



U.S. General Services Administration

# *Small Business Solutions*

## **Doing Business with GSA**

Office of Small Business Utilization

[www.gsa.gov/osbu](http://www.gsa.gov/osbu)





Dire



# introduction

We understand that small business is the heart of our nation. The Office of Small Business Utilization is an advocate for all small business concerns and we want to support your efforts to grow and adjust to demands of government contracting.

As you search for opportunities, seek out advice and guidance, tackle new legislation and trends, we hope you will always look to us as a resource you can count on. We realize you have options to get the help you need and we want to be your first step toward success when partnering with our agency.

As you review the enclosed information, let us know how we are doing and what we can do to improve your experience.

We welcome your success stories, comments, questions and concerns. Please email us at [small.business@gsa.gov](mailto:small.business@gsa.gov), visit us on the web at [www.gsa.gov/osbu](http://www.gsa.gov/osbu) or call 1-855-OSBUGSA.





## **please note:**

While this handbook provides information regarding GSA's contracting vehicles and offers helpful guidance, it should not be construed as a replacement of applicable procurement regulations and policies.





# table of contents

<b>introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>	Retail Opportunities in Federal Buildings.....	26
<b>please note</b> .....	<b>5</b>	Federal Leasing Opportunities .....	27
<b>chapter 1 Sources of Support</b> .....	<b>9</b>	Selling Building or Office Space.....	27
GSA Office of the Administrator .....	9	<b>chapter 4 Marketing</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Federal Acquisition Service .....	10	Women-Owned Small Business .....	
Public Buildings Service .....	10	Federal Contract Program .....	29
GSA's Office of Small Business .....		New Technology Evaluation Program .....	29
Utilization (OSBU).....	14	Sustainable Design Program .....	29
<b>chapter 2 GSA as a Buying Customer</b> .....	<b>17</b>	Executive Orders .....	29
Schedules .....	17	Executive Order 13423 .....	29
Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ).....	17	Executive Order 13514 .....	29
Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA).....	17	Videos Resources.....	30
Governmentwide Acquisition .....		Brand and Logo Guidance .....	30
Contracts (GWACs).....	17	Training Opportunities .....	30
Global Supply Program .....	17	Buyers Perspective .....	30
<b>chapter 3 Business Opportunities</b> .....	<b>19</b>	Proposal Basics.....	31
How to Sell to the Government.....	19	The Capability Statement.....	31
Vendor Support Center.....	19	Seeking Subcontracting Opportunities.....	31
Multiple Award Schedules Program .....	19	Contractor Team Arrangements (CTA).....	31
How to Participate .....	19	Partnering Agreements and Joint Ventures.....	31
Trade Agreements Act .....	20	Participating in Outreach Activities .....	32
Blanket Purchase Agreements .....	20	Steps to Success .....	32
Contractor Team Arrangements .....	20	Tips to Increasing Revenue.....	32
Price Reductions.....	20	Top Ten Federal Spenders.....	33
New Technology .....	20	Contracting Basics.....	33
Continuous Open Season/ Evergreen Contracts.....	20	Suggestions for Optimizing Competition.....	33
Worldwide Coverage.....	20	Agency Locator Help .....	34
Purchase Card Acceptance .....	20	Suggestions for Meeting with Agency Officials.....	34
Environmental Programs/ Identification .....	21	<b>chapter 5 Understanding Procurement Policy and Regulations</b> .....	<b>36</b>
Contractor Use of Schedules.....	21	Federal Acquisition Regulation.....	36
FAR Part 51 .....	21	General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM).....	36
FAR Part 51 Deviation.....	21	Federal Register (FR) .....	36
Section 508 Requirements .....	21	Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) .....	36
What You Should Know About Your Customers' Ordering Procedures .....	21	Section 508 Compliance.....	36
Contractor Performance Evaluation .....	22	Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) .....	37
Multiple Award Schedules Program – EXPRESS .....	22	Protest, Disputes, and Appeals.....	37
Understanding e-Buy.....	22	<b>appendix A Frequently Asked Questions</b> .....	<b>39</b>
GSA Advantage!® .....	22	<b>appendix B Glossary of Terms</b> .....	<b>49</b>
State and Local Governments.....	22	<b>appendix C Grants and Other Non-GSA Financial Support</b> .....	<b>52</b>
Cooperative Purchasing .....	22		
Disaster Recovery Purchasing .....	23		
1122 Program .....	23		
Technology Programs.....	23		
Assisted Acquisition Program.....	24		
GSA Fleet & Automotive Programs .....	24		
Travel Programs .....	25		
Personal Property Management Program .....	25		
Federal Construction Projects .....	25		





# chapter 1 Sources of Support

GSA's mission is to use expertise to provide innovative solutions for our customers in support of their missions, fostering effective, sustainable, and transparent government for the American people.

Our goal is to lead federal agencies in the economical and efficient management of federal assets by spearheading effective policy development and by the exemplary management of the buildings/ workplaces, motor vehicles, and personal property provided by GSA.

We deliver and maintain productive workplaces consisting of office space, furnishings, technology supplies, and related services. We also deliver timely, accurate, and cost-effective acquisition services and business solutions.

We are finding new and better ways of conducting business resulting in more productive and effective federal policies and administrative operations

Our agency is comprised of two departments: The Federal Acquisition Service for commercial products and services like paper products and business consulting services. The Public Buildings Service which manages construction, real-estate, architecture and interior design. Within the agency are staff offices that provide support to the different business lines. Our office, the Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) is a staff office to the administrator and responsible for providing up-to-date information on the value of small business as an agency partner.

Below are informational sources to help in your efforts to work with our agency.

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## **GSA Office of the Administrator**

**(202) 501-0800**

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) was established on July 1, 1949, when President Harry Truman signed the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act into Law.

GSA is headed by an Administrator who is appointed by the President and confirmed by Congress. (Administrator's bio)

The Administrator of General Services Administration oversees a federal agency of about 13,000 people and an annual budget of approximately \$16 billion. The GSA Administrator heads one of three central management agencies in the federal government.

Since 1949, GSA has housed federal workers and provided products and services to support the important work of government throughout the country. GSA affects almost \$66 billion in financial transactions throughout the government.

The Administrator and the immediate management team are headquartered in GSA's national office in Washington, DC. GSA also has 11 Regional Offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Denver, San Francisco, Auburn (Washington), and Washington, DC.

GSA supports federal employees wherever they work—in an office building, a warehouse, a national forest, or a government car.

GSA provides workspace, security, furniture, equipment, supplies, tools, computers, and telephones. GSA also provides travel and transportation services, manages the federal motor vehicle fleet, oversees telecommuting centers and federal child care centers, preserves historic buildings, manages a fine arts program, and develops, advocates, and evaluates governmentwide policy.

## Federal Acquisition Service

[www.gsa.gov/fas](http://www.gsa.gov/fas)

### Office of the FAS Commissioner

(703) 605-5400

[contactfas@gsa.gov](mailto:contactfas@gsa.gov)

National Customer Service Center (NCSC)

(800) 488-3111

[NCSCcustomer.service@gsa.gov](mailto:NCSCcustomer.service@gsa.gov)

GSA is America's only source solely dedicated to procuring goods and services for government. As an integral part of GSA, the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) possesses unrivaled capability to deliver comprehensive products and services across government at the best value possible. FAS offers a continuum of innovative solutions in the areas of:

- Products and Services
- Technology
- Motor Vehicle Management
- Transportation
- Travel
- Procurement and Online Acquisition Tools

### The FAS organization has 10 program areas:

**Office of Administration** manages human capital planning and analysis, competitive sourcing program management, emergency management, employee development and training, space management and other service-wide managerial and administrative functions.

**Office of Acquisition Management** ensures that GSA's activities are fully compliant with federal laws, regulations, and policies, and that operating practices are consistent across business lines and regions.

**Office of Assisted Acquisition Services** complements the programs of the Integrated Technology Services portfolio by providing acquisition, technical and project management services that assist agencies in acquiring and deploying information technology and professional services solutions.

**Office of the Chief Information Officer** develops and manages applications and systems in support of the needs of the FAS business lines and staff offices in accordance with policy established by the GSA Chief Information Officer.

**Office of the Controller** delivers financial and business information to FAS leaders and program managers to ensure sound resource and business decisions are made.

**Office of Customer Accounts and Research** enables GSA to better understand customer requirements and become a strategic partner in helping agencies meet their acquisition needs.

**Office of Integrated Technology Services** offers state of the art commercial products, systems, services and support to federal, state and local governments.

**Office of General Supplies and Services** simplifies the buying process to meet customer agency needs in the areas of office supplies, computer products, tools, security, furniture and many others.

**Office of Travel, Motor Vehicles, and Card Services** provides responsive and cost-effective solutions in support of federal travel and transportation, motor vehicle solutions and a wide variety of card services.

**Office of Strategic Business Planning and Process Improvement** sets the strategic vision for all of FAS, consistent with the overall GSA strategic vision, and also a consistent set of tools to help achieve the vision.

## Public Buildings Service

[www.gsa.gov/pbs](http://www.gsa.gov/pbs)

### Office of the PBS Commissioner

(202) 501-1100

PBS Industry Relations

(866) 727-8363

[industryrealitions@gsa.gov](mailto:industryrealitions@gsa.gov)

The landlord for the civilian federal government, Public Buildings Service (PBS) acquires space on behalf of the federal government through new construction and leasing, and acts as a caretaker for federal properties across the country. PBS owns or leases 8,600 properties, maintains an inventory of more than 354 million square feet of workspace for 1.1 million federal employees, and preserves more than 480 historic properties.

PBS is funded primarily through the Federal Buildings Fund, which is supported by rent from federal customer agencies.

### PBS Initiatives:

#### Design and construction

GSA is responsible for meeting the space requirements of federal agencies. GSA provides national leadership, policy direction, and standards in the areas of architecture, engineering, urban development, design, fine arts,

historic preservation, construction services, and project management.

### **Leasing**

[www.gsa.gov/leasing](http://www.gsa.gov/leasing)

GSA, the nation's largest public real estate organization, provides workspace for more than 1.2 million federal workers through its Public Buildings Service. Approximately half of the employees are housed in buildings owned by the federal government and half are located in over 7,100 separate leased properties, including buildings, land, antenna sites, etc. across the country.

### **Support the development of urban communities**

GSA facilities are located in more than 2,000 urban communities nationwide. As a federal agency, GSA has the responsibility to leverage its federal real estate actions in ways that support community development goals, while also meeting client agency needs. This responsibility derives from legal mandate, including federal law and executive orders, as well as sound business practices.

### **Manage federal property disposal**

[www.gsa.gov/propertydisposal](http://www.gsa.gov/propertydisposal)

GSA is responsible for promoting effective use of federal real property assets, as well as the disposal of real property that is no longer mission-critical to federal agencies.

With thousands of properties in the federal portfolio, disposing of underused federal property is a considerable task. GSA—while working together with partner federal agencies, state and local governments, non-profit organizations, business groups, and citizens—leaves a lasting positive impact on communities by making valuable government real estate available for numerous public purposes.

### **Provide space for more than 100 child care centers**

[www.gsa.gov/childcare](http://www.gsa.gov/childcare)

For more than 20 years GSA has helped federal workers gain access to work place child care facilities. Today, more than 110 independently operated, child care centers are located in GSA-managed spaces across the country. These centers offer safe, high quality care to federal workers and citizens. GSA also provides guidance, assistance, and oversight to federal agencies for the development of child care centers.

### **Donate or sell real estate for federal agencies**

GSA provides workspace and related services for over 100 federal client agencies serving more than one million workers through the GSA's Public Buildings Service. Whenever possible, client agencies are located in existing government-owned space. If suitable space in the government inventory is

not available, GSA acquires leased space in privately owned buildings.

GSA also provides related real estate services including the operation and maintenance of buildings and outleasing programs. Real estate services provided to clients appear in federal agencies' monthly electronic rent bills. GSA has simplified these bills so agencies have a clearer understanding of the costs they are charged for their workspace and services.

### **Commission artwork for new federal buildings and conserve a substantial inventory of Work Progress Administration art**

[www.gsa.gov/artinarchitecture](http://www.gsa.gov/artinarchitecture)

The GSA Art in Architecture Program commissions the nation's leading artists to create large-scale works of art for new federal buildings. These artworks enhance the civic meaning of federal architecture and showcase the vibrancy of American visual arts. Together, the art and architecture of federal buildings create a lasting cultural legacy for the people of the United States.

The Fine Arts Program manages GSA's Fine Arts Collection to ensure its safety, accessibility, preservation, and appropriate use in order to enhance and promote high-quality work environments for federal agencies and the public they serve.

### **Support sustainable design initiatives**

[www.gsa.gov/sustainabledesign](http://www.gsa.gov/sustainabledesign)

Sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments.

### **Preserve historically significant buildings for future generations**

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for the stewardship of over 400 historic properties. These properties represent the work of prominent architects and are valued for their significance in American history, architecture, art, archeology, engineering and culture. GSA takes great pride in its inventory and strives to preserve, protect, and utilize historic properties as established in Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Currently, over 200 GSA properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In order to make this valuable historic information more accessible, GSA has developed a pilot program with the National Park Service to digitize all



GSA National Register nominations. In addition, GSA is actively working to nominate over 100 eligible properties.

## **PBS Useful Sites**

### **Utility Areawide Contracts**

<http://www.gsa.gov/utilityareawidecontract>

This is a listing of the various GSA Utility Areawide Contracts managed by the Energy Conservation section of GSA.gov. For additional information contact Mark Ewing at (202) 708-9296 or mark.ewing@gsa.gov or Jerard Butler at (202) 401-0855 or jerard.butler@gsa.gov.

### **P100**

<http://www.gsa.gov/p100/>

The Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P100) establishes design standards and criteria for new buildings, major and minor alterations, and work in historic structures for the Public Buildings Service of General Services Administration (GSA). For more information contact the Office of the Chief Architect at (202) 501-1888.

### **IDIQ Contracts for Technical Services**

<http://www.gsa.gov/idiq>

This section has information regarding GSA awarding five competitively priced Multiple Award Indefinite Delivery/ Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts to some of the most technically qualified architect-engineering firms in the United States using FAR Part 36 and the Architect-Engineer Brooks-Act procurement procedures. For more information contact Charles Matta at charles.matta@gsa.gov or the Office of the Chief Architect at (202) 501-1888.

### **CAD Standards**

<http://www.gsa.gov/cad>

This section provide general information and documents relating to PBS Buildings and Real Estate Services employing specialized information technologies to create designs, prepare construction drawings, manage drawings, and track space.

### **Design Excellence and the Arts**

<http://www.gsa.gov/designexcellenceart>

The Design Excellence and the Arts Program is the center for GSA's advocacy of design quality and artistic expression. It establishes nationwide policies and procedures for selecting the finest and most appropriate architects and artists for GSA commissions. The program also implements rigorous review processes to produce facilities and civic artworks of outstanding quality and value. Under the auspices of the program, distinguished private-sector design professionals are appointed national peers by the

Commissioner of the Public Buildings Service to help GSA select lead designers and their architect/engineer teams, and critique concept designs as they are being developed. Publications, videos, exhibits, and other events, underwritten by the program, document the Design Excellence process and Design Excellence projects, significant commissions that add contemporary form and meaning to America's rich legacy of public architecture and art. For more information contact Thomas Grooms at (202) 501-2635 or thomas.grooms@gsa.gov or the Office of the Chief Architect at (202) 501-1888.

### **Urban Development**

<http://www.gsa.gov/urbandevlopment/>

GSA seeks to conduct its real estate activities and meet its client agencies' needs in ways that support community development. GSA facilities are located in more than 2000 urban communities nationwide, and in each of these communities GSA seeks to be an integral member and good neighbor. Through community partnerships, openness to the public, and location / design decisions, GSA provides multiple returns for communities and actively supports urban development. For more information contact Frank Giblin at (202) 501-1856 or frank.giblin@gsa.gov or the Office of the Chief Architect at (202) 501-1888.

### **GSA Annual Prospectus Threshold**

<http://www.gsa.gov/annualprospectusthreshold>

This section contains information regarding GSA's annual prospectus thresholds as referenced in section 102-73.35 of the FMR. For more information contact the Capital Allocation Division at (202) 501-0638.

### **Land Ports of Entry**

<http://www.gsa.gov/borderstationcenter>

This section discusses how the GSA Land Ports of Entry Program assists with the Federal Inspection Services agencies and the management of the border station construction program. Such activities include: strategic planning, budgeting, benchmarking, and design guidance. For more information contact Gianne Conard at 202-208-1453 or gianne.conard@gsa.gov.

### **Courthouse Programs**

<http://www.gsa.gov/courthouseprogram>

This section provides history of GSA's involvement with federal courthouses and how GSA is responsible for nationwide policy formulation and general management of new federal courthouse construction and the modernization of existing courthouses. For more information contact Fred Miller at (202) 501-9096 or fred.miller@gsa.gov.

## Regional Buildings Overview

<http://www.gsa.gov/regionalbuilding>

This page serves as an information portal for the total inventory of over 330 million square feet of workspace for a million federal employees in 2,100 American communities by region. For more information click on the link below:

## Real Estate Services

<http://www.gsa.gov/realestate>

This is the entry for all Real Estate Building areas such as leasing and rent. For more information contact the Office of Real Property Asset Management at (202) 501-0638, Office of Organizational Resources at (202) 501-0971, or Office of National Customer Services Management at (202) 501-0018.

## Leasing

<http://www.gsa.gov/leasing>

This section provides forms and information regarding the 6,400 leased buildings across the country for federal employees. For more information contact Gary Roberts at (202) 208-0054 or [gary.Roberts@gsa.gov](mailto:gary.Roberts@gsa.gov).

## National Broker Contract

<http://www.gsa.gov/brokercontracts>

This section provides information on the National Broker Contract GSA awarded October 4 2010 to a limited number of broker service contracts to provide consistent, high-quality services nationwide to federal agencies that rely on GSA for lease acquisition under one national contract. For more information contact Ada Kidd at (202) 208-7857 or [ada.kidd@gsa.gov](mailto:ada.kidd@gsa.gov).

## Real Estate National Accounts Program

<http://www.gsa.gov/nationalaccountsprogram>

This section provides information on PBS's National Accounts Program. For more information contact Steve Rosen at (202) 208-0153 or [steve.rosen@gsa.gov](mailto:steve.rosen@gsa.gov).

## Rent

<http://www.gsa.gov/rent>

This section provides rent information and documents related to various GSA rent policies. For more information contact Lisa Betts at (202) 501-0348 or [lisa.betts@gsa.gov](mailto:lisa.betts@gsa.gov), Office of the PBS Chief Financial Officer at (202) 501-0658, and Office of Real Property Asset Management at (202) 501-0638.

## Rent Pricing Policy

<http://www.gsa.gov/rentpricingpolicy/>

This section discusses how GSA develops policies for pricing space and related services to customer agencies. For

more information contact David Baker at (212) 264-2025 or [david.baker@gsa.gov](mailto:david.baker@gsa.gov), or the Office of Real Property Asset Management at (202) 501-0638.

## Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWA)

<http://www.gsa.gov/rwainformation>

This page discusses Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWA) and how they are established to capture and bill customers the cost of altering, renovating, repairing or providing services in space. For more information contact Larry Melton at (202) 663-0058 or [larry.melton@gsa.gov](mailto:larry.melton@gsa.gov).

## Security

<http://www.gsa.gov/buildingsecurity>

This section is a GSA information portal that provides building security information on the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement web site. For more information contact the Federal Protective Service at (202) 732-8000.

## Per Diem Rates

<http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>

This section provides information for Per Diem rates throughout the continental United States (CONUS) as well as links to Per Diem rates for other regions. For more information visit the following website: <http://ion-share3.gsa.gov/FTRD.nsf/Introduction>.

## e-Tools Overview

<http://www.gsa.gov/e-tool/>

This page serves as a starting point to the various e-Tools on GSA.gov which allow GSA to better serve federal customers by providing an efficient and cost-effective way to conduct business.

## Rent on the Web

<http://www.gsa.gov/rentontheweb/>

This is an application that posts copies of agencies' individual rent bills. Customer agencies can have access to this application by obtaining a password. The application can be found on [gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) under "Quick Links" under Rent on the Web. Click on Request for New User ID and fill out the form online. When completed, print the form and have your supervisor sign and fax to 202-606-3128 for processing. GSA will email customers their ID and password generally within 24 hours. If customers have an account and have questions, they can contact the Rent on the Web Helpdesk at 1-866-367-7878.

## **GSA Inventory of Owned and Leased Properties**

<http://www.gsa.gov/iolp>

This is a database that allows visitors to the site the option of viewing expiring lease/occupancy information from over 8,900 buildings – owned and leased. Visitors to the site can also view expiring lease/occupancy information by GSA region, state or congressional district. This is available under gsa.gov “Quick Links” under expiring leases. For more information call the Office of Real Property Asset Management at 202-501-0638.

## **GSA's Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU)**

[www.gsa.gov/osbu](http://www.gsa.gov/osbu)

Advocate for small, small disadvantaged, veteran-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, HUBZone, and women business owners. Its mission is to promote increased access to GSA's nationwide procurement opportunities.

OSBU monitors and implements small business policies and manages a range of programs required by law. GSA's small business programs nurture entrepreneurial opportunities, open doors to new business horizons, and enhance technological capabilities.

OSBU's outreach activities make it possible for the small business community to meet key contracting experts and be counseled on the procurement process. These activities include:

- Procurement networking sessions;
- Marketing strategies and techniques workshops;
- Electronic commerce/electronic data interchange training sessions;
- Interagency networking breakfasts;
- Trade missions;
- Roundtables; and
- Procurement conferences.

Business activities are supported by program experts at GSA headquarters, through Small Business Utilization Centers in 11 Regional Offices, and by small business technical advisors in the GSA National Office. GSA Regional Offices are located in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Denver, San Francisco, Auburn (Washington), Washington, DC.

OSBU is responsible for the scope of small business programs mandated by law. Every federal agency is required by the Small Business Act of 1953, as amended by Public Law 95-507, to establish an office that reports to and advises the head of the agency on the implementation functions and duties under this act.

## **OSBU Shortcuts for small business**

### **Small Business Events**

[www.gsa.gov/events](http://www.gsa.gov/events)

A calendar of events that is searchable by the words “small business”. These events, live classes and webinars are hosted throughout the country by agency experts. In many cases the events are free or a nominal charge.

### **Small Business Help**

[www.gsa.gov/smallbizhelp](http://www.gsa.gov/smallbizhelp)

An information site to help small business get started with partnering with our agency and more.

### **Small Business Publication**

[www.gsa.gov/smallbizpublications](http://www.gsa.gov/smallbizpublications)

Several publications from across the nation designed with small business in mind.

### **Small Business Recovery Program Opportunities**

[www.gsa.gov/smallbusinessrecovery](http://www.gsa.gov/smallbusinessrecovery)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has awarded contracts to businesses to create jobs and provide greener buildings. Our website list the awardees to increase subcontracting opportunities.

## **Small Business Partners**

### **Small Business Administration**

[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

Business guidance and support is crucial to increasing your odds of long-term success. Find counseling, training and business development specialists providing free and low-cost services in your area.

To reach SBA by Mail:

US Small Business Administration  
409 3rd Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20416

To reach SBA by phone or e-mail:

SBA Answer Desk  
1-800-U-ASK-SBA (1-800-827-5722)  
Send e-mails to: [answerdesk@sba.gov](mailto:answerdesk@sba.gov)  
Answer Desk TTY: (704) 344-6640  
[Spanish]



### **Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC)**

<http://www.aptac-us.org/new/>

The Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC) represents 94 PTACs - and the more than 500 procurement professionals that work for them - dedicated to assisting businesses seeking to compete successfully in federal, state and local government contracting. This website shares information about the PTACs and connects interested businesses with Centers that can provide the help that they need.

### **Federal Agency OSBU Offices**

<http://www.osdbu.gov/offices.html>

**Mission:** The mission of the Federal Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) Directors Interagency Council (OSDBU Council) is to exchange information on methods, initiatives, and best practices. The members may use the information within their respective agencies to more effectively utilize small businesses in prime contracts and subcontracts to the maximum extent practicable.

**Authority:** The Small Business Act as amended by Public Law 95-507 established the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business (OSDBU). The Director of the OSDBU is the primary advocate within each Federal Executive Agency responsible for promoting the maximum practicable use of all designated small business categories within the Federal Acquisition process. The OSDBU is tasked with ensuring that each Federal agency and their large prime vendors comply with federal laws, regulations, and policies to include small business concerns as sources for goods and services as prime contractors and subcontractors. Some Federal Departments and entities may have offices in their organizations that are not designated as OSDBU but have similar responsibilities. The goal of the OSDBU and each of these offices is to advocate for and manage the small business utilization programs for their organization.



# chapter 2 GSA as a buying customer

GSA uses a variety of contracting vehicles to effectively manage procurement for both its own operations and its government customers.

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## Schedules

[www.gsa.gov/schedules](http://www.gsa.gov/schedules)

Under the GSA Schedules (also referred to as Multiple Award Schedules and Federal Supply Schedules) Program, GSA establishes long-term governmentwide contracts with commercial firms to provide access to over 11 million commercial supplies (products) and services. While the GSA Schedules Program is only one of GSA's procurement vehicles, it is one of the largest programs and the most preferred for commercial products and services.

The Schedules Program was designed to provide discount resources to all GSA federal agencies worldwide, as well as state and local governments under cooperative purchasing (CO-OP). Under this program, a contract holder can sell to any government agency with just one source, instead of having separate contracts with each agency.

## Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ)

[http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/IDIQ\\_List\\_for\\_Web.xls](http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/IDIQ_List_for_Web.xls)

GSA has awarded several Multiple Award IDIQ contracts to procure technical expertise in areas such as cost estimating, architect/engineer services, seismic/structural/blast services, construction management and inspection, general construction, repair and alteration, design-build, demolition and remediation services.

## Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA)

[www.gsa.gov/bpa](http://www.gsa.gov/bpa)

A GSA Schedule BPA is an agreement established by a customer with a GSA Schedule contractor to fill repetitive needs for supplies or services (FAR 8.405-3). It simplifies the process for recurring needs, while leveraging a customer's buying power by taking advantage of quantity discounts, saving administrative time, and reducing paperwork.

## Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)

[www.gsa.gov/gwacs](http://www.gsa.gov/gwacs)

GSA is also authorized to establish task orders or delivery order contracts for information technology for use by other agencies. These GWACs have unique contracting features and specialized benefits for GSA customers.

Unique Features:

- Scope – Solutions based contracts integrating hardware, software and services
- All Contract Types Allowed
- Fixed Price (all types),
- Cost Reimbursement,
- Time and Material,
- Labor Hour
- Directed Orders - 8(a) STARS allows directed orders at or below \$3.5 million
- 8(a) Credit – For task orders issued against the 8(a) STARS GWAC

## Global Supply Program

[www.gsa.gov/globalsupply](http://www.gsa.gov/globalsupply)

GSA Global Supply™ provides easy and flexible requisition-based ordering for office supplies, tools, computer products, safety gear and cleaning products. GSA Global Supply provides:

- Global Delivery
- Product Breadth & Depth
- AbilityOne Guaranteed Products
- Easy Compliance with the FAR
- Payment using Government Purchase Card or AAC/ DoDAAC
- Government to Government Transactions
- Requisition-Based Ordering with no Need for Comparison Shopping





# chapter 3 Business opportunities

As the acquisition arm of the federal government, GSA plays a vital role in connecting the private sector with federal agencies fulfilling their business needs. GSA offers professional services, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology from commercial businesses to government organizations and the military through acquisition solutions from its Federal Acquisition Service (FAS).

GSA also provides workplaces to the government by constructing, managing, and preserving federal buildings and by leasing and managing commercial real estate through its Public Buildings Service (PBS).

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## How to Sell to the Government

[www.gsa.gov/howtoselltothegovernment](http://www.gsa.gov/howtoselltothegovernment)

Generally speaking, federal contractors and businesses interested in providing goods and services to the government must:

1. Find available opportunities with the government relevant to their business.
2. Make necessary preparations for bidding on a GSA contract.
3. Submit an offer.

Businesses should first visit Federal Business Opportunities, ([www.FedBizOpps.gov](http://www.FedBizOpps.gov)) and register there to be notified of newly posted opportunities in their industries. FedBizOpps provides a comprehensive database of all major government solicitations, contract awards, subcontracting opportunities, surplus property sales, and foreign business opportunities with the federal government.

## Vendor Support Center

[www.gsa.gov/vsc](http://www.gsa.gov/vsc)

The Vendor Support Center (VSC) is the online source for vendors to obtain information, review and report sales, and more.

### Multiple Award Schedules Program

[www.gsa.gov/schedules](http://www.gsa.gov/schedules)

This program is also referred to as GSA Schedules (MAS) and Federal Supply Schedules. Under the GSA Schedules Program, GSA establishes long-term governmentwide contracts with commercial firms. GSA Schedules provide access to over 11 million commercial supplies (products) and services at volume discount pricing.

GSA Schedules provide fast, flexible, cost-effective procurement solutions that allow customers to meet acquisition challenges, while achieving their missions.

GSA has delegated authority to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to procure medical supplies under the VA Federal Supply Schedules Program.

The Schedule list in [GSA eLibrary](#) contains a list of all GSA and VA Schedules. The generic categories of supplies and services available under each Schedule may be viewed by clicking on the Schedule number in the “Source” column. Supplies and services are identified in each Schedule by Special Item Number (SIN). GSA eLibrary also contains contract award information for all GSA and VA Schedules.

Schedule supplies and services can be ordered directly from GSA Schedule contractors or through the GSA Advantage!® online shopping and ordering system. All customers, even those in remote locations, can order the latest technology and quality supplies and services, conveniently, and at most favored customer prices. GSA Schedules also offer the potential benefits of shorter lead-times, lower administrative costs, and reduced inventories.

When using GSA Schedules, ordering activities have the opportunity to meet small business goals, while promoting compliance with various environmental and socioeconomic laws and regulations.

### How to Participate

Vendors interested in becoming GSA Schedule contractors should review *Getting on Schedule*, in order to fully understand the process involved in obtaining a GSA Schedule contract.

GSA recommends that before submitting an offer to obtain a GSA Schedule contract, vendors should complete available contractor training. The Center for Acquisition Excellence offers an online training course, “How to Become a Contractor — GSA Schedules Program,” which provides valuable information for all prospective Schedule contractors. [www.gsa.gov/cae](http://www.gsa.gov/cae)

### **Trade Agreements Act**

The Trade Agreements Act (19 U.S.C. 2501, et seq.) is the enabling statute that implements numerous multilateral and bilateral international trade agreements and other trade initiatives. Since the estimated dollar value of each Schedule exceeds the established Trade Agreements Act (TAA) threshold, the TAA is applicable to all Schedules. In accordance with the TAA, only U.S.-made or designated country end products shall be offered and sold under Schedule contracts.

### **Features of the Multiple Award Schedules Program**

GSA Schedules offer a variety of features, including:

#### **Blanket Purchase Agreements**

[www.gsa.gov/bpa](http://www.gsa.gov/bpa)

In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.405-3, ordering activities may establish BPAs under any GSA Schedule contract. A GSA Schedule BPA simplifies the filling of recurring needs for supplies (products) and services, while leveraging a customer’s buying power by taking advantage of quantity discounts, saving administrative time, and reducing paperwork.

#### **Contractor Team Arrangements**

[www.gsa.gov/contractorteamarrangements](http://www.gsa.gov/contractorteamarrangements)

Under a Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA), two or more GSA Schedule contractors work together, by complementing each other’s capabilities, to offer a total solution to meet an ordering activity’s requirement. Contractor Team Arrangements provide a “win-win” situation for both GSA Schedule contractors and ordering activities:

- GSA Schedule contractors may compete for Schedule orders for which they may not independently qualify.
- Ordering activities may procure a total solution rather than making separate buys for each part of a requirement.

#### **Price Reductions**

[www.gsa.gov/schedulespricereducations](http://www.gsa.gov/schedulespricereducations)

Under the GSA Schedules Program, GSA has determined that prices under GSA Schedule contracts are fair and reasonable. With regard to Schedule contracts for services, while GSA has determined that the labor hour (hourly

rate) for a labor/skill category is fair and reasonable, GSA has not determined that the level of effort or mix of labor/skill categories proposed in response to a specific requirement represents the best value. Therefore, when buying services that require a statement of work, the ordering activity must consider the level of effort and mix of labor/skill categories proposed for a particular requirement, and make a determination that the total price is reasonable and represents the best value.

It is a proven best practice that ordering activities should seek additional price reductions/increased discounts and/or concessions when placing an order under a GSA Schedule contract. Contractors will often “sharpen their pencils” to obtain a large Schedule contract order. GSA Schedule contractors are not required to pass on to all Schedule users a price reduction extended only to an individual customer for a specific order.

### **New Technology**

Vendors can submit for review, any products or services not currently found under the Schedules. The items or services should be new and deemed appropriate to the Schedule for which the vendor is applying to receive a contract.

### **Continuous Open Season/Evergreen Contracts**

[www.gsa.gov/evergreencontracting](http://www.gsa.gov/evergreencontracting)

This is a feature of the program that indicates that there is no closing date for submitting offers. However, solicitations will be refreshed from time to time to update policy and regulation changes. Always make sure to download the most current documents before submitting an offer.

With Evergreen contracting, GSA has expanded its multiyear contracts under the GSA Schedules Program to one five-year base contract period and three five-year Evergreen option periods.

Evergreen options can serve as a mechanism for customers to maintain contractual relationships with quality Schedule contractors performing at levels that meet or exceed performance expectations. Evergreen options can also assist in workload management and administrative cost savings.

### **Worldwide Coverage**

This feature allows buyers world wide to access our Schedules Program. Many of our buyers are military government employees stationed overseas as well as satellite offices in different countries.

### **Purchase Card Acceptance**

[www.gsa.gov/smartpay](http://www.gsa.gov/smartpay)

The GSA SmartPay® 2 program provides charge cards

to U.S. government agencies/departments, as well as tribal governments, through master contracts that are negotiated with major national banks. There are currently over 350 agencies/organizations participating in the program spending \$30 billion annually, through 100 million transactions on over three million cards.

Merchants and vendors that wish to obtain a schedule contract to do business with the government are required to accept the government charge card as a method of payment for micro-purchases, generally those purchases under \$3,000. The rules and requirements for accepting cards are defined by the card associations and also cover government charge cards.

A business that has trouble accepting government charge cards may be classified under a blocked Merchant Category Code (MCC). Businesses are required to label themselves by selecting an MCC that describes the products or services provided. Certain MCCs are blocked by agencies to prevent fraud and misuse.

If a company is experiencing problems accepting GSA SmartPay® 2 cards, it may be because the business is classified under an MCC that is blocked by that agency. To remedy this problem, merchants should talk to their financial institution to confirm that their MCC classification is accurate.

### **Environmental Programs/Identification**

[www.gsa.gov/enviro](http://www.gsa.gov/enviro)

GSA offers a variety of environmental products and services to its federal customers to assist them in their efforts to comply with procurement responsibilities outlined in federal environmental laws and regulations.

### **Contractor Use of Schedules**

[www.gsa.gov/far51deviation](http://www.gsa.gov/far51deviation)

#### **FAR Part 51**

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 51.1, Contractor Use of Government Supply Sources, prescribes policies and procedures under which contractors may use government supply sources, including GSA Schedule contracts. When determined to be in the best interest of the government, contracting officers may authorize contractors to use GSA Schedule contracts in the performance of cost-reimbursement contracts.

#### **FAR Part 51 Deviation**

An approved deviation to FAR 51.1 now expands the authority of contractors to use GSA sources of supply. Federal government contracting officers may authorize GSA

contractors to purchase supplies and services from Federal Supply Schedule contracts, including contracts under those Schedules managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and items available from GSA Global Supply™, when deemed appropriate to fulfill agency requirements. This authority is limited to orders:

- Placed on a time-and-materials or labor-hour basis;
- For ancillary supplies/services that are in support of the overall order;
- Issued in accordance with the procedures in FAR 8.405-1, Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work (SOW); and
- Placed by the federal government. This authorization is **not** available to state and local government.

### **Section 508 Requirements**

[www.gsa.gov/section508](http://www.gsa.gov/section508)

Federal agencies' electronic and information technology must be accessible to people with disabilities. GSA has been charged with the task of educating federal employees and building the infrastructure necessary to support Section 508 implementation. Using this web site, federal employees and the public can access resources for understanding and implementing the requirements of Section 508 as they apply to purchases of electronic and information technology products and services, software applications and operating systems, web-based internet and intranet information systems, telecommunications products, video and multimedia products, self contained closed products and desktop and portable computers. For more information on section 508 law and how it applies to you, call (202) 501-4906.

### **What You Should Know About Your Customers' Ordering Procedures**

Orders placed against GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contracts, using the procedures in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 8.4, are considered to be issued using full and open competition (see FAR 6.102(d)(3)).

Ordering activities shall not seek competition outside of GSA Schedules or synopsise the requirement (see Exception, below). In addition, ordering activities are not required to make a separate determination of fair and reasonable pricing, except for the price evaluation required by FAR 8.405-2(d) when ordering services requiring a statement of work.

By placing an order against a GSA Schedule contract using the procedures in this section, the ordering activity has concluded that the order represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the government's needs.



**Exception:** When using Recovery Act funds, ordering activities shall post notices of Schedule orders (including orders issued under Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs)) of \$25,000 or more on Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) for “informational purposes only.”

Although GSA has already negotiated fair and reasonable pricing, ordering activities may seek additional discounts before placing an order.

While the mandatory small business preference programs in FAR Part 19 do not apply to orders placed against GSA Schedule contracts, such orders may be credited toward an ordering activity's small business goals. Ordering activities may consider socioeconomic status when identifying contractors for consideration of an order (see FAR 8.405-5).

**Contractor Performance Evaluation:** Ordering activities shall prepare an evaluation of contractor performance for each Schedule contract order that exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold. See FAR 8.406-7 and 42.1502(c). Ordering activities shall use agency-approved feeder systems to collect and electronically submit past performance reports to the Past Performance Information Retrieval system (PPIRS).

#### **Multiple Award Schedules Program – EXPRESS**

<https://vsc.gsa.gov/fss/MASExpProgram.cfm>

The Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) Express Program, a specialized program established under the GSA Schedules Program, is designed to simplify, streamline, and ultimately accelerate the process for vendors to obtain MAS contracts under select or limited schedules.

#### **Understanding e-Buy**

[www.gsa.gov/ebuy](http://www.gsa.gov/ebuy)

eBuy is an electronic Request for Quote (RFQ) / Request for Proposal (RFP) system designed to allow government buyers to request information, find sources, and prepare RFQs/RFPs online, for millions of services and products offered through GSA's Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and GSA Technology Contracts. Government buyers can use eBuy to obtain quotes or proposals for services, large quantity purchases, big ticket items, and purchases with complex requirements.

In order to participate in e-Buy, you must register with the GSA Vendor Support Center and have your Schedule catalog on the GSA Advantage! shopping system. To learn more about the benefits of GSA Advantage! and the e-Buy quote system, contact the VSC at 703-305-6235 or 877-495-4849 or e-mail us at [vendor.support@gsa.gov](mailto:vendor.support@gsa.gov)

GovernmentWide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) vendors as well as Network Services and Telecommunication vendors (non-GWAC) may now register with the VSC to use GSA's eBuy RFQ system.

If you have a Schedule contract and currently have your catalog on GSA Advantage - simply login! Upon logging in, you may select categories that you want to receive RFQ notices.

#### **GSA Advantage!®**

<https://www.gsaadvantage.gov>

GSA Advantage has been a reliable and proven one-stop online resource for thousands of Federal employees worldwide. GSA Advantage offers the most comprehensive selection of approved products and services from GSA contracts.

You must be a GSA Schedule holder to sell your products or services from this site.

#### **State and Local Governments**

[www.gsa.gov/stateandlocal](http://www.gsa.gov/stateandlocal)

State and local government entities are now eligible to purchase from GSA Schedule contracts under the following programs:

##### **Cooperative Purchasing**

[www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing](http://www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing)

Under the Cooperative Purchasing Program, state and local government entities may purchase a variety of Information Technology (IT) products, software, and services from contracts awarded under GSA Schedule 70, as well as from contracts under the Consolidated (formerly Corporate Contracts) Schedule containing IT special item numbers. State and local government entities may also purchase alarm and signal systems, facility management systems, firefighting and rescue equipment, law enforcement and security equipment, marine craft and related equipment, special purpose clothing, and related services from contracts awarded under GSA Federal Supply Schedule 84, Total Solutions for Law Enforcement, Security, Facility Management Systems, Fire, Rescue, Special Purpose Clothing, Marine Craft, and Emergency/ Disaster Response.

Schedule contractors participating in the Cooperative Purchasing Program are identified in GSA eLibrary (formerly Schedules e-Library) with the Cooperative Purchasing icon. This icon is also used to identify those products and services available for Cooperative Purchasing on GSA Advantage!®, GSA's online shopping and ordering system.

## Disaster Recovery Purchasing

[www.gsa.gov/disasterrecovery](http://www.gsa.gov/disasterrecovery)

Under the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program, state and local government entities may purchase a variety of products and services from contracts awarded under GSA Federal Supply Schedules to facilitate recovery from a major disaster, terrorism, or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack.

This Disaster Recovery Purchasing authority is limited to GSA Schedule contracts and does not include any other GSA programs. GSA eLibrary (formerly Schedules e-Library) contains a list of all GSA Schedules subject to Disaster Recovery Purchasing.

Schedule contractors participating in the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program are identified in GSA eLibrary with the Disaster Recovery Purchasing icon. This icon is also used to identify those products and services available for Disaster Recovery Purchasing on GSA Advantage!®, GSA's online shopping and ordering system.

**Schedule contractors that previously declined to participate in the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program, but now wish to do so, should contact their GSA Administrative Contracting Officers (ACOs) for instructions on modifying their contracts to allow participation in this program.**

State and local government entities may use GSA Schedule contracts to purchase products and services in advance of a major disaster declared by the president, as well as in the aftermath of an emergency event. State and local government entities are responsible for ensuring that the products or services purchased are to be used to facilitate recovery.

### 1122 Program

[www.gsa.gov/1122program](http://www.gsa.gov/1122program)

Section 1122 of the fiscal year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act established the authority for states and units of local government to purchase law enforcement equipment through federal procurement channels, provided that the equipment is used in the performance of counter-drug activities. The "1122 Program" affords state and local governments the opportunity to maximize their use of taxpayer dollars, by taking advantage of the purchasing power of the federal government to receive discounts commensurate with large volume purchases.

The authority for the 1122 Program resides with the Department of Defense. The U.S. Army, as the executive agent of the program, formed a steering committee initially

consisting of representatives from GSA, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Today, the Army, GSA, and DLA are actively involved in the program.

The governor of each state participating in the 1122 Program designates a State Point of Contact (SPOC) to administer the state's activities under the program, by validating the counter-drug mission of each procurement request, and ensuring the availability of funds.

GSA publishes the Law Enforcement Equipment and Supplies Catalog (1122 Catalog), which explains how the 1122 Program works, and identifies the equipment and supplies available from the Army, GSA, and DLA.

With the approval of the executive agent, GSA has authorized states and units of local government to purchase certain products under selected GSA Schedules and Special Item Numbers (SINs) in support of their counter-drug missions. Specific types of vehicles are also available under the program by utilizing AutoChoice, GSA's online vehicle ordering system. All GSA items authorized for use under the 1122 Program, as well as detailed information regarding ordering procedures, are contained in the 1122 Catalog.

In addition to the 1122 Program, state and local government entities may take advantage of the purchasing power of the federal government through the Cooperative Purchasing Program and the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program. Access these websites to learn how to acquire authorized products and services from a variety of GSA Schedules.

## Technology Programs

[www.gsa.gov/its](http://www.gsa.gov/its)

Agencies count on GSA to provide smarter technology solutions and explore opportunities in complex technology procurement, government requirements and mandates, and accessible, timely and cost efficient contract vehicles that meet your acquisition needs.

- **IT products, services and solutions to meet your agency's technology demands.** Equipment rental, product leases, equipment purchase and maintenance, computers, smart phones, software, hardware, training, information technology services - learn more about GSA's Schedule 70.
- **Commercial, non-commercial, partial or total IT services-based solutions - fully competed indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts.** Popular GWACs include: 8(a)STARS, Alliant, Alliant SB, COMMITS

NexGen, Millennia Lite, and VETS.

- **Connectivity for internet and other commercial telecommunications, communications products and services.** Keep your agency up-to-date with leading trends in connectivity - while saving money with Networx and TEMS. Learn more about GSA's Telecommunications solutions.
- Agencies can get lower prices for commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software with SmartBUY®.
- Need a Dot.gov domain? Let GSA help your agency learn more about the .gov Domain Registration Services available.
- **Federal agencies can count on GSA's USACCESS program for Personal Identification Verification (PIV) credentialing.** The HSPD-12 MSO's identity management services - which has offices nationwide - helps agencies enroll applicants, issues credentials, and manages the lifecycle of those credentials.

## Assisted Acquisition Program

[www.gsa.gov/aascmp](http://www.gsa.gov/aascmp)

Provides management and execution of agency acquisitions, saving time and resources.

GSA works with customer agency programs, financial, contracting and legal counsel to ensure requirements are met on time and within budget. Trained staff reduce risk resulting in best value solutions.

Assisted Acquisition staff are certified contracting, project management, and financial management professionals located throughout United States, Europe, and Asia.

Acquisition solutions may include the use of:

- Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)  
[www.gsa.gov/gwacs](http://www.gsa.gov/gwacs)
- Multiple Award Contracts [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)
- GSA Schedules [www.gsa.gov/schedules](http://www.gsa.gov/schedules)
- Single Award or Agency-Specific Contracts

This suite of solutions provides customer access to thousands of commercial partners and unlimited variety. Additionally, AAS can also help agencies meet small business goals and offer solutions through the use of GWAC, Alliant Small Business, COMMITS NexGen, and 8(a) STARS contracts.

## GSA Fleet & Automotive Programs

[www.gsa.gov/vehicle](http://www.gsa.gov/vehicle)

GSA offers vehicle programs that provide complete solutions for federal agencies. It is a mandatory source for the purchase of federal agency vehicles. Vehicles covered by law include:

- Alternative fuel vehicles;
- Ambulances;
- Buses;
- Light trucks;
- Medium and heavy trucks;
- Sedans;
- Station wagons; and,
- Wreckers and Carriers.

GSA has two Federal Supply Schedule solutions that can also fulfill your vehicle needs! When using the Schedules, you can access vendors directly to place an order for vehicles or accessories or you can contact GSA to place the order on your behalf! More information on these options is available through our CARS line at 703-605-CARS (2277).

- **Schedule 23V:** This schedule offers a wide variety of specialty vehicles and accessories:
  - Fire Fighting Apparatus and Attachments
  - Fire Fighting Vehicles and Accessorie
  - Law Enforcement Vehicles and Attachments
  - Emergency Communications Vehicles
  - Special Vocational Vehicles
  - Construction and Road Maintenance Equipment
  - Aircraft Ground Support Vehicles
  - Unfitting Services
  - Medium and Heavy Trucks
  - Low Speed Vehicles
  - Trailers
  - Tires
  - Leasing of Specialty Vehicles
  - Automotive Services (coming soon)
- **Schedule 751:** This schedule offers commercial leasing of sedans and light trucks that permits agencies to fulfill their short term leasing needs via 12, 18, 24, 30, and 36 month leases:
  - Commercial Vehicles
  - SUV
  - Light Trucks

## Leasing Vehicles

GSA Fleet is a full-service, professional fleet management organization providing high quality vehicles to federal customers. This comprehensive leasing program offers complete management support for the lifecycle of the vehicle. Fleet services include:

- Vehicle acquisition;
- Asset management;
- Maintenance and repair;
- Fuel accident management;
- Short-term rentals; and,
- Vehicle remarketing.

GSA also offers used vehicles for sale in an auction environment at approximately 40 locations and online. Consumers can expect to find a mix of vehicle types hard to find anywhere else, including a wide selection of alternative fuel vehicles. Every sale is open to the public. Access to these low-mileage, well-maintained vehicles via auction comes without a registration or buyer's fee. <http://www.gsa.gov/vehicleleasing>

## Travel Programs

[www.gsa.gov/travelindustry](http://www.gsa.gov/travelindustry)

- **FedRooms®** - Information for companies interested in providing hotel room inventory to the government
- **Conference Lodging Services** - Information for companies interested in providing conference and event services to the government
- **Airline City Pair Program** - Information on solicitations for airlines to provide transportation services
- **E-Gov Travel Services (ETS)** - Information on companies awarded electronic travel reservation systems contracts
- **Travel Services Solutions** - A multiple-award schedule for contract travel services
- **Transportation Audits** - Information for contractors capable of conducting prepayment auditing services for the government

## Personal Property Management Program

[www.gsa.gov/property](http://www.gsa.gov/property)

GSA offers programs for federal agencies, state and local governments and the public to purchase personal property. Personal property refers to items ranging from common place goods to specialized equipment. Personal Property programs have different policies and rules based on the type of consumer.

## Federal agencies looking for Personal Property

Excess personal property is any personal property that is no longer required by the holding agency for the discharge of its responsibilities. Each year, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are saved by managers who acquire excess property instead of purchasing new property. Government regulations mandate that federal agencies, to the fullest extent practicable, use excess personal property as the first source of supply in meeting agency requirements (Federal Management Regulation 102-36).

## State agencies and public organizations looking for Personal Property

The Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program enables certain nonfederal organizations to obtain personal property that the federal government no longer needs. The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, provides for the transfer of surplus personal property to State Agencies for Surplus Property. Surplus personal property includes all types and categories of property, except:

- Land or other real property;
- Certain naval vessels; and
- Records of the federal government.

The following activities are eligible to receive donations of federal surplus personal property through the State Agencies for Surplus Property (SASP):

- Public agencies
- Nonprofit educational and public health activities, including programs for the homeless
- Nonprofit and public programs for the elderly
- Public airports
- Educational activities of special interest to the Armed Services
- Other donee activities

## Federal Construction Projects

[www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations](http://www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations)

All GSA design and construction contracting opportunities are advertised on Federal Business Opportunities ("FedBizOpps") at [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov). To receive drawings and specifications for projects, contractors must be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)) system and in FedBizOpps, as drawings and specifications are usually issued electronically there. Announcements will contain instructions on obtaining classified drawings and specifications which are not distributed through FedBizOpps. The following areas are included in construction.



## Design Acquisition

Design Services are competed using a qualifications-based selection process under the Brooks Act (Public Law 92-582, as amended) and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 36.6. This is a two-step process where technical submissions of qualifications from Architect-Engineer firms are reviewed, and the vendors with the strongest technical proposals are interviewed in order to develop a list of finalists. The firms are ranked based on their technical qualifications, and negotiations are conducted with the top-rated firm for the contract award. If the government and firm cannot come to agreement during negotiations, the government will then proceed to the next-ranked firm for negotiations.

GSA may use this process to award Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) and small project contracts. A variation of the process, known as “Design Excellence,” is used for the major (prospectus) projects. In this process, the “Lead Designer” submits his qualification portfolio, and the portfolios are evaluated. In the second stage the Designers submit the qualifications of the entire team and are interviewed. The firms are ranked and negotiations are begun with the top-ranked designer/firm. The selection and award process takes six to 12 months.

[For More Information >>](#)

## Construction Acquisition

In general, construction projects below the prospectus level (<http://www.gsa.gov/annualprospectusthreshold>) are procured using either sealed bidding procedures or negotiated procedures.

Major Construction Contracts may be selected using the FAR’s “Source Selection” Method (FAR 15.1). There are many variations of this method. The basic method requests both Technical or Management Proposals and a Price Proposal. Once the proposals are received they are evaluated technically, and then evaluated in terms of prices. Tradeoffs may be made, and the selection of the “Best Value” is made. The Solicitations must state the relationship between the technical and price proposals, e.g. tech more important than price, tech equal to price, or lowest price technically acceptable. Competitive range can be determined and discussion/negotiation held to allow the offers to correct technical proposals and to clarify the pricing.

There is a two-step advisory process that allows for technical proposals to be evaluated, and offerors are advised of whether they are technically viable to compete in a particular procurement. The final evaluations are the same as the one-step process and deal with selecting the best value for the government. Most awards are made within 60 days of receipt of offers.

## Performance and Payment Bonds

In accordance with FAR 28.102, all construction projects over \$150,000 are subject to the Miller Act which requires performance and payment bonds. Performance bonds represent a promise of surety to the government that once the contract is awarded, the contractor will perform its obligations under the contract.

Payment bonds represent a promise of surety of payment to all persons supplying labor or materials in the work provided for in a contract.

## Retail Opportunities in Federal Buildings

[www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations](http://www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations)

GSA has the authority to contract for concessions in federally owned and leased space in order to meet the needs of the federal tenants in that space and also to contract directly with local telecommunications companies for public pay phones. GSA also has certain authorities to grant outleases, licenses, or permits to the private sector for use of federally owned or leased space.

### Concessions

GSA has the authority to provide essential food concession services in GSA-controlled buildings when nearby private commercial services are insufficient. A feasibility study is used to determine the size and type of concessions needed, and essential concessions services are arranged through Randolph-Sheppard permits, contracts, and/or outleases. The Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 gives priority to visually impaired persons for the operation of onsite concessions in federally controlled facilities. The Department of Education has responsibility for the administration of the Randolph-Sheppard Act and has delegated that responsibility through individual State Licensing Agencies (SLAs). Visually impaired vendors interested in these opportunities should contact the SLA directly for information on licensing requirements and business opportunities; the SLA will represent the vendor in these arrangements.

GSA is required to notify the SLA if and when a concessions opportunity becomes available. Vending machines, sundry stands, prepackaged snack bars, limited onsite snack bars, and onsite snack bars with a grill are typically handled with a permit or license that is prepared by the SLA and submitted to GSA for execution.

The operation of a café or cafeteria is usually covered by a food services contract. Food service contracts can be bid on the open market, and opportunities will be advertised in FedBizOpps.gov. However, GSA must still give priority to visually impaired vendors according to the Randolph-Sheppard Act when conducting a competitive procurement.

## Outleasing

Outleasing is GSA's method of granting private-sector use of GSA-owned or leased space. GSA offers leases for retail, parking, excess office and warehouse space, and rooftops (generally to wireless telecommunications carriers), as well as short-term licenses for film productions.

Under the authority of the Public Buildings and Cooperative Use Act of 1976, GSA can lease space for up to 20 years.

A simple, negotiated lease method may be used, and procedures are similar to those of the private sector. Vendors can contact the appropriate GSA Regional Office directly if interested in further information on outleasing opportunities.

## Federal Leasing Opportunities

GSA leases space in diverse locations when leasing is the best solution for meeting federal space needs. More than 50 percent of GSA leases are for 10,000 square feet or less, so owners do not have to be corporate giants to compete for lease contracts.

The following briefly explains how private property owners and managers can compete for lease contracts. It outlines the types of space GSA ordinarily leases, the lease terms and conditions, offering space to GSA, how GSA awards leases, and who to contact for additional information.

### Scope of GSA Leasing

GSA leases all types of space for most federal agencies, including offices, laboratories, warehouses, clinics, and border stations in cities, suburbs and rural areas throughout the United States and its territories.

### Lease Conditions

GSA leases space in a wide range of sizes, locations, and terms to meet the requirements of federal agencies. A Solicitation for Offers (SFO) is submitted by potential landlords. The Solicitation for Offers is a proposal to lease space indicating the type and amount of space needed and the conditions of the lease. The solicitation also gives detailed information on how to submit a proposal, contact name and address, and the deadline by which it must be received by the GSA regional office. Each Solicitation for Offers for a new lease differs in its requirements.

The amount of space requested may range from a single room to an entire building. Initial alterations to prepare space for occupancy differ according to the needs of the tenant agency. In some cases, new construction is solicited. This "lease construction" process is used for new construction and for procurements requiring significant design work, regardless of type; most suitable for the unique needs

various tenants. In normal circumstances, new construction is in areas of high visibility and community impact, with procurements requiring significant design work. This process is what the federal government utilizes to procure "build-to-suit" space. In addition to new construction, this includes adaptive reuse of existing buildings, "full gut" rehabilitation replacement of envelope, mechanical systems, ceiling, service cores, etc.) and minor renovations. The program involves a process of submittal and evaluation where potential candidates are selected on factors that can include the quality of the site and facility design as well as the quality of the offeror.

Terms for GSA leases are usually 5 to 10 years although some leases may be shorter or as long as 20 years. The term is based on the agency's requirements and market conditions for the present and future.

## Selling Building or Office Space

[www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations](http://www.gsa.gov/pbsindustryrelations)

Requirements for space over 10,000 square feet are advertised in local newspapers or the Federal Business Opportunities webpage. Space requirements less than 10,000 square feet are usually acquired by a more informal canvassing and contacts with potential offerors. Property managers or owners interested in offering space to GSA for lease are encouraged to contact the appropriate regional office.

### Submitting a Proposal

Each Solicitation for Offers to lease space indicates the type and amount of space needed and the conditions of the lease. The solicitation also gives detailed information on how to submit a proposal, contact name and address, and the deadline by which it must be received by the GSA regional office.

### Lease Awards and Payments

GSA solicits offers on a competitive basis, negotiates with offerors, and, for most acquisitions, makes awards to the lowest priced acceptable offer. Some solicitations also consider trade-offs between price and other factors. Typically, for acquisitions greater than 10,000 square feet, the award is based on a building rate and a specific allowance for the build out of the tenant space. Once the award is made, the final cost of the build out is negotiated, based on the design drawings of the tenant's space. After acceptance of the space, GSA begins monthly rent payments in arrears.





# chapter 4 Marketing

There are many new opportunities for small businesses that are opening doors to success. The following initiatives are a great next step for moving forward in the Federal market.

## Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program

<http://www.sba.gov/content/contracting-opportunities-women-owned-small-businesses>

The U.S. Small Business Administration published a final rule effective February 4, 2011, to expand federal contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses (WOSBs). The Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract program authorizes contracting officers to set aside certain federal contracts for eligible Women-owned small businesses (WOSBs) or Economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses (EDWOSBs).

To be eligible, a firm must be at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more women, and primarily managed by one or more women. The women must be U.S. citizens. The firm must be "small" in its primary industry in accordance with SBA's size standards for that industry. In order for a WOSB to be deemed "economically disadvantaged," its owners must demonstrate economic disadvantage in accordance with the requirements set forth in the final rule.

## New Technology Evaluation Program

<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/about.html>

As the U.S. government modernizes, federal agencies turn to private industry to provide new, energy-saving technologies. To support industry contributions to this effort, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy sponsors the Building Technologies Program (BTP). The program accelerates the use of innovative solutions in commercial buildings by supporting energy-saving research and development activities and providing tools, guidance, training, and access to technical and financial resources.

Under this program, vendors can submit descriptions of new technologies and have their products validated. DOE's Commercial Building Energy Alliances (CBEAs) working groups consider submissions for possible large-scale testing, evaluation, or formulation of procurement specifications. The unique program allows industry to demonstrate the value of their ground-breaking technologies and get their solutions vetted for future use.

## Sustainable Design Program

[www.gsa.gov/sustainabledesign](http://www.gsa.gov/sustainabledesign)

Sustainable design seeks to reduce negative impacts on the environment, and the health and comfort of building occupants, thereby improving building performance. The basic objectives of sustainability are to reduce consumption of non-renewable resources, minimize waste, and create healthy, productive environments.

Sustainable design principles include the ability to:

- optimize site potential;
- minimize non-renewable energy consumption;
- use environmentally preferable products;
- protect and conserve water;
- enhance indoor environmental quality; and
- optimize operational and maintenance practices.

Utilizing a sustainable design philosophy encourages decisions at each phase of the design process that will reduce negative impacts on the environment and the health of the occupants, without compromising the bottom line. It is an integrated, holistic approach that encourages compromise and tradeoffs. Such an integrated approach positively impacts all phases of a building's life-cycle, including design, construction, operation and decommissioning.

## Executive Orders

[http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/executive\\_orders.php](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/executive_orders.php)

### Executive Order 13423

- Requires acquisition of biobased, environmentally preferable, energy-efficient, water-efficient, and recycled content products

### Executive Order 13514

- 95% of new contract actions must be green!
- Includes task and delivery orders
- Applies where such products and services meet agency performance requirements



## Video Resources

- The OSBU will be adding recorded copies of training and information for your easy access and business development.
- [Federal Business Opportunities Demonstration Videos](#) These videos will help with accessing and navigating this website to find procurement opportunities faster.
- Small Business Administration <http://www.sba.gov/tools/audiovideo/video/index.html> SBA presents a series of videos to inspire and inform entrepreneurs and small business owners as they take the journey to small business success.

## Brand and Logo Guidance

[www.gsa.gov/logos](http://www.gsa.gov/logos)

Current Multiple Award Schedules Program and/or GSA contract holders are permitted to use the GSA Schedule and/or Contract Holder logo(s). These logos include the GSA Star Mark along with an identifier, namely the word "Schedule," "Contract Holder," or "Advantage!" Only GSA schedule holders registered on GSA Advantage! may display the GSA Advantage! logo. Contractors can use only the logos as set forth below on their commercial materials. The GSA logo(s) should never take prominence over the contractor's name or logo on contractor-produced materials. Except for the limited exception to link a webpage directly to the GSA portal, contractors are not permitted to use the GSA Star Mark without an identifier. Contractors must only use the logos that include the GSA Star Mark along with an identifier. Questions or clarifications about the use of the GSA Star Mark should be directed to the Office of Marketing, Communications Division, at (703) 605-5640.

## Training Opportunities

### General Services Administration

[www.gsa.gov/events](http://www.gsa.gov/events)  
[www.gsa.gov/training](http://www.gsa.gov/training)

### Small Business Administration

<http://www.sba.gov/training>

### Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

[http://www.aptac-us.org/new/Govt\\_Contracting/training.php](http://www.aptac-us.org/new/Govt_Contracting/training.php)

## Buyers Perspective

The following tips and resources are provided by government buyers and other businesses like yourself who have been successful in selling to the government. They are sources to help you do business with the government more effectively.

We encourage you to always double check any information you receive as sites and data are constantly updated.

**USA.Gov** is an easy, one-stop access to all online Federal Government resources with keyword search capability – [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov).

**Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)** aids in formation, growth, and success of small business – [www.score.org](http://www.score.org).

**Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** provide management, finance and planning support – [www.sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html](http://www.sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html).

**The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)** provides access to markets, capital, assistance, training and more – [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov).

**The Department of Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)** promotes contracting activity between small business, Government prime contractors, and the Government - [www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm](http://www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm).

**GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), and Public Buildings Service (PBS)**, provide information on all GSA Business Lines - [www.gsa.gov/fas](http://www.gsa.gov/fas), [www.gsa.gov/pbs](http://www.gsa.gov/pbs), respectively.

**The Vendor Support Center** is a special place for getting GSA Schedule sales information, links to important downloads and more – [www.gsa.gov/vsc](http://www.gsa.gov/vsc).

**Office of Management and Budget** has information on Federal spending and other valuable items of interest – [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/index.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/index.html).

**SBA's SUB-Net** is an excellent resource for marketing and business opportunities – <http://web.sba.gov/subnet>.

**GSA Advantage!®** is the one-stop online shopping service developed by GSA for Federal customers. e-Buy, a component of GSA Advantage!®, allows Federal customers to request quotations from contractors who are registered on GSA Advantage!® [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov).

## Proposal Basics

When responding to a solicitation, we suggest considering the following:

- Consider, as a courtesy, contacting the contracting office, if you do not plan to submit a proposal.
- Follow the instructions provided by the Statement of Work (SOW) and read the proposal thoroughly. This instruction might seem elementary, but not following directions is an easy mistake to make.
- Respond to the solicitation in the manner in which the solicitation requires; i.e., past performance requirements, length of proposal, font, etc. Ensure that the final product is neat, easy to read, and is submitted prior to the due date.
- Follow up on the receipt of your offer within two weeks of the submission date to identify points of contact while going through the award process.

## The Capability Statement

While a statement of your abilities is a positive inclusion in any correspondence, it may or may not be desired. Please contact your Contracting Officer before submitting any documents that are not requested. However, for general marketing effort, consider including one or more of these points in a one page insert or pamphlet:

- Company Overview (what you do)
- Specialties (what makes you different)
- Clients (name dropping)
- Contract Types
- Certifications
- Bonds, Warranty, Clearances or Insurance (as applicable)
- Company Highlights
- References (short quotes of customer comments)
- NAICS (Federal codes with descriptions)

## Seeking Subcontracting Opportunities

While having a contract for your company is the most ideal situation for both financial and autonomous reasons, consider subcontracting as an alternate source of revenue.

- Register with the CCR to be easily identified as a potential subcontractor or to find companies to create subcontracting relationships – [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov).
- Seek talents that compliment your company's expertise
- Review a detailed list of subcontracting opportunities around

the nation – [www.gsa.gov/subdirectory](http://www.gsa.gov/subdirectory)

- Find agency partners under the GSA MAS Program – [www.gsa.gov/elibrary](http://www.gsa.gov/elibrary).
- Utilize [www.gsa.gov/elibrary](http://www.gsa.gov/elibrary) to develop subcontracting opportunities with GSA MAS Vendors. Large companies participating in the GSA MAS Program have subcontracting requirements. That means they have formal plans to utilize small businesses in the course of fulfilling their requirements. Each plan identifies the percent of work they will give to small business.
- Participate in the Mentor Protégé Program. [www.gsa.gov/mentorprotege](http://www.gsa.gov/mentorprotege)

## Contractor Team Arrangements (CTA)

CTAs provide opportunities for companies to work together to respond to a procurement. In the case of the GSA MAS Program, Schedule contractors are considered prime contractors regardless of their business size. Each Schedule contractor can have a piece of a project and get paid individually according to the company's GSA Schedule contract. Visit [www.gsa.gov/cta](http://www.gsa.gov/cta) for more information.

## Partnering Agreements and Joint Ventures

While there are many ways to develop an agreement between your company and another business, we have been provided some great advice from professional companies on the basic rules to writing a good agreement:

1. A written agreement is the best way to ensure fairness in any partnership.
2. Make the terms and conditions clear and simple so that all parties understand the agreement.
3. Make sure to identify each party. Legal names are an important aspect of a quality document.
4. Be specific, clear and detailed. Modifications should be treated with the same effort as the original agreement.
5. Money or other compensation should be clarified with due dates, late consequences, and method of payment.
6. Unfortunately not all agreements work, so there always needs to be an agreeable way to end a contract. Decide together what is fair and make sure to identify who has the authority to cancel or terminate the agreement. Make sure to specify what reasons are fair or if there has to be a reason at all.
7. Disputes often arise. How will you settle issues between the partners? Perhaps a neutral party like a Lawyer

that represents the group, not just one person. Perhaps arbitration or mediation will be helpful. Lawsuits can get ugly and cost everyone involved a lot of money so clarifying the best way to handle things can avoid costly mistakes.

8. Since laws vary from state to state, you may also need to assess if more than one state is involved with the partners perspective on laws and business practices. A lawyer can help determine how to work out these differences.

## Participating in Outreach Activities

Visibility is the best way to make an impression. It's hard to convince agencies to try your product or service if they have never heard of you. GSA offers many events for all business sizes. Our largest annual event is the GSA EXPO, which hosts more than 10,000 agency customers every year. Please visit the following event sites for more information:

### General Services Administration

[www.gsa.gov/events](http://www.gsa.gov/events)

(Searchable by the words "Small Business")

### GSA EXPO

[www.expo.gsa.gov](http://www.expo.gsa.gov)

## Steps to Success

To succeed with Government contracting, you must ask the right questions. Below is a list of questions to consider before contacting a potential customer:

- What products or services will this customer likely buy?
- Who will be our competition?
- What marketing techniques will work best?
- Who can help with the research?
- Where are the contracting opportunities for this office?
- Who has the authority to purchase in this office?

Plan your strategies carefully. There are definite steps to take. The following highlights the key steps to success in contracting with the Federal Government.

- Define your expertise.
- Determine those products and services that reflect your expertise.
- Provide quality products and/or services. The Federal Government is seeking best value for its contracted dollars, not just the lowest price.
- Bookmark "[www.acquisition.gov](http://www.acquisition.gov)" in order to access the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and familiarize

yourself with the parts of the FAR that are referenced in this handbook such as Subpart 4.11, Central Contractor Registration (CCR) and Subpart 4.12, Representations and Certifications. Make sure to review Subpart 19, which refers specifically to small business programs. The FAR is the primary regulation that all Federal executive agencies follow when purchasing products and services. However, be sure to review agency supplemental regulations to the FAR, since some agencies may have deviations from the FAR to better fit their agency missions.

- Register at the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). All Government agencies require vendors to be registered in the CCR prior to doing business with the Government.
- Before you submit a proposal, please read the solicitation carefully to be sure your company can meet the requirements of the contract. Respond to all information requested in the solicitation. If help is needed, contact the Contracting Office identified in the solicitation.
- Make certain that your submissions are current, complete and accurate.
- Additional assistance to consider:

**SBA** - [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

### Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)

<http://sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html>

### Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

[www.score.org](http://www.score.org)

### Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)

[www.aptac-us.org/new/index.php](http://www.aptac-us.org/new/index.php)

### GSA's SBTA's and Regional SBCUs

[www.gsa.gov/smallbizsupport](http://www.gsa.gov/smallbizsupport)

- Focus your marketing efforts and identify appropriate buying activities by checking on past history of procurements for your products and services based on award data. The Federal Procurement Data System, Next Generation, found at <https://www.fpds.gov>, reports statistics on Federal agency procurements.
- The GSA Schedule Sales Query (SSQ) enables you to easily access the sales reported by the GSA Schedule contractors. To create reports, please visit <http://ssq.gsa.gov>.

## Tips to Increasing Revenue

Small businesses are striving more than ever to change the standards of expectation in the Federal market. These businesses are keenly aware that the key to satisfying a customer is exceeding

the customer's expectation. The following tips will provide a good start in doing just that:

- Provide quality products and services.
- Obtain SBA Certification for all eligible programs, such as: 8(a), HUBZone, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB).
- Develop an effective marketing plan.
- Identify your business type on brochures and business cards.
- Have multiple contracting vehicles in place, such as:
  - State, Local, and Federal contracts
  - Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) (Information Technology)
  - GSA Schedule Contracts (Commercial products and services)
  - Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) (Recurring requirements)
  - Micro-purchase (Up to \$3000 with exceptions)
  - Simplified acquisitions (Up to \$150,000 with exception)
  - Private sector contracts (Other than Government)
- Accept the Government's purchase card
- Accept Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).
- Monitor agency websites for useful contracting information, events, and opportunities.
- Network! Network! Network!

## Top Ten Federal Spenders

The Federal Government spends billions of dollars annually in the acquisition of products and services. We suggest you use these websites to find out more about Federal contracting opportunities specific to these agencies.

- Department of Defense - [www.dod.gov](http://www.dod.gov) or [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)
- Department of Homeland Security - [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)
- Department of Veterans Affairs - [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- Department of Health and Human Services - [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)
- Department of Agriculture - [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)
- General Services Administration - [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)
- Department of Justice - [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)
- Department of the Interior - [www.interior.gov](http://www.interior.gov)
- Department of Energy - [www.doe.gov](http://www.doe.gov)

## Contracting Basics

- Attend vendor training sessions provided by Government agencies.
- Conduct market research to identify potential customers, end users and competitors.
- Assess your ability to compete in the Federal marketplace.
- Identify current contract holders in your industry for partnering and teaming opportunities.
- Respond to synopses and solicitations from FedBizOpps ([www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov)).
- Look at historical data and ask questions.
- Submit your proposal and other required information before the due date — follow all instructions.
- Attend agency conferences, workshops and seminars.
- Use Federal information resources to identify events and opportunities.
- Gain an understanding of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) by visiting [www.acquisition.gov/far](http://www.acquisition.gov/far).
- Expedite the award process by checking status regularly.
- Request a debriefing immediately after any offer is rejected.

## Suggestions for Optimizing Competition

- Be innovative
- Practice quality management
- Invest in human capital - employee retention
- Provide superior customer service
- Ensure financial soundness
- Practice social responsibility - charity, fundraisers
- Employ technology to:
  - Reduce cost
  - Reduce inventory
  - Speed product delivery
  - Identify value perspective for customers, employees and suppliers
- Be flexible and seek out new markets
- Participate in conferences, expos, workshops, and seminars



## Agency Locator Help

GSA developed a one source location for all Government information. Whatever you want or need from the U.S. Government, it is available on one site. You will find a treasure of online information and services. Please visit [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov) to explore this extensive resource.

## Suggestions for Meeting with Agency Officials

While one-on-one meetings are an excellent resource for visibility and sharing information about your company, there are positive and negative ways to this approach. The following is a list of suggestions for making the best of meeting face-to-face.

Do your homework:

- Know the agency and its buying practices
- Understand that each office is individual and, therefore, has individual needs
- Make sure there is a need for what you have to offer
- Call ahead
- Speak to the person with whom you are interested in meeting
- Do not push a meeting if that is not the customer's desire
- Meet at a time and place of the customer's convenience

Showing Up

- Be on time – not early, not late
- Give a warm and firm but gentle handshake
- Introduce yourself and anyone with you
- Have a business card available after the handshake

The Meeting

- Listen more than you speak
- Answer questions thoroughly
- Have questions prepared in writing (provide ahead of time if possible)
- Make eye contact while speaking and listening
- Monitor your time and try to leave when scheduled
- Be respectful
- Avoid foul language and coarse joking

Leaving

- Note the time
- Be gracious for the time spent
- Give a firm but gentle handshake good-bye
- Understand that some meetings are more for visibility than for sales
- Plan to follow up on all suggestions

Follow-Up

- Send a "Thank You" note to the persons with whom you met and their boss within one week of the visit.
- Follow up with all suggestions that were provided to you and send an email outlining the areas that you chose to follow and any positive outcome that was a direct result of the advice.
- Plan to meet again if appropriate to ask additional questions and discuss future plans.



# chapter 5 Understanding Procurement Policy

GSA like other Federal agencies is governed by policies and regulations. While extensive in nature, many of the resources for understanding the regulations have become more accessible. To learn more about the policies and regulations that affect contracting opportunities, please visit [www.acquisition.gov](http://www.acquisition.gov). Some of the more direct regulatory controls include the:

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## Federal Acquisition Regulation

(FAR) [www.acquisition.gov/far](http://www.acquisition.gov/far)

The FAR was established to codify uniform policies for acquisition of supplies and services by executive agencies. It is issued and maintained jointly, pursuant to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Reauthorization Act, under the statutory authorities granted to the Secretary of Defense, Administrator of General Services, and the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Statutory authorities to issue and revise the FAR have been delegated to the Procurement Executives in DoD, GSA and NASA.

## General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM)

[www.acquisition.gov/gsam](http://www.acquisition.gov/gsam)

The General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM) consolidates the General Services Administration (GSA) agency acquisition rules and policies.

The GSAM incorporates the General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation (GSAR) as well as internal agency acquisition policy. GSAR material is shaded. The shading helps users to distinguish and identify those parts that are regulatory from those that apply internally to GSA.

## Federal Register (FR)

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>

Published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. It is updated daily by 6 a.m. and is published Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. GPO Access contains Federal Register volumes from 59 (1994) to the present.

## Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP)

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement\\_default](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement_default)

The Federal Government spends approximately \$350 billion annually for a wide range of products and services to meet mission needs. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) in the Office of Management and Budget plays a central role in shaping the policies and practices Federal agencies use to acquire the products and services they need to carry out their responsibilities. OFPP was established by Congress in 1974 to provide overall direction for Governmentwide procurement policies, regulations, and procedures, and to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in acquisition processes. OFPP is headed by an Administrator who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Through a variety of statutory authorities and results-oriented policy initiatives, OFPP seeks to ensure the Federal acquisition system provides the best value to the taxpayer. Current priorities are designed to provide for a better skilled and more agile workforce, consistent and effective use of competition, contract vehicles that reflect the Government's buying power, and a data system that gives Federal managers the information they need to evaluate results and plan effectively for the future.

## Section 508 Compliance

[www.gsa.gov/section508](http://www.gsa.gov/section508)

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under Section 508 (29 U.S.C. 794d), agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to the access available to others.

## **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

[www.gsa.gov/foia](http://www.gsa.gov/foia)

The 1966 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits any person to request access to Federal agency records or information.

Federal agencies are required to disclose records upon receipt of a written request, except for records that may be protected from disclosure under the Act.

## **Protest, Disputes, and Appeals**

[www.acquisition.gov/far](http://www.acquisition.gov/far)

The Federal Acquisition Regulation specifically identifies policy regarding the process for filing protest, disputes, and appeals.

Please see FAR Part 33, Subparts 33.1 and 33.2.





# appendix A Frequently Asked Questions

## Where can I find an index list of all the areas on your website?

We have something called “Quick Links” which provides an appendix of the most requested sites on [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov). You can access “Quick Links” by clicking here <http://www.gsa.gov/quicklinks>

## What is the difference between GSA Schedules, Federal Supply Schedules, GSA Contracts and Multiple Award Schedules?

The actual name of the program is “General Services Administration Multiple Award Schedules Program” (GSA MAS Program). “GSA Contracts” of course can refer to far more than GSA Schedule contracts, however for the purpose of clarifying the GSA MAS Program name, please note that we do use these names interchangeably. The original name of the program was Federal Supply Schedules Program (under which we have both Single Award and Multiple Award Schedules). The term “Federal Supply” in “Federal Supply Schedules” does not relate to the former Federal Supply Service, but, rather to the Federal Supply Classification System. However, since the program name is extremely long, many short versions of the name have developed over time. Once a vendor is on the “Schedule” they have a contract, therefore “GSA Contract” indicates a GSA MAS Contract that is current under the program.

## When do you need a GSA MAS Contract?

You need a GSA MAS contract when you are trying to sell your products or services to Federal agencies that only want to buy from the GSA MAS Program. Without a contract from GSA in your company name, you are not authorized to sell under this program.

## What are the different GSA contract types?

There are many contract types with GSA. The following identifies three different contract types:

### GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS)

GSA awards and administers GSA MAS contracts pursuant to Title III of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 USC 251, et. seq) and 40 USC 501. Commercial vendors provide millions of commercial services and products through these contracts.

MAS contracts are available to Federal buyers worldwide. Additionally, certain MAS contracts are available to State and Local Governments for certain products and services. These agencies place orders directly with GSA MAS contractors. See FAR Subpart 8.4 ([www.acquisition.gov](http://www.acquisition.gov)).

### Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)

Hardware, software and services may be purchased through GWACs as part of a total technology solution. Task orders placed against GWACs may be customized to meet the full range of IT services solutions including, but not limited to, computer systems and hardware, software and applications, data centers and storage, consulting and systems integration, Internet services, satellite services, communications networks and services and professional IT services.

Task order or delivery order contracts for information technology established by one agency for government wide use. Each GWAC is operated by an executive agent designated by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to section

5112(e) of the Clinger-Cohen Act. See FAR 2.101 ([www.acquisition.gov](http://www.acquisition.gov))

### Multi Agency Contracts (MAC's)

Task order or delivery order contracts are established by one agency for use by government agencies to obtain a variety of supplies and services. The Economy Act [Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 17.5] applies to orders placed under MAC's, with the exception of MAC's for information technology that are established pursuant to the Clinger-Cohen Act. See FAR 2.101 ([www.acquisition.gov](http://www.acquisition.gov))

## What are the differences between GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contracts, Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), and Multi-Agency Contracts (MACs)?

**GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contracts**, also referred to as GSA Schedule and Federal Supply Schedule contracts, are indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts that are available for use by Federal agencies worldwide. GSA awards and administers MAS contracts pursuant to 40 U.S.C. 501, Services for Executive Agencies.



Under the MAS Program, GSA enters into Governmentwide contracts with commercial firms to provide over 11 million commercial supplies and services. Agencies place orders directly with MAS contractors. Interagency agreements are not required when placing orders against MAS contracts. The Economy Act does not apply when placing orders against MAS contracts.

**Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)** are task order or delivery order contracts for information technology established by one agency for Governmentwide use (see Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 2.1, Definitions). Each GWAC is operated by an executive agent designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) pursuant to section 5112(e) of the Clinger-Cohen Act. The Economy Act does not apply when placing orders under GWACs. To use GWACs, agencies must obtain a delegation of authority from the GWAC Program Office.

**Multi-Agency Contracts (MACs)** are task order or delivery order contracts established by one agency for use by Government agencies to obtain a variety of supplies and services (see FAR 2.1, Definitions). The Economy Act (FAR 17.5) is applicable to orders placed under MACs, with the exception of MACs for information technology that are established pursuant to the Clinger-Cohen Act.

### Who is eligible to use GSA MAS contracts?

The GSA Order ADM 4800.2E, 1/3/2000 identifies eligible users of the GSA MAS contracts:

- Executive and Other Federal Agencies
- Mixed-Ownership Government Corporations (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Federal Home Loan Banks, etc.)
- The District of Columbia
- Cost Reimbursable Government Contractors authorized in writing by a Federal agency (48 CFR 51.1)
- State and Local Governments through Cooperative and Disaster Recovery Purchasing. [www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing](http://www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing)

### How does GSA determine if vendors are offering prices that are fair and reasonable to Federal Customers?

GSA MAS contracts are negotiated with the goal of obtaining “Most Favored Customer” (MFC) pricing/ discounts. While the MFC is often the vendor’s best commercial customer and receives the highest discount,

such is not always the case. Per GSAR 538.270(a), “The Government will seek to obtain offeror’s best price (the best price given to the most favored customer). However, the Government recognizes that the terms and conditions of commercial sales vary and there may be legitimate reasons why the best price is not achieved.” Paragraph (c) of the GSAR language contains factors that are considered when the Government determines its price negotiation objectives. GSA’s goal is to acquire equal to or better than the MFC’s discount. ([www.aquisition.gov](http://www.aquisition.gov))

### How easy is it for customers to purchase from GSA Schedule contracts compared to procurement on the open market?

Purchasing from GSA MAS contracts offers the following advantages over procuring on the open market:

- GSA has determined prices under MAS contracts to be fair and reasonable.
- Synopses are not required for MAS purchases.
- MAS contracts have been awarded in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Administrative time is reduced.
- MAS contracts offer a wide selection of state-of-the-art commercial products and services.

### How are the procedures for ordering supplies under GSA Schedule contracts different from the procedures for ordering services?

Although the Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work (SOW) (FAR 8.405-1) differ from the Ordering Procedures for Services Requiring a Statement of Work (SOW) (FAR 8.405-2), both sets of procedures are designed to simplify the acquisition process.

- **For orders of supplies and/or services at, or below, the micro-purchase threshold:**
  - Place the order with any Schedule contractor that can meet the agency’s needs. Though not required to solicit from a specific number of Schedule contractors, ordering activities should attempt to distribute orders among contractors (FAR 8.405).
- **For orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, but not exceeding the maximum order threshold:**
- **Supplies, and Services Not Requiring an SOW:** Survey at least three Schedule contractors through the GSA Advantage!® online shopping service or review

the catalogs or pricelists of at least three Schedule contractors and seek additional price reductions where appropriate; evaluate; and make a best value selection.

- **Services Requiring an SOW:** Prepare a Request for Quotation (RFQ) that includes the statement of work and the evaluation criteria; transmit the request to at least three Schedule contractors; evaluate responses; and make a best value selection.

Note: Each Schedule contract has a maximum order threshold, which will vary by special item number. The maximum order threshold represents the point where, given the dollar value of the potential order, the ordering activity shall seek a price reduction.

- **For orders exceeding the maximum order threshold or when establishing a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA):**
  - **Supplies, and Services Not Requiring an SOW:** Follow the same procedures for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, except review additional Schedule contractors' pricelists (the GSA Advantage!® online shopping service may be used to facilitate this review); evaluate; seek price reductions; and make a best value selection.
  - **Services Requiring an SOW:** Follow the same procedures for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold, except transmit the RFQ (including the statement of work and evaluation criteria) to additional Schedule contractors that offer services that will meet the needs of the ordering activity; evaluate responses (using the evaluation criteria provided in the RFQ); seek price reductions; and make a best value selection. When determining the appropriate number of additional Schedule contractors, the ordering activity may consider the complexity, scope, and estimated value of the requirement, and the market search results.

Note: Department of Defense (DoD) offices and non-DoD activities placing orders or establishing Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) for supplies and services on behalf of DoD must comply with the additional requirements under Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) 208.405-70.

## What is GSA Advantage!® and are all GSA MAS contractors required to participate?

GSA Advantage!® is an online shopping and ordering system that includes products and services under all of the GSA Multiple Award Schedules, Veterans Administration (VA) Schedules and GSA Global Supply items. With over 11 million products and services currently available, electronic ordering through GSA Advantage!® allows a customer

to send an order directly to the GSA Schedule contractor, creating a direct customer-contractor relationship.

All GSA Schedule contractors must be registered with GSA Advantage!®

To learn more about GSA Advantage!®, please visit [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov).

## What is e-Buy?

e-Buy is an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool designed to facilitate the request for submission of quotations for a wide range of commercial supplies and services offered by GSA Schedule and Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) contractors.

e-Buy allows Federal agencies (buyers) to maximize their buying power by leveraging the power of the Internet to increase Schedule contractor participation in order to obtain quotations that will result in a best value purchase decision. e-Buy provides Schedule contractors (sellers) with greater opportunities to offer quotations and increase business volume for supplies and services provided under their Schedule contracts. e-Buy streamlines the buying process with point-and-click functionality by allowing RFQs and responses to be exchanged electronically between Federal agencies and GSA Schedule/GWAC contractors. In short, e-Buy provides both agencies and contractors with a tool that will result in savings of both time and money.

## Can GSA Schedules meet all of my needs? Even large or complex requirements? How can I be certain that the supplies or services I need, including new technology, are always available under Schedule contracts?

With over 11 million commercial supplies and services available under the program, GSA Schedule contracts can meet the vast majority of a customer's needs. For those large or complex requirements, GSA Schedule contractors can join with other GSA Schedule contract holders and submit a total solution to meet a customer's needs under a Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA). In addition, GSA Schedule contractors may request that their contracts be modified at any time during the contract period to add new supplies and services to meet a customer's requirements. The modification process ensures that the latest technology is always available to the customer. Schedule contract periods are as long as five years with three five-year option periods to provide for continued sources of supplies and services. Most GSA Schedule solicitations are now continuously open,



enabling new companies to submit offers at any time, and further ensuring that customers have, not only a variety of supplies and services to meet their requirements, but also the latest technology available in the commercial marketplace.

### **Can items NOT on a GSA Schedule contract be included on a Schedule order?**

Yes, under certain circumstances. Open market items are also known as incidental items, non-contract items, non-Schedule items, and items not on a GSA Schedule contract. In accordance with FAR 8.402(f), for administrative convenience, an ordering activity contracting officer may add items not on the GSA Schedule contract—i.e., open market items—to a GSA Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) or an individual task or delivery order only if—

- All applicable acquisition regulations pertaining to the purchase of the items not on the GSA Schedule contract have been followed (e.g., publicizing (FAR Part 5), competition requirements (FAR Part 6), acquisition of commercial items (FAR Part 12), contracting methods (FAR Parts 13, 14, and 15), and small business programs (FAR Part 19);
- The ordering activity contracting officer has determined the prices for the items not on the GSA Schedule contract are fair and reasonable;
- The items are clearly labeled on the order as items not on the GSA Schedule contract; and
- All clauses applicable to items not on the GSA Schedule contract are included in the order.

### **Sometimes I need delivery right away. Can I get it using GSA Schedule contracts?**

GSA Schedule contracts have the same delivery times as the contractors' commercial delivery times. GSA Schedule contracts may also contain expedited delivery terms, or customers may request expedited delivery to meet their requirements.

### **What is a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) under a GSA Schedule contract?**

A GSA Schedule BPA is an agreement established by a customer with a GSA Schedule contractor to fill repetitive needs for supplies or services (FAR 8.405-3). It simplifies the filling of recurring needs, while leveraging a customer's buying power by taking advantage of quantity discounts, saving administrative time, and reducing paperwork.

A BPA can be set up for use by field offices across the nation, thus allowing them to participate in an agency's BPA and place orders directly with GSA Schedule contractors. In doing so, the entire agency reaps the benefits of additional discounts negotiated into the BPA.

A multi-agency BPA is also permitted if the BPA identifies the participating agencies and their estimated requirements at the time the BPA is established.

A BPA may be established under a Contractor Team Arrangement.

### **Some ordering activities are issuing GSA Schedule BPAs for millions of dollars. Is there a dollar amount too large for GSA Schedule BPA procedures? Is there a limit on the dollar value of an order placed against a BPA?**

The monetary limitation of a GSA Schedule BPA is determined by the underlying competition conducted by the ordering activity when establishing the BPA. The same ordering procedures outlined in FAR 8.405 apply to the establishment of a GSA Schedule BPA (FAR 8.405-3(a)(2)). Based upon the potential volume of orders under the BPA, ordering activities may be able to obtain greater discounts, regardless of the size of individual orders. The ordering activity shall conduct an annual review of the GSA Schedule BPA to determine whether—

- The underlying Schedule contract is still in effect;
- The BPA still represents the best value; and
- Estimated quantities/amounts have been exceeded and additional price reductions can be obtained.

The ordering activity shall document the results of its review.

### **Are GSA MAS contractors required to accept the Governmentwide commercial purchase card for payment?**

GSA Schedule contractors are required to accept the purchase card for payments equal to or less than the micro-purchase threshold. GSA Schedule contractors are also encouraged to accept the card for dollar amounts above the micro-purchase threshold. Ordering activities may consider purchase card acceptance when deciding which contractor represents the best value.

The use of the Government purchase card is preferred among most agencies due to its convenient payment method. To learn more about the Government purchase card, please visit [www.gsa.gov/smartpay](http://www.gsa.gov/smartpay).

## When a Government customer places an order against my GSA MAS contract, does it meet Competition in Contracting Act of 1984 (CICA) requirements?

In accordance with FAR 6.102(d)(3), use of the GSA Schedules Program is considered a “competitive procedure” under CICA when the GSA Schedule ordering procedures are followed—i.e., the *Ordering Procedures for Supplies, and Services Not Requiring a Statement of Work* (FAR 8.405-1) or the *Ordering Procedures for Services Requiring a Statement of Work* (FAR 8.405-2).

## What is a Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA) under the GSA MAS Program?

A CTA under the MAS Program is an arrangement in which two or more MAS contractors join together to provide a total solution to meet a customer’s needs.

Orders placed under a CTA are subject to the terms and conditions of each team member’s GSA MAS contract.

For more information, please visit [www.gsa.gov/cta](http://www.gsa.gov/cta).

## Are all products and services offered under GSA Schedule contracts compliant with the Trade Agreements Act?

Yes. All products and services offered under GSA Schedule contracts are evaluated and awarded in accordance with the *Trade Agreements Act* (FAR 25.4).

As an ordering activity contracting officer, can I terminate an order against a Schedule contract?

Yes. In accordance with FAR 8.406-4 and 8.406-5, respectively, an ordering activity contracting officer may terminate an order for cause or for the convenience of the government. Such terminations shall comply with FAR 12.403. The GSA Schedule contracting officer shall be notified in all cases where an order has been terminated for cause or fraud is suspected.

## If I have limited labor categories to offer for my GSA Schedule contract, how can I add more labor categories at a later time?

Additional labor categories can be added through a modification process after your contract has been awarded.

## Where can I obtain more information regarding GSA Multiple Award Schedules?

To view a wealth of information on GSA Multiple Award Schedules and other programs, visit the Center for Acquisition Excellence. <http://cae.gsa.gov>.

## What are some characteristics of an ideal GSA MAS offer?

While every contract has different requirements and may or may not need all of the following list, we have provided some basic guidelines for an “ideal” GSA MAS offer:

- Adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them.
- Complies with the required or proposed delivery or performance of GSA MAS, taking into consideration all existing commercial and Governmental business commitments.
- Satisfactory performance record and current customers consisting of both commercial and Government
- Satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- Excellent organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them.
- Production, construction, and technical equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them.
- Meets solicitation requirements and the prices are fair and reasonable.
- Current annual sales of \$25,000 or more.
- Successful company ownership

## What is the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF)?

The IFF is a fee paid by customers to cover GSA’s cost of operating the Federal Supply Schedules program. The fee is a percentage of reported sales under Schedules contracts.

## What are some additional items I should be aware of in applying for a GSA MAS Contract?

While there will always be areas of consideration, the following note the focus of the Contracting Officer before making an award:

- The vendor is responsible.
- The pricing of the products or services covered by the contract is fair and reasonable.
- Agreement has been reached on all other terms and

conditions for the proposed contract.

- All necessary signatures have been obtained.
- Necessary actions relating to contract award have been completed.

### **How does the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide medical related contracts through the Schedules Program?**

Medical Products and Services Schedules are provided under a special agreement. GSA has delegated management responsibility for medical products and services under the Schedules Program to the VA.

The VA Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) is responsible for establishing, soliciting, awarding, and administering the VA's Federal Supply Schedules Program. VA's Schedules encompass such products as:

- Pharmaceuticals
- Medical Equipment And Supplies
- Dental Supplies
- X-Ray Equipment And Supplies (Including Medical And Dental X-Ray Film)
- Patient Mobility Devices (Including Wheelchairs, Scooters, Walkers, etc.)
- Antiseptic Skin Cleansers
- Detergents And Soaps
- Invitro Diagnostics
- Reagents
- Test Kits And Sets
- Clinical Analyzers
- Laboratory Cost-Per-Test.

For more specific information regarding this program, please contact the VA office. FSS Help Line general questions telephone number (708) 786-7733 or the FSS Service Contract question telephone number (708) 786-7722.

### **What are some tips to getting a Schedule contract awarded quickly through GSA?**

The following information will help you identify some key steps to expediting the award process:

#### **Before you submit your offer:**

Make sure you fill in all blanks. If something is not applicable please insert "N/A" or "Not Applicable" in the appropriate space.

Locate Standard Form 1449 in the solicitation package. Once you have located the form, see below:

Blocks 7a and b identify the point of contact to answer questions as you fill out the solicitation. If you have questions, write them down as you go through your offer and ask them all at once. Calling repeatedly lacks organization and can frustrate the person trying to help you.

Block 9 will identify the GSA address where you will mail your offer or directions where to find the address. Only use the address provided in the solicitation you are filling out. There are many solicitations for this program and the offices are located across the nation. Make sure you are mailing your information to the right office.

Blocks 30a, b, and c MUST be signed to finalize your offer before submission. If these blocks are not signed, your offer may be returned to you.

#### **After you submit your offer:**

Follow up within two weeks to check the status of your offer submission

Ask good questions like:

- Which Contract Specialist was assigned my offer? Get the person's telephone number.
- What is the average time frame that an award can be expected for this product/service? Put the date on your calendar.
- Is there anything more you need from my company to expedite the award? If yes, try to respond the same day or the next day.
- Can I receive emails or phone calls in addition to a letter if there is a discrepancy? If yes, make sure you check your email daily.

If an agency is planning to place an order once you get a GSA contract, have the agency write a letter to the contracting office asking for an expedited award process.

- Make sure your offer has already been submitted and assigned to a Contract Specialist.
- The letter should come from the purchasing official at the agency on the agency's letterhead.
- The letter should state the details of the procurement, including the anticipated date, quantity, and price.
- A decision to expedite the offer because of a pending order is at the discretion of GSA only.

### **Why should a small business look to GSA as a good prospective customer?**

GSA is a major purchaser of products and services sold by small businesses. GSA is always seeking new businesses to compete for its products and services contracts and is committed to increasing opportunities for small, small disadvantaged, women-owned small, HUBZone small, veteran-owned small, and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

### **If my business has developed a new product, is GSA a potential customer?**

Yes. GSA will evaluate your product to determine if it is new or better than existing items. If the Government needs your product, GSA may negotiate a contract to purchase the product from you. To determine what Schedule is applicable to your commodity, visit [www.gsaeflibrary.gsa.gov](http://www.gsaeflibrary.gsa.gov).

### **How do I find out about opportunities to sell specialized products or services to other agencies?**

Call the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) in the Federal agency that buys your products or services. For example, to sell to the Department of Defense (DoD), you would contact the OSDBU in DoD. Visit [www.osdbu.gov](http://www.osdbu.gov) for the OSDBU Directory.

### **Does Government contracting involve a lot of paperwork?**

The large, complex contracts may require substantial paperwork. Some contracts do not, particularly simplified acquisitions of \$150,000 or less. Procurement regulations require not only that GSA be fair to suppliers and make taxpayer dollars go as far as possible, but also that the agency be able to document that it is meeting these obligations. In other words, Government paperwork is a necessary part of contracting, and vendors must be able and willing to handle it.

### **How do I become eligible to participate in the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program?**

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is responsible for certifying that you or your company is eligible to participate in the 8(a) Program. To apply for certification, contact the Office of Eligibility and Certification in the SBA office that serves your area.

### **Is there any system for monitoring how well large prime contractors meet their subcontracting goals?**

Yes. Large prime contractors are required to submit reports documenting good faith efforts to meet their subcontracting goals. [www.esrs.gov](http://www.esrs.gov)

### **Does the location of my business affect my ability to compete for GSA contracts?**

It depends on the solicitation. Solicitations for repair and maintenance and small construction jobs may be limited to the geographic area needing the service. Others, such as solicitations for GSA Supply Catalog items and for large building projects, are open to vendors throughout the United States. In addition, FSS Acquisition Centers handle procurement of the products and services for which they are responsible.

### **Is it possible to be listed on more than one GSA MAS?**

Yes, if you have more than one product or service to sell you are eligible to obtain more than one GSA MAS contract.

### **How can I learn more about architect/engineer contracting with GSA and other Federal agencies?**

GSA's Design Excellence Program booklet gives information on architect/engineer contracting procedures. For a copy or further information on contracting opportunities, please contact:

GSA, Public Buildings Service  
Center for Design Excellence and the Arts (PCE)  
1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405  
Or  
The PBS Small Business Technical Advisor on  
(202) 219-1087.

### **Does GSA use specifications and standards adopted by the private sector?**

GSA's policy is to adopt the appropriate specifications and standards of nationally recognized technical organizations, whenever appropriate, and to obtain input from these groups and individual firms on proposed specifications and standards.



### **Where can I get copies of specifications and standards?**

Most solicitations will say where to obtain copies. You may also get copies from the purchasing office that issued the solicitation.

### **What's the difference between a Federal specification and a standard?**

Federal specifications are technical data used to describe Government-unique products or those, which, for reasons of health, safety or interface requirements, must be described in detail or undergo extensive testing. A standard is a set of criteria used to compare like products or services and ensure that certain quality and performance levels are met.

### **My contract calls for my company to make an item in accordance with the specification, but I have a way to do the job better for less money. What should I do?**

You may contact the contracting officer and present your ideas.

### **Some of the clauses in my contract seem to be important, but the text of the clauses is missing. What do I do?**

When a contract refers to standard clauses listed elsewhere, you still must comply with the clause requirements. The full text of the clauses can be found in the FAR or the GSAM, or you may request a copy of the clauses from the procurement official listed in the solicitation.

### **What procurements under the simplified acquisition procedures are reserved?**

Except for those acquisitions set aside for very small business concerns, each acquisition of products or services that has an anticipated dollar value exceeding \$3000, but not over \$150,000, is automatically reserved exclusively for small business concerns. It is set aside, unless the contracting officer determines there is not a reasonable expectation of obtaining offers from two or more responsible small businesses that are competitive in terms of market prices, quality and delivery, (see FAR 19.502-2).

### **Are small private companies the only sources for purchases under the simplified acquisition threshold?**

No. All Government contracting officers must use mandatory/required sources of supply for some types of items before soliciting outside quotations. Those mandatory sources include Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR), National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH, formerly the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped.

### **Is there a limit on the dollar amount of sealed bid purchases?**

No, but generally the sealed bid procedure is not used for purchases under \$150,000.

### **What should I do when an Invitation for Bid (IFB) is unclear?**

Call the contracting officer named in the solicitation.

### **What should I do if after I carefully check and submit my bid, I discover that it contains an error?**

Contact the contracting officer. If you discover the error before the bid opening, you can modify your bid by any method authorized by the solicitation, if notice is received in the office designated in the solicitation not later than the exact time set for opening of bids, (see FAR 14.303(a)). Mistakes in bids discovered after the opening of bids are governed by the procedures in FAR 14.407.

### **Are Request for Proposals (RFPs) always in writing?**

No. In emergency situations, GSA may use oral solicitations. Sometimes, when competition is restricted (such as when a purchase must be made from a particular source), a letter RFP is used. Facsimile RFPs are used by some agencies. Eventually, most RFPs and offers will be made via electronic commerce.

### **Is it necessary that I have electronic commerce/electronic data interchange (EC/EDI) capability to do business with GSA?**

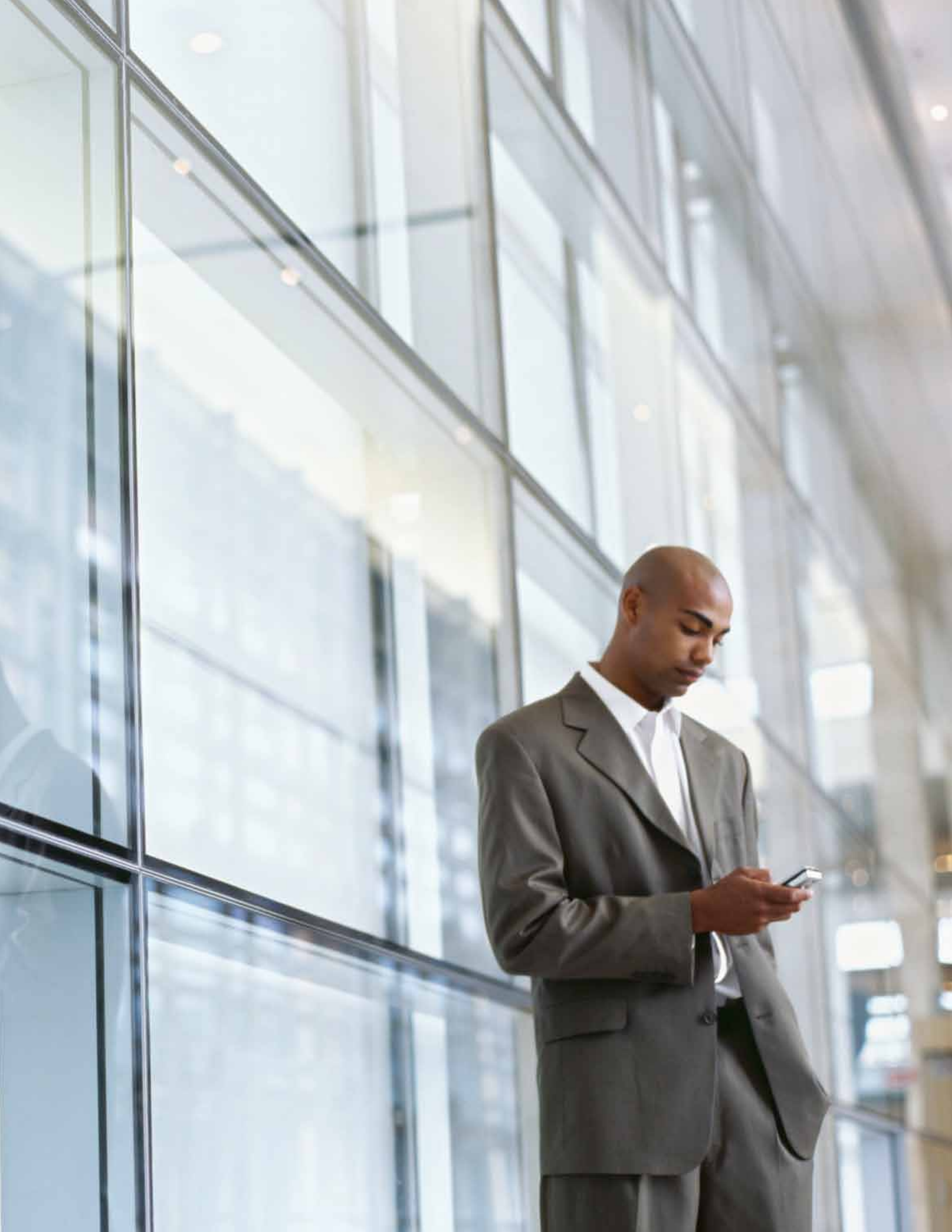
Yes. We pay vendors electronically and in some cases require contractors to provide electronic catalogues.

### **Whom should I contact if GSA doesn't live up to its obligations under the Prompt Payment Act?**

You should contact your contracting administrator. Every contract has an administrator listed with their award package, contact this person if you have any concerns.

### **What can I do to increase my chances of being paid on time?**

Read the contract instructions on submitting invoices and double check your invoice and other required documents to see that they are completed correctly and addressed to the right office. They should also contain any I.D. numbers or accounts that are relative to the payment.



# appendix B Glossary of Terms

**Acquisition Central:** Internet website for Governmentwide acquisition information.

**Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA):** An agreement between the Government and a supplier allowing repetitive purchases during a specified period (see FAR 13.303-1).

**Certificate of Competency (COC) Program:** The COC Program empowers SBA to certify to Government contracting officers as to all elements of responsibility of any small business to receive and perform a specific Government contract. When the contracting officer determines and documents that an apparent successful small business offeror lacks certain elements of responsibility (including but not limited to, capability, competency, capacity, credit, integrity and limitation on subcontracting), the contracting officer must withhold contract award and refer the matter to the cognizant SBA Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the headquarters of the offeror is located (see FAR 19.601(b)).

**Commercial Item:** Any supply or service, other than real property, that is customarily used for non-Government purposes and that has been sold, leased or licensed to the general public or falls under the additional categories listed in the complete definition of "commercial item" as it appears under FAR 2.101.

**Construction Metrication Ombudsman:** A senior GSA official responsible for ensuring that GSA is implementing the metric system of measurement in an efficient manner, while ensuring that the goals of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 are observed.

**Cost-Reimbursement Contract:** This type of contract provides for payment of allowable incurred costs, to the extent prescribed in the contract. (See FAR 16.3).

**Contract:** A mutually binding legal relationship obligating the seller to furnish the supplies or services (including construction) and the buyer to pay for them. It includes all types of commitments that obligate the Government to an expenditure of appropriated funds and that, except as otherwise authorized, are in writing. In addition to bilateral instruments, contracts include (but are not limited to) awards and notices of awards; job orders or task letters issued under basic ordering agreements; orders, such as purchase orders, under which the contract becomes effective by written acceptance or performance; and bilateral contract modifications (see FAR 2.101).

**Contracting Activity:** An element of an agency designated by the agency head and delegated broad authority regarding acquisition functions (see FAR 2.101).

**Contracting Officer:** A Government Official with the authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts. They may also make related determinations and findings (see FAR 2.101).

**Delivery Order:** An order for supplies placed against an established contract or with Government sources.

**Electronic Commerce (EC):** Electronic techniques for accomplishing business transactions including electronic mail or messaging, World Wide Web technology, electronic bulletin boards, purchase cards, electronic funds transfer and electronic data interchange (see FAR 2.101).

**Electronic Data Interchange (EDI):** A technique for electronically transferring and storing formatted information between computers utilizing established and published formats and codes, as authorized by the applicable Federal Information Processing Standards (see FAR 2.101).

**Fixed-Price Contract:** Contracts that provide for a firm price or, in appropriate cases, an adjustable price. Fixed price contracts providing for an adjustable price may include a ceiling price, a target price (including target cost) or both. Unless otherwise specified in the contract, the ceiling price or the target price is subject to adjustment only by operation of contract clauses providing for equitable adjustment or other revision of the contract price under stated circumstances. The contracting officer shall use firm-fixed-price or fixed-price with economic price adjustment contracts when acquiring commercial items (see FAR 16.201).

**Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card:** A purchase card, similar in nature to a commercial credit card, issued to authorize agency personnel to use in paying for supplies and services.

**Governmentwide Point of Entry (GPE):** The single point where Government business opportunities greater than \$25,000, including synopses of proposed contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, can be accessed electronically by the public. The GPE is located at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>.



**Industry:** All concerns primarily engaged in similar lines of activity, as listed and described in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

**Information Technology (IT):** Any equipment, or interconnected systems(s) or subsystem(s) of equipment used in the automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. IT includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services and related resources (see FAR 2.101).

**North American Industry Classification System (NAICS):** The NAICS replaced the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes. NAICS is an industry classification system used by the statistical agencies of the United States for classifying business establishments. NAICS includes 1,170 industries of which 565 are service based industries.

**Negotiation:** Exchanges between the Government and offeror's, that are undertaken with the intent of allowing the offeror to revise its proposal. Negotiations may include bargaining; i.e., persuasion, alteration of assumptions and positions, and give-and-take, and may apply to price, schedule, technical requirements, type of contract or other terms of a proposed contract.

**Offer:** A response to a solicitation that, if accepted, would bind the offeror to perform the resultant contract. Responses to invitations for bid (sealed bidding) are offers called "bids" or "sealed bids;" responses to requests for proposals (negotiation) are offers called "proposals;" responses to requests for quotation (negotiation) are not offers and are called "quotations", (see FAR 2.101).

**Purchase Order:** When issued by the Government, purchase order means an offer by the Government to buy supplies or services, including construction and research and development, upon specified terms and conditions, using simplified acquisition procedures (see FAR 2.101).

**Simplified Acquisition Procedures:** The methods prescribed in FAR Part 13, for making purchases of products or services (see FAR 2.101).

**Small Business Size:** SBA's size standards define whether a business entity is small and, thus, eligible for Government programs and preferences reserved for "small business" concerns. Size standards (see FAR 19.1) have been established for types of economic activity, or industry, generally under the NAICS.

**Standards:** Technical requirements for processes, procedures, practices, and methods that have been adopted as standard.

**Statement of Work:** A statement of work is a specific statement regarding the requirements needed in a service contract. The statement of work should include all aspects of job requirements, performance, and assessment.

**Task Order:** An order for services placed against an established contract or with Government sources. (See FAR 2.101).



# appendix C Obtaining Grants and Other Financial Support

A Grant means an award of financial assistance, including cooperative agreements, in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible grantee.

GSA does not provide grants to small businesses. However, due to frequent requests for information, we have provided the following helpful resources.

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## SBA

[www.sba.gov/content/what-7j-program](http://www.sba.gov/content/what-7j-program) and  
[www.sba.gov/financialassistance](http://www.sba.gov/financialassistance)

Under Section 7(j) of the Small Business Act, SBA is authorized to provide management and technical assistance, through grants and cooperative agreements to qualified service providers. The Agency is not authorized to award grants to assist individuals to start, operate, expand, rebuild, or purchase a business. The management and technical assistance includes specialized training, professional consulting, and executive development. The qualified service providers deliver the training and technical assistance to eligible firms and individuals participating in SBA's Business Development Program, other small disadvantaged businesses, low income individuals, and firms in either labor surplus areas or areas with a high proportion of low-income individuals.

In addition, SBA provides a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses including 7(a), 504, and disaster assistance loans. Eligibility requirements vary with SBA's loan programs, surety bonds, and other programs.

## GRANTS.GOV

[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for more than \$400 billion in Federal grants.

## Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

[www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)

The online Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance gives you access to a database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments (including the District of Columbia); federally-recognized Indian tribal governments; Territories (and possessions) of the United States; domestic public, quasi-public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups; and individuals.







**GSA Office of Small Business Utilization**

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