GetSmart

The GSA SmartPay® Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 3   December 2007

Inside this issue:

Letter from David J. Shea, Director

Dear GetSmart Reader:

With the significant achievement of the GSA SmartPay® 2 contract awards accomplished months ahead of schedule, we're all now turning our attention to the effort required to accomplish a successful transition from the existing program to the new one. As many of those who were around during the transition to the original GSA SmartPay contracts back in 1998 can attest, this was no small task.

The Office of Charge Card Management (OCCM) has taken significant steps designed to make the transition go more smoothly this time, many of which are mentioned in this edition of our newsletter. One of these steps involves measuring the progress of key agencies in making the transition through the Agency Transition Status Report (ATSR). Unlike in 1998, the government relies heavily on charge cards to support mission delivery. As a result, we can ill afford a gap in charge card services. Imagine if your agency could not fuel vehicles, quickly purchase needed supplies, or efficiently send staff on travel to perform needed work! The cards support all these activities and more. It is therefore essential that all agencies transition smoothly and on-time, and that those agencies selected to provide ATSRs do so. We need to understand, as a government, where we are in the transition process in order to ensure that the services we provide to taxpayers and other customers continue unabated. I believe this undertaking is a matter of national pride. We, the United States government, are the world leaders in the use of charge cards. We should be able to show the world that we can make this transition happen in a timely and effective manner. I know we can accomplish this task, together. As always, I thank you for the important role you play in making the charge card program function at the consistently high level it does.

One of the themes I learned in my undergraduate days is that "mutability is the only constant." Put more simply, "change is always happening." The business of charge cards in government certainly is no exception to this theme. On that note, I'm happy to report that the Certification and Accreditation (C&A) process for all four GSA SmartPay® 2 contractor Electronic Access Systems (EASs) is complete. All four EAS systems were issued "Authorizations to Operate" or "ATOs." (No such requirement existed back in 1998, as you may know.) This designation does not mean the security of these systems is perfect. Rather, it means that these systems have been determined by the GSA Chief Information Officer to be operating at an "acceptable level of risk" as measured against Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendix III, and the GSA Certification and Accreditation Program. Performing C&As of these EASs is yet another way GSA provides value to its GSA SmartPay customers, eliminating the need for such C&As to be conducted individually by our customers. Please note, however, that should your agency have an electronic interface with a bank system or systems, conducting C&As of such interfaces remains the responsibility of the agency. GSA is not in a position to conduct reviews of these agency-specific interfaces.

Cont., Page 1, Letter from David J. Shea, Director

As we approach the end of the year, my staff and I wish you and yours the very best for the holidays and the New Year! We look forward to supporting *your* mission for years to come.

Regards,
David J. Shea, CPCM, PMP
Director, Office of Charge Card Management

> **"The Office of Charge Card Management would like to thank everyone who completed the survey."**

Program News: Bank Satisfaction Survey Update

GSA conducted an online survey of GSA SmartPay® program customers to gain insight into customer satisfaction with the products and services provided by the GSA SmartPay® contractor banks. A/OPC respondents were able to rate their use and satisfaction with a number of bank products and services offered through the GSA SmartPay® program, including Electronic Access Systems (EAS), Customer Service, Security, Training, Reports, Bank Processes, and Overall Performance.

In total, there were 939 responses to the survey. Preliminary analysis of the results indicates a high level of satisfaction with bank products and services. On a 5 point scale (5 being high satisfaction), the average overall satisfaction score was a 4.2. The category which was rated highest was Customer Service (4.19), ranking particularly high was the ease of reaching a live operator. The lowest rated category was Training (3.64), where survey respondents noted frustration with the availability of bank training sessions. The detailed results were released in early November. The Office of Charge Card Management would like to thank everyone who completed the survey.

Program News: Legislation Affecting GSA SmartPay® and its Customers

The 110th Congress continues several new pieces of legislation that are relevant to the GSA SmartPay® program and its customers. First, is a new law from the "Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2006," Section 511, which requires a 3% withholding of all payments to government contractors by 2011.

The second legislation of note is S.680, the Accountability in Government Contracting Act (Collins, R-ME), which was reported out of the Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs in November 2007 and has been sent to the Senate floor. This bill requires merchants' debts to the federal government to be levied via reducing payments to these merchants until resolved.

Finally, Senator Charles Grassley's (R-IA) "Government Credit Card Abuse Act of 2007" (S.789 & H.R. 1395) sets guidelines for bolstering the internal controls of government purchase and travel cards. These safeguards include updated record keeping of agency employees assigned cards, increased intra-agency oversight of those individuals, enhanced purchase tracking technology, and redefined audit and penalty measures.

The Office of Charge Card Management will work on behalf of agencies/organizations where appropriate to address proposed legislation, and will continue to keep agencies/organizations informed on any updates with respect to this and future relevant legislation.

Ninth Annual GSA SmartPay® Training Conference

The Ninth Annual GSA SmartPay® Training Conference was held on August 21-23, in Philadelphia, PA. This year we had a record attendance of approximately 4100 attendees. Preliminary survey results indicated an overall satisfaction rating of 91%. In general, the feedback received indicated that the conference ran smoothly and effectively. Attendees were also very pleased with the keynote speaker, Garrison Wynn.

The GSA SmartPay® Program Office would like to thank all agency/organization attendees, the bank representatives, as well as the presenters for a successful learning experience. We hope to see you next year July 22-24, 2008 in Denver, CO!

"The new quiz is now available on the GSA website."

Online Purchase Card Training Revised

GSA has re-developed the quiz for its online purchase cardholder training. The quiz has new types of questions and is designed to more accurately reflect the curriculum in the online training course. The new quiz is now available on the GSA website. The content of the online training course has not changed, therefore purchase card users do not need to retake the course or the quiz if they have already completed it.

Please contact Michael Bertty (michael.bertty@gsa.gov, or 703-605-2178) with any questions concerning the training quiz for the purchase card program.

GSA SmartPay® 2 Kick-Off Conference

GSA SmartPay® hosted the GSA SmartPay® 2 Kick– Off Conference on July 17, 2007 at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, DC. This conference provided customers with an opportunity to learn more about SP2 products and services and to speak with representatives from the SP2 charge card vendors: Citibank, GE Capital Financial, JPMorgan Chase, and U.S. Bank.

At the conference, banks provided copies of their presentation packages, which are now available on their websites for agencies/organizations to review. Please click on the links below to access the presentation packages:

Citibank: www.citigroup.com/transactionservices/homepage/cash/cc/gov/reference/files/aopc_guide/gsasmartpayfinal.pdf
GE Capital Financial: www.gemoneyfps.com/Presentation_Packet.pdf
JPMorgan Chase:
www.jpmorganchase.com/cm/ContentServer?c=TS_Content&pagename=jpmorgan%2Fts%2FTS_Content%2FGeneral&cid=1159313215573
U.S. Bank: www.usbankgsasmartpay2.com/taskorders/

September Delinquency Statistics

The following agencies' delinquency rates were at or below 1% for September: Department of Commerce, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation, Department of the Treasury, Environmental Protection Agency, General Services Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, and the Social Security Administration.

We want to acknowledge those agencies that had no write-offs in September: Agency for International Development, Corporation for National Service, Department of Education, Department of Energy, Department of Labor, Department of State, General Services Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Social Security Administration.

Agencies whose recoveries exceeded write-offs include: Department of Energy, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Transportation, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration and the Social Security Administration.
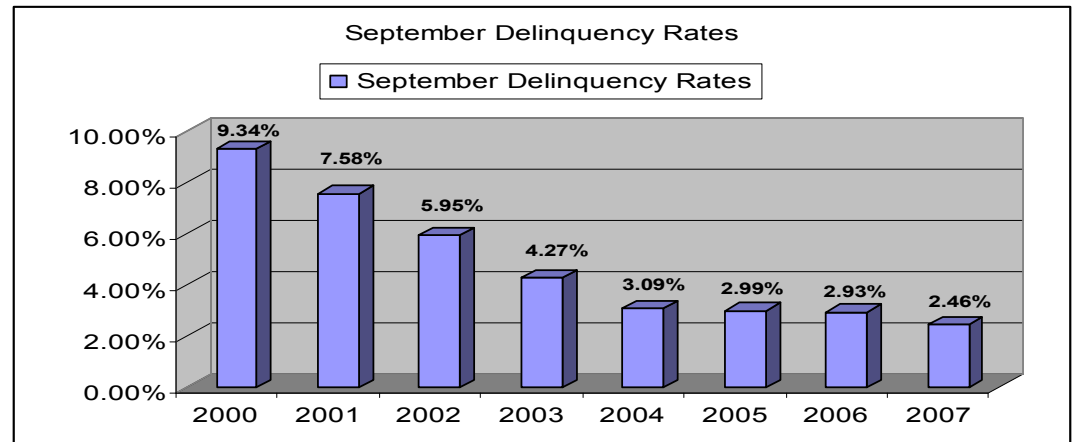
Total Write-Offs

September:

$232,996

Total Recoveries

September:

$148,308

September Delinquency Rates

Year	September Delinquency Rates
2000	9.34%
2001	7.58%
2002	5.95%
2003	4.27%
2004	3.09%
2005	2.99%
2006	2.93%
2007	2.46%

New BIN Numbers Under SP2

The new BIN numbers have been finalized for the charge cards under the GSA SmartPay® 2 program. These numbers, which can be found as the first four numbers in the sequence on the card, are used to identify important information about the card and its user.

Under master contract section C. 1.1 Account Number, and the subsections which fall under it, there is an in depth discussion of the contractor requirements regarding BIN numbers and their ability to act as identifiers of important information. BIN numbers can be used to identify whether the account is centrally or individually billed, and whether it has access to the City Pair Program, as well as indicate other important information about the card.

Purchase			Fleet	
MC	5568		MC	5565
MC	5565		MC	5568
VISA	4716		Voyager	8699
VISA	4614			
VISA	4486		**Debit/Prepaid**	
			MC	5564
Travel			MC	5568
MC	5568		MC	5565
MC	5565		VISA	4614
VISA	4486		VISA	5115
VISA	4614			

Transition to GSA SmartPay® 2 (SP2)

Transition Overview
Government agencies/organizations should now be aware that the current GSA SmartPay® contracts end on November 29, 2008. The follow-on SP2 Master Contracts were awarded in June. Over the next 11 months, agencies/organizations must complete several tasks to ensure that the transition to GSA SmartPay® 2 is a smooth one and that any disruptions in service are avoided. The GSA SmartPay® Program Office will support agencies'/organizations' transition efforts through educational meetings and training sessions, transition tools, and one-on-one meetings and phone calls with the GSA SmartPay® Point of Contact as needed.

"Over the next 11 months, agencies/ organizations must complete several tasks to ensure that the transition to GSA SmartPay® 2 is a smooth one…"

Where Should my Agency/Organization be in the Transition Process?

A high-level timeline is included on this page as a reminder of the transition activities that will be taking place over the next 11 months. The timeline shows that at this point, agencies/organizations should be continuing pre-award (i.e., before task order award) tasks, in particular, the development of their task order requests. As part of this effort, A/OPCs (or other agency/organization personnel as appropriate) should have already completed the following tasks:

- Reviewed the Transition FAQs and the Pre-Award Checklist and developed transition plans;

- Used the Executive Briefing Tool to obtain leadership support for the agency's/ organization's transition;

- Developed a communications plan using the Communications Planning Tool; and

- Attended a Transition Boot Camp session and regular A/OPC meetings to be educated on transition tasks and share best practices with other A/OPCs.

What Should my Agency/Organization be Doing now for the Transition to SP2?

Currently, A/OPCs need to build on the activities listed above and perform the next set of transition tasks which include:

- Completing a needs assessment using the Needs Assessment Tool;

- Identifying the type of task order that best fits the agency's/ organization's needs, using the Task Order Type Tool; and

- Developing their task order request using the Task Order Guide.

The table on the next page provides a description of each of these transition tools, each of which should be completed prior to the other. As noted in the timeline, the post-award activities are expected to take 6-9 months or more to complete, so it is critical that agencies/organizations stay on track with all transition activities.

2007							2008										
Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Define Needs, Task Order Type						Write Task Order Request	Evaluate & Award					Post-Award Implementation					

Pre-Award Tasks   Post-Award Tasks

Highlights of Transition Tools

	Needs Assessment Tool	Task Order Type Tool	Task Order Guide
What does this tool do?	Helps agencies/ organizations review various aspects of their current charge card program, and guides them through the process of defining needs for their future (SP2) charge card program	Provides descriptions of the different types of task orders (e.g. tailored, standard, tag-along, pool) that agencies/ organizations can develop as well as instructions for determining the task order type	Provides instructions to help agencies / organizations develop and award a task order
Why is this tool important?	Enables agencies/ organizations to prioritize their charge card program needs under SP2, thereby preparing them to determine task order type and write their task order request	Enables agencies/ organizations to select the task order type that best suits their needs	Enables agencies/ organizations to develop and award a task order that addresses their needs and requirements regarding their charge card program
When should I use this tool?	Agencies/organizations should be using this tool now, prior to developing their task order request	Agencies/organizations should use this tool upon completion of their needs assessment	Agencies/ Organizations should use this tool after completion of their needs assessment and after the task order type is identified.

Tools Posted on the GSA SmartPay® Webpage
www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay

(Click on "Transition to GSA SmartPay® 2")

Transition Quick Reference

Executive Briefing

Pre-Award Checklist

Transition FAQs

Needs Assessment Tool

Communications Planning Tool

IT Quick Reference

Task Order Type Tool

Task Order Guide

GSA SmartPay® Pooling Assistance

As the transition to SP2 approaches, additional information about the GSA pool task order(s) will become available. Updated information regarding the GSA pool and long-term deadlines will be communicated to agencies/ organizations who elect to join the GSA pool.

If you are currently a member of the GSA SmartPay® pool, or your agency/organization is considering pooling under SP2, please contact Elizabeth Skolnik (elizabeth.skolnik@gsa.gov) with any questions about the pooling process.

GSA SmartPay® Points of Contact

To identify your agency's/organization's GSA SmartPay® Point of Contact, go to www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay (Click on Agencies and Organizations/GSA SmartPay® Points of Contact).

Share Your Success

Have you achieved success in streamlining operations through using the GSA SmartPay® purchase, travel, and fleet cards? Have you found innovative ways to improve your program?

Other agencies/organizations can benefit from learning about the best practices of individual agencies/organizations. We'd like to highlight your achievements in an upcoming issue.

Please submit your success story (in 250 words or less) to Susan Farrar at susan.farrar@gsa.gov. GSA SmartPay® reserves the right to edit contributions for publication.

Upcoming Events

A/OPC Meetings 10:00am —12:00pm :

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Contact Erin VanDagna (erin.vandagna@gsa.gov, or 703-605-5589) to schedule an individual meeting regarding the transition effort of your agency/organization.

Agency Transition Status Report

The Office of Charge Card Management has worked with the Office of Federal Financial Management within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop a process for agencies to monitor their progress in transitioning to SP2. The Agency Transition Status Report (ATSR) is a tool which agencies/organizations can use to input their progress towards key transition milestones. The Office of Charge Card Management is collecting ATSR reports every other month from 47 targeted agencies/organizations for reporting transition progress to OMB. OMB has agreed to accept this reporting through GSA, as opposed to implementing a separate reporting requirement.

The Office of Charge Card Management would like to thank those agencies/organizations who have submitted their ATSRs for the October 26, 2007 due date. To date, 36% of the targeted agencies/organizations have submitted their first ATSRs. As we approach the transition to SP2, submitting this information regarding your progress will be critical. Please contact your GSA SmartPay® Point of Contact if you have any questions.

Contact Us

If you have suggestions or comments about *GetSmart*, please contact Erin VanDagna at 703-605-5899 or via email at erin.vandagna@gsa.gov