

DIRECT EXPRESS

Place Orders Directly With FEDLINK's Discounted Prices



Beginning in Fiscal Year 2003, FEDLINK will be piloting a new purchasing option called *Direct Express*. Similar to making a purchase from the GSA schedule, FEDLINK customers will be able to place orders directly with five commercial information services vendors. Ebsco Publishing (online services only), Gale Group, LexisNexis, ProQuest, and West Group will be the first vendors to offer their services under this new streamlined process. Their products and service offerings will continue to be as comprehensive as always—electronic database publications, document delivery services, associated print publications and specialized access options.

Revolving Fund Benefits Continue

Section 103 of P.L. 106-481 (2 U.S.C. 182c) which established FEDLINK as a revolving fund beginning in Fiscal Year 2002, authorized FEDLINK to provide “the procurement of commercial information services, publications in any format, and library support services,...related accounting services,...related education, information and support services” to federal offices and to other organizations entitled to use federal sources of supply (Subpart (f)(1)). Under the Economy Act, FEDLINK could only receive its administrative fees directly from a federal agency. Now it can accept its fees from federal agencies that have “passed through” a vendor and been earned for facilitating federal purchasing. (The vendors will pay the FEDLINK administrative fees.)

As a result, FEDLINK has negotiated indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts on a sole source basis with the five commercial information services vendors. An IDIQ contract allows the government to place orders for an indefinite quantity of commercially available supplies or services during a fixed period. Rather than renewing their current Basic Ordering Agreements, the vendors participat-

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ing in the pilot will have negotiated an IDIQ contract offering “Direct Express” for Fiscal Year 2003.

Direct Express or Transfer Pay?

For the five pilot program vendors, customers will now have two service options—Direct Express and Transfer Pay mode. With Direct Express, customers simply cite the FEDLINK contract number on their agency’s purchase order and send it straight to the vendor. No synopsis or competition is required on purchases over \$25,000 as the FEDLINK IDIQ establishes the vendors as sole source for their individual products and services. When comparing two vendors with similar databases, customers may want to compare prices or choose a vendor based upon their interface.

The vendor receives the purchase order, sets up the customer’s account and promptly issues passwords and/or authorization numbers. The vendor will then invoice the FEDLINK customer directly against their agency’s purchase order. The customer’s agency finance office pays the invoice (and any interest penalties) and reports disbursements to the customer. (FEDLINK will not issue a statement of account for Direct Express purchases.)

What is the difference between Direct Express and FEDLINK’s traditional payment modes? There is no online registration for this service option. With Direct Express the customer does not need to initiate or modify an Interagency Agreement (IAG) or pay the FEDLINK administrative fee directly. Instead, the FEDLINK fee is built into the vendor’s fee which FEDLINK collects based on the volume of quarterly

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sales of Direct Express customers. Direct Express customers are responsible for initiating the purchase, managing delivery of the product and services, and paying invoices.

For customers using the Transfer Pay option, it's full account management service as usual. Most current members will continue to prefer transfer pay mode, which offers them more flexibility in managing their funds and provides more assistance with procurement processes. Under the Transfer Pay option, customers transfer both FEDLINK administrative fees and estimated annual service dollars to FEDLINK/Library of Congress (LC) via a signed Interagency Agreement (IAG). On behalf of the customer, LC/Contracts issues a delivery order to the vendor in the amount specified on the IAG. After receiving the delivery order, the vendor provides service to the customer and submits the customer's invoices to FEDLINK. FEDLINK reviews the invoices, rejects improper ones, and pays acceptable ones from the customer's account. FEDLINK sends the customer copies of rejected invoices, paid invoices, and a monthly statement of account. (The vendor does not pay FEDLINK administrative fees.)

Another major benefit of Transfer Pay Mode is extended order deadlines. Instead of having to fulfill a member's order either by providing services or by issuing delivery orders to vendors prior to the end of the fiscal year, before their funds expire, FEDLINK is able to accept signed IAGs with firm orders up to September 27, 2002 and generate delivery orders well into October. In addition, FEDLINK is also authorized to accept IAGs and amendments by fax, pending receipt of originals via courier service or mail. This reduces the lead time necessary to add funds to purchase information products and services at the end of the fiscal year.

Members will be able to have a mixture of Transfer Pay, Direct Express and Direct Pay services, but they must choose one payment option per vendor. When choosing Transfer Pay or Direct Pay modes, each vendor service may be used only in one pay

option on a single IAG. Members must consider payment mode choices carefully, because it is not possible to switch from one service option to the other during the fiscal year.

The five vendors participating in the pilot will offer traditional Transfer Pay and Direct Express options only. Their sales and customer representatives will be reviewing the details of the pilot during the next few months so that they can assist customers in using Direct Express. (Please note that EBSCO's serials subscription services will continue to be offered in transfer and traditional direct pay mode. Direct Express will apply only to their online services.)

Watch for Updates

Future issues of *FEDLINK Technical Notes* will cover the beginning of the pilot and its developments. For information, please contact Georgette Harris, FEDLINK Network Program Specialist, by phone at (202) 707-4850 or by email to gharris@loc.gov.

Direct Express FEDLINK Contract Numbers And Contact Information

To place an order with any of the Direct Express Vendors, simply cite the following contract numbers on your agency's purchase order The FEDLINK vendor ID and contact information follows each number:

- EBSCO CASIAS Inc. (dba EBSCO Publishing)
#03CSFC70101 (EH—Heather Mcleod, (978) 356-6500 ext. 5555)
- The Gale Group #03CSFC70102 (GR—Karen Bailey, (800) 877-4253 ext. 8886)
- LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. #03CSFC70103 (ML—William Stubbs, (202) 857-8286)
- ProQuest Information and Learning Company
#03CSFC70104 (UM—Ron Clowney, (202) 223-8658)
- West Group #03CSFC70105 (WE—Judy Cowden, (651) 687-6853)