



Industry and Government: *Publishing Together*

Both industry and the government gain from jointly producing and distributing consumer booklets. For instance, when industry tries to get its message out, it reaches a certain portion of the population. The same is true for the government. But when they work together, the impact is greater than each working alone. The costs are lower, the public perception is positive, and a broader variety of information reaches consumers.

The benefits of cooperative publishing include:

- combining business and government views and experience on topics of mutual interest;
- building an educated consumer/customer base;
- pooling staff time, expertise and budgets;
- expanding distribution and recognition through an increased number of media outlets, including the *Consumer Information Catalog* and award-winning websites, such as **Pueblo.gsa.gov**, **Kids.gov**, **ConsumerAction.gov**, **USA.gov**, and **GobiernoUSA.gov**;
- engaging in a positive partnership with your federal/private sector counterpart;
- * building consumer confidence in your company, trade association or agency.

What Does the Federal Citizen Information Center Have to Do with It?

The Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) of the U.S. General Services Administration assists federal agencies in the development, promotion, and distribution of helpful consumer publications. FCIC has developed an innovative cooperative publishing program that encourages the federal government and the private sector, including foundations, trade associations, and individual companies, to collaborate and create timely consumer publications. To date, more than 200 publications have been produced cooperatively for nationwide distribution by FCIC. Current partners include American Express, MetLife, Sprint, National Pharmaceutical Council, Prudential Insurance, American Council on Education, the Toy Industry Association, Wells Fargo, National Crime Prevention Council, Fair Isaac, Visa, Home Safety Council, National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, Electrical Safety Foundation International, and Motorist Assurance Program.

FCIC seeks out cooperative opportunities by contributing staff time and acting as matchmaker, project coordinator, publicist, and distributor. FCIC provides a number of services without charge. For example, FCIC:

- Assigns a specific FCIC liaison officer to work on your project;
- Identifies partners for cooperative ventures;
- Provides editorial and design assistance;
- Lists publications in approximately 2 million copies of each edition of the free, quarterly *Consumer Information Catalog*;
- Offers electronic access to publications in HTML, PDF, and text formats on **Pueblo.gsa.gov**.
- Markets publications through news releases sent to approximately 10,000 newsletters, weekly and daily newspapers, magazines, wire services, and freelance writers;
- Develops special promotions in magazines such as *Family Circle*, *Parade*, *Smart Money*, and *Good Housekeeping*;
- Takes publication orders through our toll-free call center and provides other call center services as needed;
- Gauges reader satisfaction through publication evaluation surveys and follow up reports;
- Provides publication distribution reports and press clippings about your publications; and
- Assures that the Government Printing Office (GPO) distribution facility in Pueblo, Colorado fills consumers orders in an efficient and timely manner.

How Much Will It Cost?

There are generally two costs to consider—publishing and distribution. The cooperative partners share these costs depending upon their respective resources.

Development and printing costs vary according to the size of the manuscript, weight of paper, number of colors used, etc.

Distribution costs include the postage, handling, and warehousing of publications through the GPO Pueblo facility. FCIC takes a “no frills” approach to distribution to keep costs extremely competitive while meeting or exceeding industry standards for service. FCIC has been authorized by Congress to accept funds from the private sector to cover distribution costs.

FCIC uses distribution funds to pay GPO and does not keep any funds received from the private sector or charge for any service it provides other than publication distribution and specialized call center services.

How Do I Get Started?

If you have an idea for a cooperative booklet or would just like to learn more, contact Mary Levy, Director of FCIC’s Consumer Information and Education Division, at **(202) 501-1794** or by e-mail at **mary.levy@gsa.gov**.

How Do I Know If My Booklet Qualifies?

FCIC has established the following criteria for cooperative publications in conjunction with SOCAP International, the American Council on Consumer Interests, and the National Coalition for Consumer Education. The publication must:

1. Receive the endorsement of an appropriate federal agency;
2. Be an unbiased, objective presentation with clear labeling of industry or government positions whenever present;
3. Be free of advertising or promotional messages;
4. Include permission for reproduction in whole or part by educational and non-profit groups.

Learn more about cooperative publishing guidelines with FCIC’s publication, *Consumer Education and Information: Guidelines for Business-Sponsored Materials*. The publication can be viewed online at **www.pueblo.gsa.gov/coop_gde.htm**. Or call **(202) 501-1794** to request a printed copy.