencies (buyers) to maximize their buying power by leveraging the power of the Internet to increase Schedule contractor participation in order to obtain quotations that will result in a best value purchase decision. e-Buy provides Schedule contractors (sellers) with greater opportunities to offer quotations and increase business volume for supplies and services provided under their Schedule contracts. e-Buy streamlines the buying process with point-and-click functionality by allowing RFQs and responses to be exchanged electronically between Federal agencies and GSA Schedule/GWAC contractors. In short, e-Buy provides both agencies and contractors with a tool that will result in savings of both time and money.

Can GSA Schedules meet all of my needs? Even large or complex requirements? How can I be certain that the supplies or services I need, including new technology, are always available under Schedule contracts?

With over 11 million commercial supplies and services available under the program, GSA Schedule contracts can meet the vast majority of a customer's needs. For those large or complex requirements, GSA Schedule contractors can join with other GSA Schedule contract holders and submit a total solution to meet a customer's needs under a Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA). In addition, GSA Schedule contractors may request that their contracts be modified at any time during the contract period to add new supplies and services to meet a customer's requirements. The modification process ensures that the latest technology is always available to the customer. Schedule contract periods are as long as five years with three five-year option periods to provide for continued sources of supplies and services. Most GSA Schedule solicitations are now continuously open, enabling new companies to submit offers at any time, and further ensuring that customers have, not only a variety of supplies and services to meet their requirements, but also the latest technology available in the commercial marketplace.

Can items NOT on a GSA Schedule contract be included on a Schedule order?

Yes, under certain circumstances. Open market items are also known as incidental items, non-contract items, non-Schedule items, and items not on a GSA Schedule contract. In accordance with FAR 8.402(f), for administrative convenience, an ordering activity contracting officer may add items not on the GSA Schedule contract—i.e., open market items—to a GSA Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) or an individual task or delivery order **only if—**

- All applicable acquisition regulations pertaining to the purchase of the items not on the GSA Schedule contract have been followed (e.g., publicizing (FAR Part 5), competition requirements (FAR Part 6), acquisition of commercial items (FAR Part 12), contracting methods (FAR Parts 13, 14, and 15), and small business programs (FAR Part 19);
- The ordering activity contracting officer has determined the prices for the items not on the GSA Schedule contract are fair and reasonable;
- The items are clearly labeled on the order as items not on the GSA Schedule contract; and
- All clauses applicable to items not on the GSA Schedule contract are included in the order.

Sometimes I need delivery right away. Can I get it using GSA Schedule contracts?

GSA Schedule contracts have the same delivery times as the contractors' commercial delivery times. GSA Schedule contracts may also contain expedited delivery terms, or customers may request expedited delivery to meet their requirements.

What is a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) under a GSA Schedule contract?

A GSA Schedule BPA is an agreement established by a customer with a GSA Schedule contractor to fill repetitive needs for supplies or services (FAR 8.405-3). It simplifies the filling of recurring needs, while leveraging a customer's buying power by taking advantage of quantity discounts, saving administrative time, and reducing paperwork.

A BPA can be set up for use by field offices across the nation, thus allowing them to participate in an agency's BPA and place orders directly with GSA Schedule contractors. In doing so, the entire agency reaps the benefits of additional discounts negotiated into the BPA.

A multi-agency BPA is also permitted if the BPA identifies the participating agencies and their estimated requirements at the time the BPA is established.

A BPA may be established under a Contractor Team Arrangement.

Some ordering activities are issuing GSA Schedule BPAs for millions of dollars. Is there a dollar amount too large for GSA Schedule BPA procedures? Is there a limit on the dollar value of an order placed against a BPA?

The monetary limitation of a GSA Schedule BPA is determined by the underlying competition conducted by the ordering activity when establishing the BPA. The same ordering procedures outlined in FAR 8.405 apply to the establishment of a GSA Schedule BPA (FAR 8.405-3(a)(2)). Based upon the potential volume of orders under the BPA, ordering activities may be able to obtain greater discounts, regardless of the size of individual orders. The ordering activity shall conduct an annual review of the GSA Schedule BPA to determine whether—

- The underlying Schedule contract is still in effect;
- The BPA still represents the best value; and
- Estimated quantities/amounts have been exceeded and additional price reductions can be obtained.

The ordering activity shall document the results of its review.

Are GSA MAS contractors required to accept the Governmentwide commercial purchase card for payment?

GSA Schedule contractors are required to accept the purchase card for payments equal to or less than the micro-purchase threshold. GSA Schedule contractors are also encouraged to accept the card for dollar amounts above the micro-purchase threshold. Ordering activities may consider purchase card acceptance when deciding which contractor represents the best value.

The use of the Government purchase card is preferred among most agencies due to its

convenient payment method. To learn more about the Government purchase card, please visit www.gsa.gov/smartpay.

When a Government customer places an order against my GSA MAS contract, does it meet Competition in Contracting Act of 1984 (CICA) requirements?

In accordance with FAR 6.102(d)(3), use of the GSA Schedules Program is considered a "competitive procedure" under CICA when the GSA Schedule ordering procedures are followed—i.e., the Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work (FAR 8.405-1) or the Ordering Procedures for Services Requiring a Statement of Work (FAR 8.405-2).

What is a Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA) under the GSA MAS Program?

A CTA under the MAS Program is an arrangement in which two or more MAS contractors join together to provide a total solution to meet a customer's needs. Orders placed under a CTA are subject to the terms and conditions of each team member's GSA MAS contract.

For more information, please visit www.gsa.gov/cta.

Are all products and services offered under GSA Schedule contracts compliant with the Trade Agreements Act?

Yes. All products and services offered under GSA Schedule contracts are evaluated and awarded in accordance with the Trade Agreements Act (FAR 25.4).

As an ordering activity contracting officer, can I terminate an order against a Schedule contract?

Yes. In accordance with FAR 8.406-4 and 8.406-5, respectively, an ordering activity contracting officer may terminate an order for cause or for the convenience of the government. Such terminations shall comply with FAR 12.403. The GSA Schedule contracting officer shall be notified in all cases where an order has been terminated for cause or fraud is suspected.

If I have limited labor categories to offer for my GSA Schedule contract, how can I add more labor categories at a later time?

Additional labor categories can be added through a modification process after your contract has been awarded.

Where can I obtain more information regarding GSA Multiple Award Schedules?

To view a wealth of information on GSA Multiple Award Schedules and other programs, visit the Center for Acquisition Excellence. cae.gsa.gov.

What are some characteristics of an ideal GSA MAS offer?

While every contract has different requirements and may or may not need all of the following list, we have provided some basic guidelines for an "ideal" GSA MAS offer:

- Adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them.
- Complies with the required or proposed delivery or performance of GSA MAS, taking into consideration all existing commercial and Governmental business commitments.
- Satisfactory performance record and current customers consisting of both commercial and Government
- Satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- Excellent organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them.
- Production, construction, and technical equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them.
- Meets solicitation requirements and the prices are fair and reasonable.
- Current annual sales of $25,000 or more.
- Successful company ownership

What is the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF)?

The IFF is a fee paid by customers to cover GSA's cost of operating the Federal Supply Schedules program. The fee is a percentage of reported sales under Schedules contracts.

What are some additional items I should be aware of in applying for a GSA MAS Contract?

While there will always be areas of consideration, the following note the focus of the Contracting Officer before making an award:

- The vendor is responsible.
- The pricing of the products or services covered by the contract is fair and reasonable.
- Agreement has been reached on all other terms and conditions for the proposed contract.
- All necessary signatures have been obtained.
- Necessary actions relating to contract award have been completed.

How does the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide medical related contracts through the Schedules Program?

Medical Products and Services Schedules are provided under a special agreement. GSA has delegated management responsibility for medical products and services under the Schedules Program to the VA.

The VA Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) is responsible for establishing, soliciting, awarding, and administering the VA's Federal Supply Schedules Program. VA's Schedules encompass such products as:

- Pharmaceuticals
- Medical Equipment And Supplies

- Dental Supplies
- X-Ray Equipment And Supplies (Including Medical And Dental X-Ray Film)
- Patient Mobility Devices (Including Wheelchairs, Scooters, Walkers, etc.)
- Antiseptic Skin Cleansers
- Detergents And Soaps
- Invitro Diagnostics
- Reagents
- Test Kits And Sets
- Clinical Analyzers
- Laboratory Cost-Per-Test.

For more specific information regarding this program, please contact the VA office. FSS Help Line general questions telephone number (708) 786-7733 or the FSS Service Contract question telephone number (708) 786-7722.

What are some tips to getting a Schedule contract awarded quickly through GSA?

The following information will help you identify some key steps to expediting the award process:

Before you submit your offer:
Make sure you fill in all blanks. If something is not applicable please insert "N/A" or "Not Applicable" in the appropriate space.

Locate Standard Form 1449 in the solicitation package. Once you have located the form, see below:

Blocks 7a and b identify the point of contact to answer questions as you fill out the solicitation. If you have questions, write them down as you go through your offer and ask them all at once. Calling repeatedly lacks organization and can frustrate the person trying to help you.

Block 9 will identify the GSA address where you will mail your offer or directions where to find the address. Only use the address provided in the solicitation you are filling out. There are many solicitations for this program and the offices are located across the nation. Make sure you are mailing your information to the right office.

Blocks 30a, b, and c MUST be signed to finalize your offer before submission. If these blocks are not signed, your offer may be returned to you.

After you submit your offer:
Follow up within two weeks to check the status of your offer submission

Ask good questions like:

- Which Contract Specialist was assigned my offer? Get the person's telephone number.
- What is the average time frame that an award can be expected for this product/service? Put the date on your calendar.
- Is there anything more you need from my company to expedite the award? If yes, try to respond the same day or the next day.
- Can I receive emails or phone calls in addition to a letter if there is a discrepancy? If yes, make sure you check your email daily.

If an agency is planning to place an order once you get a GSA contract, then have the agency write a letter to the contracting office asking for an expedited award process.

- Make sure your offer has already been submitted and assigned to a Contract Specialist.
- The letter should come from the purchasing official at the agency on the agency's letterhead.
- The letter should state the details of the procurement, including the anticipated date, quantity, and price.
- A decision to expedite the offer because of a pending order is at the discretion of GSA only.

Why should a small business look to GSA as a good prospective customer?

GSA is a major purchaser of products and services sold by small businesses. GSA is always seeking new businesses to compete for its products and services contracts and is committed to increasing opportunities for small, small disadvantaged, women-owned small, HUBZone small, veteran-owned small, and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

If my business has developed a new product, is GSA a potential customer?

Yes. GSA will evaluate your product to determine if it is new or better than existing items. If the Government needs your product, GSA may negotiate a contract to purchase the product from you. To determine what Schedule is applicable to your commodity, visit www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov.

How do I find out about opportunities to sell specialized products or services to other agencies?

Call the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) in the Federal agency that buys your products or services. For example, to sell to the Department of Defense(DoD), you would contact the OSDBU in DoD. Visit www.osdbu.gov/ for the OSDBU Directory.

Does Government contracting involve a lot of paperwork?

The large, complex contracts may require substantial paperwork. Some contracts do not, particularly simplified acquisitions of $100,000 or less. Procurement regulations require not only that GSA be fair to suppliers and make taxpayer dollars go as far as possible, but also that the agency be able to document that it is meeting these obligations. In other words, Government paperwork is a necessary part of contracting, and vendors must be able and willing to handle it.

How do I become eligible to participate in the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program?

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is responsible for certifying that you or your company is eligible to participate in the 8(a) Program. To apply for certification, contact the Office of Eligibility and Certification in the SBA office that serves your area.

Is there any system for monitoring how well large prime contractors meet their subcontracting goals?

Yes. Large prime contractors are required to submit reports documenting good faith efforts to meet their subcontracting goals.

Does the location of my business affect my ability to compete for GSA contracts?

It depends on the solicitation. Solicitations for repair and maintenance and small construction jobs may be limited to the geographic area needing the service. Others, such as solicitations for GSA Supply Catalog items and for large building projects, are open to vendors throughout the United States. In addition, FSS Acquisition Centers handle procurement of the products and services for which they are responsible.

Is it possible to be listed on more than one GSA MAS?

Yes, if you have more than one product or service to sell you are eligible to obtain more than one GSA MAS contract.

How can I learn more about architect/engineer contracting with GSA and other Federal agencies?

GSA's Design Excellence Program booklet gives information on architect/engineer contracting procedures. For a copy or further information on contracting opportunities, please contact:

GSA, Public Buildings Service
Center for Design Excellence and the Arts (PCE)
1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405

or

The PBS Small Business Technical Advisor on (202) 219-1087.

Does GSA use specifications and standards adopted by the private sector?

GSA's policy is to adopt the appropriate specifications and standards of nationally recognized technical organizations, whenever appropriate, and to obtain input from these groups and individual firms on proposed specifications and standards.

Where can I get copies of specifications and standards?

Most solicitations will say where to obtain copies. You may also get copies from the purchasing office that issued the solicitation.

What's the difference between a Federal specification and a standard?

Federal specifications are technical data used to describe Government-unique products or those, which, for reasons of health, safety or interface requirements, must be described in detail or undergo extensive testing. A standard is a set of criteria used to compare like products or services and ensure that certain quality and performance levels are met.

My contract calls for my company to make an item in accordance with the specification, but I have a way to do the job better for less money. What should I do?

You may contact the contracting officer and present your ideas.

Some of the clauses in my contract seem to be important, but the text of the clauses is missing. What do I do?

When a contract refers to standard clauses listed elsewhere, you still must comply with the clause requirements. The full text of the clauses can be found in the FAR or the GSAM, or you may request a copy of the clauses from the procurement official listed in the solicitation.

What procurements under the simplified acquisition procedures are reserved?

Except for those acquisitions set aside for very small business concerns, each acquisition of products or services that has an anticipated dollar value exceeding $3000, but not over $100,000, is automatically reserved exclusively for small business concerns. It is set aside, unless the contracting officer determines there is not a reasonable expectation of obtaining offers from two or more responsible small businesses that are competitive in terms of market prices, quality and delivery, (see FAR 19.502-2).

Are small private companies the only sources for purchases under the simplified acquisition threshold?

No. All Government contracting officers must use mandatory/required sources of supply for some types of items before soliciting outside quotations. Those mandatory sources include Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR), National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH, formerly the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped.

Is there a limit on the dollar amount of sealed bid purchases?

No, but generally the sealed bid procedure is not used for purchases under $100,000.

What should I do when an Invitation for Bid (IFB) is unclear?

Call the contracting officer named in the solicitation.

What should I do if after I carefully check and submit my bid, I discover that it contains an error?

Contact the contracting officer. If you discover

the error before the bid opening, you can modify your bid by any method authorized by the solicitation, if notice is received in the office designated in the solicitation not later than the exact time set for opening of bids, (see FAR 14.303(a)). Mistakes in bids discovered after the opening of bids are governed by the procedures in FAR 14.407.

Are Request for Proposals (RFPs) always in writing?

No. In emergency situations, GSA may use oral solicitations. Sometimes, when competition is restricted (such as when a purchase must be made from a particular source), a letter RFP is used. Facsimile RFPs are used by some agencies. Eventually, most RFPs and offers will be made via electronic commerce.

Is it necessary that I have electronic commerce/electronic data interchange (EC/EDI) capability to do business with GSA?

Yes. We pay vendors electronically and in some cases require contractors to provide electronic catalogues.

Whom should I contact if GSA doesn't live up to its obligations under the Prompt Payment Act?

You should contact the contracting officer.

What can I do to increase my chances of being paid on time?

Read the contract instructions on submitting invoices and double check your invoice and other required documents to see that they are completed correctly and addressed to the right office. They should also contain any I.D. numbers or accounts that are relative to the payment.

Appendix B Glossary of Terms

Acquisition Central: Internet website for Governmentwide acquisition information.

Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA): An agreement between the Government and a supplier allowing repetitive purchases during a specified period (see FAR 13.303-1).

Certificate of Competency (COC) Program: The COC Program empowers SBA to certify to Government contracting officers as to all elements of responsibility of any small business to receive and perform a specific Government contract. When the contracting officer determines and documents that an apparent successful small business offeror lacks certain elements of responsibility (including but not limited to, capability, competency, capacity, credit, integrity and limitation on subcontracting), the contracting officer must withhold contract award and refer the matter to the cognizant SBA Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the headquarters of the offeror is located (see FAR 19.601(b)).

Commercial Item: Any supply or service, other than real property, that is customarily used for non-Government purposes and that has been sold, leased or licensed to the general public or falls under the additional categories listed in the complete definition of "commercial item" as it appears under FAR 2.101.

Construction Metrication Ombudsman: A senior GSA official responsible for ensuring that GSA is implementing the metric system of measurement in an efficient manner, while ensuring that the goals of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 are observed.

Cost-Reimbursement Contract: This type of contract provides for payment of allowable incurred costs, to the extent prescribed in the contract. (See FAR 16.3).

Contract: A mutually binding legal relationship obligating the seller to furnish the supplies or services (including construction) and the buyer to pay for them. It includes all types of commitments that obligate the Government to an expenditure of appropriated funds and that, except as otherwise authorized, are in writing. In addition to bilateral instruments, contracts include (but are not limited to) awards and notices of awards; job orders or task letters issued under basic ordering agreements; orders, such as purchase orders, under which the contract becomes effective by written acceptance or performance; and bilateral contract modifications (see FAR 2.101).

Contracting Activity: An element of an agency designated by the agency head and delegated broad authority regarding acquisition functions (see FAR 2.101).

Contracting Officer: A Government Official with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts. They may also make related determinations and findings (see FAR 2.101).

Delivery Order: An order for supplies placed against an established contract or with Government sources.

Electronic Commerce (EC): Electronic techniques for accomplishing business transactions including electronic mail or messaging, World Wide Web technology, electronic bulletin boards, purchase cards, electronic funds transfer and electronic data interchange (see FAR 2.101).

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI): A technique for electronically transferring and storing formatted information between computers utilizing established and published formats and codes, as authorized by the applicable Federal Information Processing Standards (see FAR 2.101).

Fixed-Price Contract: Contracts that provide for a firm price or, in appropriate cases, an adjustable price. Fixed price contracts providing for an adjustable price may include a ceiling price, a target price (including target cost) or both. Unless otherwise specified in the contract, the ceiling price or the target price is subject to adjustment only by operation of contract clauses providing for equitable adjustment or other revision of the contract price under stated circumstances. The contracting officer shall use firm-fixed-price or fixed-price with economic price adjustment contracts when acquiring commercial items (see FAR 16.201).

Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card: A purchase card, similar in nature to a commercial credit card, issued to authorize agency personnel to use in paying for supplies and services.

Governmentwide Point of Entry (GPE): The single point where Government business opportunities greater than $25,000, including synopses of proposed contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, can be accessed electronically by the public. The GPE is located at www.fedbizopps.gov.

Industry: All concerns primarily engaged in similar lines of activity, as listed and described in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Information Technology (IT): Any equipment, or interconnected systems(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment used in the automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. IT includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services and related resources (see FAR 2.101).

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS): The NAICS replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes. NAICS is an industry classification system used by the statistical agencies of the United States for classifying business establishments. NAICS includes 1,170 industries of which 565 are service based industries.

Negotiation: Exchanges between the Government and offerors, which are undertaken with the intent of allowing the offeror to revise its proposal. Negotiations may include bargaining; i.e., persuasion, alteration of assumptions and positions, and give-and-take, and may apply to price, schedule, technical requirements, type of contract or other terms of a proposed contract.

Offer: A response to a solicitation that, if accepted, would bind the offeror to perform the resultant contract. Responses to invitations for bid (sealed bidding) are offers called "bids" or "sealed bids;" responses to requests for proposals (negotiation) are offers called "proposals;" responses to requests for quotation (negotiation) are not offers and are called "quotations", (see FAR 2.101).

Purchase Order: When issued by the Government, purchase order means an offer by the Government to buy supplies or services, including construction and research and development, upon specified terms and conditions, using simplified acquisition procedures (see FAR 2.101).

Simplified Acquisition Procedures: The methods prescribed in FAR Part 13, for making purchases of products or services (see FAR 2.101).

Small Business Size: SBA's size standards define whether a business entity is small and, thus, eligible for Government programs and preferences reserved for "small business" concerns. Size standards (see FAR 19.1) have been established for types of economic activity, or industry, generally under the NAICS.

Standards: Technical requirements for processes, procedures, practices, and methods that have been adopted as standard.

Statement of Work: A statement of work is a specific statement regarding the requirements needed in a service contract. The statement of work should include all aspects of job requirements, performance, and assessment.

Task Order: An order for services placed against an established contract or with Government sources. (See FAR 2.101).

Thank you for taking the time to review the information enclosed in this publication. We hope you found it helpful. Our office also provides support through online webinars and classroom training on topics such as the GSA Schedules Program, Marketing, and *Doing Business with GSA.* To learn more about the Office of Small Business Utilization please visit www.gsa.gov/sbu.

We look forward to hearing from you and providing valuable resources to you as you grow your small business.

GSA Office of Small Business Utilization

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