



Get Smart

The GSA SmartPay® Newsletter

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Contact Us

If you have suggestions or comments about *Get Smart*, please contact Dena Gross at (703) 605-2808 or via email at dena.gross@gsa.gov.

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the GSA SmartPay® newsletter! We hope that you found the previous issues helpful and informative.

As the new Director of the GSA SmartPay® program, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and provide you with my vision for the future. I hold a Masters Degree in Procurement Management and am a Certified Professional Contracts Manager. Before joining GSA on August 15th, I headed the Procurement Policy Division at the United States Department of Agriculture. In this position, among other things, I managed the purchase card program. With 21 years of overall procurement experience within the Federal government and 13 years of experience managing purchase card programs, I can relate to your needs and issues as GSA SmartPay® customers.

Based on customer feedback, GSA management input, and my own personal experience, I have already identified specific areas for improvement within the program. My biggest focus is to enhance the customer service and value-add services that the GSA SmartPay® program provides to its customers. We will improve communications to our customers, including enhancing our website, so that it is a more user-friendly tool. We are also currently working on developing the future contract for the program, which could include new services such as emergency charge card capabilities to assist agencies/organizations with their Continuity of Operations (COOP) efforts. As many of you asked, I anticipate the GSA SmartPay® program office will be taking on more of an advocate role in regard to government-wide charge card issues. With the elevation of the GSA SmartPay® program in the GSA reorganization, the program will be reporting directly to senior management, which will allow us to provide even better levels of service to you.

We hope that this newsletter is a step towards providing better customer service to you. We value your feedback on how we can improve it. Please provide your feedback at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay, under "GSA SmartPay® Feedback Form."

Sincerely,
David J. Shea, CPCM
Director, GSA SmartPay®



PROGRAM NEWS

GSA SmartPay® Conference

The 7th annual GSA SmartPay® conference was held August 30th – September 1st in Boston, Massachusetts, and attracted 3,650 attendees. David J. Shea, Director of the GSA SmartPay® program, opened the General Session of the conference, followed by Barbara L. Shelton, Acting Commissioner of GSA's Federal Acquisition Service, and G. Martin Wagner, Associate Administrator of GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy. Jim Gibbons, President and CEO of National Industries for the Blind, and guest speaker Ross Schafer, rounded out the General Session.

A record 279 sessions, 48 more than last year, were held at this year's conference. These included sessions held by the banks, the associations, and GSA. Session topics ranged from training on Electronic Access Tools, to OMB Circular A-123 Appendix B, to the upcoming recompetes of the GSA SmartPay® contract, among others.

Copies of the presentations held by GSA can be found on the GSA SmartPay® website at www.gsa.gov/gasmartpay under "Publications and Presentations," while copies of the presentations held by the banks can be found on the banks' websites. If you need assistance locating this information, please contact your GSA SmartPay® point of contact.

OMB Circular – Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs

OMB Circular A-123 Appendix B – *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs* was released in August and becomes effective October 1, 2005. It outlines requirements

affecting all three business lines of the government charge card program, i.e. travel, purchase, and fleet. The requirements relate to many aspects of charge card programs, including developing a charge card management plan, providing training, managing risk, capturing performance metrics and data, assessing creditworthiness, managing refunds, implementing strategic sourcing, and recovering state and local taxes.

In order to assist agencies/organizations, the GSA SmartPay® program has developed guidance on performing credit checks. Credit checks can be performed through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), GSA's Financial and Business Solutions (FABS) schedule at www.gsa.gov/fabs, or the banks.

The GSA SmartPay® program is developing templates to assist its customers with capturing and submitting performance metrics and data to OMB and with developing a charge card management plan. The templates and more detailed information on performing credit checks will be posted on the GSA SmartPay® website

www.gsa.gov/gasmartpay in October.

Newsletter Posted Online

New and archived issues of the GSA SmartPay® newsletter, *Get Smart*, are posted online. They are located at www.gsa.gov/gasmartpay under "In the News."

GSA Reorganization

Effective October 1, 2005, GSA's Federal Supply Service (FSS) and Federal Technology Service (FTS) will merge to form the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). Within FAS, the GSA SmartPay® program will be part of the Travel, Motor Vehicle and Card Services organization.

As part of the reorganization, the GSA SmartPay® program has been elevated in the organizational hierarchy and will report directly to the Assistant Commissioner for the Travel, Motor Vehicle and Card Services organization. This restructuring will allow charge card program issues to be resolved with senior management more efficiently and effectively.

Web Enhancements

The GSA SmartPay® program is currently in the process of enhancing its website to better serve its customers' needs.

One such improvement has been the addition of the "Emergency Charge Card Use Information" section on the website. In light of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, special rules and regulations have been enacted regarding use of the travel and purchase cards. For more information related to these rules and regulations, please visit the GSA SmartPay® website at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay under "Emergency Charge Card Use Information."

Another improvement that is currently under development is the ability to subscribe online to the GSA SmartPay® newsletter, *Get Smart*, and receive a copy of it in your email inbox upon its release every two months. This functionality will be added to the GSA SmartPay® website www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay, under "In the News" in the upcoming weeks.

Submit Your Feedback Online

Provide your feedback and thoughts about the current and future program at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay, under "GSA SmartPay® Feedback Form."

Recompete News

Status Update

The GSA SmartPay® program continues to make progress in its contract recompete efforts. During the past few months, several key steps have been taken to obtain feedback regarding the recompete from agencies/organizations and from industry.

During this year's GSA SmartPay® conference, the GSA SmartPay® program held ten panel discussion sessions, open only to federal employees, relating to the following topics:

- Data management and reporting
- Program management
- Transition planning
- Procurement and payment processes
- Small agency requirements

Through these sessions, the program was able to obtain a tremendous amount of valuable feedback regarding what its customers would like to see in the future program. David Shea also held three future program overview sessions, in which he provided an overview of the key

topic areas that the program is focusing on with the upcoming recompetes.

To obtain feedback from industry, the program released a Request for Information in early July. Responses were due in late July and are currently in the process of being considered. The GSA SmartPay® program will conduct one-on-one meetings with the respondents in early October.

We will continue to provide you updates on key developments in the recompetes process.

Have you begun planning for your agency's transition?

Begin the planning process for additional budget and resources that will be needed to support your agency's transition to the new contract. For example, additional funds may be needed for training, testing support, IT resources, and independent verification and validation (IV&V) support.

The GSA SmartPay® program is currently developing a "transition checklist" to provide guidance to customers in planning for the transition, and will release it in the November timeframe.

Upcoming Events

Citibank Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Date: November 15, 2005
Time: 10:30am – 3:30pm EST
Place: 1901 South Bell Street,
Arlington, VA 22202,
Room 1129

This TAG meeting is open to all Citibank users. A dial-in number will be provided at a later date. For more information, contact Bradley Forrestel via phone at 703-605-2799 or via email at bradley.forrestel@gsa.gov.

8th Annual GSA SmartPay® Training Conference

The next GSA SmartPay® Conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, in August 2006.

For additional information, visit the GSA SmartPay® website at www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay under "In the News," or the GSA SmartPay® Conference website at www.gsasmartpayconference.org.

Statistics

Travel IBA Delinquency Accounts

The delinquency rates of government-wide travel Individually Billed Accounts (IBAs) rose to 3.55% in July 2005. The July 2005 rate was a 0.12% increase from the same time last year.

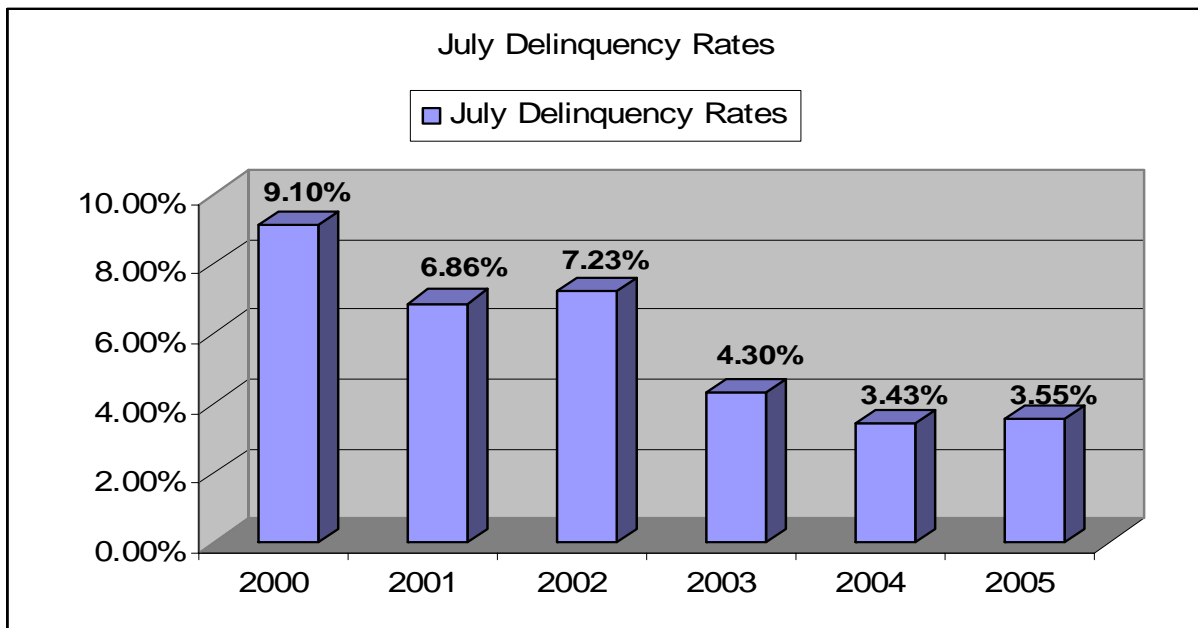
GSA SmartPay® would like to acknowledge the following agencies whose delinquency rates were 1% or less in July 2005: Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of the Treasury, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Social Security Administration.

Recoveries and Write-offs

In July 2005, travel IBA recoveries totaled \$281,385, while travel IBA write-offs totaled \$514,589.

GSA SmartPay® would like to acknowledge the following agencies which had no write-offs in July 2005: Agency for International Development, Corporation for National and Community Service, Department of Education, Department of Transportation, General Services Administration, National Science Foundation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, and Social Security Administration.

GSA SmartPay® would also like to acknowledge the following agencies whose recoveries exceeded write-offs in July 2005: Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, General Services Administration, and Office of Personnel Management.



KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Success Stories

Share Your Success!

You've achieved great success in streamlining operations through using purchase, travel, and fleet cards. Other agencies can benefit from learning about the enhancements and best practices of individual agencies. We will highlight your achievements in upcoming issues of *Get Smart*.

Please submit your success story to Dena Gross at dena.gross@gsa.gov. Stories should not exceed 250 words. GSA SmartPay® reserves the right to edit contributions for publication.

Best Practices

Pre-Issuance

The pre-issuance phase in charge card program management is the foundation for your program's success. This includes performing a risk assessment to determine and address the risks associated with managing your agency's program, developing and disseminating the proper policies and controls for the program, selecting the appropriate personnel to run the program, and creating and implementing a training program for employees associated with

the program. Applying the following best practices can help your agency during the pre-issuance phase:

- Know your risks and act to address them;
- Be selective when issuing cards to employees;
- Publish agency policies pertaining to the purchase and travel card on the agency's Internet or Intranet website;
- Establish appropriate training requirements for cardholders;
- Require training for all cardholders prior to issuing a charge card;
- Set clear expectations and appropriate training requirements for Approving Officials (AOs), Certifying Officials, and Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPCs);
- Centralize collection of cardholder, AO, and A/OPC training records;
- Create and maintain a centralized list of all cardholder and program coordinator email addresses;
- Ensure that the AO to cardholder ratio is manageable;
- Use the program to achieve maximum strategic leverage and make strategic decisions related to your agency's business practices; and
- Create policies and procedures to ensure high-risk property is included in the agency's property control system.