



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS
WASHINGTON DC 20420**

IL 001AL-11-01
October 14, 2010

OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS INFORMATION LETTER

- TO:** Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits, and Memorial Affairs; Assistant Secretary for Management; Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management; Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors; Directors, VA Medical Center Activities, Outpatient Clinics, Medical and Regional Office Centers, and Regional Offices; Directors, Denver Acquisition and Logistics Center, VA Austin Information Technology Center, Records Management Center, VBA Benefits Delivery Centers, and VA Health Administration Center; Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, VA National Acquisition Center; Chief Information Officer; VA Health Revenue Center; VA Health Eligibility Center; and, Office of General Counsel
- ATTN:** Heads of Contracting Activity, VA Contracting Officers, Contract Specialists, Purchasing Agents, Purchase Cardholders, and all Other VA Employees Involved with Acquiring Office Supplies
- SUBJ:** Guidelines for Acquiring Office Supplies

I. PURPOSE

This Information Letter (IL) establishes guidelines for the acquisition of office supplies within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA will acquire these supplies by using the General Services Administration's (GSA) blanket purchase agreements under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative for Office Supplies Second Generation (FSSI OS 2).

II. BACKGROUND

VA is committed to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) initiative to leverage spending to the maximum extent possible through combined multi-agency strategic sourcing efforts. As part of the FSSI Community of Practice (CoP), VA committed 100 percent of the Department's spend for office supplies to be acquired from FSSI OS 2. GSA, in partnership with the Department of Treasury, launched the FSSI in November 2005, in response to a May 2005 memorandum from the OMB Office of Federal Procurement Policy requiring agencies to identify commodities that could be purchased more efficiently through strategic sourcing. More than 20 federal agencies, civilian and military, actively participate in the FSSI CoP. Further information on FSSI OS 2 is available at the following Web site:
<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/141857>.

I. **APPLICABILITY**

This guidance applies to all members of the VA acquisition community, including contracting officers, contract specialists, purchasing agents, and purchase cardholders, as well as other VA employees acquiring office supplies. VA office supply contracts in base or option years are exempt from the requirements to use FSSI OS 2 until completion of the base/option year minimum guarantee. Options shall not be exercised on any existing office supply contracts.

II. **ACTION**

- A. Effective immediately, VA acquisition community members will place:
1. General office supply and paper orders using Pools 1 and 2 suppliers under FSSI OS 2 through GSA. For a list of Pool 1 and 2 suppliers, go to: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/141857>. There are specific requirements that apply for paper orders, please see paragraph 6 of the attached Implementation Guidance for details.
 2. Toner cartridge orders using Pool 3 suppliers under GSA's FSSI OS 2. For a list of Pool 3 suppliers, go to: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/141857>. There are specific requirements that apply for toner, please see the attached Implementation Guidance for details.
- B. The purchase of 50 percent minimum recycled content paper is required; VA offices and facilities are highly encouraged to exceed this minimum threshold.
- C. Toner cartridges shall be acquired in the following order of preference:
1. Remanufactured;
 2. Compatible with original equipment; and
 3. Original equipment manufacturer.
- D. The only authorized method of payment is the government purchase card.
- E. VA is committed to 100 percent procurement of AbilityOne office supply products.
- F. See Attachment A for further implementation guidance and background supporting VA's use of FSSI OS 2.

3.
IL 001AL-11-01
October 14, 2010

V. POINT OF CONTACT

Please direct questions regarding this IL to the Acquisition and Logistics Programs and Policy Division at (202) 429-8439.

/S/
Jan R. Frye
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Acquisition and Logistics

Implementation Guidance

- I. **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Commitment:** VA is committed to the Office of Management and Budget's initiative of leveraging agency spending to the maximum extent possible through strategic sourcing. VA's strategic sourcing plan must be sustainable and balanced with socioeconomic goals for small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, Veteran-owned small businesses, service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses, Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone), and other preference programs, as appropriate. In achieving this balance, VA acquisition community members shall ensure compliance with Title 41, United States Code (U.S.C.), sections 46 through 48c, known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act. This program is branded as "AbilityOne."

- II. **Procurement List:** Federal Acquisition Regulation 8.703 provides a link to the Procurement List of supplies and services required for purchase through AbilityOne participating nonprofit agencies. The Procurement List is a mandated priority source under the JWOD Act and is maintained by the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled. Under the JWOD Act, federal agencies shall, in accordance with rules and regulations of the Committee, procure certain commodities or services, at the prices established by the Committee, from a qualified nonprofit agency for the blind or such an agency for other severely handicapped if the commodity or service is available within the period by the government entity. Use of GSA's blanket purchase agreements under the Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative for Office Supplies Second Generation (FSSI OS 2) ensures compliance with AbilityOne under the JWOD Act.

- III. **How to Order:** All payments will be made using the government purchase card (GPC). Orders above the \$3000 threshold shall only be placed by warranted individuals. Orders should be rotated among the various suppliers in Pools 1 and 2 to the maximum extent possible (unless competitive delivery orders are awarded). When placing orders, VA customers will need to provide relevant procurement information, such as purchase order number, station number, and GPC number, prior to confirming the orders.
 - A. Orders below the micro purchase threshold (currently \$3,000) may be placed by authorized purchase cardholders. Orders above that threshold shall only be placed by warranted individuals. The FSSI OS 2 suppliers are accessed by selecting the LOGIN on the GSA Advantage Web site at:
<https://www.gsaadvantage.gov/>.

- B. Orders may be placed through GSA Advantage, VA Advantage, the suppliers' Web portals, via phone, fax, or supplier in-store purchases. Due to technical problems, in-store purchases will not be an option until January 2011. In the future, the VA Advantage portal will be the primary portal for placing orders.
 - C. All office supply orders regardless of value must be placed through FSSI OS 2. The minimum order threshold has been established at \$100 per order. Orders less than \$100 may be placed through the FSSI OS 2; however, there may be additional fees assessed for orders not meeting the minimum order threshold. To minimize additional fees, it is recommended that orders for less than \$100 be combined at the facility-level.
 - D. Current VA customers with "Desktop Delivery" service will need to coordinate the name of any new supplier with their facility Security and Law Enforcement (SLE) offices.
 - E. VA customers wanting to take advantage of "Desktop Delivery," but who currently do not receive this service:
 - 1. Must coordinate their needs through the facility logistics and SLE offices prior to requesting "Desktop Delivery" from the respective FSSI OS 2 supplier.
 - 2. To avoid delivery problems, orders placed through FSSI OS 2 will be delivered by either UPS, FedEx, or the supplier's resources. Thorough communication and coordination between the offices mention in paragraph 4.1 is critical.
 - F. In meeting the Department's critical "greening" goals, VA procurement is moving to 50 percent recycled content paper. VA is encouraging procurements which exceed that standard up to 100 percent post-consumer content.
 - G. Federal agencies within the national capital region must place their paper orders through the Government Printing Office in accordance with Title 44 U.S.C., Section 1121, Paper and envelopes for Government agencies in the District of Columbia. VA entities located within the national capital region will contact the VA Office of Publications Service at (202) 461-8905 to place an order.
- IV. Reports:** Monthly Level III data reports providing line item details for each purchase will be sent to VA from the respective suppliers through the FSSI Knowledge Management Portal (CoP Web-portal). Performance reports will also be made available quarterly through the same portal.

- V. Shipping:** Standard shipping for FSSI OS 2 is three to four business days. Overnight shipping, although highly discouraged, is available for an additional fee.
- VI. Substitutions:** When placing orders, VA agreed to allow for automatic substitutions by the supplier when the item being purchased meets Environmentally Preferable Purchasing or Comprehensive Procurement Guideline requirements established by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- A. If substitutions occur, customers who call, fax, or place orders on-line will be notified of the substitution when the order is “confirmed for shipment” by the supplier via email.
- B. Substituted items which fail to meet the customer's needs or requirements can be exchanged for the original AbilityOne item (at no cost) within 30 days of purchase.
- VII. Returns:** Customer returns, exchanges, or refunds are permitted within 30 days at no cost. Refunds will be made electronically to the GPC directly by the supplier's financial institution. Some suppliers may have an extended return policy of up to one year (please check with each of the suppliers before returning the items).
- VIII. Toner/Cartridge (Pool 3):** Each of the remanufactured toner suppliers offer the manufacturer's warranty, which is a one year money-back guarantee on the cartridge as well as an offer to reimburse repair or replacement costs of any equipment item damaged by a remanufactured or compatible cartridge.
- A. Several of the suppliers offer on-site maintenance within 24 hours, in addition to innovative print management solutions. To take advantage of the print management solutions offered, VA facilities will need to select one of the suppliers as their prime toner provider. Suppliers have agreed to warrant and accept old stock toner cartridges.
- B. Remanufactured ink and toner manufacturing processes are commonly certified by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) under ISO 9001:2008, which is certification for quality management, and ISO 14001:2004, which is an environmental management standard. Most manufacturers have ISO 9001:2008 certification, while only a few are ISO 14001:2004 certified.
- C. For additional information on available compatible and remanufactured toner products, please contact the suppliers or visit their Web sites.