

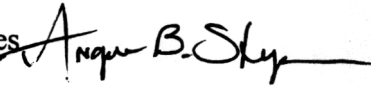


EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

OFFICE OF FEDERAL
PROCUREMENT POLICY

May 6, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR FEDERAL ACQUISITION COUNCIL
AGENCY SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVES

FROM: Angela B. Styles 
Administrator

SUBJECT: Roll-Out of the Inter-Agency Contract Directory

Over the past year, the eCatalogs group, an inter-agency team of acquisition and information technology (IT) experts, has been working to configure an on-line inter-agency contract directory (Contract Directory). This effort has been conducted as part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) E-Government initiative to facilitate the migration and leveraging of IT investments to mirror the integrated nature of acquisition and enable more strategic buying. The purpose of this memorandum is to familiarize agencies with the Contract Directory and to seek the assistance of agencies that manage inter-agency contracts in populating the database, located at www.contractdirectory.gov.

The Contract Directory, which is the initial product of the eCatalogs group, was conceived to overcome shortcomings with current databases and support more informed agency decision making by providing centralized and easy on-line access to general information about contracts available for inter-agency use. Like E-Government efforts generally, the Contract Directory will improve government operations by unifying and simplifying, reducing burden (e.g., allowing information to be entered into a database once for use many times), and eliminating redundant investments in infrastructure. In particular, the Contract Directory will, for the first time, provide the acquisition community with:

- a single website for general information on all inter-agency contracts;
- standardized information to facilitate market research; and
- a foundation for future market research across catalogs.

Access to the Contract Directory will be administered by each agency, similar to FedBizOpps. Agencies that have awarded, or plan to award, inter-agency contracts should provide contact information for the person who will serve as the Agency Administrator (see "Roles and Responsibilities" on the Contract Directory website) to Bill Morgan of GSA, at bill.morgan@gsa.gov, by May 19, 2003, to schedule training and register for access to the directory.

Agencies are urged to identify all covered vehicles and begin populating the Contract Directory as soon as possible. The sooner the Contract Directory is populated, the faster potential customers can learn about, and make more educated decisions regarding, their options.

Additional information on the Contract Directory is provided in the Attachment. Questions on this memorandum may be directed to the IAE Program Manager, Teresa Sorrenti at teresa.sorrenti@gsa.gov (703-872-8610) or the IAE Deputy Program Manager, Earl Warrington, at earl.warrington@gsa.gov (703-872-8609). General questions regarding the purpose of the Contract Directory may also be directed to Mathew Blum of my office at 202-395-4953. Additional information concerning the Contract Directory and other IAE initiatives may be found at <http://egov.gsa.gov>.

I greatly appreciate your help in ensuring the successful roll-out of the Contract Directory as well as your ongoing support of IAE initiatives. As we continue our migration to a technology-based infrastructure, we will significantly increase the likelihood of achieving major and lasting improvements in how agencies carry out their missions.

Attachment

Inter-agency Contract Directory (Contract Directory)

In recent years, agencies have become increasingly interested in taking advantage of inter-agency contracts, when appropriate, to support mission activities. Unfortunately, there are few, if any, resources to which program managers and buyers can turn to identify easily the range of existing contracts across government that may be suitable and available for meeting agency requirements.

As part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment Initiative, the eCatalogs group has configured an on-line directory of inter-agency contracts, the "Contract Directory," located at www.contractdirectory.gov (the Contract Directory website). Agencies will be able to use the Contract Directory as one tool during acquisition planning and market research in deciding whether they are better served by placing an order under an existing contract or pursuing a new open market contract action. Users will be able to search for information in various ways, including by principal product or service code or type of procurement instrument. Socio-economic information will also be provided, so agencies may consider small business contracting opportunities. However, the Contract Directory will not provide for searches by contractor, since the goal of the Contract Directory is to encourage thoughtful consideration of the capabilities of multiple sources as agencies consider how best to meet their needs.

In addition, the Contract Directory will help senior managers to get a better picture of the number of inter-agency contracts that their agencies are managing. This information could be used, for instance, as part of a "spending analysis," to rationalize contracting efforts and eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort.

The database will provide information on: government-wide acquisition contracts, multi-agency contracts, Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts and other procurement instruments intended for multiple agency use, including blanket purchase agreements under FSS contracts.

Description of the Contract Directory's data fields. The fields that will be used to populate the Contract Directory fall into one of three categories: (1) general information about the procurement instrument (e.g., scope of the procurement instrument, type of procurement instrument, socio-economic considerations), (2) information about placing orders (e.g., ordering procedures, fees), and (3) information about the servicing agency that manages the vehicle (e.g., point of contact). The initial data elements were selected through a consensus process that included input by the eCatalogs group, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy, the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council. Public comments (solicited through the Federal Register) were also taken into consideration. A more detailed description of the data fields is available at the Contract Directory website.

Data elements were selected based on their utility in furthering sound inter-agency contracting. For example, the Contract Directory will include a description of a vehicle's scope, product and service codes, and information on fees to support customers as they perform market research and develop acquisition strategies when placing orders under inter-agency contracts. Similarly, the Contract Directory will include information about ordering procedures so that customers can effectively conduct competition for orders on vehicles where there are multiple contract holders. Accordingly, servicing agencies should take advantage of the Contract Directory to reinforce strategic and accountable use of their vehicles by their customers. Of particular note, servicing agencies should highlight (in the ordering procedures data field) any special business rules or procedures that they have put in place to promote effective customer ordering.

Population of the Contract Directory. Contracting activities that manage inter-agency contracts will be expected to enter information about their vehicles into the Contract Directory. There are two ways to enter information: (1) by logging into the website or (2) by electronic submission. Agencies that choose to enter data via the web will need to obtain an individual user identification and password. For agencies that maintain databases of information about multi-agency contracts, the Contract Directory has the capability to receive contract information electronically. A copy of the electronic interface specification is provided on the Contract Directory website. Agencies that elect to use this method will need an agency identification and password.

Agencies will be responsible for the accuracy and currency of their data. Agencies should not leave fields blank, as this will reduce the utility of the Contract Directory. For example, if information on ordering procedures is not available on an existing website, agencies need to provide this information on the Contract Directory or otherwise indicate how users may obtain the information.

Timeframes for entering data into the Contract Directory. The FAR Council will issue final amendments to the FAR to establish standardized timeframes for populating the Contract Directory after validation testing is completed later this Spring. Under the FAR rule, contracting activities will be required to provide the information identified at the Contract Directory website for each inter-agency procurement instrument they manage: (a) within 10 days of award of a new instrument, and (b) by October 31, 2003 for existing instruments that expire after June 1, 2004. Contracting activities may enter information about instruments expiring before June 1, 2004 at their discretion, considering the administrative burden to input such information in light of the likely amount of customer usage prior to expiration.

Training. The General Services Administration, which serves as the systems administrator for the Contract Directory, will provide training to agency administrators regarding contract submission, search, and reports generation. For additional information on training contact Bill Morgan of GSA, at bill.morgan@gsa.gov (202-501-3748). For information on duties of the agency administrator, see "Roles and Responsibilities" on the Contract Directory website.