Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions for terms used in the FAQs

Systems terms

CFS: "Commerce Financial System" or "Core Financial System"
CBE: "Commerce Business Environment" which includes CSTARS, C.Request, CFS, and other associated systems to form the enterprise-wide procurement perspective.
C.Request: The web requisitioning system
CSTARS: "Commerce Standard Acquisition and Report Systems", the current client-server acquisition production system
CSPS: "Commerce Small Purchase System", part of CFS, and currently used by Census
ORSI: "Obligation and Requisition Standard Interface" that connects technology to deliver a procurement and financial processing electronic support environment
TIBCO: The formal name for the ORSI middle ware (software)

Business and process terms

ACCS: "Accounting Classifications Code Structure", the financial codes found on the old CD435
Requisitioner: A person who historically prepared CD435s
Approver: A person who historically checked and okayed prepared CD435s or awards.
Reviewer: A person who historically read and commented on CD435s or awards.
Initiator: A person, normally in a program office, who requests that a requisition be developed.

Question categories

The following categories are used to classify FAQs. Questions are classified in at least one and sometimes two categories. To find questions in one of these categories, use the Word FIND feature.

Access	ACCS	Approver
Award document	C.Request	CFS
Change	COMMIT	CSTARS
e-mail notification	Error message	Forms
Funds	Invested Equipment (IE)	Modification
Notes	Object class code	OBLIGATE
Password	Project code	Reports
Requisition assignment	Requisition availability	Requisition copy
Routing list	Rush order	Security
Shipping charges	Signature Password	Sole source
Status	SUBMIT	Supplemental address
Supporting document	TIBCO	Training
Vendor		

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request Approver Training	Why do requisition approvers need to attend C.Request training?	Approvers must know how to navigate the C.REQUEST system, review line item and accounting code data, edit requisition data, and approve requisitions. Their role differs from that of reviewers, who have View Only C.REQUEST access and cannot edit requisition data. The half-day Approvers C.REQUEST training ensures that approvers have these skills.

C.Request COMMIT	Why does it take so much time to COMMIT a requisition in C.Request?	The COMMIT function validates ACCS (and funds when commitment accounting is enabled at the Bureau's CFS) for an acquisition. This means that C.Request must communicate with the Core Financial System (CFS) through the Obligation and Requisition Standard Interface (ORSI). This process requires time for "behind the scenes" messaging between systems. The steps in this process, which takes place on a "first come, first served" basis, include:
		• C.Request creates a message containing obligation data and places it into a queue
		• A polling program picks up the message from C.Request and sends it TIBCO (the interface between C.Request, CSTARS and CFS). This polling process starts automatically in intervals which may vary by Bureau.
		    • In a 2 minute polling interval, the document could wait as long as 2 minutes to pass to the next stage. The time would be dependent on where your document uploaded during the polling process.
		    • Another polling program picks up the message from TIBCO and sends it to CFS where the message data is processed. Again, the timing of the polling process dictates how long it waits before it is sent to CFS.
		    • After processing in CFS, a confirmation or rejection message is created and sent back through TIBCO to C.Request through the polling sequences.
		    • Once the message is received by C.Request, the status data is updated.
		As the number of requisitions and awards being processed at the same time increases, the number of systems messages being processed increases as well and response time rises. However, if you do not receive a response within 10 minutes (5 minutes at NIST), please contact your local Help Desk.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
CSTARS OBLIGATE	Why does it take 8 - 10 minutes to obligate funding for an award in CSTARS?	Obligating funds for an award means that CSTARS must communicate with the Core Financial System (CFS) through the Obligation and Requisition Standard Interface (ORSI). This process requires time for “behind the scenes” messaging between systems. The steps in this process, which takes place on a “first come, first served” basis, include: • CSTARS creates a message containing obligation data and places it into a queue. • A polling program picks up the message from CSTARS and sends it TIBCO (the interface between C.Request, CSTARS and CFS). This polling process is automatically starting in intervals which may vary from Bureau to Bureau. If it is a 2 minute process the document could wait as long as 2 minutes to pass to the next sage. • Another polling program picks up the message from TIBCO and sends it to CFS where the message data is processed. Again, the timing of the polling process dictates how long it waits before it is sent to CFS • After processing in CFS, a confirmation or rejection message is created and sent back through TIBCO to CSTARS through the polling sequences. • Once the message is received by CSTARS, the status data is updated. As the number of requisitions and awards being processed at the same time increases, the number of systems messages being processed increases as well and response time rises. However, if you do not receive a response within 10 minutes, please contact your help desk.
C.Request Routing list	Why do we have to create route lists in C.Request?	The new requisition process requires that all approvals be done electronically through C.Request. The route list ensures that each requisition is reviewed and approved by the appropriate staff members in the proper sequence (concurrently or consecutively). The requisitioner can create a unique route list for a particular requisition or default route lists can be created by Requisitioners. • C.Request sends e-mail notices to the next person on the route list when the requisition is ready to be reviewed. E-mail addresses are obtained from the approver’s or reviewer’s system profile and the document is in the Approver/Review’s INBOX. • Acquisition staff can use the route list to view the reviewers/approvers and the status of the approvals after the requisition is submitted to procurement. • Requisitioners can use their documents route list to check approval progress and determine how long each pending and completed approval takes.
C.Request Routing list	Why would you create default route lists for approvals?	If a Requisitioner frequently generates requisitions which have the same or similar approvers, C.Request saves time and effort by allowing him/her to build pre-set or default approver route lists. Once a default approver list is built, requisitioners can add or delete reviewers/ approvers as needed for the particular requisition.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request Supplemental address	How is the Supplemental address used?	The Supplemental Address field is a **mandatory field** used to capture the re-delivery address so the Shipping and Receiving Office knows where to deliver the item. • For items, you **must include the Name of the person, Bldg/Room, and Extension of the person who represents the ultimate destination of the item**. • For services not delivered to the Shipping and Receiving Office, enter "*N/A*" in the address field. • Bureaus can add specific information requirements. If so these requirements should be provided to OAMFA CASD to be incorporated into the DOC BPR Data values.
C.Request COMMIT SUBMIT	What is the difference between the function COMMIT and SUMBIT?	Commit is the process of validating the financial information against the information in the CFS (Core Financial System). Submit is the process of sending the requisition to the Acquisition Office so it can be awarded. Requisitions must have an approved financial commitment prior to submittal to the Acquisition Office. The difference between the two C.Request functions is: • COMMIT verifies that the requisition financial data, the ACCS codes are valid ACCS codes in CFS, the Core Financial System. If the Commitment Accounting function is turned on in CFS it also checks for funds availability. The information is added to CFS, and the requisition locks so it can no longer be edited. COMMIT is done after all approvals are completed. • SUBMIT sends the requisition data and supporting documents (Requisition Package) to the Procurement Office for solicitation and award actions. Requisitions must be committed, before being submitted.
C.Request Notes	Why would I use the NOTES field?	Notes are used to send any additional information to the Procurement Office that has not been entered elsewhere on the requisition. Examples include: • Need for a rush or emergency order • Additional vendor information • Point of contact if different from preparer
C.Request COMMIT	What happens during the COMMIT process?	**COMMIT** verifies that the requisition financial data, the ACCS codes are valid ACCS codes in CFS, the Core Financial System. . If the Commitment Accounting function is turned on in CFS it also checks for funds availability. The information is added to CFS, and the requisition locks so it can no longer be edited. COMMIT is done after all approvals are completed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request SUBMIT Change	How do I change a requisition that has been submitted to the Procurement Office?	Once a requisition has been submitted, it is a locked record that cannot be edited. To change a submitted requisition, follow these steps: 1. Call the Procurement Office. Request that the requisition be returned. 2. Once returned, complete a **Cancel Commit**. 3. Once the cancellation is received and approved, the requisition is unlocked. 4. Make necessary changes to the requisition data. 5. Route for review and approval, as necessary. 6. **COMMIT** the requisition. 7. **SUBMIT** the requisition to the Procurement Office.
C.Request Access	How do I get access to C.Request?	Requisitioners and anyone who will review or approve a requisition must have access to C.Request. 1. Complete a procurement authorization form. This form can be found on your intranet CBS portal web site at http://cbs-i.nist.gov/portal/index.html. 2. Complete the appropriate role training course before access is granted.
C.Request Requisition availability	How long to requisition documents stay on the "Recently Accessed" tab?	Documents will stay on the Recently Accessed tab for: • 30 days for NIST • 90 days for NOAA • 30 days for CENSUS • 50 days for OS from the last time the document was accessed. Once this time period has passed, the document can be found using a query under the Worksheet tab on the Home page.
C.Request COMMIT ACCS	What happens if I use an invalid ACCS?	The "Account Classification Code Structure" (ACCS) codes you entered on the requisition are validated through the **COMMIT** function. COMMIT verifies that the ACCS codes are valid ACCS codes in CFS, the Core Financial System. If an ACCS is not valid, the commitment will be "*disapproved*" by the CFS via the ORSI Interface. An approved commitment is required for the requisition to be submitted to the Procurement Office. • Correct the invalid ACCS code on the requisition • Repeat the **COMMIT** function.
ACCS Project Code	Where do I get an ACCS code? All I have is the Project Code.	Generally. ACCS codes are available from your budget Liaison. • For NIST: Information pertinent to a specific project can also be found by running the project detail report available on the CBS portal.
C.Request COMMIT ACCS	If a COMMIT is rejected, how will I know what the problem is?	1. From the **Requisition Summary Screen**, click on ***View*** Status. 2. Click on the **Message** link to view the commitment rejection information. 3. Make the necessary changes. 4. **COMMIT** again.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request Vendors	What are the two little arrows to the right of the Suggested Vendor field?	The little two arrows represent the **Refresh** button. • If you manually enter the vendor number in the Suggested Vendor field, the vendor name will not display until you click on the **Refresh** button, or click **Apply** or **Save**.
C.Request Routing list Supporting document	When I tried to create a **Statement of Work** approval routing list in C.Request, the route list defaulted to units of 1 instead of 10. Why did this happen?	You got units of 1 because of the way you created the routing list. There are two ways to create a routing list. • Create a brand new route list on the document itself using the Route and Approval function. When this is done, the document route order is in increments of 10. • Add approvers and reviewers to a route list by first opening an InBox, and then from the InBox opening the document through the Hyperlink. When this is done, the document route order is in increments of 1.
C.Request Access Security	Is C.Request tied to a specific IP address? Further, will you need to be connected through a VPN?	C.Request is not tied to a specific IP address. You will not be able to access C.Request through any web browser with TLS 1.0 security turned on. • Users using the DOC Intranet are not prompted for an IP address. • For security, VPN and connection through CITRIX are necessary for users that are not connected to the DOC Intranet. • NOAA users are prompted for an IP address for access to the NOAA Intranet Web site where forms and training material are posted.
CSTARS CFS Funds Status	Can I use CSTARS to determine the status of funding on a contract?	CSTARS does not supply funds tracking. The CSC has developed a funds tracking report called the "Obligation Balance Report". The report allows you to track: • Funds have not been paid • Funds available to be reduced or modified on the contract This report requires access to the CFS. Contact the CSC or your CFS staff for more detailed information.
C.Request CSTARS Funds check Status	When and where is a funds check - is this done?	A true "funds check" is completed with the CSTARS OBLIGATE function. Because we are not doing commitment accounting, the C.Request COMMIT function only confirms that valid ACCS codes are on the requisition. Valid means an ACCS is a good one in CFS.
C.Request Shipping charges	Do we need to enter shipping charges on the requisition in C.Request?	Shipping charges are not required on the requisition. They are normally found on in the award or order. Check with your Finance office for your bureau's requirements.
Object Class Code C.Request CSTARS	Do the object class codes go through a check - if so where and who?	Object Class Codes are checked to see if they are good Object Class Codes using the C.Request COMMIT function and the CSTARS OBLIGATE function. These functions DO NOT tell you if they are the correct Object Class Codes for your organization or acquisition. This must be done by the Budget Liaison through the Route and Approval process. The same applies to Property issues.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
Error message TIBCO	What is the cause for this error message? **"A TIBCO error has occurred. Please contact your TIBCO Administrator for more information."**	There are two user causes for this message: 1. The user has entered different bureau codes on different line items. The user is allowed to use only one bureau code for the entire transaction. • Message sent to TIBCO Administrator: The bureau code given is invalid or the control level bureau codes for this transaction do not match with its ACCS level bureau codes. 2. The user has attached two supporting documents to the C.Request transaction with the same file name. Each document must have a unique name. • Message sent to TIBCO Administrator: ORA-00001: unique constraint (xxxx.C2F_I_RQS_REQ_DOC_PATH_PK) violated.
CSTARS Award document	Does CSTARS return an electronic copy of the award document to the requisitioner?	No. The award document copy must be sent manually to the requisitioner by the Procurement Office.
C.Request Password	How do I change my C.Request log-in password?	If you already know your current log-in password: 1. Login to C.Request 2. Click on My Profile 3. Enter your existing password; click continue 4. Click on Logins/Passwords 5. Place a checkmark in the Change Logon Password box 6. Type your new password 7. Confirm your new password 8. Click save • For NIST requisitioners, if you don't remember your C.Request login password you will need to contact your bureau Help Desk to request a password reset. • For NOAA requisitioners, for password resets and help, users should email the Help Desk at AGOSystems.help@noaa.gov. NOAA Help Desk staff are at multiple locations. If a user wants a return call for the password reset, he/she should provide the help desk with his/her phone number in the e-mail. • For OS requisitioners, for password resets and help, users should call the ITCSC Help Desk 202-482-5010 or email itcsc@doc.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
Password	Where can I find additional information on Password requirements?	• For NIST, individuals are required to follow the NIST Password Policy found at: http://www-i.nist.gov/cio/itsd/pp_nist/policy/ITSMgmtHandbook/Passwords.htm • For NOAA, individuals are required to follow the NOAA Password Policy found at: http://www.ago.noaa.gov/ad/systems/crequest.shtml • For CENSUS, individuals are required to follow the CENSUS Password Policy found at: (To be added at a later date.) • For OS, individuals are required to follow the OS Password Policy found at: (To be added at a later date.) Here is additional guidance on NOAA Password use for CSTARS 1. **Use strong passwords.** Your CSTARS password should be at least 8 characters in length and contain at least one number and one special character to help prevent password guessing or cracking through brute force methods. 2. **Turn off "Remember Password" function in Microsoft desktop operating system** (Windows 98, Windows 2000, Windows XP). CSTARS users must configure their computers to NOT "remember" or save DOC passwords. 3. **Protect usernames and passwords.** DO NOT share or reveal CSTARS usernames and passwords to anyone (including family members) to prevent unauthorized access to DOC IT systems and data. 4. **Prevent 'Shoulder-Surfing'**. You must shield the entry of authentication information (user name and password) from onlookers, as though shielding entry of your PIN at an ATM. 5. **Use Password-Protected Screensavers**. You must protect your computer against unauthorized access by using password-protected screensavers when idle for duration of 15 minutes.
C.Request Signature password Change	How do I change my C.Request signature password?	1. Login to C.Request 2. Click on My Profile 3. Enter your existing password; click continue 4. Click on Logins/Passwords 5. Place a checkmark in the Change Signature Password box 6. Type your new password 7. Confirm your new password 8. Click save
e-mail notification C.Request Routing list	I want to be notified via e-Mail when a requisition has been routed to me. How to I make that happen?	To receive e-mail notifications from C.Request that there are documents for your review and/or approval in your C.Request Inbox: 1. Log in to C.Request 2. Click on My Profile 3. Enter your existing password; click continue 4. On the Administration tab place a checkmark on the option which indicates ***Send e-Mail when items are routed to my Inbox*** 5. Click ***Save***.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request Supporting document	How do I attach supporting documents to my requisition in C.Request?	To attach each supporting document, follow these steps: 1. On the **Summary screen** of the document where the Supporting Document is to be attached, click on *Support Documents* on the left hand side under Procurement. 2. The **Support Document Detail** screen is displayed. 1) Enter the following pieces of information for the supporting document: a. 'Title' of the document, b. 'Description' (up to 2000 Characters), c. Whether the document is the current version , d. Related Document dates (dates it was Created on, Received on, and Effective on), 2) Under Document Location; i. If the document is in hardcopy, click on the hardcopy button and indicate where it can be located in the textbox below the buttons. ii. If the document is a file that can be upload (i.e., electronically attached), type in the path/file name or browse for the document, and then click on **save.** This will attach the document to the requisition.
C.Request COMMIT	How do I check whether the requisition I created has been committed?	1. Open the requisition. 2. Click on ***View Status*** 3. The ***Status*** field will display either Approved or Disapproved for the financial commitment message. 4. If the document was disapproved by CFS, the information will be displayed on the Message Tab of the status block.
C.Request COMMIT Status	How do I check whether the requisition I created has been submitted to the Acquisition office?	1. Open the requisition. 2. The *Document Status* field in the **Administration Section of the Summary Screen** will display "Unsubmitted" if it has not been submitted. It will display "Submitted", or other procurement status if it has been committed.
C.Request Requisition assignment	How do I check whether the requisition I created has been assigned?	1. Open the requisition. 2. Verify the document has a *Document Status* of "submitted". 3. If the requisition has a status other than "Unsubmitted", click on the *Related Documents* hyperlink 4. Acquisition status information related to this requisition will be displayed.
C.Request Rush order	I need to submit a rush order to Procurement. How can I alert them?	A **Procurement Note** should be added to the requisition stating that the requirement is needed by a certain date. That date should be reasonable. For long lead time items, you should include the estimated date for delivery.
C.Request Vendor	I could not find the vendor I wanted in the vendor table. How do I tell the Procurement Office which vendor I want?	If the vendor is not in the system, enter the vendor information (including the Vendors Name, POC, Phone, Fax and Address) in the **Notes** section of the requisition. At this point, you should ask the vendor to register in CCR in case an award is made to this vendor.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
C.Request Requisition copy	How do I make a copy of a requisition?	You can only copy requisitions that belong to you or that you share with another person (i.e. you are in his/her workgroup) 1. Get the name or the number of the requisition to copy. 2. Go to the ***Customer Worksheet***. Find the requisition to copy. 3. Open that requisition. Go to the ***Actions*** section under ***Requisition Menu*** on the left frame. 4. Click on the ***Copy*** option. 5. The ***Requisition Document Duplicate*** screen is displayed. a. Under the ***Copy From*** section, the current requisition number and document name is displayed. b. Under the ***Copy To*** section, you create a new document number (Requisition Number). Enter a Name (although optional, a document name helps you recognize it and related documents in the future). c. **Do not use the freeform block** for any documents that will be passed to CFS via ORSI. 6. Click on the ***Save*** button. The current requisition data copied to the new requisition. a. The procurement notes, supporting documents, and routing list ARE NOT be copied. **You will need to enter new data in these fields.**
C.Request Invested Equipment (IE)	How do I purchase an item with Invested Equipment (IE) money?	This applies only to NIST and OS. 1. In the **Header section** of all line items being purchased with Invested Equipment money, type in the useful life and amortization information in the following format <UL03:1630900000:100>. • Where amortization data is enclosed by <>, UL=number of years followed by the project and task and percentage applied to that project and task. • If there is more than one project and task, separate them using a back slash (/). Example: <UL05:1630951000:75/1630955000:25>
C.Request Supporting document	Where do supporting documents go once I attach them to a requisition?	Support Documents attached to a requisition in C.Request are stored with the requisition. The supporting documents are passed electronically to the Procurement Office and stored in CSTARS for use by Procurement staff. Technically, they can be found in the table 'support_doc' in the C.Buy database.
C.Request Modification	How do I submit requisitions for modifications to existing or new awards which were in CSTARS at the time C.Request was deployed?	All requisitions will be submitted to Procurement electronically using C.Request. There is no difference between the way changes to existing (pre-ORSI deployment) or new awards are submitted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Categories	Question	Answer
CSTARS Forms	Form OF-347: form has been updated as of 04/2006 but CSTARS is still utilizing 03/2005 version. Will the form be updated in CSTARS Software?	The OF347 Form in CSTARS version 5.9d reflects all the data element fields as depicted on the official GSA Library form. However, • On the CSTARS version 5.9d OF347 Form, the revision number continues to reflect the 2005 date and the prescribed letter (e) has not been updated to reflect (f). • For these two issues, CACI created ticket, SPR 2006-C00478. Please retain this SPR number in your records and reference this number in any future correspondence regarding this matter. • Tentatively, these minor fixes may be inserted into the next release of CSTARS.
C.Request Reports	Why can't I open my C.Request reports?	If your C.Request reports do not open, perform the following steps: In Internet Explorer, 1. Select **Tools** at the tool bar 2. Select **Internet Options** 3. Select **Security** 4. Select **Custom Level** 5. Select **Downloads** 6. Select **Automatic Prompting** for files downloads 7. Select **Enable** 8. Click on **OK**.
C.Request Sole source	If Sole source documents (e.g., CD 492) are attached to requisitions, will they be accepted for approval without hard-copy signature?	These documents are attached as supporting documents and therefore should have the signature affixed to the document. They can then be scanned as a PDF file and attached.
C.Request Training	Who do I contract for a training user names to practice in the training database.	Once you have completed training you should contact your local Help Desk for practice user names.