

October 1, 2003

TO: United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) Vendor

USPTO IS MOVING TO IMPLEMENT THE CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION (CCR) SYSTEM

Consistent with the President's principles for a citizen-centered, results-oriented and market-based Government, the USPTO is taking steps to streamline and improve our vendor data. This is part of a Federal E-Government initiative known as the Integrated Acquisition Environment. We will be partnering with the Department of Defense Electronic Business Program Office to use the CCR system. This improvement will put vendors, like you, who do business with USPTO and other Government agencies, in charge of supplying and updating all the data that the Government uses for contract payment purposes. CCR registration will ensure current and accurate vendor data, which will facilitate timely payments.

By October 1, 2003, all vendors that do business with the USPTO and the Federal Government must be registered in CCR. Changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) require, among other things, that contractors be registered in the CCR before award of any contract, basic agreement, blanket purchase agreements, or basic ordering agreement can be made, and that contract payments and/or new awards will be conditioned on CCR registration. The FAR change also requires that contractors with existing contracts with performance extending beyond December 31, 2003, register in the CCR. There are five exceptions to the CCR registration requirement, including purchases that use the government-wide purchase cards as the purchasing mechanism, certain emergency operations and urgent procurements, certain purchases where CCR registration could jeopardize national security, and awards to foreign vendors for work performed outside the United States. The FAR change may be viewed on the CCR website at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

The CCR system is intended to be a highly secure, single repository of vendor data. Vendor registration will provide common data in one central location via a simple web application accessed by a web browser. You only need to register once. You control the accuracy of your business information and it will be accessible to all Federal agencies with which you do business. You have access to update your information whenever necessary. Annual renewal is required to remain active. There is no cost to register in CCR.

CCR registration includes your electronic funds transfer (EFT) data. This will expedite your contract payments and assist USPTO in complying with the mandate that all Federal payments be made by EFT (Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996). Effective immediately, the USPTO will use your CCR registration data for payment purposes on all new awards. Existing contracts and simplified acquisitions with performance extending after December 31, 2003 will be modified as soon as possible to add the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), CCR and EFT clauses, as well as to reconcile the contract data with your CCR registration. Any changes will be coordinated with your company. After December 31, 2003 the USPTO will use the CCR data for payment purposes on all contracts or simplified acquisitions.

The preferred method for completing a registration is via the World Wide Web at <http://www.ccr.gov>. There, a CCR Handbook is available to provide detailed information on data you will need prior to beginning the on-line registration, as well as steps to walk you through the registration process. You must have a DUNS number in order to begin your registration. If you do not already have a DUNS number, please call Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., at 1-866-705-5711 or 1-610-882-7000. There is no cost to obtain a DUNS number. Since the DUNS number is the key

for searching the CCR, including your company's DUNS number on all invoices will assist a timely payment process.

The average CCR registration takes approximately 48 hours to process. You will be sent a welcome letter once your registration becomes active. Additionally, the individual you indicate as your CCR point of contact will receive your company's Trading Partner Identification Number (TPIN) through the U.S. mail. This TPIN is very important, because any subsequent changes you wish to make to your registration, including the annual renewal process, will require entry of your TPIN along with your DUNS number.

Your TPIN number is a confidential password into your company's CCR information and should not be given to anyone. Please be assured that once you have completed your registration in CCR, the USPTO will have access to all the information it will need to do business with your company. The CCR website at <http://www.ccr.gov> has posted a Security Alert for all vendors to read. If you feel that your company's CCR number has been compromised, please have your CCR Point of Contact call the CCR Helpdesk at 888-277-2423 to request a new one.

The USPTO appreciates your prompt cooperation in registering in the CCR system. We look forward to partnering with you in this important Government-wide initiative to streamline and simplify contractor payments.