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Justice Management Division  
*Management and Planning Staff*

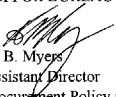
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Washington, D.C. 20530

MAY 22 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR BUREAU PROCUREMENT CHIEFS

FROM:

  
H. B. Myers  
Assistant Director  
Procurement Policy and Review Group

SUBJECT: DOJ Procurement Guidance Document 02-03

Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) (FBO) User Guidelines

The start of this Fiscal Year saw the successful introduction, implementation, and use of the government-wide FBO site. This was the culmination of more than a year of pilot testing with various DOJ components and could not have been done without your enthusiastic support. On behalf of the Procurement Executive, I offer both congratulations and thanks.

While we have made a good start, however, much work remains to fully implement this system and take full advantage of its benefits to us and our prospective vendors. As you know, my staff is both a key technical resource for the operation of FBO as well as a means for DOJ to monitor use and effectiveness of the system. Based on our observations, discussions with your staff, and as a member of the government-wide steering committee, we have identified a number of recurring problems and errors our contracting personnel are experiencing when they use the system. Most of these are simply the result of misunderstandings or the lack of clear direction in the operation of the system.

To remedy these problems and assist your staff, we have prepared the attached FBO User Guidelines. Please disseminate them to your personnel and encourage that they be followed. My staff is always available for assistance. Please contact Anne D. Hudson on 202/616-3759, if you have any questions concerning implementation, operation, or use of FBO.

Thank you for your cooperation in this effort. As our experience with FBO continues to grow, we will continue to realize the full benefits of this system. Not only do we save the costs of reproduction and mailing, but we reap the benefits of broader competition within the vendor community.

Attachment

**INTRODUCTION**

The General Services Administration (GSA) established FBO to allow easy access from a central point to pre-solicitation notices, solicitations and related information, accommodate different commercial electronic means for accessing information, and facilitate re-engineering of processes used to provide and obtain information on contracting opportunities. GSA designed FBO based on FAR requirements and the operational capabilities of the Commerce Business Daily (CBD).

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 5, "Publicizing Contract Actions" requires that effective October 1, 2001 all synopses for acquisitions valued over \$25,000.00, along with electronic versions of the associated solicitations must be posted on the Government-wide Point of Entry, officially named the "Federal Business Opportunities". Exceptions are: (1) disclosure would compromise the national security (e.g., would result in disclosure of classified information) or create other security risks. The fact that access to classified matter may be necessary to submit a proposal or perform the contract does not, in itself, justify use of this exception; (2) the nature of the file (e.g., size, format) does not make it cost effective or practicable to provide access through FBO; or (3) the Agency's Senior Procurement Executive makes a written determination that access through FBO is not in the Government's interest. All use of the CBD independently of FBO and otherwise ceased effective January 1, 2002.

The Procurement Policy and Review Group (PPRG), the Departmental FBO Administrator is responsible for departmental oversight and continuous improvement of the FBO program. Each Bureau has a single FBO Administrator to manage their accounts and assist their users. Bureau Administrators were provided system administrative training and given the technical capability to establish and delete Location and User Accounts. Bureau FBO Administrators are the only users at the Bureau that can "delete" actions.

FBO users must follow the FAR uniform policies and procedures to maintain the validity of the acquisition process and eliminate potential protests when using FBO to create pre-solicitation, solicitation, and contract award postings.

**PROCEDURES FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF FBO****1. POSTING METHODS**

There are two acceptable methods to posting and recording solicitation and amendment documents to FBO. Users may upload documents by selecting the "upload" button on the FBO DOJ Bureau Main Page or index documents from their Home Page by selecting the "index" button on the FBO DOJ Bureau Main Page. "Indexing" creates a one-click link to the Bureau Home Page and allows FBO to record the documents. Users may not reference their Home Page sites in the Synopsis text or otherwise, as it does not record their contractual actions.

## 2. THE FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION (FAR) ORDER OF PROCESS

A. FBO users must post documents in the FAR order of process. Listed below is an example of a FAR order of process as it pertains to FAR Part 15:

- (1) Sources Sought Notice
- (2) Special Notice
- (3) Pre-solicitation Notice
- (4) Modification to Previous Notice
- (5) Solicitation
- (6) Amendment
- (7) Award Notice

B. Listed below is an example of a FAR order of process as it pertains to FAR Part 12:

- (1) Pre-solicitation Notice (Combined Synopsis/Solicitation)
- (2) Amendment
- (3) Award Notice

Normally, the user will post a Pre-solicitation Notice for a combined synopsis/solicitation, copying and pasting the descriptive information into the "Description" field. However, if the user needs to upload a large file or attachment, they may post the Pre-solicitation Notice, reference in the "Description" field to see the solicitation posting, and then post the Solicitation Notice, uploading their files.

C. FBO users must issue modifications when they need to make changes to a pre-solicitation. After FBO users issue a solicitation, whether by FAR Part 12 or 15 they are required to issue amendments to the solicitation from that point forward. Users should not issue modifications to solicitations.

## 3. PRE-SOLICITATION INFORMATION

Users should include all required information in the General Information, Description, and Place of Performance fields. They should not type the words "NA" or "Null" in any of these fields without providing an explanation within the general information field. The "Response Date" in General Information is the date the response to the pre-solicitation is due from the vendors. If users need to state an approximate date, they may include a statement in the Description (i.e., "The solicitation will be released on or after June 12, 2002."). Users must include a clear and concise description of the pre-solicitation information in the free-text area provided in FBO. The system will insert the Contracting Office Address and Point of Contact information automatically from the established system profiles.

#### 4. UPLOADING DOCUMENTS

FBO users should upload all contractual documents (Site Visit Minutes; Specifications; Drawings; Abstracts, etc.) at the "Solicitation" and/or "Amendment" upload selection. Users should not use the "Other" upload selection to upload any contractual documents that should be captured in the contract award. The "Other" upload selection should be used to upload draft documents such as Requests for Information and requests for comments on draft Requests for Proposals.

#### 5. COUNTING, NUMBERING, AND NAMING DOCUMENTS

FBO users may not issue more than one solicitation for each requirement, but may issue multiple modifications to a previous pre-solicitation notice and/or amendments to a solicitation.

*When FBO users issue a modification to a previous pre-solicitation notice or an amendment to the solicitation, the system will count and number the modification or amendment (i.e., Modification 01, Amendment 01). To be consistent with the system issued FBO number, FBO users must count the modification or amendment by inserting the identical number in the upload description field with a short description following (i.e., Modification 01-Date Change; Amendment 01-SF33).*

If users upload or index more than one file for the same solicitation or amendment they must entitle the files with corresponding file names (i.e., Statement of Work; Amendment 01-SF33). FBO files may not be listed in the order in which the user selects them for uploading or indexing. To ensure files are listed in logical order, the user must add sequence numbers (i.e., Statement of Work, 1-1; Amendment 01-SF33, 1-1).

FBO users must structure their electronic uploaded files so that vendors may download the files with ease. Users must organize their files to eliminate the need to post multiple actions in the same session. This will help them avoid the 30 minute system time-out. They should wait at least four hours to view their posting to avoid duplication. This will allow the system to reconcile the posting to both servers.

#### 6. DELETING DOCUMENTS

In order to maintain the integrity of the acquisition process, FBO Administrators must never delete actions from FBO under normal circumstances. Actions that have been posted to FBO may have been viewed by vendors. Contractual actions can not be erased or deleted from the acquisition process. Users must process the appropriate contract vehicles, modifications or amendments so that vendors can view the status of these actions. Electronic contract files should not be handled any different than contract paper files where the validity of the contractual action is involved. Your FBO Bureau Administrator may delete actions concerning "special notices" for meetings and conferences.

#### 7. FBO DEMO AND LIVE SITE

GSA created and maintains the FBO Demo Site at : <http://demo.eps.gov> to test the system and train users. The login is "fbodemo" and the password is "fbodemo". FBO Administrators and users must never use the live site at : <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/> to test the system or post samples.

#### 8. PROFILE INFORMATION

FBO user profile information is established by FBO Bureau Administrators when they create user accounts. An individual user's profile may be maintained by that individual user or by their FBO administrator. It is extremely important that users do not remove their email addresses or any other information from their profiles and type "NA" or "Null" in the field. The information is essential to the vendor community and must be current and accurate at all times.

#### 9. FIRST LINE OF ASSISTANCE

Each Bureau's first line of assistance is their FBO Bureau Administrator. If your administrator is not available, you may contact the Departmental FBO Administrator, Anne D. Hudson on 202/616-3759 for assistance with your technical questions. Your FBO Bureau Administrator or the *Departmental FBO Administrator will coordinate your questions and contact the FBO Help Desk, if necessary.* This will streamline FBO Help Desk activities, save valuable resources, and in most cases provide a rapid resolution to your questions.