

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

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Relocations and the Housing Market

by Mary Anne Sykes

GSA offers relocation services for government agencies through the Transportation, Delivery and Relocation Solutions (TDRS) Schedule 48. Under this Schedule, employee relocation services are available for employees and their families transferring to new duty stations within the United States and around the world. This program offers a multitude of flexible services to customize a solution that best meets agency and employee requirements. This article focuses on the homesale piece of relocation.

There are two primary approaches to home sales when an employee is authorized relocation benefits. The first is direct reimbursement. In this scenario, the government reimburses the employee for authorized expenses incurred as part of the relocation process. These expenses identified in Chapter 302 of the Federal Travel Regulation cover expenses such as real estate commissions in residential transactions and transportation expenses for the shipment of household goods.

The other approach is the Guarantee Home Sale (GHS) program. Federal civilian agencies relocate approximately 25,000 employees annually. Approximately 50 percent of these employees enter into GHS programs. In this process, a relocation service company purchases the relocating employee's home. Agencies offer GHS programs to help employees sell their homes quickly and expedite the transition to their new duty stations. The GHS program maximizes the homesale experience through leveraging the expertise of commercial entities. The employee benefits from marketing assistance, equity advance, faster transition and settlement to their new locations. Some agencies offer GHS programs as incentives to encourage employees to accept positions at new duty stations. Other agencies with mobility critical missions see GHS programs as a tool to help fulfill their core mission.

The turbulent domestic housing market has affected the government's relocation processes. Falling home values, larger home inventories and tighter credit resulted in a quiet storm where fewer Relocation Service Companies (RSCs) are on the GSA relocation schedule than were present in 2007. The exodus of three of the four major suppliers influences the government's ability to effectively manage and fulfill its mobility requirements. The Center for Transportation Management (CTM) hosted a meeting in December 2007 to bring civilian agencies and RSCs together to discuss the issues and identify ways to minimize the impact on all the stakeholders.

As a result of that meeting, three major areas of concern were raised. Participants wanted GSA to address the current Statement of Work (SOW) for SIN 653-1, Home Sale Services; adopt recommendations of the Government Relocation Advisory Board (GRAB), and review the pricing structure under 653-1. There were other issues raised, but the team chose to address the major ones that would bring the greatest relief to the agencies and the RSCs. The Employee Relocation Council (ERC), in an act of true partnership, offered its assistance and support through market research, relocation tools, and SOW review. The criticality of this situation caused GSA to hire a consultant to assist with the SOW rewrite and provide relocation industry expertise. With the consultant on board, GSA convened another meeting with the agencies on March 18, 2008. Individual meetings with the SIN 653-1 vendors followed the agency meeting on subsequent days. GSA remains committed to address the issues caused by the current housing market and status meetings were held in mid April.

GSA's role is critical, as agencies expect GSA to provide the mechanism where agencies get relocation direction and homesale assistance. Agencies see GSA's responsibility as ensuring the viability and affordability of relocation programs, and GSA is working to meet and maintain those objectives. GSA continues to work on specific requests by agencies to assist and minimize the risks to employees in GHS programs. The target date for the rewrite of the relocation SOW is early May 2008. GSA will launch other initiatives to lessen the impact on government relocations. Watch for these initiatives in succeeding articles. As the housing market continues to work through oversupply, longer marketing periods, and loss on sales along with fewer sales, GSA remains steadfast in its goal to bring relief to relocation stakeholders. GSA will continue to meet with its customers, supply partners, and industry representatives to keep abreast of concerns and issues as stakeholders work collaboratively on enhancements to the homesale program.



THANK YOU

**Thanks
to everyone
for all the
feedback
and
compliments
on our
first issue!**

TMSS Tips



- When inside TMSS, don't click the Home button on the tool bar unless you want to leave TMSS and return to the Home Page. If you return home, you will need to login to return to TMSS. Click on the Main button to return to the TMSS Main screen and menu options.
- If you are in TMSS and are trying to do a Household Goods query with either an origin or destination of a city in Hawaii, do not enter the zip code. Instead, go to the "Country" option and use the drop down box to select "Hawaiian Islands."
- For users that ship to Alaska, TMSS calculates the miles from/to the CONUS location (either origin or destination), to/from the port in Seattle, WA. As an example, TMSS will display mileage of 1,290 for a shipment transported from Denver (80030), CO to Anchorage, AK. This is the mileage to the Port of Seattle, WA.
- If you are an approved TSP in either the FMP or CHAMP but have never accessed TMSS, please contact either Kim Chancellor (CHAMP) or Jim Stroup (FMP), at GSA, for your TMSS User ID and password.

Not Approved as a CHAMP or FMP Transportation Service Provider (TSP)?

Centralized Household Goods Traffic Management Program (CHAMP)

CHAMP has two approval applications – one for domestic transportation and one for international transportation. Interested TSPs should go to www.gsa.gov/transportation, click on "Household Goods Transportation," "Transportation Service Provider Info" and then "HHG TSP Approval Requirements." From this link, TSPs can download the Household Goods Application Instructions, the HHG Domestic Application, and the HHG International Application. Questions regarding approval to participate in CHAMP should be directed to Brian Kellhofer at GSA.

Freight Management Program (FMP)

TSPs interested in obtaining approval in GSA's FMP should go to www.gsa.gov/transportation, click on "Freight Management" and then on "Freight TSP Approval Requirements." From this link, TSPs can access the requirements to obtain approval in the FMP as a common, contract or rail TSP, a freight forwarder, a broker, or a shipper agent/Intermodal Marketing Company. Questions regarding approval to participate in the FMP should be directed to Jim Stroup at GSA.



We would love to have your input for upcoming newsletters.

- *Ideas*
- *Topics*
- *Customer Success Stories*
- *Comments on what we've done so far*

*Send ideas & input to:
transportation.programs@gsa.gov*

Express and Ground Domestic Delivery Services

by Blaine Jacobs

A [Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative \(FSSI\)](#) Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for Express and Ground Domestic Delivery Services (ExGDDS) was awarded October 6, 2006. The award provides for significant discounts to the low prices already available on GSA's [Schedule 48](#) and eliminates fuel surcharges. The primary objectives of ExGDDS are to:

1. Establish a common procurement vehicle through which Government agencies may procure and utilize Express and Ground Domestic Delivery Services
2. Lower total costs associated with Express and Ground Delivery Services while achieving similar or improved service levels versus today
3. Utilize business intelligence to better support overall decision making and performance management

The best-value award is the result of a collaborative team effort among customer agencies across the federal government. The team gathered data to conduct benchmarking studies and spend analyses, defined requirements, determined acquisition strategy, evaluated offers, and recommended award. Under the BPA, discounts increase as the collective spend grows across the federal government. Through this pricing structure, ExGDDS leveraged the government's buying power, saving agencies and taxpayers about \$16.7 million in Fiscal Year 2007.

"We strongly encourage agencies to focus on government-wide solutions first. If your agency is considering any significant acquisition for express [and] ground domestic delivery services, office supplies, telecommunications expense management, printers or copiers, you should consider the FSSI solution first." – Paul A. Denett, Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, OMB in a [Strategic Sourcing Progress Memorandum to Chief Acquisition Officers dated May 22, 2007](#).

For more details and to [join ExGDDS](http://www.gsa.gov/exgdds), visit www.gsa.gov/exgdds or contact Blaine Jacobs at GSA. Find out how easy it is to join 52 other agencies in realizing significant savings and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort in pursuing OMB Strategic Sourcing Initiatives. To participate, agencies simply sign up by sending a letter to the Contracting Officer (sample sign up letter template at our website).

TMSS Training Opportunities

Whether you are a customer agency or TSP, GSA frequently offers hands on TMSS training in Arlington, VA. This training is offered at no cost. To view upcoming training dates, go to www.moveit.gsa.gov and on the right hand side under "Offerings" click on "TMSS Training, Online Training Guides." In addition to training dates, you can also download the "HHG Online Training Guide" and the "Freight Online Training Guide." If you are unable to travel to Arlington, VA, you may contact one of our Regional offices to request training. Depending on your location, you could possibly travel to one of our Regional offices, we could travel to you, or training could be provided via telephone.

Transportation Crossword Puzzle

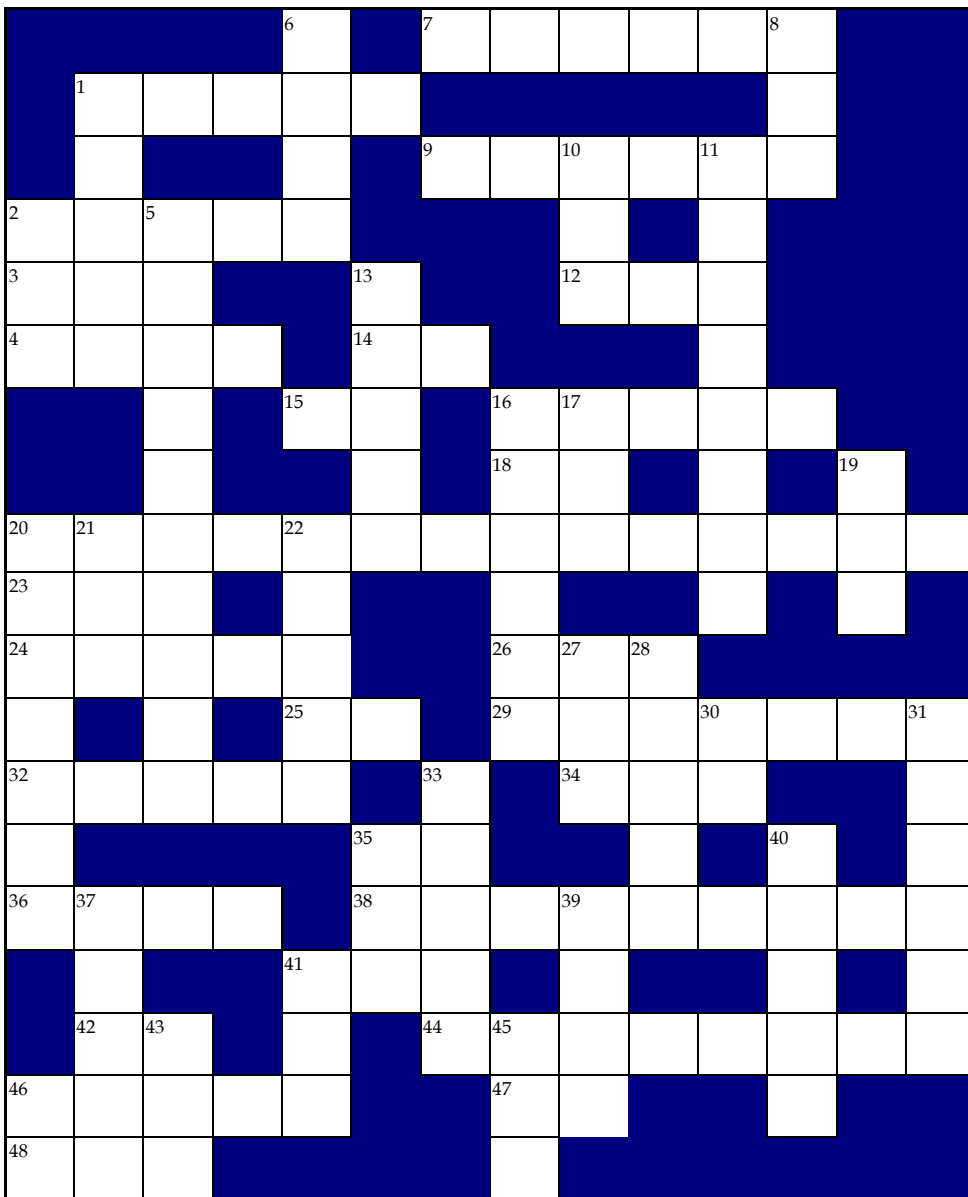
Across

1. The tastiest way to cook chicken
2. Meeting or conference
3. Poem of praise
4. The color of spring daffodils
7. Circular glazed treats
9. Government organization
12. Transportation Service Provider
14. Opposite of she
15. Los Angeles
16. Vehicle often used for transportation
18. Alcoholics Anonymous

20. _____ Trends, a popular newsletter
23. Boring, as in "we are in a _____"
24. All the vowels
25. Opposite of don't
26. Federal Acquisition Service
29. Cargo
32. Rhymes with bunny
34. Industrious insect
35. Type of medical scan
36. Let them eat _____
38. _____ goods
41. Phil Duffy's sister on Disney TV series
42. Shootout at the _____ Corral
44. Transportation Service _____
46. Facial expression of office workers when Friday comes around
47. We
48. Tiny bit

Down

1. Famous hobbit
2. State of the brain on a Monday morning
5. Moving to another place
6. Package of copier paper
8. What veggie burgers are made of
10. What you do if you see a cookie
11. Quantity that can be stored or carried
13. Centralized Household Goods Traffic Management Program
16. Schedule of duties imposed on imported or exported goods
17. Unwelcome rodent
19. A unit of volume for freight usually reckoned at 40 cubic feet
20. The business of transporting freight
21. Regret
22. Runzheimer International _____ showed savings with GSA
27. Assistant Regional Administrator
28. _____ and Sensibility, novel by Jane Austen
30. Scary clown novel by Stephen King
31. _____ of Service
33. Tread heavily with a pounding step
35. Eastern philosophy word for breath or energy
37. Welcome smell of food cooking
39. Standard Tender of Service
40. Household _____
41. Agent Cooper's favorite dessert on Twin Peaks TV show
43. Karate _____, movie title
45. Carpet
46. _____ Louis, Missouri, Gateway to the West



Answers on last page

Tips on Marketing to the Government



As an approved TSP in GSA's CHAMP or FMP or a contractor under TDRS Schedule 48,

do you ever find yourself asking **"How can I find customers?"**

If yes, maybe the links and tips below will help.



Go to www.gsa.gov.

Under "For Contractors and Vendors" click on "Marketing to the Federal Government." From here you can download "How to Market to the Federal Government" and "Training Day Presentation - Marketing to the Federal Government."



Purchase the Federal Yellow Book at www.leadershipdirectories.com, www.target.com, www.amazon.com, or search the internet for other sources from which to purchase the publication.



FedBizOpps at www.fedbizopps.gov



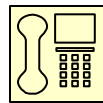
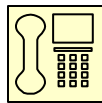
Go to www.moveit.gsa.gov TMSS Mailing List option.

Answers to Puzzle

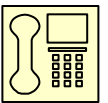
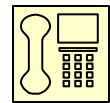


Dates and Deadlines

May 1, 2008	Effective date for new and supplemental CHAMP and FMP rate offers
May 31, 2008	1st Qtr. 2008 CHAMP Shipment and claim reports due
May 31, 2008	1st Qtr. 2008 CHAMP IFF due from participating TSPs
May 31, 2008	1st Qtr. 2008 FMP 4% Transaction Fee due from Participating TSPs
On-going	Remember to submit those 3080s



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