

CAO Corner

**EDITION FIVE
FALL 2004**



Introducing the new CAO!


On June 22, 2004, GSA Administrator Stephen A. Perry announced the establishment of the Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer (OCAO), a division reporting directly to the Administrator. To quickly bring the new office into operation, Administrator Perry announced Chief of Staff Karl H. Reichelt would be the new GSA Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) on an interim basis. The OCAO is responsible for managing a broad range of acquisition activities including: ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies; fostering full and open competition for contract awards; developing the acquisition workforce, and accountability for acquisition decision making. The OCAO consists of functions formerly under GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy. The CAO will participate in the Chief Acquisition Officer Council, and has responsibility for overseeing all of GSA's contract vehicles including the Multiple Award Schedules, Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts, City-Pairs, and the federal credit card programs. The OCAO will also be responsible for policy, training and management of GSA's

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *What is the "Get It Right" Plan"*
- *Major Announcements on SIS*
- *GSA Launches Applied Learning Center*
- *Section 508's "Buy Accessible Wizard"*

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acquisition workforce, numbering 2,400 associates nationally.

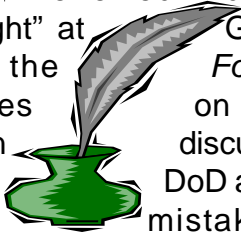
Administrator Perry said Reichelt's "leadership, management skills and commitment to improving our acquisition activities is just what is needed to get this new office off to a successful start."

One of the first challenges the new CAO faces is the implementation of GSA's new "Get It Right" program. On August 5, 2004, Mr. Reichelt stated: "From the smallest of regional offices to our national headquarters, GSA takes seriously the trust placed in us to properly execute and manage government acquisition activities. GSA remains a premier source of acquisition solutions, and our challenge is to assure that best value is delivered while balancing an emphasis on compliance, ethics and integrity in everything we do."

Karl Reichelt has been GSA's Chief of Staff since January 21, 2004. Previously, he served as GSA's Regional Administrator for the Northeast and Caribbean Region from April 2002 until April 2004, a position held by appointment from President Bush. After being designated as GSA's Chief of Staff, Reichelt concurrently held the position of regional administrator through a transition period. Before coming to GSA, he held senior management positions with Governor Pataki's administration in New York State. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Reichelt was selected to serve as Chairman of New York State's Human Services Disaster Task Force to coordinate overall relief efforts provided to disaster victims. Reichelt is a 1989 graduate of the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy at the University of Albany with a bachelor's degree in political science.

From the Desk of the Editor by Judy Steele

With the beginning of a new fiscal year comes a renewed dedication to "Getting It Right" at GSA. This edition of the *Forum* offers several articles on the "Get It Right" Plan discussing what GSA and DoD are doing to make sure mistakes of the past are not repeated. This includes two articles on training efforts at FSS and FTS. The Applied Learning Center will make it easier to keep track of training for 1102's and FAI Online's expansion of CON courses will make it easier for 1102's to get the training they need. The Usability University offers new courses to improve the usability of government websites and other electronic services.

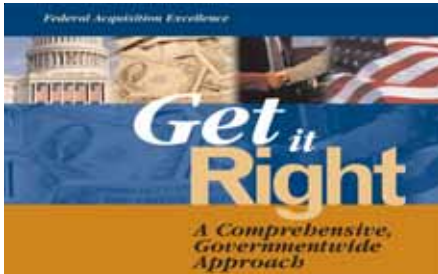


Wizards are very popular at GSA and are a great help in quickly getting work done. The Acquisition Planning Wizard can help develop acquisition plans quickly. The Buy Accessible Wizard makes it easier to buy Section 508 compliant items. ORCA, a new IAE internet application, will provide an online capability for filing and maintaining most Section K representations and certifications.

This edition of the *Forum* also includes articles on developments to established programs like FPDS-NG, the Share-in-Savings Program, what's new with Performance Based Services Acquisition, and Green Cleaning. And don't forget to celebrate JWOD during National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

We welcome any comments, suggestions and articles for the newsletter. The *Forum* is here to meet the needs of the GSA acquisition community and we can't do that

without your input! We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele, at judy.steele@gsa.gov or 202-501-4994 with comments or suggestions.



What is the “Get It Right” Plan?

In recent months, GSA has been working with other federal agencies, particularly the Department of Defense (DoD), to identify actions necessary to ensure proper use of GSA contracting vehicles by GSA and other agencies. On July 13, 2004, GSA and DoD conducted a joint meeting of acquisition officials to release a comprehensive plan to ensure improved contracting operations and proper use of GSA’s contracting vehicles. At this meeting, Deidre Lee, Director of DoD Procurement and Acquisition Policy, reported on their policies and procedures for proper use of non-Defense contract vehicles. DoD is GSA’s largest customer and Deidre Lee has pledged her support for the “Get It Right” Plan.

At this meeting GSA Administrator Stephen A. Perry stated, “Excellence in acquisition is a top priority at GSA. There is nothing more important than providing acquisition services to our federal agency customers in a way that delivers best value to support the achievement of their missions of service to the American people, while adhering strictly to federal acquisition policies, regulations and best practices.”

Following this meeting, Deidre Lee’s office began drafting a new policy that requires Military Departments and Defense Agencies to establish internal procedures for reviewing and approving the use of non-DoD contract vehicles when procuring supplies and services valued above the simplified acquisition threshold—currently \$100,000. These procedures will evaluate factors such as satisfying customer requirements, schedule, cost effectiveness (including discounts and fees), unavailability of a contract within DoD, scope of the non-DoD contract, and funding appropriation limitations. A recent comment from Ms. Lee’s office is: “Recent media headlines undermine the good credit acquisition professionals deserve, but we can change that. Whether DoD is your customer, or you are a member of DoD’s acquisition community, let’s work together to “Get It Right!”

The major objectives of the “Get It Right” plan include:

- Ensuring compliance with federal contracting regulations,
- Making contracting policies and procedures clear and explicit,
- Ensuring the integrity of GSA’s contract vehicles and services,
- Improving competition in the marketplace when GSA’s contract vehicles and services are used,
- Improving transparency relating to how GSA’s contract vehicles and services are used,

The “Get It Right” plan is available on *Insite*, under “Featured Offerings.” This document lists a number of actions currently underway but it is by no means final. The Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer has established a special mailbox called askacquisition@gsa.gov which seeks questions and comments on the new plan.



FSS Acquisition Management Center Works to “Get It Right!”

The FSS Acquisition Management Center does much to promote accountability through training on the proper use of GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) vehicles. Most of the time, the emphasis is placed on the FSS Center for Acquisition Excellence Virtual Campus. The Virtual Campus offers online training courses such as “Basic Contracting for the GSA Schedules Program - FSS Personnel,” designed to teach FSS associates how to effectively award MAS contracts. Another online course, “Using GSA Schedules – Customers,” is available to teach federal customers and other authorized MAS users how to properly place orders against the MAS program. Additionally, an online course entitled “Cooperative Purchasing Program” is available to assist state and local government customers in understanding the rules and regulations governing the MAS program. The FSS Virtual Campus targets three specific audiences: MAS customers, businesses seeking to participate in and market their services and products through the MAS program, and FSS associates. To access the online training, just log on to fsstraining.gsa.gov or e-mail Patricia Miller at patricia.miller@gsa.gov to request onsite training.

In addition to the online training, the Acquisition Management Center supports all forms of education through expositions, meetings, and other venues where representatives make presentations to various audiences to “get the word out.” Recently Brenda Pollock, Program Analyst at the Center, traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi to speak at the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) Annual Forum and Products Exposition, held August 7-11, 2004. NIGP is a nonprofit educational organization devoted to helping state/local

governments manage tax dollars wisely. This year’s Forum hosted a record breaking 1,177 attendees.

Ms. Pollock began her session at the NIGP conference by asking what integrity meant to members of the audience and explained to them that integrity is doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do. “Why do I bring up integrity,” she asked, “because all too often we get so focused on our own agenda, our own goals that we forget to take time to verify if we are doing ‘what is right’ along the way. That’s why GSA has embarked on a ‘Get It Right’ campaign.” In addition to updating the audience on the Cooperative Purchasing program and the proper use of the IT services/products, much emphasis was placed on working as a partnership to share responsibility for following the rules, regulations, laws, and initiatives in order to “Get It Right.”

The Cooperative Purchasing program represents GSA’s implementation of Section

“Check out our courses at
www.fsstraining.gsa.gov!”

211 of the e-Government Act of 2002. On May 18, 2004, GSA issued a final rule amending GSA Regulations to implement this Act. Section 211 authorizes the Administrator of GSA to provide for the use of its Federal Supply Schedule for automated data processing equipment (including firmware) software, supplies, support equipment, and services by states and local governments. The rule applies to Federal Supply Schedule 70, Information Technology. The interim rule, in effect since May 2003, was converted to a final rule with minor changes. Sales to state and local governments have steadily increased since

the program's inception. For more information, contact Brenda Pollock at Brenda.pollock@gsa.gov or 703-305-7474.

encouraged to use the wizard which is available at <http://apw.gsa.gov/>. For more information or to schedule a demonstration of the APW, contact Gerald Zaffos at gerald.zaffos@gsa.gov or 202-208-6091.

Pacific Rim FTS Promotes "Get it Right"

The Pacific Rim's FTS office kicked off the Region's "Get it Right" campaign by conducting two All-Hands teleconferences September 2, 2004. The conferences were held to formally introduce the "Get it Right" initiative and provide associates the information they need when meeting with customers and industry partners. Copies of GSA's "Get it Right, A Comprehensive Governmentwide Approach" and the Defense Department's "Policies and Procedures for Proper Use of Non-DoD Contract Vehicles" were distributed to associates prior to the meeting. For more information, contact Casey Kelley at 951-677-4896, or Tony Stevens at 520-290-1416.



Tips On Using FPDS-NG

Some people use the FPDS-NG system frequently and have few problems with entering data. Others seldom use the system and end up spending more time than they would like trying to figure out how to do basic data entry. To help users with data entry, the Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer has developed several tips for using the system. To see these tips, go to <http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/programView.do?pageTypeId=8203&oid=10111&programPage=%2Fep%2Fprogram%2FgsaDocument.jsp&programId=8898&channelId=-13090> and click on the tip you want to see. After October 19, 2004, "Tips" may be accessed through a "Quicklink" at <http://www.gsa.gov/FPDSTips>.



Acquisition Planning Wizard

Gerald Zaffos, Procurement Analyst, Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer, demonstrated GSA's Acquisition Planning Wizard (APW) on August 3, 2004, to 25 members of the Coalition for Government Procurement, a nonprofit association of FSS contractors. Zaffos demonstrated how the wizard can streamline the creation, maintenance and approval of acquisition plans required by GSA Order OGP 2800.1. The GSA acquisition workforce is

The topics covered in the tips include:

1. Reporting dollar amounts to FPDS-NG:
 - a. \$0.00 contract modifications.
 - b. How to fill out all three dollar amount fields.
 - c. How to enter \$ amounts for options in a new award.



- d. How to enter \$ amounts for options when options are exercised.
 - e. How to enter \$ for delivery orders together with a contract mod.
 - f. How to handle incremental funding at initial award and later funding mods.
2. How to correct a migrated document.
 3. Information to give to vendors who are having trouble entering information into CCR on Product or Service Codes.
 4. Definitions about dollar fields and how they work.
 - a. Action Obligation.
 - b. Base and exercised options value.
 - c. Base and all options value.
 5. Definitions about key date fields.
 - a. Date signed
 - b. Effective date
 - c. Completion date
 - d. Estimated ultimate completion date.
 6. How to find migrated documents and associated reference PIID's (4 steps).

regarding the SiS Program. The first announcement was the award of Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) to six companies with successful past performance records implementing the SiS concept. The second announcement was the issuance of the proposed FAR Rule on SiS. The third announcement was the establishment of a two-day training course on SiS.

The BPAs, valued at \$500 million each, were awarded to: Accenture, American Management Systems (AMS), Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC), International Business Machines (IBM), Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), and Systems Research and Applications (SRA). "We established these vehicles based on customer demand," said Karl Reichelt, GSA's Chief Acquisition Officer, "and the fact that they are multiple awards will ensure that our agency customers get the best deal possible." The scope of each BPA includes: Systems Consolidation, e-Government initiatives, Business Process Re-engineering and Infrastructure Change. The documents establish unique terms, conditions and streamlined processes for agencies to follow as they implement programs suitable for the SiS concept. Specific information on each BPA can be found at www.gsa.gov/shareinsavings.


The FAR Rule on SiS was published in the Federal Register on July 2, 2004 and the public comment period ended on August 31, 2004. The rule outlines clear processes and procedures for the conduct of SiS projects. Included in the regulation are a Seven Step process similar to those established for Performance Based Contracts, reference to the e-tools for business case development and proposal evaluation, and a focus on the cultural aspects that need to be present for SiS procurements to be successful.

Even if you have been using the system for a while, you might gain some benefit returning to the computer based training on the system for a refresher. You can take free computer based training by clicking "Award CBT" or "IDV CBT" when you go to the FPDS-NG home page at <https://www.fpds.gov/>. For more information, contact Rodney Lantier, Director, Federal Procurement Data Center, at Rodney.lantier@gsa.gov or 202-501-2647.

Major Announcements on Share-in-Savings!

GSA's Share-in-Savings (SiS) Program Office recently made major announcements





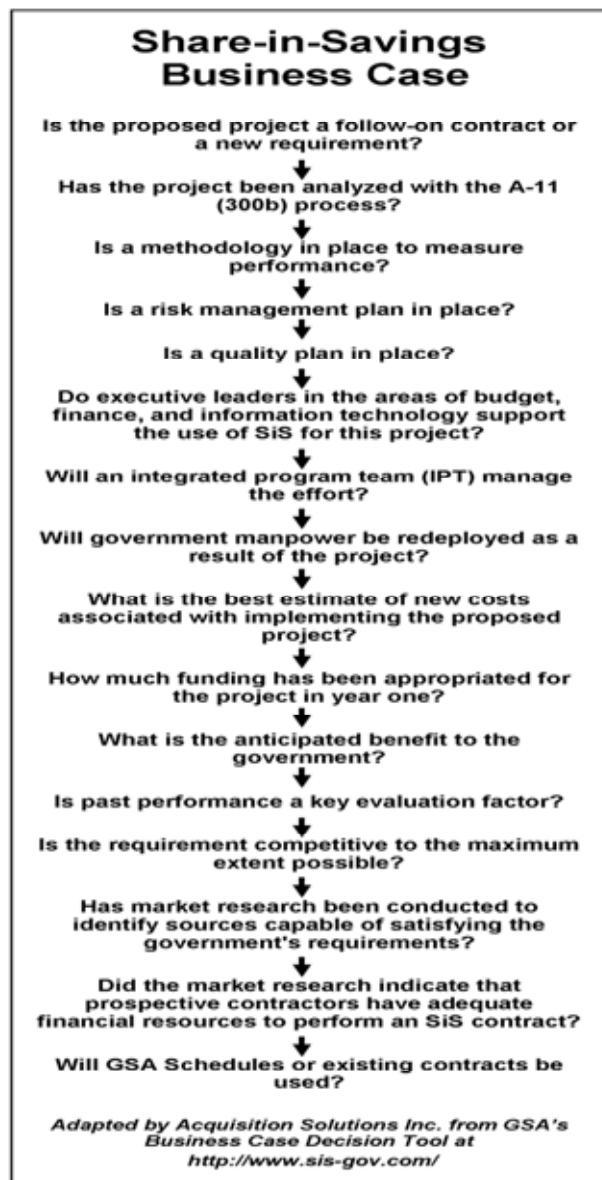
“The FAR Rule and the new acquisition vehicles are very valuable to agencies that have struggled with how to conduct SiS procurements,” said Karen Evans, **Administrator for Electronic Government and Information Technology, Office of Management and Budget**. Having the ability to access pre-qualified industry partners with strong track records with SiS implementations will help launch many under-funded programs, including some e-gov initiatives. Possible applications include OPM’s e-payroll, EPA’s e-manifest, and systems consolidation requirements at the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security. Agencies have a choice as to whether to conduct the procurements in-house or to receive support from GSA contracting officers.

SiS contracting is authorized under the e-Government Act of 2002 and incentivizes industry to develop creative technology solutions to meet agency needs. At the same time, SiS helps administration efforts to advance the President’s Management Agenda to make the federal government a modern, citizen-centric, electronic enterprise. Like other performance-based contracts that focus on results, SiS contracts arrange for the contractor to finance the work, then share in the savings and generate revenue with the agency partner. Payments to SiS contractors are based on the amount of savings or revenue generated through improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Information on the new two-day SiS training course can be found on the SiS website (www.gsa.gov/shareinsavings). The purpose of this course is to familiarize each student with the concept of Share-in-Savings and its relationship to performance based contracting. This course is designed from the government perspective. It reviews the structure of the SiS program, describes how to structure a SiS solicitation and how to

compare and analyze proposals. At the completion of this course, students will understand the latest statutory and regulatory guidelines, as well as the e-tools that are available to develop a SiS business case and to evaluate offers from industry. By using case studies students will gain a working knowledge of the nuances of SiS and its impact on budget, finance, procurement and program management within their agency.

For more information on the Share-in-Savings Program, contact Ken Buck, Director of GSA’s SiS Program Office at ken.buck@gsa.gov or 202-219-0311.





GSA Launches Applied Learning Center

GSA launched the first phase of an online competency assessment tool called the Applied Learning Center (ALC) on September 1, 2004. The ALC, which is currently designed for Series 1102 associates, seeks to accomplish two major goals—to measure skill gaps and to provide an objective vehicle for our 1102s to earn a permanent waiver to the OPM 1102 Qualification Standard created as a result of the Clinger-Cohen Act, and/or to earn college or training credit.

In accordance with those two major goals, the ALC has two major components: the Skills Assessment (mandatory) and the Full Assessment (optional). Data from the Skills Assessment will help the 1102 and his/her supervisor to prioritize the individual's training goals. The aggregate data will help GSA prioritize training needs organizationally.

The ALC was piloted in 2003 at which time a randomly selected group of 1102's provided valuable feedback on many aspects of the original design. As a result of that feedback, the ALC has had considerable


revisions with many improved features. Subject Matter Experts throughout GSA continue to help in the development of the ALC to ensure it is relevant and current in its approach. The Federal Acquisition Institute has identified 38 competencies that the 1102 series should possess. The Skills Assessment covers 10 competencies that have been identified as most critical for the day-to-day work of the 1102 and the Full Assessment covers 15 competencies.

The first phase involves the launch of the self-assessment and supervisor assessment (on a randomly selected basis) which comprise part of the Skills Assessment. The objective portion of the Skills Assessment will be launched very early in 2005. All portions of the Skills Assessment can be taken only once since the purpose is to give GSA a snapshot of the organization's skill gaps. This snapshot will provide a baseline upon which to measure improvement and will also provide valuable information for planning training needs and resources. The timeframe for future retesting has not yet been determined.

The Full Assessment will also be launched in April 2005 and is more robust than the Skills Assessment. This component of the ALC is optional but allows the 1102 to earn credit for what he/she knows. If the individual passes the Full Assessment, he/she will be granted a permanent waiver to the Clinger-Cohen requirements. The Full Assessment also provides the opportunity to earn college credit or credit for a portion of the 11 mandatory training classes and is set up in a challenge test format.

One important aspect of the Full Assessment is a series of practice tests that will provide feedback when the individual is ready to take the Full Assessment. When skill gaps are identified in this process, the 1102 will have the opportunity to review study aids and





close the skill gaps before moving on. Due to accreditation standards, the actual Full Assessment can only be taken once a year so these practice tests are critical for ensuring success.

“All 1102’s must register at
<http://www.alc.gov/>”

Another feature of the ALC is to provide study aids that are mapped to the particular assessment item. This allows the 1102 to get immediate feedback on items they missed and allows the opportunity to review specifically identified material that will help them.

All GSA Series 1102 associates should have received a message inviting them to register at the ALC website www.alc.gov. If you are an 1102 series associate and have not received this message, please call the ALC Support Center at 703-322-9565 extension 151, or send a message to alchelp@meridianksi.com. For more information on the ALC, contact Al Matera, Director, Acquisition Workforce Division, at albert.matera@gsa.gov or 202-501-0843.



Changes in CON Courses on FAI Online University


Important changes are now in effect to the way students can register for CON 100 level

courses at the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) Online University (www.faionline.com). The CON101 and CON104 courses are being replaced with CON110 Mission Support Planning, 111 Mission Strategy Execution, 112 Mission Performance Assessment and 120 Mission Focused Contracting. The new track of contracting courses develops a foundation of contracting basics while focusing on the business advisor’s role in shaping successful mission outcomes.

Effective September 1, 2004 new enrollments in CON101 have been halted. However, if you are already enrolled in CON101 you **will** be able to complete the course and also complete CON104. Between September 1, 2004 and October 1, 2004, CON110 will be opened for limited enrollment to ensure that all technical issues have been resolved.

The three new online courses, CON110, CON111 and CON112 are approximately 30 seat hours per course. This provides for better time management. The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) will allow 60 days to complete each course for civilian students. For DoD students the three online courses will be followed by a two-week in-resident course – CON120. This course will provide students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from the online courses.

For students just starting the level one certification track, DAU and FAI recommend that you start the new track beginning with CON110. DoD students seeking level one certification once in the CON101 track also are required to complete CON104. To develop the same contracting knowledge and skills in both the DoD and civilian agency workforce, the new contract series will be fully open for enrollment starting October 1, 2004. For more information or for questions



regarding FAI Online University, please e-mail questions@fai.gov.

What's New with PBSA?

On September 7, 2004, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) issued a memorandum to increase the use of Performance-Based Service Acquisition (PBSA). This memorandum implements several suggestions from OFPP's July 2003 report, "Performance-Based Service Acquisition: Contracting for the Future." This memorandum changes the target performance goal for fiscal year 2005 to 40%; revises the PBSA reporting requirements; encourages award recognition for successful use of PBSA and use of the Seven Steps to PBSA online guide available at www.acqnet.gov; requires each agency to identify a PBSA point of contact; and may require agencies to submit a management plan demonstrating the agency's approach to increasing the use of PBSA techniques and developing core PBSA skills and experience within the acquisition workforce. For a copy of the OFPP memorandum, go to www.acqnet.gov. For more information, contact Julia Wise at Julia.wise@gsa.gov or 202-208-1168.

Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE) for Services

OFPP is establishing an Acquisition Center of Excellence (ACE) for Services as required by the Service Acquisition Reform Act (SARA), Section 1431(b). The ACE will be an online central clearinghouse for service contracting, government and industry best practices, policy and guidance, e-tools, as well as education and training opportunities.


The ACE for Services will provide value to the acquisition community in the following ways:

- Provide a one stop resource information center for new/more junior employees and senior/more experienced practitioners;
- Facilitate the building of services knowledge;
- Facilitate the rapid identification of individuals with specific knowledge or skills;
- Foster a collaborative knowledge sharing across organizational boundaries ("boundary spanning"); and
- Promote and facilitate the capture and re-use of existing knowledge assets within the acquisition community.

The target audience for the center is the private and public sector acquisition community including program managers and technical representatives. The online center will be available at the end of November 2004, and will be located at <http://acc.dau.mil> and <http://www.acqnet.gov>. For more information, contact Julia Wise at JuliaWise@omb.eop.gov or 202-395-7561.

Fall Usability University Schedule

OGP's Office of Electronic Government and Technology and HHS have released the fall schedule for Usability University, an extensive training program to improve the usability of government websites and other electronic services. Information and registration for these courses is available at



<http://usability.gov/usabilityuniversity/training.html>.

The first free seminar, “Searching vs. Linking on the Web: A Summary of the Research” will be held on Friday, October 1, 2004. To register for this seminar or the other free seminars on usability topics see <http://usability.gov/usabilityuniversity/seminar.html>. Space is limited, and registration is required.

“Check us out at <http://www.usability.gov/usabilityuniversity/training.html>”

For more information, contact Janice Nall at 202-219-1544 or Jerry Varner at 202-219-2370 or e-mail usabilityuniversity@gsa.gov.



IAE and ORCA

ORCA (Online Representations and Certifications Applications) was developed as part of the Business Partner Network (BPN), which is a component of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE) e-Gov initiative. It was designed to replace most of the paper based Representations and Certifications process, known as Section K, in proposals. Under current FAR regulations, vendors are required to complete certain provisions that require representations and certifications each time they submit a solicitation valued at over \$25,000 to the government. The same information is required on all the proposals they submit to various government contracting offices. ORCA is an internet

application that allows users to enter their representation and certification information once for use on all federal contracts. The site enables vendors to maintain an accurate and complete record and also provides Contracting Officers both current and archived views of the data with the click of a mouse.

A vendor is required to have two items prior to registration in ORCA; an active record in the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR) database and a Marketing Personal Identification Number (MPIN). In order to comply with this, vendors can go to www.ccr.gov to complete their registration and create a distinctive MPIN that will be used in conjunction with the Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number as the ID and password for entering ORCA. CCR and ORCA are linked, and it is important for vendors to update their records as necessary so the data is accurate and current. A record is active for 365 days from the date of submission or update. ORCA is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

At this time, registration in ORCA is voluntary; however, an amendment to the FAR is expected to be issued in October 2004 that will mandate the use of ORCA. The new rule clearly requires vendors to provide representations and certifications electronically via ORCA and keep them updated at least annually. The benefit to government contracting personnel will be the ability to access the information quickly and easily. They can search for a current record using a vendor’s DUNS number (the Dun & Bradstreet unique nine-digit identification sequence which provides unique identifiers of single business entities) or obtain historical data by date.

ORCA will reduce the administrative burden on vendors who have been submitting the same Section K information repeatedly for

various proposals. It will promote efficiency in the federal government since it utilizes an electronic tool instead of paper to conduct business. ORCA can be found at www.bpn.gov/orca.

For more information, contact: Lisa Cliff, IAE Communications Office, 703-872-8593 or email integrated.acquisition@gsa.gov.



Old Method: The old method of cleaning required chemicals from gallon bottles that had to be mixed by hand then poured into small spray bottles and buckets. The chemicals containers were heavy and could be easily spilled creating slip and safety hazards. The chemical strengths could not be effectively controlled, which resulted in improper dilution causing ineffective cleaning, environmental and safety hazards, and increased cost to the government and the contractor.

Green Cleaning in Portland, Oregon


The GSA Southern Service Center in Portland, Oregon, embraced the difficult challenge of converting all their buildings to the “Green Cleaning” approach. Green cleaning is an organized approach to cleaning buildings that protects the occupants and worker health while at the same time reducing the impact on the natural environment. This approach focused on the **Equity** of promoting health and safety, **Environmental** awareness for the health of our planet, and **Economy** designed to save the taxpayer money. A partnership between the GSA Southern Service Center and Portland Habilitation Services (a nonprofit corporation designed to provide education and training to individuals with disabilities)

converted 561,628,564 square feet of space annually to the green cleaning approach. This square footage is roughly equivalent to 11,143 football fields or 12,893 acres of land.

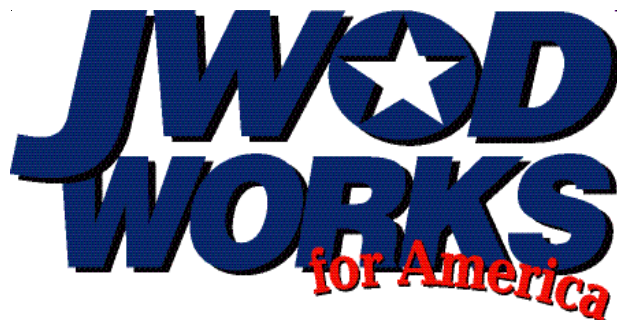
The partners selected environmentally preferable products, recycled content supplies, and equipment that would improve indoor air quality and limit exposure to toxic chemicals. All products were required to meet the benchmark guidelines for environmental compliance established by the Environmental Protection Agency’s Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines and the Green Seal Standards. Product compliance certification was conducted by Zero Waste Alliance through the Chemical Assessment and Ranking System. This system will reject any product with negative attributes that are listed on the state and federal regulatory lists. Approved products used to clean this space will be tracked through periodic reports to gauge the efficacy of the program.



New Method: Equity, Environmental, and Economy are the three essentials to a successful green program. These new green cleaning products are concentrated and typically mixed with water in ratios of 128 or 256 parts water to 1 part chemical. This system ensures chemicals are precisely dispensed and does not allow the employees the ability to change the mixture. The number of types of cleaners can be reduced because the green cleaning products are multifunctional, safe for the employee, cost effective for both the Government and the contractor, and they have a reduced impact on the environment.



The success of this program can be duplicated in any building with no increased cost. Everyone wins with the “Green Cleaning” approach and it’s a giant step towards saving the earth for future generations. For more information, contact Steve David, PBS Southern Service Center at steve.david@gsa.gov or 503-326-3984.



Celebrate JWOD in October!

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and a perfect time to celebrate the Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) Program.

Created in 1938, this unique federal procurement program employs over 42,000 individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities, enabling them to lead more productive and independent lives. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy quality products and services at a fair market price from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities.

According to President Bush, “All of our citizens should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and freedom. Every October, we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month, to recognize the talents, skills, and dedication of disabled Americans who are a vital part of our workforce.” Not only are people who are

blind or have other severe disabilities a vital part of the country’s workforce, under the JWOD Program they are also essential suppliers of SKILCRAFT® and other JWOD products and services to the federal government and U.S. Armed Forces. Everything from office supplies, such as pens and notepads; military unique items, such as chemical protective suits and first aid kits; food items that support government international relief feeding programs; and services, such as janitorial/custodial, food services, call center operations and digital imaging. The JWOD Program also works closely with GSA’s Federal Supply Service and Public Buildings Service to supply quality products and services to GSA customers nationwide.

National Disability Employment Awareness month provides federal employees with the opportunity to recognize those individuals within their agencies who support the JWOD Program, and to learn more about JWOD capabilities that meet their procurement needs. There are a number of different activities federal employees may consider in order to recognize the JWOD Program, both in October or any time throughout the year.

Please contact the JWOD Program if you require any assistance in planning a JWOD celebration during National Disability Employment Awareness Month at www.jwod.gov. For more information on this article, contact Stephanie Lesko at slesko@jwod.gov or 703-603-0036.



Section 508's "Buy Accessible Wizard"

GSA has developed an automated tool called the "Buy Accessible Wizard." The Wizard guides users through a process of gathering data and providing information about Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT) and Section 508 compliance. It is a web-based application, and will be available from GSA October 1, 2004, for use by any federal employee.

Under Section 508, government requiring officials must identify which Access Board's Accessibility Standards apply to any E&IT procurement. With the Wizard, government officials can quickly and easily determine if Section 508 applies to an acquisition and which specific standards apply for any particular product or service being acquired. The Wizard also compiles a running summary to document the decision process and the results of those decisions as a record of due diligence performed to ensure compliance. It's "a very valuable and very timely tool which brings the needed consistency and ease of use to the complicated 508 requirements process" says Hayward R. Kennedy of the GSA IAE team.

Section 508 requires that when federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology, federal employees with disabilities have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access and use by federal employees who are not individuals

with disabilities. Section 508 also requires that individuals with disabilities, who are members of the public seeking information or services from a federal agency, have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to the public who are not individuals with disabilities. These actions are required unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency in either instance.

Beginning this past March, several agencies began testing the Wizard as part of a trail deployment. The results have been overwhelmingly positive. The Wizard was much more accurate in identifying the applicable provisions of the Access Board Standard than standard practices in these agencies, and the time to do so was dramatically shortened. One participant from the IRS commented, "The Buy Accessible Wizard is easy to use. All I have to do is provide my system requirements, and the Buy Accessible Wizard will provide a report of the 508 requirements that need to be considered when purchasing new E&IT."

Outputs from the Buy Accessible Wizard include:

- Market Research Template to help requiring officials determine the availability of accessible E&IT products and services.
- Evaluation Report providing possible tests for determining the accessibility of these products.
- Design Guide for E&IT system developers.

The Wizard can be accessed at www.buyaccessible.gov. For more information, contact Terry Weaver at 202-501-1136 or send email to staff-1@accessibilityforum.org.



Check It Out!

“Check It Out!” highlights upcoming conferences and events of interest to the GSA acquisition community. If you’d like to have your conference or event listed in this column, please send an email to the Editor, judy.steele@gsa.gov with the pertinent information and a point of contact.

Federal Government Procurement Conference of the Americas

Vancouver, Canada

November 15-17, 2004

<http://www.meet-ics.com/fgpca2004/index1.html> If you are interested contact Edward.loeb@gsa.gov.

Federal Buildings Expo 2004

Washington Convention Center

801 Mt. Vernon Place, NW

Washington, DC 20001

October 6-7, 2004

Federal Buildings Expo is a GSA-supported training seminar and exposition that targets the largest building services products buyers in the world.

To register go to www.federalbuildings.com

The e-Gov Institute e-Learning Conference & Exhibition

Sheraton Premiere at Tyson’s Corner

Vienna, VA

October 20, 2004

800-746-0099

NCMA 23rd Annual Government Contract Management Conference:

“Riding the Wave-The Future of Government Contracting in a Fluid Environment”

(formerly known as NCMA Annual East Coast Educational Conference)

Sheraton Premiere at Tyson’s Corner
Vienna, VA

December 6-7, 2004


To register: bourke@ncmahq.org or call 571-382-1135



SPE Corner by David Drabkin

Get it Right

I don’t know why it happened, but somehow, in implementing and encouraging Acquisition Reform, folks developed the idea that no rules applied and we could essentially do anything in the name of innovation, creativity and customer service. This, in fact, was never the message of Acquisition Reform. It was then Secretary Cheney, as Secretary of Defense, who forwarded to the Congress the report of the Section 800 Panel, which included an outline for reforming the government’s acquisition process to reduce the cost of our transactions, improve the quality of our contractor base, and streamline the process by which the government acquired goods, services and construction. The Section 800 Panel report that Secretary Cheney submitted to Congress, as one of his last acts as Secretary, became the foundational piece on the bi-partisan legislative agenda of the Congress and the President to reform our acquisition processes so that we could have access to commercial markets.



The bills the resulting legislation, FASA and Clinger-Cohen, were designed to address principally were focused in three main areas:

- Simplify rules for low-dollar value purchases so that the rules were commensurate with the risk;
- Provide greater access for the government to the commercial marketplace and greater access for commercial merchants to the government marketplace; and,
- Focus our efforts on those purchases where there was greater risk.

Nothing in the acquisition reform agenda talked about throwing the rules out or ignoring them. The agenda was focused on “right-sizing” rules so that we focused on the markets where there were greater risks and we made it easier to purchase requirements in those markets where the risk was minimal. A mantra evolved across government to do things faster, better and cheaper. That is still our mantra today and it does not need to be changed to effect a small course correction. That course correction is to make sure that, as we buy things faster, better and cheaper, we need to focus on getting the best value and complying with the simpler rules we have available to us.


For example, faster does not, nor did it ever mean, to force purchases to such short schedules that competition cannot be obtained. Faster does mean that, instead of the 9 to 18 months it used to take us to purchase requirements, they can now be done in 2 to 4 months or less, depending on the nature of the requirement. In this regard, we must manage our customer’s expectations and tell them that we will give industry a reasonable amount of time to respond to our requirements and that may mean the process will take some time. It is unreasonable to get a complicated requirement for services on Monday afternoon, under non-emergency situations, and expect a contractor to begin performing those service the following Monday. By contrast, it may be possible to turn a requirement for computer

monitors around in a matter of hours. The difference is that we can compete the monitors using catalogues and negotiate with the vendor on quantity discounts in a much shorter timeframe than purchasing the services.

Better, in our mantra, does not just refer to the quality of the stuff (a term of art meaning goods, services, construction and real estate) we buy, it also means the process we use to buy it. The process we have today is designed to provide the maximum practicable competition, the maximum practicable transparency, and to end up with the best value solution. Better isn’t an excuse not to follow the rules.

Cheaper does not mean that the only factor is the purchase price. In the context of our mantra it means the overall best value to the government. What constitutes the overall best value to the government is circumstantial in nature and varies, as it should, from buy to buy. It includes the notion of dissimilar competition where varying solutions may be competed to achieve the same outcome. It is also not easy; it is something a mere “shopper” will find difficult to master.

In the final analysis, acquisition reform is not an excuse to cut corners, it is a program focused on using the processes and markets we have available to us to “wow” our customers with best value solutions that support them in overseeing the delivery of goods and services to the taxpayer. Each member of the acquisition workforce, regardless of one’s respective position, is responsible to make sure that the system works, the customer gets what they need when they need it, and that the taxpayer receives a return on the investment of their tax dollar. The ultimate responsibility of our system is in the hands of our Contracting Officers. Each day you make the final decision about best value, and about compliance with the rules, we proudly rely upon you to “Get it Right.” [Mr. Drabkin is the Senior Procurement Executive and Deputy Chief Acquisition Officer, Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer.]



We thank our guest authors for their contributions to this newsletter. Guest authors express their own views, which are provided for the information of our newsletter readers.

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We welcome any comments, suggestions, and articles. We also welcome any individually authored articles on acquisition issues that would be of interest to the GSA acquisition audience. Please contact the Editor, Judy Steele, at judy.steele@gsa.gov or 202-501-4994 with comments or suggestions. Questions for the “FAR-cited” column can also be submitted to the Editor.