

## News You Can Use

### Contractor Success - Marketing Matters!!!

Recently, the General Services Administration (GSA) designed a new series of [informational videos](#) in order to help current and prospective GSA/VA Federal Supply Schedule contractors develop strategies for maximizing business opportunities with the Government under the Schedules program.

The videos cover four key areas:

- **Segment 1: What You Should Know About Federal Contracting**  
*Highlights the basics of federal contracting and the value of the Schedules program to GSA/VA Schedule vendors.*
- **Segment 2: GSA/VA's Role in the Schedules Program**  
*Offers information to help vendors understand and appreciate GSA/VA's roles and responsibilities by explaining what GSA/VA does to market the schedules program, and what tools and resources are available to help contractors in their marketing efforts.*
- **Segment 3: The Contractor's Role in the Schedules Program**  
*Aims to help vendors understand and appreciate their organization's roles and responsibilities to market their status as a Schedules contract holder.*
- **Segment 4: Marketing Your Products and Services**  
*Aims to help you better understand how to get noticed by buyers, stay relevant, improve your marketing and business development efforts and promote your schedules contractor status to potential customers*

This comprehensive training series reviews the basics of federal contracting and highlights the value of the GSA/VA Schedules program. Current GSA/VA vendors will learn the differences between the myth and the reality of being a GSA/VA contract holder, as well as how the Government procurement process works. In addition, the training provides a better understanding of the numerous ways that the GSA/VA Schedules program benefits both Government agencies and vendors.

The videos provide an understanding and appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of both GSA/VA and your company as part of the Schedules program. They also review many of the online tools and resources available to assist vendors with market research and lead generation.

Want to learn more about these issues? Visit the [GSA Interact](#) community. Additional information is available on the [FSS Managing a Schedules Contract](#) and [FSS Marketing](#) pages.

**"At the end of the video series, vendors will have a better understanding of how to get noticed by buyers, stay relevant, and improve their marketing and business development efforts."** Ms. Geri Haworth, Business Management Director with GSA's Management Services Center

## Training Topic

### VA Directive 7408.1 Open Market Waivers

#### 1) What is VA Directive 7408.1?

In accordance with [VA Directive 7408.1 Requesting Waivers from the Requirement to Use VA Federal Supply Schedules](#), VA ordering activities are required to submit a request for waiver in order to waive the requirement of purchasing goods and services from VA FSS contracts if:

- It has been determined that the items available through current VA Schedule contracts will not meet the specific needs of the ordering activity; and
- It has been determined that a like or similar item available from another (non-contract) source will meet the specific clinical needs of the ordering activity.

#### 2) What important definitions should be considered when determining if a waiver is needed?

- Like or similar: An item that performs the same basic function as the specified item.
- Clinical Need: A need that highlights a specific clinical exception (e.g. a specific patient with special needs, allergies, etc.)

#### 3) What is the emergency waiver request process?

Failure to submit a request in a timely manner will not result in the issuance of an emergency waiver, except in rare circumstances. Emergency waiver requests will be processed as soon as possible. The facility Chief of Staff (COS) has the authority to approve emergency requests for an immediate procurement to ensure appropriate patient care. The COS will forward the emergency request to the Office of Clinical Logistics and to the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary (ADAS) for National Healthcare Acquisitions (formerly the Executive Director of the NAC). Waivers granted on an emergency basis will be limited to the initial purchase and only in the quantity needed to meet the immediate needs of the patient. The NAC will review every six months to determine whether the waiver is still necessary or whether comparable items are available on an FSS contract or Blanket Purchase Agreement.

#### 4) What is VA Form 0573A & what information should it contain?

[VA Form 0753A](#), FSS Request for Waiver, should be completed and submitted in order for a waiver to receive consideration from FSS. The completed VA Form 0573A shall contain:

- A complete description of the required items, including descriptive literature (illustrations, brochures, etc.);
- A comparison of prices and the technical differences between the requested item and the Schedule item, identifying as a minimum the inadequacies of the Schedule item to perform required functions;
- The required quantity; and
- An estimated annual usage or a statement that the requirement is non-recurrent or unpredictable.

**NOTE:** Each VA medical facility is responsible for, and urged to, establish a local procedure for processing waiver requests for review by the Field Chief of Staff and subsequent approval/denial by the ADAS for National Healthcare Acquisitions. All waiver requests should be submitted to [NAC@va.gov](mailto:NAC@va.gov). If you have any questions about the waiver process, please contact us at [PMRS@va.gov](mailto:PMRS@va.gov).

## VA FSS Working for You

### VA FSS in Action

We will be targeting October 1, 2011 as the date to incorporate the cradle-to-closeout assignments for all FSS contracts managed by the VA to coincide with the start of Fiscal Year 2012. This will allow us time to update all the affected database systems, as well as finalize all the process changes to be incorporated in our office. We will be sending out a formal notification to the contract administrator(s) listed in the FSS contract to advise each company of their assigned Contract Specialist.

Once again, we want to stress the importance of using the systems already in place to ensure the proper and timely handling of any contract modification actions. **When submitting a modification request, you must send it through the FSS Helpdesk at [helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov](mailto:helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov).** This allows us to track the progress and timeliness of the request, and to ultimately serve you better.

**DO NOT SEND REQUESTS FOR MODIFICATIONS DIRECTLY TO YOUR ASSIGNED CONTRACT SPECIALIST.** Please review our website if you would like to obtain more specific instructions on the [modification process](#) or to download the [modification forms](#). We are currently working on refining the various modification forms and you will begin to see new versions shortly.

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](mailto: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](mailto:craig.robinson@va.gov).

Thank you for your continued cooperation and collaboration.

*"Excellence is the gradual result of always striving to do better."*  
**Pat Riley**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY 2011 Sales Due

At this time, all FSS contractors should have reported their 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (i.e. April 1, 2011 – June 30, 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 applicable 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](#)

Please direct all IFF and sales reporting related questions to the VA Sales Helpdesk at [FSSSales.ammhin@va.gov](mailto:FSSSales.ammhin@va.gov).

### Did You Know...

[Hines VA Hospital](#) was named after Edward Hines, Jr., son of the land donor for the hospital. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Edward Hines, Jr. died while serving in France during World War I. Edward Hines, Sr. made the honorary name designation a condition of the land deal for the Government's new Chicago-area veteran's hospital for World War I veterans. On October 24, 1921, Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon issued the official order that renamed Public Health Hospital No. 76 as the Edward Hines, Jr. hospital.

## 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 [thirty-nine declarations](#) by President Obama in August 2011.

#### MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type	Designated Counties
<a href="#">4011</a>	8/08	UT	Flooding	
<a href="#">4012</a>	8/12	MO	Flooding	
<a href="#">4013</a>	8/12	NE	Flooding	
<a href="#">4014</a>	8/12	NE	Tornadoes	
<a href="#">4015</a>	8/18	LA	Flooding	
<a href="#">4016</a>	8/24	IA	Severe Storms	
<a href="#">4017</a>	8/27	PR	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">4018</a>	8/30	IA	Flooding	
<a href="#">4019</a>	8/31	NC	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">4020</a>	8/31	NY	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">4021</a>	8/31	NJ	Hurricane Irene	

#### EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type	Designated Counties
<a href="#">3326</a>	8/22	PR	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3327</a>	8/25	NC	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3328</a>	8/26	NY	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3329</a>	8/26	VA	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3330</a>	8/26	MA	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3331</a>	8/27	CT	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3332</a>	8/27	NJ	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3333</a>	8/27	NH	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3334</a>	8/27	RI	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3335</a>	8/27	MD	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3336</a>	8/28	DE	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3337</a>	8/28	DC	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3338</a>	8/29	VT	Hurricane Irene	
<a href="#">3339</a>	8/29	PA	Hurricane Irene	

#### FIRE MANAGEMENT DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Incident
<a href="#">2941</a>	8/01	OK	Mustang Road Fire
<a href="#">2942</a>	8/02	OK	Anderson Road Fire
<a href="#">2943</a>	8/02	OK	Regency Fire
<a href="#">2944</a>	8/02	OK	Turley Fire
<a href="#">2945</a>	8/04	OK	Coffee Creek Fire
<a href="#">2946</a>	8/05	OK	265 <sup>th</sup> West Fire
<a href="#">2947</a>	8/07	OK	Cleveland-Mannford Fire Complex
<a href="#">2948</a>	8/08	OK	Cedar Lane Fire
<a href="#">2949</a>	8/15	TX	Horseshoe Fire
<a href="#">2950</a>	8/30	MT	Canyon Creek Fire
<a href="#">2951</a>	8/30	OK	63 <sup>rd</sup> & Sooner Road Fire
<a href="#">2952</a>	8/30	TX	101 Ranch Fire
<a href="#">2953</a>	8/31	OK	Twin Lakes Fire Complex
<a href="#">2954</a>	8/31	OK	Westminster Fire

## Recently Awarded FSS Contracts (August 2011)

### Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Hematology Related Products Contracts (Schedule 651B)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
ViroPharma Incorporated	V797P-5260B	Small	
Perrigo New York, Inc.	V797P-5270B	Large	

### Medical/Surgical Equipment & Supplies Contracts (Schedule 651A)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Pari Respiratory Equipment	V797P-4477B	Small	
Academy Medical, LLC.	V797P-4478B	Small	Veteran Owned Business
American Med Supply, Inc.	V797P-4473B	Small	Veteran Owned Business
Kreg Therapeutics	V797P-4474B	Small	
Dujo Logos, Inc. DBA Medicomp Medical	V797P-4480B	Small	Veteran Owned Business
Easy Walking, Inc.	V797P-4481B	Small	
Communications Professional, Inc.	V797P-4485B	Small	Small Disadvantaged Business
Robert Busse & Co., Inc. DBA Busse Hospital Disposables	V797P-4488B	Small	
Synovis Orthopedic & Woundcare, Inc.	V797P-4484B	Small	

### Patient Mobility Devices (Schedule 651F)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Topolino Technology, LLC.	V797P-3248M	Large	
Rehabmart, LLC.	V797P-3250M	Small	HubZone Business

### Invitro Diagnostics, Reagents, Test Kits, & Test Sets (Schedule 651V)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Cellestis, Inc.	V797P-5271B	Small	

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

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
CRAssociates, Inc.	V797P-7360A	Large	
Platinum Business Corporation	V797P-7361A	Small	Small Disadvantaged, Woman, Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business
Health Research Associates DBA Pharmacy Resources	V797P-7362A	Small	Veteran Owned Business
Staff Care, Inc.	V797P-7363A	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](mailto:helpdesk.ammhinfss@va.gov).