

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



Topic: RWA Tools for the Customer: eRETA and VCSS

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Link to Series Information: [CES Historical Topics](#)

Question #1: As a GSA employee who works in RETA, who will be notified that the customer has submitted an RWA through eRETA?

Answer: While the exact workflow is not set in stone yet, the current plan is that each region customizes where GSA individuals' customer requests are routed. For example, this could be by state, by city, by customer agency, etc. So, if Region 4 indicates any request that comes from Florida is routed to RETA user A and user B then those two users are responsible for assigning a Project Manager and Budget Analyst to oversee the RWA at a minimum. However, each region can assign additional individuals to each request. Because the routing will be customizable in RETA, each region can set up the workflow as they see fit and change it up over time as necessary.

Question #2: Is there an eRETA contact?

Answer: eRETA information is available at www.gsa.gov/ereta. If a user cannot find what they are looking for there, they can email us at eRETA@gsa.gov.

Question #3: Is there a follow up mechanism to check on application progress? My application was submitted and I haven't heard status.

Answer: There is depending on what step (steps 1-3) you most recently completed. If you last completed step 1 or step 3, you can follow up by contacting eRETA@gsa.gov. Please allow at least 72 business hours after completing either step 1 or 3 before contacting us. However, it is harder for us to provide an immediate status if you most recently completed step 2. Step 2 is handled by the GSA Personnel Security Office and the HR/Personnel Security Office of the customer agency to verify a user has a valid security background check at their home agency. Since this step is removed from the rest of the process (due to PII and sensitive data), the eRETA team is not directly involved. Users should first check with their HR/Personnel Security representative they initially worked with from their home agency to confirm the information was sent to GSAs Personnel Security office at the fax or email address listed on the step 2 application. If it is confirmed this occurred, email eRETA@gsa.gov to follow up. However, do NOT re-send your step 2 application which contains PII and other personal information to the eRETA@gsa.gov account, merely inquire with your email and date your step 2 application was

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A

submitted. Please wait at least 7-10 business days from submitting your step 2 application before following up with eRETA@gsa.gov.

Question #4: So at this time a pen and ink signature is still required though?

Answer: Today, RWA customers can sign an RWA by the traditional pen and ink signature or they can choose to use the built in “digital signature” capability of Adobe PDF. In Adobe, you should note the “red flag” icon in the upper left corner of all signature blocks on the RWA 2957 Form (available at www.gsa.gov/forms and then searching for “2957”). Clicking on the flag will prompt the user to insert their federal government PIV card and “sign” the RWA with the PIV cards digital signature. Note: Each PBS region may use their discretion in accepting or rejecting Adobe PDF digital signatures based on their comfort level with the authenticity of the signature. Regions may request you sign the RWA form in pen and ink fashion.

Question #5: What features of VCSS are distinct from eRETA?

Answer: VCSS and eRETA are complementary applications. eRETA is a “project management” application to track the status of RWAs, access to related project documentation, and run global reports on the status of all RWA projects in a given city, state, region, or customer agency. VCSS serves as a “billing” site that archives all RWA billing statements for a given RWA. In the future, the eRETA and VCSS teams would like to connect the applications so information found separately in both applications today can easily be accessed in one or the other in the future.

Question #6: The person, who is electronically signing, does he/ she need access to eRETA?

Answer: Yes, since the verification of the signature will be accomplished inside of eRETA, not external to it.

Question #7: Does eRETA use a different log-in than VCSS?

Answer: At this time yes. eRETA is “owned” by the Public Buildings Service and hosted within the PBS Extranet Portal which makes multiple PBS customer facing applications available to customer agencies with a single log-in. VCSS is “owned” by GSA Office of Financial and HR IT Services and hosted as an independent website. However, GSA is investigating how to lump numerous customer facing applications together into a single-sign-on portal. As of today, eRETA has a link to VCSS and vice versa, however each will still require a different log-in.

Question #8: Can one person input data on the RWA and another person go into eReta and sign it?

Answer: Yes they can. Just like one individual may complete the paper or PDF version of the RWA 2957 form today, and then another individual sign it, eRETA 2.0 will make the same workflow possible electronically.

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A

Question #9a: Is the annual re-certification for eRETA notice automatic?

Answer: Yes. Your PBS National Helpdesk sends out an email about 30 days before your 12 month period expires that has a subject line of: "Expiring PBS Portal Accounts for the Month of <insert month>". Instructions in that email will tell you how to recertify to extend your access for the next 12 months.

Question #9b: Does a client have to register again if they have not used the system in a while? Or maybe have a password reset?

Answer: If a user is still within the initial 12-month window from when they gained access, there is no need to re-register. If the user received the re-certification email (see question #9a above) and fails to recertify within 30 days their access will be disabled. However, the user only needs to email eRETA@gsa.gov to request their account to be re-activated. If the user switched agencies; however, he/she would have to re-apply going through all three steps as outlined at www.gsa.gov/ereta.

Question #10: I thought I saw access to eRETA when I logged on to Delegate website?

Answer: You will see eRETA if you have Del-e-Gate access since both applications are housed under the PBS Extranet Portal. However, you do need to apply to each application separately. If a user has an Extranet ID and password they could attempt to launch eRETA, but eRETA will not launch until they follow the three steps outlined at www.gsa.gov/ereta.

Question #11: Will customers be notified if there is a credit?

Answer: GSA is planning to notify customers by email when new billing activity has posted in VCSS.

Question #12: Why doesn't eRETA show the current balance?

Answer: This is a field that will be added with eRETA 2.0. For now, the balance is something anyone can calculate by taking RWA Authorized Amount and subtracting total expenses to date.

Question #13: Why can't eRETA provide the same data that is on the RETA Financial Summary Report?

Answer: The eRETA report shows nearly all of the same information as the RETA Financial Review report does. Since eRETA is customer centric and RETA is internal to GSA, each report was customized to provide information most valuable to each respective audience.

Question #14: What about the supporting documentation that is needed - e.g., SOW etc?

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A

Answer: RETA users (internal GSA) can share or not share all documentation uploaded to RETA with eRETA as they deem necessary. The Documentation Tool within RETA serves as the “RWA file” that used to be found as a hanging paper folder in GSA filing cabinets. As such, some of the documentation is for internal GSA use only (e.g. contracting files, internal audit paperwork, etc) that is meant for GSA RWA management only and does not impact the customer. RETA users are instructed to share copies of RWA forms, estimates, customer letters, SOWs, and more that are inherently customer centric. RETA defaults the share/do not share indicator automatically depending on the document category selected by RETA users. However the RETA user may select the opposite of the default share/do not share indicator per document.

Question #15: Does that mean no more IPACs?

Answer: No, it does not mean that. *IPAC is the acronym for Intra-Governmental Payment and Collection System.*

Question #16: Does this mean I can send in my RWA through the system? Or will I still have to follow the submittal process of the GSA region I'm located in? They're different.

Answer: With eRETA 2.0, any customer can follow any process they wish. They can submit their RWA work request electronically or they could choose to submit their signed RWA as they do today (via fax, email, or hand delivery). eRETA 2.0 is only offering an additional avenue to submit RWA requests.

Question #17: Can I look up my Overtime Utilities too?

Answer: Yes, OT Utility RWAs are already accessible in eRETA today.

Question #18: Do I get notified through a system generated message when expenses hit against an RWA or when one closes? Or will that process remain unchanged?

Answer: No, individual expenses will not trigger a communication to customer agencies. Customers can follow RWAs from day to day in eRETA to identify if new financial activity posted against the RWA in the last 24 hours. Starting on or after July 17, 2013, RETA, and therefore eRETA, will be updated three times a day with the last financial activity posted internally within GSA's financial system. NOTE: RWA billing only occurs once per month at most, so new RWA bills will only post once per month in VCSS and also in the “billed amount” field in eRETA on or about the 20th of each month (assuming new financial activity in the most recent 30 days triggers a billing).

Question #19: It looks like I can view data on my fleet, what about rent we pay GSA?

Answer: Yes, you can currently see Rent as well as Fleet in VCSS. In Phase 2, we will be adding more business lines. Please see our schedule <http://gsa.gov/portal/content/246401>

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A

Question #20: Are RWA funds we pay shown through this system or just eRETA?

Answer: Collections show in both eRETA and VCSS. When an IPAC customer pays a bill it shows in the eRETA “Collected” bucket the following day. When a non-IPAC customer pays a bill it shows in the eRETA “Collected” bucket once the payment is processed by the GSA Finance Center. In VCSS, since RWA billings only post once per month, the collected amount will show on the “Total Collected Amount” line item on each subsequent billing statement.

Question #21: Is historical data included? How far back?

Answer: Historical data is not included. Bills created June 2013 and prior are available in BillView

Question #22: What's the difference between this and say Rent on the Web?

Answer: Rent on the Web is for Rent only whereas VCSS has multiple Business Lines.