

Client Enrichment Series – Q & A



Topic: eRETA eNCORE! - Making the most of GSA's electronic RWA management tool

Date of Presentation: March 8, 2018

Link to Series Information: www.gsa.gov/ces

1. What resources are available for eRETA assistance?

Answer. On our website www.gsa.gov/ereta we have a multitude of eRETA resources including user guides, video demonstrations, instructions on gaining access, and much more.

2. If I am unable to obtain access, who should I contact?

Answer. If you have any issues with eRETA access, please navigate to www.gsa.gov/ereta and click on "How do I access eRETA" in the left pane. Scroll to the step your application is "stuck" on (Step 2 or Step 3) and review the FAQs listed under each step for the most appropriate contact email and/or phone number depending on your situation.

3. Who can amend an existing RWA?

Answer. Anyone with data entry rights can amend an RWA associated with their Agency Bureau (AB) code. For example, an FBI eRETA user with data entry rights can amend any RWA with the AB code 01513. He/she can amend it regardless of whether he/she submitted the initial RWA or whether the RWA was submitted/accepted before they had eRETA access.

4. Does entering the RWA 2957 replace the need to fill out the paper version of the form? Do some of the fields auto-populate?

Answer. Yes! This is one of the reasons it is so beneficial for customers to enter RWAs directly into eRETA themselves. The RWA data entered in eRETA is auto-populated into the 2957 Form which customers can save/print/download as a PDF.

5. If you need to alert other members of staff and management to get a signature, is there an ability to CC those other people when requesting a signature?

Answer. Only the final signer (Fund Certifying Official) will receive an email to digitally sign. GSA understands that some agencies have internal processes requiring signature or approval from one or more individuals before the final Fund Certifying Official signs the RWA. In these cases, customers can save the RWA Form as a PDF by downloading it from eRETA and then sending an email to the individual(s) for approval. Once the individual(s) approve(s), they can let the final Fund Certifying Official know that the RWA has gone through all internal approvals. The Fund Certifying Official would then open the email from eSignLive to digitally sign the RWA on their agency's behalf.

Alternatively, when additional internal approvals are needed, the same process can happen as outlined above. Once all approvals are received, the customer agency can then return to eRETA and click the

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“Send to GSA” button to alert GSA to take final actions in RETA and route the RWA for digital signature.
NOTE: ONLY GSA users can route the RWA for digital signature to both the customer agency signer and the GSA signer.

6. I've had access to eRETA for several years, but recently, have not been able to access the system. How do I regain access?

Answer. You might be having this access issue because it is time for your to apply for recertification. You can email eRETA@gsa.gov for help with any type of access issues, including recertification.

7. Is there a way to obtain the actual monthly IPAC charges in eRETA?

Answer. eRETA gives an overview of RWA financial information including total commitments, total obligations, total expenses, total billed, etc., but does not include individual IPAC statements. Customers may access VCSS.ocfo.gsa.gov to view individual IPAC statements.

8. Are there any reports available from eRETA - for example - a report reflecting all the RWAs from an agency in a particular region, the specific charges against the RWA, the balance remaining on the RWA, etc.?

Answer. Customers can go to the 'Financial Review' Search in eRETA, look up RWAs for their agency, and then export the data to Excel. In Excel they can organize the RWAs by region using the 'Org Code' field. The Org Code always starts with a 'P' followed by two digits for the GSA region to which it belongs, i.e. P01 for region 1, P02 for region 2, etc. The Excel report shows total RWA Obligations, Commitments, Expenses, Balance, Total Billed, Total Collected, etc. for each RWA.

Customers can also look up individual RWAs in eRETA and click the yellow 'Financial Review' hyperlink to access more detailed financial information for the RWA, including Function Code/Object Class summary and a Vendor Summary, both of which can be exported to Excel.

9. Who determines what Agency Bureau (AB) codes you have access to? And can more be added if needed?

Answer. eRETA users may request access to AB codes that fall under their respective agency. More can be added if needed; simply email eRETA@gsa.gov with your request for additional AB codes.

10. I currently manually prepare RWAs. Will eRETA get me the signed RWAs back from GSA quicker?

Answer. The time it takes GSA to review and accept a fully executable RWA - meaning the RWA has already undergone full requirements development and is signed by the customer - should take no longer than 15 business days. We refer to this as our intake and submission process, and the 15 business day timeframe applies regardless of whether or not the customer submits the RWA to GSA in eRETA or via a traditional method (email, fax, etc.).

The biggest advantage of using eRETA instead of the manual form is the ability to see where the RWA is in the process and have POCs you can reach out to immediately for updates and questions.

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11. Can I use search fields to pull the information I'm looking for? For example, by Agency Bureau Code, Customer ID, etc.?

Answer. Yes, you have the option to search for RWAs using many different criteria, two of those being Agency Bureau Code and Customer ID. eRETA uses an "AND" operator, meaning that when you select multiple options in the RWA Search, only RWAs meeting ALL of those criteria will be shown.

12. If an RWA was submitted manually and we need to amend to add additional money, is it possible to amend it in eRETA?

Answer. Yes customers can initiate amendments in eRETA, even if the original RWA was submitted on the paper 2957 Form. However, a change in the RWA authorized amount will always require new signatures from the customer agency Fund Certifying Official and GSA Approving Official.

13. If I haven't received a status on my RWA in a reasonable amount of time, who should I contact?

Answer. You could contact any of the GSA contacts listed on the RWA or in eRETA. Also you can always reach out to the regional RWA Manager for assistance, and he/she will be happy to help. You can find a map and list of regional RWA Managers on our national website www.gsa.gov/rwa.

14. Can I attach drawings and specifications?

Answer. Yes, you can upload documents into eRETA. If you have data entry access, then you'll pull up your RWA and go to the "Customer Approval" tab where there is an "Upload New" button allowing you to upload documents from your computer or shared drive.

15. How do I get the data entry tab if I currently only have a Read Only role in eRETA?

Answer. Simply email eRETA@gsa.gov indicating you would like data entry access to eRETA, and our team will help get you set up.

16. What if it is decided not to move forward with the project. How do you end it?

Answer. Customers can cancel an RWA at any time before charges have been incurred against the RWA. If the project is still in the "Work Request" status and is not yet an accepted RWA (meaning both the customer and GSA have signed the RWA), then an eRETA Data Entry user can cancel the Work Request. If the RWA has already been accepted, but has not yet incurred any expenses, then an eRETA Data Entry user can submit an amendment to the RWA. Specifically select an "N-input code (cancel/early completion)" amendment and enter a justification as to why the project needs to be cancelled.

Alternatively, any customer can reach out to the GSA Project Manager/POC listed in eRETA and indicate their need to cancel the RWA. Please note your organization will be billed for any charges already incurred.

17. Does the agency POC populate boxes 4A to 4D on the RWA form?

Answer. Yes, the information entered into eRETA regarding Agency POC will auto-populate into blocks 4A-4D on the RWA Form.

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18. Since we are always on a CR where do we put the amount of what we are authorizing to be funded under the CR for OT Utilities?

Answer. On the "Billing Information" tab you'll see the "Authorized Amount" field which is where you'll enter the amount you are currently authorizing under the CR. Then on the "Customer Information" tab, make a note in the comments section (bottom box) that you are partially funding the RWA through the CR period. You should also send an email to the GSA POC(s) listed on the RWA reminding them that the amount entered in eRETA is the CR amount and not the full year amount. GSA will in turn revise the associated estimate to match the net amount that can be paid today; the residual amount is entered in a "Continuing Resolution" field on the estimate so we know to revise the estimate and the RWA upward to match the full year amount once another CR and/or the full year budget is passed.

19. If I submit RWAs in eRETA, do I still need to fill out the PDF version of the form and send it to the appropriate GSA contact?

Answer. No. When you enter RWA information in eRETA and submit to GSA, eRETA automatically populates the data onto the RWA Form and routes your RWA to the appropriate regional contact. As such there is no need for you to manually fill out the RWA form and send it to the GSA POC yourself. Furthermore, on the final data entry screen in eRETA (Customer Approval tab) a "Print 2957 Form" button allows you to print a copy of the RWA form with your data already pre-populated in the appropriate blocks.

20. Is a Work Request in eRETA necessary in order to enter a new RWA in eRETA? For example if my agency has a project already being developed with a GSA PM, should I still submit a new work request before I can submit an RWA?

Answer. If your agency already has a project being developed with a GSA PM, you should still submit a Work Request in eRETA. It's better this way because we not only ensure the project is saved in the system, but also because that same Work Request will build into the fully executable RWA you send to GSA. Since in this case you already know the GSA PM, you would enter his/her name in the GSA PM/POC field. At this point, you would be able to fill out the remaining customer information tabs (normally you can't access those until GSA has assigned a PM).

21. Where do I print the PDF version of the form?

Answer. On the "Customer Approval" tab there is a button which allows you to print a PDF version of the RWA Form. Additionally, for an RWA that has already been accepted by GSA, there is a "Form 2957" icon in the upper right corner of the RWA Summary screen that allows you to print a Form 2957 of that RWA at any time.

22. Is No Year funding handled differently in eRETA?

Answer. Annual, Multiple year, and No Year funding have different accounting strings, but otherwise are not handled differently in eRETA.

23. On the billing/accounting information tabs, does this information interface with the Judiciary Financial Information Management Systems (JIFMS)? Or does this create the obligation?

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Answer. No, eRETA interfaces with GSA's financial management system known as Pegasys. Also customers should only obligate funds on their books once the RWA is signed (accepted) by GSA.

24. When you use eRETA or the old fashioned way to submit, is there any way to speed the process of receiving a close out letter at the end of the project so we can efficiently deobligate the remaining funds?

Answer. If the closeout letter was sent and for some reason you didn't receive it, you could always go to the eRETA Documentation tab to pull up the closeout letter for that RWA. If the closeout letter was not sent, then we would encourage you to reach out to the appropriate regional RWA Manager who will help ensure those letters get sent. You can find their contact info at www.gsa.gov/rwa. At the bottom of the page you'll find an RWA Managers map and list with their contact info.

25. After GSA reviews and fills out their tabs, they route the RWA for signature. What does the email with the link to digitally sign look like?

Answer. The email will come from the GSA RETA user who entered GSA's half of the RWA and routed it for signature - so it will come from an @gsa.gov email. The signature request will include a subject line that references the RWA Number, work location, a sequential number, and the name of the GSA user who sent the signature request. The subject line will look something like this- "RWA_N1683473_Charlotte_NC_003 - eSign this package sent by Jane Doe." In the body of the email there will be a large button you'll click which will open up a new tab in your browser (on a computer or smart device) and present the signer with a RWA 2957 form to digitally sign.

26. Is there a typical time frame for close-out letters to be sent/posted once the project is complete?

Answer. Typically it takes around 60-120 days. It varies because certain projects take longer to close, e.g. the vendor takes months to bill GSA, so we need to wait to finalize the close-out.

27. Is there an eRETA test site agencies can play/practice with?

Answer. There is no eRETA test site for customers at this time. If you would like to demo the system, feel free to reach out to us at eRETA@gsa.gov, and we can set up something to meet your needs.