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Introduction

Welcome to the third quarterly report on Making It Easier To Do Business with the Government from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

GSA’s leadership remains dedicated to the goals of making the agency more efficient, innovative, and effective by continuing to support GSA’s Making it Easier (MIE) initiative - a series of programs designed to provide start-ups, small businesses, and other suppliers with the tools and support they need to do business with government.

These initiatives aim to ensure that:

- Companies can do business with the government with as little burden and delay as possible
- Small businesses have the tools and support they need to be successful while working with the government
- Well-designed technical interfaces allow industry and suppliers to register, update information, and interact easily with the government
- Suppliers understand the procurement process and how to seek new business

This quarterly report highlights GSA’s Category Management efforts, as well as our policy developments, process improvements, and ongoing small business activities across the agency. Each of these areas shows how GSA is striving to make it easier for our industry partners, our customers, and federal end users to do business with the government.
Making it Easier for Small Business Success
GSA’s Office of Small Business Utilization Makes It Easier For Small Businesses To Participate In Government

GSA has a long history of being a champion for small business participation in the federal government and continues to meet small business contracting goals set by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

GSA’s Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU) is charged with advocating for groups including, but not limited to:

- Small Business (SB)
- Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)
- 8(a) Business Development (8(a))
- Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone)
- Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB)
- Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB)

What Does This Mean for Small Businesses and How Can GSA Help?

GSA OSBU is comprised of three offices:

- The Office of Policy and Forecasting
- The Office of Customer Care and Outreach
- The Office of Regional Small Business Management

The Office of Policy and Forecasting, in collaboration with the Office of Government-wide Policy, ensures agency regulatory compliance in contracting with small businesses. They provide internal small business policy training and small business technical training program development. GSA OSBU is also home to the web-based GSA Forecast of Contract Opportunities Tool, which focuses on acquisition planning and helps small businesses become aware of opportunities early in the procurement process. The Forecast Tool provides forward-looking data in a web-based, easy-to-use format, and improves accessibility and transparency of potential small business opportunities. The tool increases awareness of potential prime contracting and subcontracting opportunities, allowing Continued on page 6.
vendors to filter the tool to find upcoming potential opportunities based on their industry or service. GSA’s goal is to help both buyers and vendors easily communicate around potential contracting opportunities with GSA, and several other agencies.

Currently, GSA and the Department of Interior are the only reporting agencies providing information in the tool; however, OSBU is working with SBA to include other agencies. Businesses are encouraged to check the tool throughout the fiscal year to determine if other agency procurement forecasts have been added.

The Office of Customer Care and Outreach is the advocate for national small business customers. This office provides training, counseling, and subcontracting reviews to improve the small business engagement experience with the agency at the national level. They also host events aimed at increasing the small business sector’s knowledge of the federal procurement process, requirements, and industry best practices.

GSA’s Regional Offices of Small Business Utilization (ROSBU) advocate for small businesses out of GSA’s 11 regional offices. In addition to providing general training and counseling, ROSBU works to improve the small business engagement experience by reviewing small business analysis records (GSA Form 2689), acquisition plans, and subcontracting plans.

To learn more about how these three GSA offices make it easier for small businesses to participate in federal government, visit GSA’s Assistance for Small Businesses page: https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/108067
Small Business Compliance Reviews (SBCRs)
Ensure Contracting Officers Use Small Business Regulations Correctly

GSA’s Office of Policy and Forecasting collaborated with other GSA staff and service offices to conduct GSA Small Business Compliance Reviews (SBCRs) across the United States. These reviews will continue throughout the upcoming months.

SBCRs are conducted to:

- Ensure that GSA’s Acquisition Centers continue to comply with small business procurement laws and regulations
- Assist Acquisition Centers in preparing for any external agency audits
- Improve Acquisition Center efficiency and operational/transactional effectiveness

During the SBCR kickoff meeting OSBU Deputy Associate Administrator Karen Poole said, “We can't thank our agency partners enough for making small business participation a top priority. We want to ensure that all small businesses are represented in the federal procurement process and demonstrate GSA’s commitment to the small business community.”

Tom Howder, Assistant Commissioner for Assisted Acquisition Service, de’Wayne Carter, National Director, Customer Care & Outreach Division, Karen Poole, OSBU Deputy Associate Administrator, Lloyd Hampton, Supervisory Contract Specialist, and John Holmes, Contract Specialist at the SBCR kickoff meeting.
Making It Easier for Veteran Owned Businesses (VOB) With GSA’s Veterans Forum

According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau report, Veteran owned businesses (VOB) make up 7.5 percent of the 5.4 million U.S. businesses with employees. So it makes sense that GSA would set up the GSA Veterans Forum. Its mission is:

- To raise awareness and advocate for VOBs
- Promote using VOBs, VOSBs, and SDVOBs
- To be the champion for Veterans' concerns in GSA and across government

His responsibilities include developing a strategy to increase the use of VOBs in GSA’s contracting vehicles, establishing a Government-wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) reserved for participation by SDVOSBs, and assisting them with becoming Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contractors.

Before joining GSA in 2014, Mr. Gavino worked in networking and communications as a member of the United States Air Force, retiring as a colonel after twenty-seven years of service. Mr. Gavino also serves as the Director of Telecommunications Services in GSA’s Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), responsible for a portfolio of contracts that provide government agencies with a diverse set of telecommunications services valued at over $3.8 billion annually. In that role, Mr. Gavino interfaces with small businesses and engages with both large and small contractors.

To date in FY17, GSA is exceeding its three percent SDVOSB contracting goal and continues to meet and exceed all prime small business contracting goals set by the SBA.

Amando Gavino has been named GSA’s Veterans Forum Executive Representative, tasked with increasing federal contracting and subcontracting opportunities for VOBs.

OSBU Deputy Associate Administrator Karen Poole and Amando Gavino, GSA’s Veterans Forum Executive Representative, sign the GSA Veterans Forum Charter at GSA Headquarters in Washington, DC.
GSA Receives High Marks for Small Business Success

When it comes to awarding contracts to small businesses, GSA continues to make the grade! GSA has again earned an “A” on the SBA's Small Business Scorecard for its work in awarding a substantial portion of contracting dollars to small businesses in FY16. The annual scorecard is an assessment tool to:

- Measure how well federal agencies reach their small business and socioeconomic prime contracting and subcontracting goals
- Provide accurate and transparent contracting data
- Report agency-specific progress

According to the SBA, “the prime and subcontracting component goals include goals for small businesses, small businesses owned by women, small disadvantaged businesses, service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, and small businesses located in HUBZones.” This is the seventh year in a row that GSA has been honored by the SBA.

“We want to ensure that all small businesses are represented in the federal procurement process and demonstrate GSA’s commitment to the small business community.”

Karen Poole
Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Small Business Utilization

Robb Wong (left), SBA Associate Administrator for Government Contracting and Business Development, presents GSA’s “Grade A” SBA Scorecard to de’Wayne Carter, National Director, Customer Care & Outreach Division, Office of Small Business Utilization and Kenneth Dodds, SBA’s Director of Policy, Planning and Liaison (right).

“We want to ensure that all small businesses are represented in the federal procurement process and demonstrate GSA’s commitment to the small business community,” said Karen Poole, OSBU Deputy Associate Administrator. In FY16, GSA awarded $1.6 billion, more than 39 percent of eligible contract dollars, to small business. Continued on page 10.
Last year, GSA subcontracting dollars awarded to SDVOSBs totaled more than $223.3 million and the agency also met substantial subcontracting goals with small business, small disadvantaged businesses and women-owned businesses. “We are very proud of the work we’ve done here at the Office of Small Business Utilization,” said Poole. “Now, we must keep the momentum going and remain committed to supporting the small businesses who are the engine of economic growth and job creation.”

For more information about GSA’s Office of Small Business Utilization, visit us at https://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/108067
Making it Easier
For the Government to Act as One With
Category Management
About Government-Wide Category Management

Category management is a strategic practice that the Federal government is implementing to buy smarter and more like a single enterprise. The goals of government-wide category management are to:

- Deliver more savings, value, and efficiency for federal agencies
- Eliminate unnecessary contract redundancies
- Continue to meet the government’s small business goals

Category management makes it easier for industry to do business with the government by reducing duplicative contracts decreasing costs for bids, proposals, and contract administration.

To support the goals of category management, GSA created the Acquisition Gateway - a workspace where acquisition professionals and federal buyers can connect with resources, tools, and each other to improve acquisition government-wide.
Tools and Resources Available on the Acquisition Gateway

The Acquisition Gateway enables efficient procurements government-wide by leveraging contract intelligence and spending data to facilitate smarter purchasing. This tool is available to both government and non-government users and, with more than 15,000 federal users and over 50,000 visits by non-government users to date, the Gateway is fast becoming an important source for accessing government-wide information.

Inside the Acquisition Gateway are a variety of resources and tools to help industry partners better understand the government procurement process. Government-Wide Category Hallways feature curated articles, along with category-specific tools to help acquisition professionals achieve successful outcomes at each step of the government acquisition lifecycle.

Among the tools found on the Gateway are the:

- **Solutions Finder**: Provides easy access to information on government-wide shared services, contract vehicles (such as a Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) and Government-Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)), government-rate tenders, or licensing agreements. Industry partners are able to search and view solutions from across government to gain a better understanding of the procurement landscape, while also identifying points of contact for potential outreach opportunities.

- **Forecast of Contract Opportunities Tool**: A tool that makes it easier for small businesses to find upcoming federal contracting opportunities around the world. This web-based search tool, co-developed by FAS and GSA OSBU, lets users filter contracting opportunities by agency, award status, location, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and contract value. GSA's goal is to help both buyers and vendors easily communicate around potential contracting opportunities with GSA, and several other agencies.

- **CALC Tool**: Allows access to awarded hourly rates from GSA Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Service Schedules

The Gateway is also home to:

- **Document Library**: Contains samples, templates, and examples of a broad set of acquisition documents from all stages of the acquisition lifecycle.

*Continued on page 14.*
• **TechFAR Hub**: Provides access to resources that identify industry best practices in the world of digital service acquisition across the federal government

• **Green Procurement Compilation**: A comprehensive green purchasing resource that consolidates and organizes information from federal environmental programs in one place

The Gateway provides our industry partners with easy access to a wealth of information about the government buying process. We are constantly implementing enhancements based on user feedback and also adding features that make it even easier to stay up-to-date on the government buying process.

Visit the [Acquisition Gateway](#) to learn more about how GSA is connecting acquisition professionals and federal buyers to the resources, tools and each other as we continually improve federal acquisition.
Making it Easier to Connect with GSA on Category Management

In March, 2017, GSA and the American Council for Technology-Industry Advisory Council (ACT-IAC) co-sponsored an all-day conference focused on government-wide category management. More than 400 participants, including federal employees and government contractors from over 50 different departments, took part in the event, and discussed issues related to category management implementation.

Keynote speakers included representatives from OMB’s Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Unified Shared Services Management, the Department of Defense, and GSA. The conference featured 16 panels and working sessions focused on the Professional Services, IT, and Security and Protection categories, and the Acquisition Gateway.

The conference was a great opportunity for government and industry to present accomplishments and case studies, resolve concerns and misperceptions, and share suggestions and recommendations for making it easier to work together. In addition, federal agencies and industry partners were able to engage in collaborative discussions on efforts to advance efficient acquisition practices in government.

You can learn more about the event and category management by accessing the presentation materials at: https://www.actiac.org/2017-category-management-conference-1.
Government-Wide Contract Vehicles Designated Best-in-Class

18 Solutions, Addressing Approximately $20B Spend Annually, Now Available to Improve Government Acquisitions

The Program Management Office (PMO) for Government-Wide Category Management, part of a government-wide initiative sponsored by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), recently announced the designation of several new Best-in-Class (BIC) solutions. BIC is an acquisition designation that recognizes these contracts as “good-for-government” purchasing solutions which should be used by all agencies.

The newest BIC solutions are:

- Human Capital Category
  - HCaTS
  - USA Learning
- IT Category
  - Army CHESS ADMC
  - NASA SEWP Government Strategic Sourcing (GSS)
  - NITAAC CIO-CS GSS
  - IT Schedule 70
  - GSS, hardware and software contracts
- Professional Services Category
  - OASIS and OASIS Small Business

All BIC solutions:

- Are designated BIC by a cross-agency team of experts
- Have category management practices in place
- Are well-managed and transparent
- Collect, analyze and share transactional data
- Have tools to share info and reduce duplication
- Define, track and publicize metrics

Agencies now have 18 government-wide BIC solutions with an addressable spend of nearly $20 billion annually:

- BMO: Building Maintenance and Operations FSSI (Facilities and Construction Category)
- CHESS: Computer Hardware Enterprise Software & Solutions (IT Category)
- FedRooms (Travel Category)
- City Pair Program (Travel Category)
- Facility Reduction Program (FRP) U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Facilities and Construction Category)
- GSA SmartPay (Professional Services Category)
- HCaTS: Human Capital and Training Solutions (Human Capital Category)

“These BIC solutions also address the Administration’s recently outlined focus for agencies to streamline their mission-support functions where possible to increase efficiency while maintaining or improving quality.”

Steve Krauss
Government-Wide Category Management PMO Director

Continued on page 17.
The Transportation and Logistics Services Category’s Next Generation Delivery Services (NGDS) contract, previously designated as BIC, was recently awarded with contract performance to begin October 1, 2017.

These BIC-designated contracts align with recent Administration guidance for agencies to leverage existing solutions for common requirements - helping them easily identify and use high-quality, pre-vetted government-wide contracts for common goods and services. BIC contracts save money, avoid wasteful and redundant contracting actions, and free-up acquisition staff to accelerate procurements for high-priority mission work.

“These recent designations are key acquisition tools that will help the government buy even smarter and more like a commercial business -- enabling agencies to direct energy toward delivering value to the taxpayer,” said Government-Wide Category Management PMO Director Steve Krauss.

Continued on page 18.
As the list of BIC solutions continues to grow, agencies will have more and more opportunities to leverage existing solutions for common requirements to save time and money for improved focus on high-priority mission work. Visit the Acquisition Gateway to learn more about both BIC and other category management developments.
Making it Easier for Our Partners to Connect In-Person with GSA
First Ever GSA Professional Services and Human Capital (PSHC) Categories Symposium Draws More than 600 Participants

GSA’s first-ever Professional Services and Human Capital (PSHC) Categories Symposium, held June 6-8, 2017 in Tacoma, Washington, was a success with more than 600 participants. The three day event was designed with two main goals:

- To give GSA’s contracting officers an opportunity to engage with industry partners with the goal of developing long term, collaborative partnerships so that we can deliver the professional services federal agencies need to fulfill their mission
- To offer targeted training to the regional federal contracting and program management community

Keynote speakers included Office of Professional Services and Human Capital Categories Assistant Commissioner Tiffany Hixson and former FAS Commissioner Tom Sharpe. The highlight of the first day was a panel discussion on how the federal government buys professional services. Panelists Ken Brennan (Department of Defense), Jaclyn Smyth (Department of Homeland Security), and GSA’s Michelle Warren offered industry insights and tips on how to better help agencies meet their requirements and mission.

The Industry Day training sessions were tailored to meet the needs of current GSA professional services contract holders. 565 industry partners took part in industry workshops, a One Acquisition Solution for Integrated Services (OASIS) Program Management Review, and a Human Capital and Training Solutions (HCaTS) Program Management Review.

Breakout sessions included supplier relationship management, the Transactional Data Reporting rule, navigation of contract audits, the Acquisition Gateway, BIC contracts, assisted acquisition, small business requirements, and maintaining your Professional Services Schedule contracts.

The Symposium also included a contractor networking session giving industry partners the opportunity to meet with their GSA contracting officer in a round-robin format. More than 170 contractors

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took advantage of the chance to get in-person answers to their contract questions. Attendee feedback tells us this was one of the most valuable (and appreciated) sessions of the event.

In addition, the HCaTS and OASIS Program Management Review sessions provided opportunities for those industry partners to discuss contract administration, pipeline, and other related topics.

The final day included a special federal agency Customer Forum that attracted more than 50 attendees. The Forum included breakout sessions on topics relevant to the contracting community around the Pacific Northwest including reverse auctions, GSA fleet, global supply, blanket purchase agreements, state/local/tribal support, an overview of GSA contract and market research tools, and more.

The Symposium was open to all Professional Services Schedule, OASIS, and HCaTS contract holders and the federal community around the Puget Sound and Pacific Northwest (including Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington). All PSHC Symposium presentations can be found here on Interact.
Making Transactional Data Reporting Easier for Our Partners
With an emphasis on being business-friendly, the President’s Regulatory Reform Executive Order includes an evaluation of the burdens placed on our contractors by all our rules. GSA remains committed to putting a premium on being both business friendly and keeping efficient policies in place. Two examples of this are our moves to streamline acquisition processes and reducing regulatory burdens.

In June, 2016, GSA published the final Transactional Data Reporting (TDR) rule requiring participating contractors to electronically report transactional data for products or services purchased through the MAS program. TDR supports the government-wide category management initiatives by producing market intelligence used by GSA and its partner agencies to make smarter acquisition decisions and save even more taxpayer dollars.

TDR also provides benefits for our MAS industry partners. Those participating in TDR are no longer required to produce a Commercial Sales Practice (CSP) chart. They are also released from the Price Reduction Clause (PRC), which requires burdensome tracking on the part of the supplier to maintain the discount relationship. The removal of these requirements reduces barriers for entering into the federal marketplace, particularly for small businesses.

Participation numbers have been excellent since FAS launched the TDR pilot in August 2016. There has been a 4:1 voluntary acceptance vs. rejection rate, with almost half of the potential pilot population participating.

Industry engagement has been an important part of this pilot. As a result of industry feedback, GSA is in the process of removing the mandatory aspects of TDR and making participation in the program voluntary for all contractors - including new offerors and current contractors at the time of option. TDR was originally voluntary for all current contractors on the pilot Schedules and only mandatory for new offerors on the pilot Schedules and for contractors on pilot Schedules exercising an option (participation is still limited to pilot Schedules at this time).

GSA is currently examining all the impacts of this pilot on our systems, policies, and training. We will issue additional guidance regarding TDR to our stakeholders in the coming months.

Visit us on GSA Interact to connect, join, learn and discuss more about TDR at https://interact.gsa.gov/.
Making it Easier for Our Customers to Get What They Need, When They Need It

Getting what you need, when you need it - and safely - is critical to every agency’s mission. Have you ever given a thought to what goes into deciding how a package is labeled? When it comes to federal shipping, you don’t just write a simple name and address on a label. There is specific information that must be included so the label has all the data needed to identify and track the package every step of the way.

In the past, GSA procurement contracts relied on the specifications required in the current version of Federal Standard form 123 (Fed-Std-123H) for package shipment to GSA General Supplies and Services (GSS) distribution centers and other civilian agencies. However, with the GSS transformation to a sole Direct Vendor Delivery (DVD) model, suppliers wondered if GSS could make the move to “commercial marking practices.”

The simple answer is: after a series of site visits and meetings with various federal agencies and a large commercial entity, the Policy, Engineering, and Standards Branch of the Office of Supply Chain Management (SCM) has come up with a draft revision for an updated Fed-Std-123 that aligns it with suppliers commercial marking and labeling practices - with a few exceptions. Adopting these changes should make it easier for our federal end users to get what they need when they need it - with the added bonus of cost savings to suppliers, federal agency customers, GSA, and taxpayers.

Closing Out a Successful FY17

GSA remains committed to identifying new and innovative ways to improve processes, policies, and tools that make it easier for our stakeholders to do business with government. Connect with us through Interact and stay tuned for news of ongoing public events and live webinars as we continue our drive towards the finish line of a successful 2017 - there is still much more to come!
### Key Resource Links

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<td>Overview - GSA Schedules Program</td>
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<td>FAS Vendor Service Center - For Ongoing Vendor Support</td>
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<td>GSA's Acquisition Gateway</td>
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<td>GSA's Recent Category Management Conference and Presentation Materials</td>
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