

News You Can Use

VA Launches Facebook Pages for All 152 Medical Centers

¹On December 21, 2011, VA announced that all of its 152 medical centers are now actively represented on Facebook, the world's largest social networking site.

"This event marks an important milestone in the overall effort to transform how VA communicates with Veterans and provide them the healthcare and benefits they have earned," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Veterans and their families told us from the beginning that they want to engage and they want relevant information delivered at the local level. By leveraging Facebook, the Department continues to expand access to VA, and embrace transparency and two-way conversation."

The process that began with a single Veterans Health Administration Facebook page in 2008 has now produced over 150 Facebook pages, 64 Twitter feeds, a YouTube channel, a Flickr page, and the *VAntage Point* blog. Additionally, in June 2011, VA produced a Department-wide social media policy that provides guidelines for communicating with Veterans online. The overarching strategy is designed to help break down long-perceived barriers between the Department and its stakeholders.

"Veterans of all eras are depending on us to get the right information to the right person at the right time," said Brandon Friedman, VA's director of online communications, and a Veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. "With more troops returning home, we also have a responsibility to connect with the thousands of Service-members who have been—and will be—entering our system. They're using social media, so that's where we need to be. Facebook helps us do that."

VA clinicians can't discuss the specific health concerns of individual Veterans on Facebook, but that doesn't prevent staff from monitoring VA's sites closely each day—and providing helpful information to Veterans when they can. In the last year, for instance, VA's Crisis Line counselors have successfully intervened on Facebook in cases where Veterans have suggested suicidal thoughts or presented with other emotional crises.

"Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected and we are excited to see Government agencies using our service to better to connect with citizens, provide information, and deliver services," said Don Faul, Facebook's Vice President of Online Operations, a former U.S. Marine and a Veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan. "We want to do all we can to support Veterans, so we're pleased to see the Department of Veterans Affairs using Facebook connect with Veterans in an authentic and engaging way."

VA currently has over 345,000 combined Facebook subscribers (or, "fans"). The Department's main Facebook page has over 154,000 fans and its medical centers have a combined subscribership of over 69,000. The Department plans to continue expanding its Facebook presence while also focusing on bringing Twitter to every VA medical center as well.

- o [Directory of All VA Social Media Sites](#)
- o [VA Facebook Page Directory](#)
- o Join VA FSS on [LinkedIn](#)

¹ The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Accessed on December 22, 2011. <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2238>.

Training Topic

Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) of 1984

■ What is CICA?

In 1984, the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA), Public Law 98-369 (Sec. 2701) was established in order to increase competition for all Government contracts and to save the Government money by taking advantage of competitive pricing. The act requires the Government to hold full and open competition for most solicitations, with exceptions being documented in writing and authorized by the appropriate Government official. The Act's elements are mostly implemented through Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) [Part 6](#).

■ What are the publicizing requirements and applicable timeframes under CICA?

CICA requires solicitations with an estimated value of \$25,000 or more to be advertised for at least 15 days on [FedBizOpps](#). Please note that there are a few exceptions to the publication requirements, which can be seen in FAR [5.202](#). Also, FAR [5.203](#) and [12.603](#) permit the use of a combined synopsis and solicitation procedure, which eliminates the need to publish a separate synopsis before issuing the solicitation.

According to FAR 5.203(b), for solicitations that exceed \$25,000 but are not greater than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), and for solicitations of commercial items that are estimated to be greater than \$25,000, "The Contracting Officer must establish a solicitation response time that will afford potential offerors a reasonable opportunity to respond" and the Contracting Officer "should consider the circumstances of the individual acquisition, such as the complexity, commerciality, availability, and urgency, when establishing the solicitation response time." Except for the acquisition of commercial items, solicitations that are expected to exceed the SAT must be posted for at least 30 days before offers are due.

■ What are the 7 exceptions under CICA?

Per FAR Part 6, the following circumstances may permit a contract award using other than full and open competition:

- 1) (6.302-1) Only one source will satisfy the requirements
- 2) (6.302-2) Unusual and compelling urgency
- 3) (6.302-3) Industrial mobilization; engineering, developmental, or research capability; or expert services
- 4) (6.302-4) International agreement
- 5) (6.302-5) Authorized or required by statute
- 6) (6.302-6) National security
- 7) (6.302-7) Public interest

■ How does CICA apply to the contracts established/managed by the VA FSS Service?

VA FSS contracts are multiple award schedule (MAS), indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contracts that are awarded to responsible companies that offer commercial (**medical**) products and/or services. In accordance with FAR [Part 6.102\(d\)\(3\)](#), using VA FSS contracts meet FAR requirements for full and open competition when the ordering procedures of FAR [Part 8.405](#) are utilized. Since the price of every product and service is deemed fair and reasonable before it is placed on a FSS, Schedule users operating under the guidance set forth in FAR Subpart [8.4](#) should NOT:

- o Seek further competition outside of the MAS program;
- o Synopsise the requirement in [FedBizOpps](#) (unless the order or Blanket Purchase Agreement is conducted on a restricted basis, is supported with a limited source justification (per FAR [8.405-6](#)) and exceeds the SAT.

VA FSS Working for You

VA FSS in Action

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! We hope that you all have enjoyed the holiday season and had lots of time to spend with family and friends. [Public Law](#) updates went very smooth this year with the cooperation of the vendors and the hard work of the Public Law Team!! Congratulations to all!

We have much on our agenda for the coming year. We plan to continue our efforts to standardize the modification forms to provide all of our vendors a consistent guide for submitting contract change requests. We are also working to develop more presentation topics for the upcoming NAC Industry Conference. Based on feedback from last year, the attendees indicated that they wanted more time with the Contract Specialists and pointed presentations that drill into more details. We are working hard to take these suggestions into consideration and develop a program that will serve everyone.

Another main focus for the FSS Service in 2012 will be our continued focus on decreasing the overall timelines for modification actions, extensions, and offer proposals. We had much success with this last year, but we definitely recognize that there is still plenty of room for improvement.

As always, if you are experiencing any issues, please do not hesitate to contact Carole O'Brien, Director of the FSS Service, at (708)786-4957 and/or carole.obrien@va.gov or, Craig Robinson, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary (ADAS) for National Healthcare Acquisitions, at (708)786-5157 and/or craig.robinson@va.gov. Thank you for your continued support and collaboration, as we move into a new calendar year.

"Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort." **John Ruskin**

Social Media Corner



Want to stay connected? Add [this link](#) to any RSS reader to display feeds for VA FSS news and updates.

1st Quarter FY 2012 Sales Due

January 3, 2012 marked the first day that FSS contractors became eligible to register and/or report their 1st quarter FY 2012 (i.e. October 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011) sales figures in accordance with contract [clause 552.238-74](#), Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) and Sales Reporting. Pursuant to this clause, a FSS contractor is required to submit its quarterly Report of Sales and IFF payment within 60 days of the completion of each quarter. Please note all FSS contractors are required to submit their sales data for the 1st quarter (even if no sales occurred under the contract). In order to avoid confusion and having an IFF payment returned, all sales figures should be reported **BEFORE** an IFF payment is submitted to our office (regardless of how the IFF is remitted).

- [Access the VA online sales reporting system](#)
- [View portal user guides](#)

Available Training Opportunities

Get the training you need to become a successful contractor!!!

- [Training Resources for Vendors](#)
- [Pathway to Success & New Contractor Orientation](#)
- [How to be a Successful Contractor](#)
- [Schedule Input Program \(SIP\) Training](#)
- [All About e-Buy & e-Buy Training](#)

National News

Recent Emergency & Disaster Declarations

Under the [Disaster Recovery Program](#), state and local Governments may purchase products/services off of FSS contracts in order to facilitate the recovery from a major disaster. In addition, state and local Government entities may use FSS contracts to purchase products and services in advance of a major disaster declared by the president. State and local Governments are responsible for ensuring that the products/services purchased are to be used to facilitate recovery. As such, there were [two declarations](#) by President Obama in December 2011.

MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type	Designated Counties
4049	12/05	NH	Severe Storm & Snowstorm	
4050	12/22	AK	Severe Winter Storms & Flooding	

- [Disaster Recovery Program FAQs](#)

Did You Know...

¹One hundred and fifty years ago, on December 21, 1861, during the first winter of the American Civil War, Congress authorized the nation's first Medals of Honor - for exemplary men of the US Navy. Seven months later, the first Medals of Honor were authorized for non-commissioned officers and privates of the US Army. The Medal of Honor is the highest award given to military personnel for valor in battle. The medal is presented to the recipient by the US President in the name of Congress.

The original 1861 Act stated "that the Secretary of the Navy be, and is hereby, authorized to cause two hundred "medals of honor" to be prepared, with suitable emblematic devices, which shall be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen, and marines as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities during the present war. . ."

Although the Medal of Honor was created for the Civil War, Congress made the prestigious award a permanent decoration in 1863. 1,520 Medals were awarded during the Civil War, of which,

- 1,195 were made to the US Army;
- 308 to the US Navy; and
- 17 to the US Marines.

What are some of the entitlements that Medal of Honor recipients receive?

- A monthly \$1,000 pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Children of Medal of Honor recipients are not subject to quotas if they are qualified and desire to attend the U.S. military academies.
- A 10-percent increase in retired pay, not to exceed the 75% maximum, for enlisted recipients who retire with 20 or more years of Military Service.
- Receiving invitations to attend Presidential inaugurations and accompanying festivities. Military recipients and those who are civil servants have traditionally been authorized administrative absence instead of chargeable leave to attend.
- A special engraved headstone for deceased recipients of the Medal of Honor provided by VA.
 - o View [Medal of Honor Statistics](#)
 - o [African American World War II Medal of Honor Recipients & Asian Pacific American World War II Medal of Honor Recipients](#)

¹Department of the Navy. Accessed on December 22, 2011. <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq38-1.htm>.

Recently Awarded FSS Contracts (December 2011)

Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Hematology Related Products Contracts (Schedule 65IB)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
GTx, Inc.	V797P-2056D	Small	
Kremers Urban Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	V797P-2005D	Large	

Medical/Surgical Equipment & Supplies Contracts (Schedule 65IIA)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Augustine Temperature Management	V797P-2055D	Small	
BioMedical Life Systems, Inc.	V797P-2041D	Small	
Alcon Laboratories, Inc.	V797P-2046D	Large	
EZ Way, Inc.	V797P-2061D	Small	
CAS Medical Systems, Inc.	V797P-2053D	Small	8(A) Business
I.V. House, Inc.	V797P-2068D	Small	Woman Owned Business
Landau Uniforms, Inc.	V797P-2036D	Large	
Magnum Medical	V797P-2074D	Small	
Capsa Solutions	V797P-2073D	Small	
Patterson Medical Supply, Inc. DBA Sammons Preston	V797P-2057D	Large	
Medical Products Resources	V797P-2075D	Small	
Tetra Medical Supply Corp.	V797P-2078D	Small	

Patient Mobility Devices Contracts (Schedule 65IIF)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Accessible Designs, Inc.	V797P-2069D	Small	Small Disadvantaged, Disabled Veteran Owned Business
SizeWise Rentals, LLC.	V797P-2076D	Large	

Professional & Allied Healthcare Staffing Services Contracts (Schedule 621I)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Woodbury Technologies, Inc.	V797P-2058D	Small	Woman Owned Business
Demekola Nursing Agency DBA Caring Hearts Group	V797P-2077D	Small	Woman Owned Business

Medical Laboratory Testing & Analysis Services Contracts (Schedule 621II)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
National Medical Services, Inc.	V797P-2060D	Large	

Please visit the [VA Schedule Programs](#) page for a complete listing of all Schedules

In order to obtain pricing information for all of the companies referenced above or any other FSS contractor, please review the [NAC Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#) or [GSA E-Library](#). If you have any questions/concerns or would like to learn more about a specific topic and/or issue, please feel free to contact the FSS Help Desk by phone at (708)786-7737 and/or by e-mail at helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov.