



Get Smart

The GSA SmartPay® Newsletter

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Contact Us

If you have suggestions or comments about *Get Smart*, please contact Dena Gross at (703) 605-2808 or via email at dena.gross@gsa.gov.

Welcome to the 2nd issue of the GSA SmartPay® newsletter! We hope that you found the previous issue useful and informative.

In this issue of the newsletter, we provide information on new developments and updates on planning efforts for the future GSA SmartPay® program. We also share program statistics, best practices, and information about the upcoming GSA SmartPay® Conference in Boston.

As you read through the newsletter, please consider submitting a success story that highlights the achievements of your agency's program. Contributing success stories for upcoming issues will allow you to share experiences that could benefit your peers.

We hope that you find this newsletter to be a step towards providing better customer service. We look forward to your feedback about how we can enhance it to better serve your needs.

Sincerely,

Sue Mclver
GSA SmartPay®



PROGRAM NEWS

A/OPC Survival Guide Update

The GSA SmartPay® program is currently in the process of updating its *A/OPC Survival Guide*. A workgroup, comprised of A/OPCs from various agencies who represent all five bank providers, has been diligently working to improve the original guide. The original guide was only geared towards managing delinquency, while the updated guide will be geared towards managing the overall travel card program, including delinquencies.

The workgroup plans to complete the updated guide in early Fiscal Year 2006. There will be a roundtable session at this year's GSA SmartPay® Conference in Boston to share a draft of the new guide and gather comments. The session will be held Thursday, September 1 from 9:30am to 10:40am. All those interested in providing feedback on the new *A/OPC Survival Guide* are asked to participate in the roundtable session at the conference.

New Phone Numbers

Due to the installation of a new phone system, the GSA SmartPay® team's phone numbers have changed. The new numbers are as follows:

- Houston Taylor (Acting Director): 703-605-2867
- Bertha Gelhaus (Contracting Officer): 703-605-2865
- Dana Blank: 703-605-2790
- Rosemarie Dunn: 703-605-2810
- Bradley Forrestel: 703-605-2799
- Dena Gross: 703-605-2808
- Barbara Johnson: 703-605-2811
- Joseph Novak: 703-605-2677
- Joline Souder: 703-605-2812
- Lori Mae Tadalán: 703-605-2809
- Amha Tekalign: 703-605-2773

New Online Feedback Form

The GSA SmartPay® program values your feedback. For this reason, an online feedback form has been posted on the GSA SmartPay® website for stakeholders to provide comments and suggestions regarding the program's current opportunities for improvement, and potential requirements for the future program. The feedback form is located at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay under "GSA SmartPay® Program Feedback Form."

Upcoming Events

GSA SmartPay® Conference

The 7th annual GSA SmartPay® Conference will be held August 30 – September 1 in Boston, MA. The conference is designed for A/OPCs, designated billing office personnel, and IG staff for purchase, travel, and fleet business lines of the GSA SmartPay® government-wide charge card program. The conference attracts around 4,000 attendees who represent more than 350 agencies and organizations. This year's conference will provide over 220 lectures, hands-on electronic access training, and best practice roundtables for managing government charge card programs.

For more details, including registration/hotel information and session agendas, please visit the GSA SmartPay® conference website at www.gsasmartpayconference.org.

Recompete News

Status Update

The GSA SmartPay® program continues to make progress in its contract recompete efforts. During the past several months the following activities have taken place regarding communication planning and execution:

- Several key congressional committees were briefed;
- Communiqués were sent to key stakeholder communities including Congress and Federal Agency Heads;
- Liaisons were designated to represent the GSA SmartPay® program on the CFO, CAO, CIO, PCIE, ECIE, Small Agency, and FedFleet Councils;
- RFI was released on FedBizOpps (responses due July 26, 2005); and
- Press release was issued July 6, 2005.

The GSA SmartPay® program is also obtaining market and customer research for potential program requirements. The program office:

- Has conducted focus groups in the areas of program management expectations; data management and reporting; transition planning; and procurement and payment processes;
- Is conducting individual stakeholder interviews; and
- Will be holding sessions at the GSA SmartPay® Conference in late August relating to requirements for the future program.

We will continue to provide updates on key developments in the process.

Budgeting for FY08

As agencies begin their initial planning for their FY08 budget estimates, A/OPCs should work to ensure that sufficient funds are set aside for their card programs to cover transition-related expenses and training. The current GSA SmartPay® contracts will expire on November 29, 2008, assuming the exercise of the remaining contract option periods. It is anticipated that the upcoming recompete of the program will be awarded in 2007.

As agencies transition to the new contract, additional human resources and funding may be needed for contract administration, training, etc. Please allocate the necessary funds now, so that enough will be set aside to ensure a smooth transition to the new GSA SmartPay® program.

Newsletter Posted Online

New and archived issues of the GSA SmartPay® newsletter, *Get Smart*, have been posted online. They are located at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay under "In the News."

Statistics

Travel IBA Delinquency Accounts at an All-Time Low

The GSA SmartPay® program is pleased to announce that delinquency rates of government-wide travel Individually Billed Accounts (IBAs) fell to an all-time low of 2.56% in May 2005.

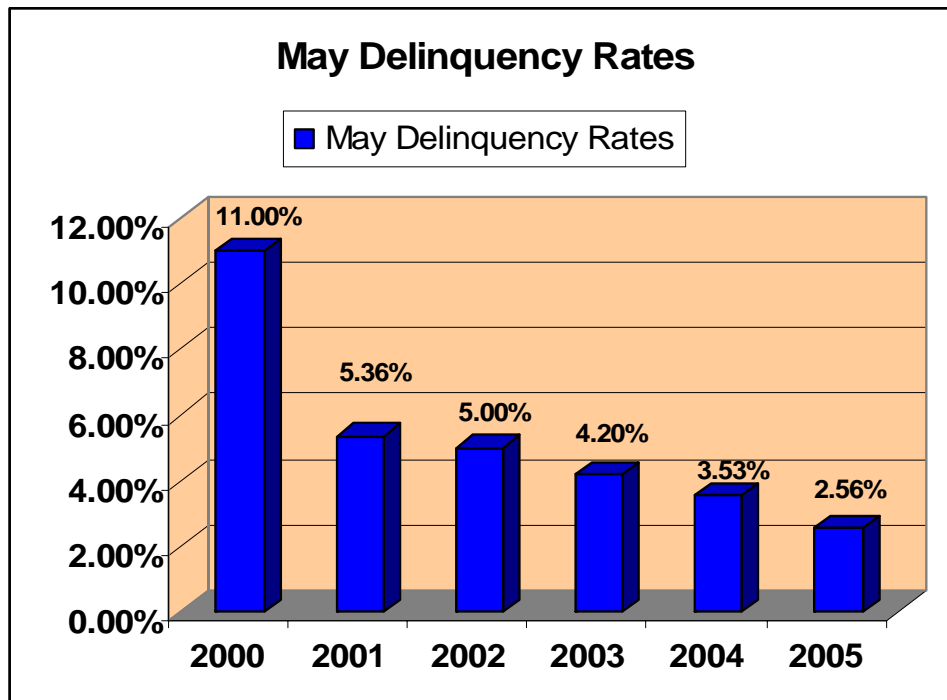
GSA SmartPay® would like to acknowledge the following agencies whose delinquency rates were 1% or less in May 2005: Corporation for National and Community Service, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of the Treasury, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, National Science Foundation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, and Social Security Administration.

Recoveries and Write-offs

In May 2005, travel IBA recoveries totaled \$259,294, while travel IBA write-offs totaled \$399,734.

GSA SmartPay® would like to acknowledge the following agencies which had no write-offs in May 2005: Corporation for National and Community Service, Department of Education, General Services Administration, Office of Personnel Management, National Science Foundation, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

GSA SmartPay® would also like to acknowledge the following agencies whose recoveries exceeded write-offs in May 2005: Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of the Treasury, Office of Personnel Management, and Social Security Administration.



KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Success Stories

Share your success! You've achieved great success in streamlining operations through using purchase, travel, and fleet cards. Other agencies can benefit from the enhancements and best practices of individual agencies. We will highlight your achievements in upcoming issues of *Get Smart*.

Please submit your success story to Dena Gross at dena.gross@gsa.gov. Stories should not exceed 250 words. GSA SmartPay® reserves the right to edit contributions for publication.

Best Practices

Mitigating Purchase Card Misuse and Fraud

Handling purchase card misuse and fraud once it occurs can be extremely costly and time consuming. However, implementing preventive measures can help lower their occurrences. Applying the following purchase card risk management best practices can help minimize purchase card misuse and fraud at your agency:

- Engage strong commitment and leadership by senior management
- Review agency card program policy, ensuring it addresses appropriate card use, and review procedures regarding the following:
 - Delegation of contracting authority
 - Training requirements
 - Account limits
 - Approved uses of the card
 - Receipt and acceptance of supplies and services

- Reconciling accounts
- Statement reviews
- Span of control for Approving Officials (AOs) and Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPCs)
- Criteria for establishing accounts
- Criteria for canceling or suspending accounts with minimal activity
- Publish agency policies on agency's Internet or intranet website
- Appoint AOs who are able to determine if transactions are reasonable and are able to act independently
- Train A/OPCs, AOs, and cardholders
- Set reasonable single and monthly purchase limits
- Block merchant category codes not needed for mission
- Optimize use of bank Electronic Access Systems (EAS) including the following special use reports:
 - Account activity report
 - Statistical summary report
 - Summary quarterly purchase report
 - Official invoice
 - Invoice status report
 - Transaction dispute report
 - Renewal report
 - Detailed electronic transaction files
- Evaluate the number of accounts and transactions to ensure appropriateness (at least monthly)
- Audit program regularly
- Keep current on new and innovative solutions to detect and prevent misuse and fraud
- Take disciplinary/legal action as appropriate