

Issue No. 13  
Nov. 2006

## GSA s t e p s

## In This Issue

Online Training for MAS Contractors

Important Update: New Requirements  
for Accessing Pay.govRecycled Products: Comprehensive  
Procurement Guideline (CPG)The Federal Biobased Products  
Preferred Procurement Program (FB4P)Government Employee Ethics  
and Your Marketing Strategy

E-mail or Phone: Make the Right Call

GSA Steps: [marydel.kemp@gsa.gov](mailto:marydel.kemp@gsa.gov)Online Training for  
MAS Contractors

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is committed to helping our Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contract holders achieve success. We recognize that you're not always able to attend New Contractor Orientation seminars held around the country. That's why we translated everything you need to know into a webcast. This online presentation contains critical information on contract requirements and your responsibilities as a contract holder. It also provides links to various marketing resources to help you on your way. The webcast is not limited to new contractors. It's a perfect way for veterans of the schedule program to brush up on contract requirements or bring new employees up to speed. You can access the presentation any time at:

<http://www.vodium.com/goto/gsa/ncos.asp>

The presentation is also available through our Vendor Support Center (VSC) website at <http://vsc.gsa.gov> under "Vendor Training."

But that's not all. We realize that watching a presentation on the web deprives you of the ability to ask questions and provide feedback. That's why we hold live, monthly online chat sessions that give you the opportunity to ask questions and receive real-time answers from GSA personnel. After you register and view the webcast, you will get periodic e-mails

alerting you of upcoming chat sessions. We can't wait to talk with you, so please join us! In addition to being able to provide feedback during the chat sessions, you will also be able to tell GSA how you think we did through an electronic survey. Several weeks after you view the New Contractor Orientation, you will receive a short feedback survey via e-mail. We strongly encourage you to provide comments and suggestions for improvement so that we can ensure that the webcast is as informative and useful as possible.

We hope we've provided a beneficial and accessible tool to help you navigate your road to success.

Note: When you register to watch the Orientation, please be sure to indicate that you are a GSA Schedule contract holder and insert your contract number(s). This is how we make sure that you've received the training you need to manage your contract effectively.

If you have any questions regarding the purpose or content of the presentation, please contact Sheri Meadema at 703.605.2577. Technical questions should be addressed to the Vodium helpdesk at 202.223.1800 or via e-mail at [support@vodium.com](mailto:support@vodium.com).

## Important Update: New Requirements for Accessing Pay.gov

Starting November 23, 2006, contractors will be required to use a browser with 128-bit encryption to make credit card and electronic debit Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) payments. Please be sure you are using the most recent version of your Internet browser when reporting sales and paying your IFF so that you may continue to benefit from electronic payments.

## Recycled Products: Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG)

Congress enacted the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to protect human health and the environment, reduce or eliminate the generation of hazardous wastes and conserve energy and natural resources. Section 6002 of the RCRA encourages the use of materials recovered through recycling and helps reduce the amount of solid waste. Reinforced by Executive Order 13101 Section 403, Congress later directed federal agencies to increase their purchases of recycled-content products.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) program for the purpose of designating products that can be made with recovered material. The CPG program establishes minimum recovered materials and post-consumer materials for each designated product. The EPA periodically publishes Recovered Materials Advisory Notices (RMANs) to provide federal agencies purchasing recommendations on the recommended recovered and post-consumer material content levels of products designated in the CPG program.

Today, the CPG Program covers 61 products in the following eight product categories: Paper and paper products, vehicular products, construction products, transportation products, park and recreation products, landscaping products, nonpaper office products and miscellaneous products.

Procuring agencies, including all federal agencies and any state or local agency or government contractor using appropriated

funds, must adhere to the following CPG program recycled-content guidance:

If an agency spends more than \$10,000 a year on an EPA-designed item and part of that money is from appropriated funds, then the agency must purchase that item made from recovered materials.

Offerors and Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contract holders should become familiar with GSAM clause 552.238-72 "Identification of Products that have Environmental Attributes" located in relevant Federal Supply Service (FSS) schedule contracts. Section (a) of this clause states that there are several laws, Executive Orders and agency directives that require federal buyers to purchase products that are less harmful to the environment when they are life cycle cost-effective (see FAR Subpart 23.7).

Section (a) of this clause also states that the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) requires contractors to highlight environmental products under FSS schedule contracts in various communications media (e.g., publications and electronic formats). Vendors can satisfy this requirement by applying the CPG logo to all CPG designated items offered in your firm's FSS Pricelist and GSA Advantage!® Pricelist.

To learn more about the CPG Program visit the EPA website:

<http://www.epa.gov/cpg/about.htm>

To view all 61 designated recycled-content products visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/cpg/products.htm>

To learn how to propose a product for consideration in the CPG program visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/cpg/propose.htm>

To market your CPG designated products to government agencies make sure you apply the CPG symbol to all CPG recycled-content products awarded on your GSA Schedule contract and listed on GSA Advantage!®

Government agencies are able to purchase CPG designated items from GSA Advantage!® at:

<http://www.gsaadvantage.gov>

They can be also be specifically selected and purchased on the GSA Advantage!® Environmental Aisle by clicking on Environmental on the GSA Advantage!® home page.

Also, CPG designated products can be ordered on the GSA Global Supply online purchasing system at:

<https://wwwgsa.globalsupply.gsa.gov>

*Make sure you  
apply the CPG  
symbol to all CPG  
recycled-content  
products awarded.*

## The Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program (FB4P)

Section 9002 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (FSRIA) of 2002, also known as the "Farm Bill," requires federal agencies to give procurement preference to items the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated as being biobased.

To date, the USDA has established minimum biobased content levels for the following items: Bedding, bed linens and towels, diesel fuel additives, hydraulic fluids, penetrating lubricants, roof coatings and water tank

coatings. It's important to note that federal agencies are not required to give preference to bedding, bed linens, towels and water tank coatings until the USDA identifies two or more manufacturers that can meet the USDA minimum biobased content levels. The USDA is seeking to add an additional 20 items in the near future. A total of 1,500 items have been identified for potential inclusion in the biobased program.

Biobased products are "commercial or industrial products (other than food or feed) that are composed in whole or in significant part of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials."

Following are the product categories the USDA has identified for consideration and testing of biobased content levels for possible inclusion in the biobased program:

- Automotive / Fleet Maintenance
- Construction / Remodeling
- Building Maintenance
- Industrial / Shop / Laboratory
- Personal Care
- Food and Service
- Lawn / Grounds / Gardens

Once the USDA designates an item as biobased, procuring agencies are required generally to purchase the designated biobased item. This rule became effective April 17, 2006, and applies where the federal agency's procurement of a designated item exceeds \$10,000 or where the quantity of such items or of functionally equivalent items purchased over the preceding fiscal year equaled \$10,000 or more.

However, some biobased items designated for

preferred procurement may overlap with products designated under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) program for recovered content products. Where an overlap occurs, the EPA-designated recovered content product has priority in federal procurement over the qualifying biobased product. It is recommended that vendors be proactive and contact the USDA and/or the EPA whenever there is a question regarding what designated product is appropriate for a specific procurement and the intended use of the subject item.

It is important for U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) schedule contract holders to properly identify a biobased product by applying the biobased environmental symbol. Environmental symbols are provided for your convenience and use in *GSA Advantage!*® Our federal procurement customers rely on the information you provide. Therefore, please be diligent and only apply environmental attribute symbols that meet the requirements of each applicable environmental program. Help GSA maintain the integrity of this important service for our shared customers—the federal procurement community.

To learn more about currently approved biobased items, biobased minimum content requirements and how to submit an item for consideration in the biobased program visit the USDA Biobased website at:

<http://www.biobased.oce.usda.gov>

To market items that meet or exceed the biobased program's minimum content requirements, apply the biobased symbol to all biobased items awarded on your MAS schedule contract and listed on *GSA Advantage!*®.

Government agencies are able to purchase

biobased designated items from  
GSAAdvantage!® at:  
<http://www.gsaadvantage.gov>

They can be also be specifically selected and purchased on the GSAAdvantage!® Environmental Aisle by clicking on “Environmental” on the GSAAdvantage!® homepage.

Also, biobased designated items can be ordered on the GSA Global Supply online purchasing system at:  
<https://wwwgsa.global supply.gsa.gov>

## Government Employee Ethics and Your Marketing Strategy

**Reminder:** Government employees must adhere to the Standards of Ethical Conduct issued by the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). Among other things, the OGE regulations outline the “dos” and “do nots” of soliciting or accepting gifts from potential vendors, contractors and other sources. These regulations may directly affect your marketing strategy, especially if you’re accustomed to marketing in the commercial world. Although we, as government employees, are ultimately responsible for ensuring that we comply with the applicable regulations, please familiarize yourself with our ethics rules and adjust your marketing practices accordingly. **Thank you!**



*“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”*  
—Anthony Robbins

## E-mail or Phone: Make the Right Call

Effective communication is essential to the success of every interaction, whether it’s personal, professional, governmental or global. To ensure that you are understood, be sure to choose the best method to communicate your message.

At a time when e-mail has become a universal business tool, thousands of articles advise executives to brush up on their communication skills. While e-mail has been praised as a time-saver and productivity enhancer, experts say it can damage relationships when overused or used in place of personal interactions. If there is any possibility of a misunderstanding, you will be much better off if you just pick up the phone. How many times have you sent six e-mail messages back and forth when you could have taken care of everything with a single phone call? It’s inefficient, a waste of time and money, especially when an argument or debate has developed or when you want to clarify something with discussion. That’s the time for person-to-person conversations or face-to-face visits. It’s important to remember that e-mail creates a permanent record. Never write anything you don’t want to come back to visit you later. First and foremost, always be polite and professional. If you want a permanent record, have the discussion first and then put it in writing for all to accept.