U.S. Government Services Administration

Contractor Reference Guide

Steps to Success
Make the Most of Your GSA Contract

Steps to Success

Welcome and congratulations on becoming part of the GSA Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) team! As our partner, there are many steps you'll need to follow to be successful. To make the process a little easier for you, we have compiled this guide. In the subsequent pages, we'll show you how to:

- Create, distribute and update your price list;
- Participate in GSA*Advantage!*® and eBuy;
- Market your company to targeted government customers;
- Report sales and remit the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF);
- Keep your contract current through contract modifications;
- Comply with Trade Agreements Act (TAA) and scope reviews;
- Use available training sources provided by GSA;
- Prepare for a GSA Industrial Operation Analyst (IOA) on-site Contractor Assistance Visit (CAV); and
- Be a quality GSA MAS partner.

For complete details, we encourage you to review and completely familiarize yourself with your contract; it contains all the tools you need to succeed!

Now that you've invested considerable time and resources to establish your relationship with GSA, we'll help you make the most of it. As GSA's "face" to the customer, you are our partner in meeting the needs of our mutual customers, and your success is paramount.

The MAS program is the premier government acquisition program that mirrors commercial buying practices. It is the fastest, easiest and most effective contracting vehicle, designed to help customer agencies comply with all rules and regulations for buying products and services the right way.

Do you have what it takes to succeed? Are you prepared to be an outstanding GSA MAS partner? With 17,000-plus contracts in place – and more being added every day – GSA vendor competition is stiff. And now that you are partnered with GSA, we are in this together – and absolute success is our mutual goal! As an MAS contractor, you join GSA in dedicated service to our customers. To promote this relationship and your success, GSA presents this step-by-step guide to help you reach the top.

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Step One

Understanding Contract Requirements

Important Contacts for Success

When you need advice or help, these are the people to contact:

- Your Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) is the individual who negotiates and awards your contract and resolves most day-to-day contracting matters.
- Your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) is assigned after contract award, based on your MAS contract. The ACO is responsible for the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF), 72A sales and other compliance issues, and can provide you with useful springboards to help you up the stairway to success!
- The Industrial Operations Adjust (IOA) visits your company to gather information to assist the ACO and PCO in evaluating your company's compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract. During the visit, the IOA will explain GSA's expectations, provide marketing information, review sales reporting and the fee-payment processes, and provide useful information to help you better understand contract clauses. Results of the visit are shared in the form of the MAS-contractor Report Card (RC) issued by the ACO.
- The Vendor Support Center (VSC) is your major long-term data source for information on all MAS contracts. A VSC representative can be reached by calling (877) 495-4849 or (703) 605-9992, or contacted via e-mail at vendor.support@gsa.gov. The VSC maintains a Web site at **http://vsc.gsa.gov**, which is updated frequently and is a helpful resource for all current information pertaining to your contract.
- The GSA Center for Acquisition Excellence maintains a Web site designed to provide working knowledge on a vast array of subjects such as: Ordering Procedures, Performance-based Contracting, Blanket Purchase Agreements, Team Arrangements, and Best Practices. Check it out at **www.gsa.gov/CAE**.

Your Passport to Government Agencies

While the ink on your contract begins to dry, you should immediately turn your attention to marketing your new contract! GSA's strength lies in identifying customer needs and supplying those needs through our industry partners. Your contract price list is a "catalog" that lists the items you have been awarded and identifies the terms and conditions of your contract. Ordering agencies use this information when procuring from the GSA MAS program. Our surveys have shown customers most often seek the optimal balance of quality and best value, so you should focus on these points to succeed. Although the government is moving toward a paperless environment, we're not there yet. The paper price list still plays an important role as authorized procurement: Officials use your price lists to make comparisons of MAS contracts. Because our customers rely on them, the price lists are mandatory in accordance with clause I-FSS-600, Contract Price Lists. This clause in your contract provides the required format for completing a price list that must contain the following:

- Cover page;
- Contract items awarded and associated pricing;
- Labor categories and descriptions;
- Maximum/minimum order provisions;
- Geographic coverage (delivery area);
- Points of production;
- Discounts from the list prices or statement of net prices;
- Volume discounts;
- Prompt-payment terms;
- Acceptance of the government commercial purchase card;
- Foreign items offered;
- Delivery terms; and
- Expedited delivery.

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Your price list is your initial "face" to the customer. Make sure that it's user-friendly and entices the customer to do business with you.

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Please review Clause I-FSS-600 for detailed information on contract price lists.

Make sure your price list addresses all of these required items, even if non-applicable. The standard format helps our customers to make distinctions when comparing numerous price lists, so you'll want yours to be as accurate and complete as possible. This does not mean that your price list has to be generic or dull. On the contrary, it's an excellent opportunity to market your business and stand out from the crowd. Overall, make your price list easy for the customer to understand and use.

Identifying Your Terms and Conditions

Your price list is your initial "face" to the customer. Make sure that it's user-friendly and entices the customer to do business with you. Your price list must include the terms and conditions that were identified, reviewed and negotiated prior to your contract award. You may only include those items, terms and conditions that were awarded.

Within 30 days of your contract award, be sure to send two copies of the contract price list to your GSA Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO). For additional information on the requirements for updating and distributing your price list after modifications, please refer to Clause 552.243-72 of your contract.

Additionally; if you are a contractor with participating dealers, those dealers must also comply with the terms and conditions of your contract.

Note: Look to Clause 552.232-83 for more details on participating dealers and billing responsibilities

Step Two

Marketing Your Business

GSA wants you to be a successful industry partner. Just as you market your commercial business, you need to market your business to government customers. Your marketing program should include steps to define, promote and distribute your approved product/service information, and to maintain a relationship with your customers – all while complying with your GSA contract terms and conditions. Good marketing efforts will identify government customers, get their attention and motivate them to buy from you. Here are some helpful suggestions.

Educate Your Personnel About Your MAS Contract

Your personnel are particularly important because they are the initial people the government customer will encounter regarding your capabilities and capacity to meet their requirements and needs. All personnel coming into contact with government customers will have an impact on your overall sales success. They play a critical role in making the sale and keeping the customer. They must be appropriately trained and motivated to ensure the success of your GSA contract. At a minimum, they need to: know you have a GSA contract in place; identify an eligible government customer; provide accurate information to the customer with regard to your MAS contract; and assist the customer in completing the sale appropriately.

GSA offers free training, webinars, online chats, regional seminars and more to assist you with expanding your knowledge and expertise regarding the MAS program. Be sure to sign up for the Pathway to Success and New Contractor Orientation (NCO) training under the "Vendor Training" tab available at **http://vsc.gsa.gov**. The Vendor Support Center (VCS) Web site contains further valuable information, newsletters and more.

Maximize Your Internet Presence

You can maximize your Internet presence simply by adding your company Web site address on the front of your approved contract price list. Make sure you provide the correct Internet address that directs the customer to your GSA contract information.

If your company already has a Web site established, consider providing direct links to your homepage through GSA*Advantage!®*. Some restrictions apply, but this is an excellent way to avoid duplication of effort and "wow" your customers with all the products and/or services you offer. It's your contract; make the most of it.

The GSA*Advantage!®* and GSA eBuy Benefits

What is **GSA*Advantage!®***?

Available at **www.gsaadvantage.com**, GSA*Advantage!®* is the federal government's premier online catalog, information and ordering system that provides federal customers with the ability to quickly search, compare and order those products and services best meeting their needs. GSA*Advantage!®* is known as a reliable, proven one-stop resource for federal employees. It allows government customers to educate themselves about your company and approved products and/or services. It offers the most comprehensive selection of products and services from GSA contracts. Inclusion of your products and services on GSA*Advantage!®* provides greater market exposure and increases the potential for greater sales to federal agencies and activities worldwide.

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You should note that participation in GSA*Advantage!®* is mandatory. Look to Clause I-FSS-597 for more details. Keep in mind that each time your contract is modified, you must update your file. This also includes changes in Points of Contact within your company. It is your responsibility to keep GSA*Advantage!®* information current, accurate and complete to help federal customers find the products and services they need.

Learn more about GSA*Advantage!®* by visiting the VCS Web site at **http://vsc.gsa.gov**. Free online training is available.

The Benefits of GSA*Advantage!®*

More than one million customers use GSA*Advantage!®* each week to search out sources, perform market research and place orders. Customers ordering through GSA*Advantage!®* will provide you with a governmentwide GSA SmartPay® purchase card, and an Agency Activity Address Code (AAC) or a Department of Defense Activity Address Code (DODAAC). Procurement officials utilizing GSA*Advantage!®* currently results in more than 30,000 orders per week. The faster your approved price list is loaded into GSA*Advantage!®*, the more rapidly you will become visible to GSA's customers.

Government agencies use **GSA*Advantage!®*** to:

- Search for items using keywords, part numbers, supplier names, contract numbers, etc.;
- Research potential contractors through their posted Web sites;
- Compare features, prices and delivery options;
- Configure products and add accessories;
- Place orders directly online or through eBuy (another benefit of GSA*Advantage!®*);
- Review and choose delivery options;
- Select a convenient payment method;
- View history, track status, re-order, or cancel orders; and
- Meet agency environmental ("green") procurement goals.

Contractors use GSA*Advantage!®* for:

- Visibility of MAS-awarded products/services to the federal marketplace;
- Availability to sell directly to the federal marketplace;
- Qualification to receive MAS eBuy quotes and proposals;
- Researching potential teaming partners; and
- Identifying and promoting their environmental products.

What is GSA eBuy?

eBuy (**www.ebuy.gsa.gov**) is GSA's online Request for Quotes (RFQ) solution for MAS-awarded products and services. It is available only to registered MAS and Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) contractors. It facilitates the request for, and submission of, quotes for a wide range of commercial services and products offered by sellers who are on GSA*Advantage!®*.

eBuy allows customer agencies to maximize their buying power by bringing the contractor and the purchasing customer together. Your registration on GSA*Advantage!®* will simultaneously register your designated Contract Administrator on eBuy. If you have an MAS contract and currently have your catalog on GSA*Advantage!®*, simply log in! Once logged in, you may select the categories for which you want to receive RFQ notices.

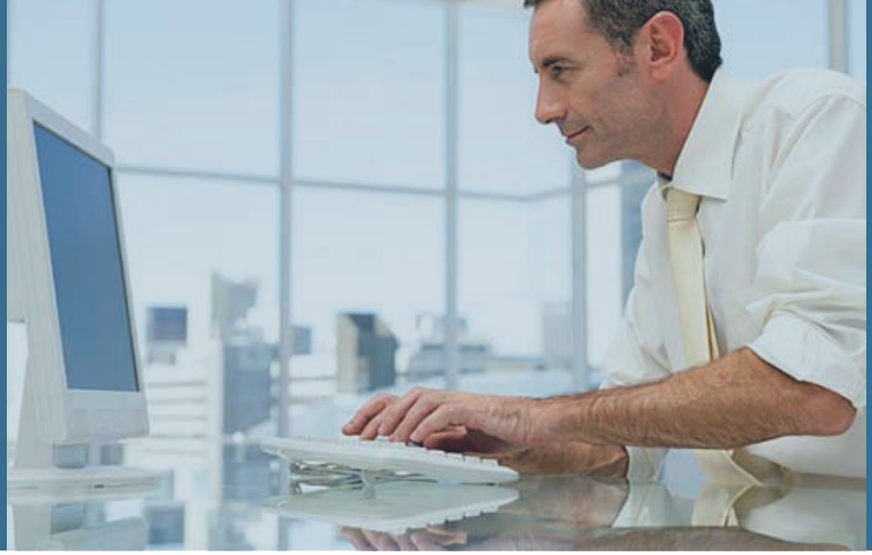
You can review additional information and guidance on our eBuy system by visiting the **http://vsc.gsa.gov** Web site, clicking on "Business Opportunities," and selecting "eBuy."

What are the Benefits of GSA's eBuy?

GSA's eBuy provides a wealth of benefits; it:

- Maximizes the opportunity to participate by notifying you of new government requirements for your specific MAS-awarded products and/or services;
- Saves you money by reducing the cost of finding government business opportunities, decreasing lead-times and costs when submitting quotes;
- Allows government buyers and MAS contractors to communicate requirements and quotes via the Web;
- Helps contractors establish new business relationships as new opportunities are discovered;
- Improves efficiency by streamlining the acquisition process;

Good, current customer contact information is the heart of any successful marketing and sales program.



- Increases sales potential by making you more aware of new business opportunities;
- Provides valuable information on the federal marketplace allowing you to expand your customer base; and
- Saves you time because business opportunities are sent directly to you via e-mail, and quotes can be sent electronically.

How does eBuy Work?

The eBuy system is used by an ordering agency to prepare and post an RFQ tool for specific products, services or a combination thereof for a certain period of time. The customer selects various MAS contractors to receive the RFQ. Each selected vendor will receive e-mail notification that an RFQ has been posted and a quote is requested. It may take some time for the generated e-mail to get to you, so make sure you check your GSA*Advantage!®* account every day.
(You may be missing a valuable opportunity if you don't!)
Those contractors not specifically chosen by the requesting agency to receive the RFQ can still view it on eBuy and can submit a quote if they qualify, i.e., they have the contract Special Item Number (SIN).

Each RFQ is assigned a category or SIN by the ordering agency. Some examples of the categories/SINs are office supplies/paper, consulting services, snow maintenance equipment, temporary help, or services/clerical. The SIN designation and the ordering agency determine which contractors will receive e-mail notices. Each notice may be sent to all or any number of contractors within the SIN. Contractors wanting to quote must do so at the eBuy Web site. Once the RFQ has closed, the ordering agency may then accept the quote(s) that represents the "best value" and issue an order to the contractor whose quote was accepted. Since response times are short, checking your account daily is imperative.

Now you see why it is vitally important to keep your paper price list current and properly posted on GSA*Advantage!®*. Ordering agencies are turning more and more to GSA*Advantage!®* and eBuy for their procurement needs. You do not want to be left behind!

Find Government Customers with Market Research

Market research is a powerful tool used in finding out who is buying, and what, when and why they are buying. Identifying and gathering information about your target government customer will be a major step toward achieving or increasing your government sales. Good, current customer contact information is the heart of any successful marketing and sales program. You will find an incredible amount of information available on the Web and government agency home pages once you begin researching.

Start your market research by following these steps *(Note: This list is illustrative only and does not include all the resources available for market data research.)*:

A. Review **www.gsa.gov/eligibility-gsasource** – GSA Order ADM 4800.2E, Eligibility to use GSA sources of supply and services – which provides detailed information regarding those agencies, activities and organizations determined eligible to use GSA MAS contracts. The GSA order also provides definitive guidelines concerning eligibility requirements and limitations for a variety of other GSA sources of supply and services.

B. Explore **www.usa.gov**, as it is the U.S. government official Web portal offering chat, blogs and direct links to government agencies, news and features.

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The GSA Marketing Partnership is a service offered by the Office of Marketing to help strengthen the success of GSA MAS contractors in building identification and increasing sales.

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C. Register on **www.fedbizopps.gov**. This is the U.S. government's virtual marketplace for federal-government procurement opportunities that exceed $25,000. By signing up for this free service, you automatically receive procurement information and position yourself to react more quickly to procurement opportunities.

D. See multiple agencies recurring Procurement Forecasts at **www.acquisition.gov/comp/procurement_forecasts/index.html**. There may be potential sales opportunities for your company.

E. Visit the Federal Acquisition Jump Station on **http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/pub/fedproc/home.html**. It provides Web sites with federal procurement information broken down by agency for multiple departments of the executive branch and their independent agencies.

F. Use Federal Procurement Data Systems – Next Generation (FPDS-NG) – to identify who bought what, from whom, for how much, when and where. Find it at **http://fpds.gov/**. *Note: Using this site is free but requires registration.*

G. Research the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) procurements at **http://progate.daps.dla.mil/home/** and DIBBS at **https://www.dibbs.bsm.dla.mil/.** (These are agency-specific portals.)

H. Utilize the Department of Defense (DoD) Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) centers as a local resource. They can provide assistance to business firms in marketing products and services to the federal, state and local governments at no or nominal cost. Locate one in your area by visiting **www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm**.

I. The Navy offers **www.neco.navy.mil/** as an eCommerce online tool. It provides a drill-down-type "business opportunities" links.

J. Always consider military installations as potential sales opportunities. For more information, visit **www.armed-forces.net** or **www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/sites.html**. (Tip: Narrow your search by region, state and location.)

K. GSA Marketing Partnership: The GSA Marketing Partnership is a service offered by the Office of Marketing to help strengthen the success of GSA MAS contractors in building identification and increasing sales. This partnership provides news and information about program enhancements, shows, expositions and various other marketing opportunities. Visit the Web site at **www.gsa.gov/market2feds**.

L. Remember, your local phone book contains "blue pages," which list U.S. government office information.

Promote Your Identity as an MAS Contractor

Use the GSA star mark logo, available at **www.gsa.gov/logos**.

As a current GSA MAS contractor, you are entitled to use GSA logos in your advertising. Placing these identifiers in your printed and online communications promotes your position as an MAS contract holder. The GSA star mark is a registered mark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and other provisions apply. These logos include the GSA star mark along with an identifier, namely the words "Schedule," "Contract Holder," or "GSA*Advantage!*®."

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Notes: Aside from the limited exception to link a Web page directly to the GSA portal, you are not permitted to use the GSA star mark without an identifier. You should note that only GSA MAS holders registered on GSA Advantage!® *may display the GSA* Advantage!® *logo.*

Use of GSA logos does not eliminate the requirements of the General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAR) clause 552.203-70, Restrictions on Advertising. Appropriate use of these logos in advertisements directed to federal government contract use is acceptable, provided that the advertisement does not state or imply that the product or service is endorsed or preferred by the government.

Government Advertising Opportunities

Numerous publications are read by government employees every day. These include commercial publications that may offer excellent opportunities to market your products and services to a particular market. Find the appropriate publications for your industry, and consider advertising. Many are industry-specific publications. Conduct thorough research, check out the circulation figures, and give special consideration to the number of government readers the publication has.

Step Three

Teaming to Propose a Total Solution

What if the Job is Bigger or Broader than You Can Handle?

What is a GSA MAS Contractor Team Arrangement?

A Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA) allows two or more GSA MAS contractors to work together in order to meet agency requirements. This agreement permits contractors to complement each other and allows the team to compete for orders they might not qualify for independently. CTAs can apply to several services within the same MAS, or can be combined across two or more Schedules. Customers benefit from a CTA by obtaining a total solution, rather than making separate buys from two or more contractors.

Under GSA MAS CTAs, each contractor has privities of contract with the government, since each holds its own GSA MAS contract. Each contractor can serve as the team leader and/or interact directly with the government. Each contractor uses his or her awarded contract prices for services and products already on contract. These prices have already been negotiated and determined fair and reasonable. Total solutions can be put together quickly and easily under GSA CTAs using your MAS contract. This arrangement also facilitates improved pricing for "best value" quotes and quantity buys.

We suggest that any arrangements between teaming partners be put in writing to prevent any misunderstandings. At a minimum, the CTA should clearly identify the MAS contractor team members, services and products that each team member will be responsible for supplying, price/discount of each line item, and the applicable GSA contract numbers. Each team member will be responsible for reporting his or her sales and submitting the appropriate portion of the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) against the MAS contract.

Invoicing, payment, warranty and reporting remittances are areas that should be addressed in a CTA. Many times, agencies will want to receive a single invoice that cites the lead MAS contract. It is a good idea for each teaming partner to annotate his or her own MAS contract number on all invoices submitted to the CTA lead contract holder.

For more information on CTAs, please visit **www.gsa.gov/schedules** and select "Contractor Team Arrangements."

What are Some of the Benefits of a GSA MAS CTA?

Among its many benefits, a CTA:

- Satisfies the customer with a single solution;
- Increases the competitive edge;
- Provides complementary capabilities;
- Focuses on core capabilities;
- Offers additional opportunities with customers;
- Integrates different skills;
- Builds direct relationships with customers;
- Shares risks and rewards;
- Maximizes use of one or more MAS solution;
- Increases market share;
- Allows increased small-business participation;
- Expands visibility;
- Enhances contractor images; and
- Helps increase a partnership within MAS contractors.

*Note: To find other GSA contractors who may want to team, please visit eLibrary at **www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov**. Optimally, look for contractors who provide products and/or services that enhance or complement your specialty.*

Step Four

Stepping Out From the Crowd

Eligible Organizations to Use GSA Sources of Supplies and Services

Which of the following organizations are eligible to use GSA sources of supplies and services?

- Marine Mammal Commission;
- Export-Import Bank of the United States;
- Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation;
- Tennessee Valley Authority;
- International Coffee Organization;
- Government of Guam;
- European Space Research Organization;
- Organization of African Unity;
- Los Alamos National; and
- American Red Cross (international organization).

Would you believe that they are all eligible? If you are looking for additional information on customers who can use GSA MAS contracts, check the list of authorized users (GSA Order ADM 4800.2E) by visiting **www.gsa.gov/eligibility-gsasource**.

Ordering Procedures

Listed below are a few things you'll want to keep in mind when selling to federal agencies.

- You are obligated to accept orders below the maximum-order threshold from all executive agencies. The maximum-order threshold is identified in each MAS contract. This threshold is not a ceiling. You can accept orders above this level; however, agencies expect a price break for large-volume buys. *Note: Look to Clause 52.216-19 for more information on maximum orders.*
- You are not obligated to sell to those outside of the executive branch; however, you are encouraged to do so. If you receive these orders and wish to refuse them, return the order within 24 hours if purchase was made with a purchase card, or within five days if it was not.
- You are obligated to accept purchase card orders up to $3,000 (commonly referred to as the micro-purchase

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Good market research will focus your target on an agency that will have the most potential for a sale.

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threshold). We also encourage you to accept purchase-card orders for amounts higher than $3,000. When you accept purchase-card orders for any amount, you may not process the transaction for payment until you have shipped the goods or performed the services. *Note: purchase-card orders are considered GSA MAS sales unless otherwise specified by the customer.*

- To be more competitive for a particular sale, or to win a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA), contractors are able to offer one-time, spot discounts from established MAS contract prices. MAS contractors can give one ordering agency a discount without passing the discount on to the entire federal government. In essence, this provision allows the contractor to offer – and the government to take advantage of – spot pricing in the commercial market.
- At the same time, MAS contractors can be more competitive by offering higher discounts to a single ordering agency without offering the same higher discounts to all authorized users. This method allows contractors to react immediately to the commercial marketplace, move inventory, and respond to technological advancements. However, if, in your commercial business, you reduce a price for your "Most Favored Customer" (the customer/class of customer who served as the basis for your GSA award) you must extend that same price reduction to all GSA MAS contract users. Good, internal price-reduction management on your part can save you many headaches during the life of your GSA contract! *Note: See the Price Reduction Clause of your contract for further details.*

Understanding the Government Procurement Process

You know by now that it will not be easy to find the right people to talk to in government to sell your approved products and/or services. Good market research will focus your target on an agency that will have the most potential for a sale. Once you have targeted the agency that fits your niche, be ready with a plan to begin the sales process. Start with a general understanding of the respective role of each government associate participating in the process. There are often three "customers" involved with government procurement. They are the **influence** (including program-manager and high-level, decision-maker types), the **procurer** (including contracting-officer and specialist types) and the **end user** (often the initiator and influence, who will be the direct recipients of the product or services). You should remember that each of these individuals expects the same basic features and services when procuring products and services. (They may also be called buying agents, item managers, procurement specialists, etc.)

The **influence** type is typically the visionary for high-dollar-value and complex-service purchases. This individual is presented with the requirements for what is needed to enhance the agency's program. This type is routinely given tight deadlines to meet and depends on and expects reliable, high-quality contractors to help achieve the agency's goals. The influence type is experienced at tapping into the pool of expertise and working with quality contractors, and wants a variety of reliable, quality resources available to select from – regardless of which mechanism is used. The procurement process is complex and the influence type may turn to a contracting office for assistance. It would not be unusual for an influence type to ask contractors for procurement guidance or for advice about getting needed products and services in the fastest, most efficient manner.

The **procurer** type may be thought of as a "gate-keeper" in relationship to the influence types and end users. The procurer type is a highly trained and certified individual who ensures that established acquisition regulations, agency goals, and any other guidelines are met with procurement. This person is a key part of the MAS process, ensuring proper implementation and formulation of the task order.

The **end user** type (often the initiator and influence) is the individual who is the recipient of the product or service. This individual often wants the quickest way to fill the requirement or need and is not totally familiar with the various regulations and the procurement-process requirements. The end user turns to the contracting office for assistance. An end user depends on and expects a good product or service to help accomplish his or her job. You should consider end users key contacts during the procurement/buying processes, because this individual does have a voice in the selection of a contractor.

Behind the Procurement Process

Internally, the government side of the procurement process applies a great deal of protocol and formality to comply with the multitude of rules and regulations to ensure proper acquisition results. You should note that for commodity purchases in small amounts, the government purchase card makes buying very simple. The list below lists the typical chain of events for more complex government purchases.

- The end user identifies a need for supplies or services to either a procurer or influence type. A requirements document is drafted, with the assistance of technical personnel, including an estimated cost. This information is packaged as a purchase request.
- The purchase request is routed for approval within the organization (this may consist of many layers of approval and several drafts).
- The approved purchase request goes to the organization's finance office for a commitment of funds, based on the estimate.
- The Contracting Officer receives and reviews the purchase request, researches the market, plans the MAS buy, reviews information submitted by industry (market research), and issues the Request for Quote (RFQ) if appropriate.

Please note: The RFQ will tell you whether an award will be made on the basis of lowest price or best value. ("Best value" is defined in FAR 2.101 and discussed in FAR 15.101.)

Response to Request for Quote (RFQ)

Usually, an entire team assembles to facilitate the procurement process for complex service buys. Even before issuing the RFQ, evaluation factors are developed to maximize competition, minimize the complexity of the RFQ and the evaluation, ensure impartial and complete evaluation of all responses, and facilitate selection of the source whose performance is expected to best meet the stated government requirements.

The technical evaluation factors of past performance, technical approach, management capability, and understanding of the requirement are often used when the quality of technical performance is important relative to price. If oral proposals are called for, one goal will be to verify that you understand the key technical requirements. In some cases, the only issue is whether your technical proposal is acceptable or not. In other cases, offers are evaluated against the factors established by key members of the program office. Higher-ranked offers are given more favorable consideration than lower-ranked ones. Be sure to read the complete RFQ carefully to gain a thorough understanding of the needs of the customer.

Of importance is the fact that MAS buys differ from the more formal source-selection process. They are fast and conducted without formal source selection plans. The RFQ will articulate which factors matter most, but don't expect it to provide full weighting information. You must be prepared to respond quickly, if needed.

Note: Because of the strict integrity associated with this process, key acquisition personnel must remain objective and unbiased. Government procurement officials must avoid improper personal relationships, receiving gifts, or any appearance of impropriety. Your marketing efforts should always be geared accordingly.

Note: We have provided the below information as a reference for your continued learning with regard to understanding procurement regulations.

Acquisition Central at **www.arnet.gov** will allow you access to shared systems and tools to help you conduct business efficiently.

The FAR can be accessed online at **http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr**.

Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) and Procedures, Guidance and Information (PGI) is available at DFARS's Web site (**www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/dars/dfars/html/current/tochtml.htm**). It is a supplement to the FAR that provides DoD-specific acquisition regulations.

Step Five

Reporting Requirements

Your contract contains several reporting requirements. The MAS contract sales reports are filed directly with GSA. Others, such as Subcontracting, Affirmative Action and VETS 100 compliance are filed with other agencies. Pay attention to who gets what report and when. Information on completion of reports and filing can be found at the below listed Web sites. The following reports must be filed when indicated:

What	Where	When
Affirmative Action (EEO-1)	EEOC www.eeoc.gov/eeo1survey/	Annually On/Before 9/30
Sales Reporting 72a	GSA https://72a.gsa.gov/	Quarterly
Subcontracting (Individual and Summary)	ESRS www.esrs.gov/	4/30 and 10/30
VETS 100	DOL https://vets100.vets.dol.gov/	Annually, NLT 9/30

Reporting GSA MAS Sales

Reporting your GSA sales is a critical element in the success of our relationship. Sales reports must be submitted, and fees must be remitted quarterly. If no MAS sales orders have been placed or payments received (depends on your chosen reporting method) on your contract for the quarter, you are still responsible for filing the sales report by entering zeros. You should maintain a consistent accounting method for sales reporting, based on your established commercial accounting practices. Quarterly sales reports and IFF remittances are due by January 30, April 30, July 30 and October 30 of each year. (Sales reported on the thirty-first of these months are considered late.) All GSA MAS contracts require sales to be reported via the Internet. *Note: Look to Clause 552.238-74 for more information and instructions regarding Contractor's Report of Sales and GSA Form 72A.*

Electronic Payment of the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) with ePay

Paying electronically via ePay is the most efficient and easiest way to remit the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF). It provides you with the option of paying online via credit card or electronic check (direct debit). It's fast, easy and secure. Paying online benefits both you and GSA by eliminating the expense of processing paper checks, the delays inherent in sending checks through the mail, and the need for post-payment research due to lost checks, incorrect payment amounts, and incorrect allocation of payments to the proper contract and report period.

When you use ePay, you will be given two choices: "Pay Online Now" and "Pay Online Later." If you are ready to pay after you've reported your sales and you have your bank-account or credit-card information ready, just click "Pay Online Now." Enter the appropriate information and you're finished. It's as simple as that! If you are not ready to pay, or if someone else in your company handles payments, click "Pay Online Later." Using this option will save the sales you just reported and will allow you (or another representative from your company) to return to the Web site to pay at a later time. If you didn't remember to click on "Pay Online Later" or the total IFF due does not equal the IFF for the quarter (which could be caused by a prior sales adjustment) the payment can still be submitted electronically. Just return to the main menu page and click on "Make a Payment," then enter the exact dollar amount owed and follow the instructions. Always remember that the payment is due within 30 days after the end

You should give your GSA contract the widest publicity possible whenever federal agencies call for information about your products and services.

of the quarter. Save yourself time and money and give ePay a try. Either way you choose, now or later, you just saved the time it takes to write and mail a paper check. For more info to report sales and pay IFF online, go to **https://72a.gsa.gov/**.

If you choose to pay via check, it is vitally important that you provide proper identification of the IFF payment to assure that credit is given to the proper GSA contract.

You must follow the instructions in the IFF clause and provide the following information:

- Contract number(s);
- Report amount(s); and
- Report period(s).

If your payment is for more than one contract and/or for multiple report periods, the specific amount to be allocated to each report period and each contract number must be included on the check.

Note: For additional information on electronic remittance, contact the Vendor Support Center (VSC) at **http://vsc.gsa.gov** *or call (877) 495-4849 or (703) 605-9992. You can also contact the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) assigned to your contract. The ACO assigned to your contract information can be accessed using the ACO locator tool on the VSC Web site.*

How Do I Know If a Sale is a MAS Sale?

One of the biggest questions about sales is how to recognize whether or not the sale is a MAS sale. You should give your GSA contract the widest publicity possible whenever federal agencies call for information about your products and services. You should encourage all federal customers to use your MAS contract whenever they place new or renewal orders. That is why you have a contract with GSA: to make it easier for our customers to meet their needs in the most efficient and economic manner. Any one or more of the following may indicate that a sale is an MAS sale:

- GSA contract number is stated on the purchase order or task order;
- Ordering information and terms are the same as your GSA contract;
- Customer made contact with you through GSA*Advantage!*® or eBuy;
- Product or service is on your GSA contract;
- Customer pays with the government purchase card;
- Pricing is at or below the MAS price; and
- Order is above the micro-purchase level ($3,000) and there is no indication of any other procurement vehicle being used.

Note: It is important to maintain supporting documentation of all MAS sales in your company records. The easiest and most direct way is to make sure the GSA contract number is stated on those files and records.

The bottom line is, when a government order fits within the MAS contract parameters, the order should be considered an MAS sale unless the ordering agency indicates otherwise. By "contract parameters" we mean the product is on the MAS, the ordering organization is authorized to use the MAS, the ordering procedure used is consistent with the MAS price list, the schedule delivery terms are used, and there is no evidence of any other contracting vehicle being used by the contracting office. If you have questions or need further clarification, please talk to your ACO.

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Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System

The Small Business Subcontracting Program is intended to aid small businesses in obtaining procurement dollars from the government by encouraging large businesses with government contracts to subcontract with small businesses. In accordance with Public Law 95-507, this program requires large businesses that are awarded a contract with an estimated value of $550,000 (or more) to have a small-business-subcontracting plan that provides for the maximum utilization of small-business concerns. The plan does this by establishing goals for subcontracting with small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, HUBZone small businesses, veteran-owned small businesses and service-disabled-veteran-owned small businesses.

If you are a small business, your contract will not include a plan. If you are a large business and your contract includes a plan, it will be either a "commercial" or an "individual" plan. A "commercial" plan covers your company's fiscal year and applies to the entire production of commercial items sold by the company. You must negotiate a new commercial plan with GSA every year. An "individual" plan covers the entire contract period (usually five years and can include option periods), applies only to your GSA MAS contract, and has goals that are based on your planned subcontracting specifically in support of your GSA contract.

You must report progress towards meeting the subcontracting goals in your plan via the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS) at **www.esrs.gov/**. The eSRS is the governmentwide, Web-based reporting system for the small-business subcontracting program. This system replaced the Standard Forms 294 and 295, therefore GSA will no longer accept hard copies of those forms. The federal government and Department of Defense (DoD) began using eSRS for small-business subcontract reporting on October 28, 2005. All DoD organizations handling unclassified contracts began using eSRS in October 2008.

If your contract includes a "commercial" plan, you are required to file a Summary Subcontracting Report (SSR), formerly Standard Form 295, once per year. The SSR collects data covering all subcontract dollars that your company awarded as a result of its entire commercial and government business during the government's fiscal year of October 1 through September 30. You must submit the SSR within 30 days of the end of the government's fiscal year (October 30 deadline) via the eSRS.

If your contract includes an Individual Plan, you are required to file a SSR once per year, and an Individual Subcontract Report (ISR), formerly Standard Form 294, twice per year. The ISR collects data covering all subcontract dollars that your company awarded in support of your GSA MAS contract since the contract began. You must submit the ISR via the eSRS and within 30 days of the end of the March 31 and September 30 reporting periods.

When filing your eSRS reports, remember to include the e-mail address of your responsible government Contracting Officer or government official in the appropriate field of the report. For detailed instructions on filing SSRs and ISRs, please see "Contractor User Guide and Training Materials" at **www.esrs.gov/**. You should submit technical questions to the eSRS helpdesk online and substantive policy-related questions to your responsible Contracting Officer.

Go to the Vendor Support Center at **http://vsc.gsa.gov** and click on "Contract Administration." Select "Subcontracting Reporting System" from the dropdown box for instructions to file electronically.

Step Six

Caring for Your Contract

Your GSA contract will be the most successful if you keep it up-to-date and work with your Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) to delete obsolete items and add new ones. You should continually fine-tune your contract price list to maximize its potential. Make sure all of your items are under contract for customers' easy access. When a modification is necessary, including changes to phone numbers, names, e-mail addresses, titles, model names and numbers, etc., your first step is contacting your PCO, who will guide you through the procedure for modifying and updating your contract.

You should maintain a contract file and keep it up to date. At a minimum, your contract file should contain the original contract, its terms and conditions, all modifications, the price lists (including those previously approved), systems passwords, and all correspondence with GSA. A well-maintained contract file is essential to administering your contract and will assist your company if there is a change in contract administration personnel.

Company Name Changes and Novations

If your company is changing its name, it will need to execute a Name Change Agreement with GSA. If another company is acquiring yours, the new company may need to execute a Novation Agreement with GSA before it is recognized as the MAS contract holder. Notify your PCO immediately if your company is changing its name or being purchased, so the PCO can guide you through the necessary steps and direct you to the required paperwork. *Note: Look to the FAR Part 42.12 for the required Change of Name and Novation Agreement documentation.*

Address Changes and Other Administrative Changes to Your Contract

The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is the primary contractor database for the U.S. federal government. CCR collects, validates, stores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions.

Both current and potential government contractors are required to register in CCR in order to be awarded contracts by the government. Contractors are required to complete a one-time registration to provide basic information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. Contractors must update or renew registration annually to maintain an active status, and should update it any time there are changes.

CCR validates the contractor's information and electronically shares the secure and encrypted data with the federal agencies' finance offices to facilitate paperless payments through electronic funds transfer. Additionally, CCR shares the data with government-procurement and electronic business systems. Keep in mind that up-to-date CCR information will facilitate the payment process.

Any information provided in your registration may be shared with authorized government offices. If your company's information in CCR is not accurate, it will be difficult to market your GSA contract to the federal government. However, registration in CCR does not guarantee business with the government. For more information on the CCR and its registration process, go to **www.ccr.gov** and click on the "CCR Handbook" tab.

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Note: Regular maintenance of your Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) and CCR information is extremely important. Be sure to check it every 30 days, especially if you have recently moved or plan to move. Additionally, be sure that your company's information in GSA Advantage!® *and eLibrary is up to date and consistent with that in CCR and D&B.*

In addition to maintaining current information in CCR, please contact your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) and PCO if your company's administrative point of contact or address changes.

Price Adjustments and Adding New Items

To adjust prices or add new items to your contract, be aware of the requirements of Clauses 552.216-70, Economic Price Adjustment, and 552.243-72, Modifications. These clauses indicate what documentation you need to submit with your request. You will have to negotiate these modifications with your PCO. (Check the Economic Price Adjustment Clause for pricing caps, time limitations and procedures.) No price adjustments can be requested during the first 12 months of the contract.

When requesting price adjustments for products, you may be required to submit:

- A copy of the new commercial catalog/price list;
- Relevant invoices, purchase orders, contracts, or similar substantiating documents demonstrating that you've sold the items at the new price;
- Effective date for commercial customers;
- The Most Favored Customer information; and
- Product testing and results.

Note: New items or services must fall within the scope of your awarded GSA MAS contract. In order to reduce turnaround times, be sure to send the PCO all required information when requesting additions to your contract. Also, refer to Clause 552.243-72 for more about modifications to your contract and the information needed to process a modification.

For price adjustments on services, you'll need to submit:

- A copy of the new commercial catalog/price list;
- Relevant invoices, purchase orders, contracts, or similar substantiating documents demonstrating that you've sold the services at the new price;
- New labor categories (including definitions and qualifications); and
- The Most Favored Customer information.

Important Definitions

Solicitation: Any request to submit offers or quotations to the government. Solicitations under sealed bid procedures are called Invitations for Bids (IFBs). Solicitations under negotiated procedures are called Requests for Proposals (RFPs). Solicitations under simplified acquisition procedures may require submission of either a quotation or an offer. (FAR 2.1.)

Amendment: Any change to the terms and conditions of a "solicitation," "RFP" or "Request for Quotes" (RFQ). Amendments are used when it becomes necessary to make changes in quantity, specifications, delivery schedules, opening dates, etc., or to correct a defective or ambiguous invitation. Changes to a solicitation are accomplished by issuance of Standard Form 30, Amendment of Solicitation/Modification of Contract. (FAR 14.208 or FAR 15.206.)

Modification: Any written change in the terms and conditions of a contract. (FAR 43.103.) Modifications fall into one of two classifications: unilateral or bilateral. A "unilateral" modification is issued by the government, carries only one signature and generally directs the contractor to accomplish a specific action. A "bilateral" modification carries two signatures (the contractor's and the government representative's) and serves as a mutual agreement of the parties to a course of action or change in performance requirements.

eMod

eMod is an online contract modification request tool that allows you, the GSA MAS contract holder, to make paperless modification requests directly to GSA.

You can make several types of general modification requests from eMod; they are the abilities to:

- Add or delete Special Item Numbers (SINs);
- Add or delete goods and services;
- Issue price reductions;
- Make economic price adjustments; and
- Administrative changes.

The advantages of using eMod are:

- Electronic process reduces delivery costs and delays;
- Digital certificates ensure the integrity of your proprietary data;
- User-friendly screens lead you through the submittal process;
- Web-based technology facilitates your team's collaboration on proposal preparation; and
- Electronic signature creates an electronic contract modification for fast retrieval.

For more information on eMod, visit **www.eoffer.gsa.gov** or send questions via e-mail to eoffer@gsa.gov.

The Trade Agreements Act

Hopefully, you have heard or read the media coverage regarding violations of Trade Agreements Act (TAA). If this slipped under your radar, or you did not consider the issue and how it relates to your GSA MAS contract, you should have more of the facts. This is an important part of caring for your contract.

Incorporated in all GSA MAS contracts is FAR Clause 52.225-5, Trade Agreements. When you signed your contract,

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you certified that all end products offered on your contract comply with the terms of FAR 25.4, Trade Agreements. This applies to all of the products on your contract, whether you offer one product or 10,000. The TAA applies to services, too.

The Trade Agreements (TA) clause requires that you may provide only items produced or "substantially transformed" in countries that have signed a trade agreement with the United States, or met certain other criteria. In order to comply with the TAA clause, you need to know where all of your contract items are produced or "substantially transformed" and compare that information to the "designated country" list in the FAR (25.003). If a contract item is produced or "substantially transformed" in a country listed as a "designated country," your company may provide it, but if your product originates in a country not appearing on the "designated country" list, then your company may not provide it under your MAS contract.

If your company is the manufacturer of the offered products, you can learn where your contract items are produced or "substantially transformed" from your production management office. If you are a reseller for the products, you will need to obtain this information from the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). As the contract administrator, you should maintain a list of suppliers and provider points. Your purchasing people may already have this information, so check with them first. Keep in mind that your company is responsible for ensuring that that products provided by your suppliers are TAA-compliant.

Once you know where the products come from, you should develop a procedure for regularly reviewing the sourcing information, as well as a system for maintaining and tracking the data. Also, you should include the need to review the TA clause in FAR 25 for any changes to designated countries. It is a good idea to document your procedures, step by step, making sure to include who is responsible for each step and how frequently the reviews are taking place. For tracking purposes, you should have a "database" or files where you can track the source of each and every product on your contract. If you identify products that are not TAA-compliant, you should immediately notify your PCO and request a modification to remove those products from your contract. As a part of your "Contractor Assistance Visits" (CAVs) the IOA will review your system/procedure to evaluate whether an adequate process has been established to meet your TAA requirements.

TAA compliance is a very important issue under your GSA contract. Make sure you understand what you have committed to do regarding the TAA, and that you can demonstrate compliance. If you don't understand, be sure to ask.

Scope of Your GSA Contract

Another subject receiving a lot of interest and oversight is "scope of contract." This refers to your contract's proper use. Your company may only provide those specific products and services that GSA authorized for sale under the contract. Specifically, the items your company provides must fall within the description of the SINs that GSA awarded under the contract.

Proper scope of contract is important to both you and GSA. You are required by GSA to sell only those products and services awarded to you under the contract. This helps ensure the integrity of the MAS program and protect our contractors from any unintended consequences.

Proper scope of contract is important to both you and GSA.

Products and services not part your MAS contract are not allowed to be represented as being on the contract. Your company must identify open-market, or non-contract items, on quotations and invoices to the customer. Agency's purchase orders should clearly identify open-market items by line item. If there are Other Direct Cost (ODCs) items you are selling to your customer and they are not on your MAS contract, you must also identify them as "noncontract."

During a CAV, the IOA will review your Statements of Work and points of supply, and compare them to the MAS awarded SINs, in order to determine if they are within the scope of your contract.

There are ways to sell non-contract products and services and still ensure staying within the scope of your contract. Two of these ways are "Teaming Arrangements" and "Modifications." You learned about "Contractor Team Arrangements" in Step 3 of this brochure, and we discussed modifications and adding items to your contract earlier in Step 6. You may want to go back and reread these pages to refresh your mind in relation to "scope of contract." This is very important to the success of your GSA contract.

When GSA Requests Changes

GSA contracts are periodically refreshed to update terms and conditions. Clauses may be updated, new clauses may be required, and old clauses may become obsolete. Normally, the PCO tries to combine changes to a contract, but there is no limit to the number of solicitations that can be amended or a contract modified. These modifications are mandatory.

Refreshing contracts allows all GSA MAS contract holders to compete on the same terms and ensures that customers know what the terms and conditions are in the MAS contracts. GSA may also exercise its option to renew your contract and may ask you for information to determine if exercising your option remains in the government's best interest. Read all documentation from the PCO and comply with any specified timing requests. Don't hesitate to contact the person requesting the modification, if you have any questions or require clarification.

Canceling Your Contract

You and the government both have the unilateral right to cancel your contract with 30 days with written notice and walk away free and clear. There are several reasons why the government may choose to cancel a contract. Some of these are:

- Violations of contract terms and conditions;
- Non-compliance with contract deliverables (e.g., failure to report sales, repeated late reporting of sales, failure to remit IFF, failure to keep the price list current, failure to load the price list to GSA*Advantage!®*, failure to submit required eSRS filings);
- The government no longer has a need for the products and/or services offered; and
- Low annual sales (maintaining the contract is not profitable to you or GSA).

You may choose to cancel your contract for numerous reasons. Some of these are:

- Change in corporate structure (company bought or sold);
- Change in business direction; and
- Low annual sales (maintaining the contract is not profitable to your company).

Review Clause 552.238-73 for more information about contract cancellation.

Note: Cancellations are effective 30 calendar days after the other party receives the written notice of cancellation.

Your Rights in the Face of a Disagreement

If a disagreement arises between you and a government customer, the first step should be to try to iron out the differences with the agency's Contracting Officer who made the award. If that doesn't work, the use of the Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR), as provided at FAR 33.214 (**www.arnet.gov/far**) is encouraged.

Step Seven

Getting the Support You Need

The Vendor Support Center (VSC) is your main portal and source of information for all major topics involving the MAS contracts.

eLibrary: a Valuable Online Information Resource

eLibrary is GSA's official online source for complete MAS information. Information is updated daily to ensure access to the latest MAS and contract award information.

You can update your own information or find out if your competition has a contract, and what's covered under their contract by using various search options, e.g., MAS contractor's name, contract number, SIN, MAS number, or keyword. This is also a great tool for you to use to find teaming partners when responding to a customer's requirement. eLibrary can be accessed at **www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov**.

Note: If you find that your information is not up-to-date, visit **www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov** *and select "Help" from the bar at the top of the screen, then click on "Contractor Information" on the right side under "Help Topics."*

New Contractor Orientation Webcast Training

GSA is committed to helping our MAS contract holders be successful. GSA's Industrial Operations Analysts (IOAs) try to contact every new contractor soon after contract award to discuss contract requirements and ensure that contractor personnel understand what the government expects of them under contract.

As the MAS program continues to grow, we want to make sure you have all the information you need to be a successful MAS contractor. In support of this effort, we have implemented "New Contractor Orientation" seminars, which are given periodically throughout the country. These seminars assist GSA with getting information to you, the contractor, and provide face-to-face interaction among groups of contractors and presenters. And the benefits don't stop there.

We are very excited about our New Contractor Orientation webcast, which provides further support to you and our other contractors. This online presentation contains critical information on contract requirements and your responsibilities as a GSA contracting partner. Helpful links to various marketing resources are also available to help you on your way. You can access the presentation at any time through our Vendor Support Center (VSC) Web site at **http://vsc.gsa.gov**. Training via webcast is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The webcast is not exclusively for use by new contractors. It's the perfect way for veteran contractors in the MAS program to brush up on contract requirements or bring new employees up to speed. It also serves as a quick refresher and resource guide and reference.

We realize that watching a presentation on the Web deprives you of the ability to ask questions and provide feedback. That is why we hold live monthly online chat sessions that will give you opportunities to ask questions and receive real-time answers from GSA personnel. After you register to view the Web cast, you will get periodic e-mails alerting you of upcoming chat sessions. We invite you to participate.

Your comments and feedback (provided to us via the survey at the end of the presentation) will prove quite valuable for further implementation and improvement. This is our way of ensuring that the New Contractor Orientation webcast is as informative and useful as possible. We hope that the webcast provides you with useful tools as you navigate your way to success.

GSA's job doesn't end with your contract award; in fact, that's really only the beginning. We are your partners. We're available to you throughout your entire contract period (potentially 20 years!) and will strive to develop a close working relationship. We want to ensure that you have the tools necessary to be a GSA MAS success!

Remember: Your PCO, ACO, and Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) are available and ready to provide assistance and guidance throughout the life of contract.

Step Eight

Reaping the Rewards

How Do I Get Paid?

Payment on an MAS contract is similar to that of your commercial invoicing practices but will largely depend upon the terms of your actual task order or Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA).

When your contract was established you were required to register in the Central Contract Registration (CCR) system. Your registration must be updated annually, prior to your contract anniversary date. If your registration is not current, your payments could be delayed. Your CCR registration is valid for one year.

DoD's Defense Finance Account System

Payments are made by the Defense Finance Account System (DFAS). DFAS maintains a payment inquiry site on the DFAS homepage at **www.dod.mil/dfas**. If you are registered in the CCR system and have submitted a valid invoice, this site is a good place to start.

Civilian Agencies

Vendor Express (**www.fms.treas.gov/vendor.html**) is an electronic funds-transfer program designed to make direct deposits to your bank. Using this system eliminates potential loss of a paper check being mailed to you or your bank, and it is much faster. Many civilian agencies no longer issue paper checks. Now payment processing for many civilian agencies is made using electronic funds transfer.

The Department of Treasury Web site (**www.treas.gov**) contains answers to questions regarding your rights when you offer prompt payment discounts and if you charge interest in the event that a payment is late, as well as an array of other helpful information regarding "money."

Note: For additional information on submitting invoices and getting paid review GSAR Clauses 552.232-74, Invoice Payments (Sept. 1999) and 552.232-77, Payment by Government Commercial Purchase Card (March 2000). (Alternate I, March 2000.)

Whether your order was with the DoD or a civilian agency, an even faster way to get paid is to ask the customer agency to make payment by purchase card. While you will pay a transaction fee to the bank, you will avoid invoicing costs and the efforts of possibly chasing the payment.

Establishing a Merchant Account to Accept the Government Purchase Card

Government purchase card "GSA SmartPay® 2" may be either Visa® or MasterCard®. These purchase cards can be recognized utilizing the first four digits. Visa cards will begin with 4486, 4614 or 4716, while MasterCard cards will begin with 5568 or 5565.

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. . . the benefit of accepting the government purchase card is a greater assurance that you'll get paid promptly!

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It is required that you accept the government purchase card for all purchases up to $3,000. You also have the option of accepting purchase cards at higher dollar values.

That stated, the benefit of accepting the government purchase card is a greater assurance that you'll get paid promptly! If you currently accept Visa® or MasterCard®, there is nothing more to do! If you currently do not accept these, you need to set up a "Merchant Account." A Merchant Account is an agreement between your business and a merchant processor that enables you to accept credit-card payments from your customers. If you are setting up a new merchant account, you may be required to pay an application fee. Merchant account costs depend on several things such as:

- The type of business and product or service sold;
- The credit worthiness of the applicant; and
- How business is transacted (number, type and size of transactions).

Depending on these factors, you can expect to pay Merchant Account fees, which typically range between one and four percent per transaction. New businesses may also be required to pay a one-time setup fee to process your application. Additional monthly fees for your Merchant Account may include a monthly statement fee (up to $15) and sometimes a minimum assessment of transaction fees to be billed to your account each month (up to $25). The Merchant Account enables you to process credit card transactions only. You will need a vehicle to move the customer's credit card information to the processor, which might be a telephone, credit-card terminal or virtual terminal integrated with your Web site. Shop around! Bank transaction fees will vary from one private-sector financial institution to another.

Step Nine

Contractor Assistance Visit (CAV)

Introduction

As an MAS contract holder, you will be routinely visited by a GSA Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) who will conduct a Contractor Assistance Visit (CAV). GSA's Examination of Records clause (Multiple Awards Schedule GSAR 552.215-71, July 2003) allows the IOA to review any MAS contractor's records to verify contractual compliance. Normally, two CAVs will be conducted during each five-year contract term (minimum). The CAV findings will assist the ACO with issuance of a Report Card (RC). You should expect to have a CAV conducted at the contract midterm point (during the third year) and again during the final contract year prior to expiration.

Purpose of a CAV

The CAV is not an audit. In fact, the purpose of the visit is to help you succeed as an MAS contractor. By verifying that you are in compliance with some of the critical clauses identified in your MAS contract, and making sure that you completely understand your responsibilities and GSA's expectations, we can achieve a mutually beneficial relationship.

How to Prepare for a CAV

You will be contacted by an IOA by phone, e-mail or both. That initial contact will establish the time and date of the CAV and will also address the IOA's goals for the CAV. The IOA will also identify what documentation you'll need to have readily available and organized for the CAV to be completed timely and effectively.

The following are some examples of the types of documentation that may be necessary during the CAV:

- The original MAS contract, including the Final Proposal Revision;
- All approved modifications and price lists;
- Any BPAs awarded against your MAS contract;
- Letters-of-supply and country-of-origin information;
- Listing of all GSA-authorized dealers; and
- Documented sales tracking system standard operating procedures (SOP).

It is also important for all applicable personnel to be in attendance during the CAV. This could mean personnel from sales, marketing, accounting and/or shipping (basically anyone that has a role – large or small – in handling MAS orders).

Prior to the visit, the IOA may request that you send your company's sales data in an electronic format before the CAV. Agreeing to do this will allow the IOA to review and sample your sales data prior to the CAV, possibly reducing the amount of time the IOA will need to be at your facility. Please remember that sending your sales data prior to the CAV is optional and not a contractual requirement.

What to Expect During the CAV

On the day of the CAV review, the IOA will have many questions pertaining to your company's MAS contract and the internal processes you've implemented to manage the contract successfully. These processes could include but are not limited to:

- Sales tracking system;
- Trade Agreements Act compliance;
- Most Favored Customer discount monitoring; and
- Warranty claim processing.

Once the IOA has a good working knowledge of your company's processes, he or she will review and select a sample from your sales data. Both GSA and non-GSA orders will be sampled and reviewed in order to ensure that your

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sales tracking system is allowing you to report all eligible GSA orders at the end of every calendar quarter. Each GSA order will be reviewed for the following:

- The correct GSA-approved pricing was extended to all GSA customers;
- All of the items provided under the MAS contract correspond to an approved SIN; and
- All deliverables were provided within the contractually negotiated terms.

Note: Remember, the CAV is a great time to discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding your MAS contract. Use the visit to your benefit, and remember that we are here to help.

After the Review: Contractor Report Card

Shortly after the completion of the CAV, your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) will provide you with a completed copy of your contractor Report Card (RC). The RC provides a "snapshot" of your firm's ability to meet important terms and conditions of your MAS contract at the time of the CAV. The RC's purpose is to identify areas where you are successful and areas where you need improvements in regards to processes and systems. The RC is not an evaluation of your current or past performance with the contract. A sample of the contractor RC can be viewed at the Vendor Support Center Web site at **http://vsc.gsa.gov**.

Enjoy Your Success

A GSA MAS contract represents a whole lot of work on both our parts. You're on Schedule because we believe in you and want you to be our partner, and our "face" to the customer. The range of authorized users is vast, and your contract allows you the opportunity to sell to them all. We are dedicated to working with you and helping you achieve great results. We have created this guide in the hope that it will help you become a successful MAS contractor!

Helpful Web Addresses

ASSIST (Acquisition Streamlining and Standardization Information System) ..... http://assist.daps.dla.mil/

Central Contractor Registration ..... www.ccr.gov

Dun & Bradstreet ..... www.dnb.com/us/

FedBizOpps ..... www.fedbizopps.gov

Federal Acquisition Regulation Home Page ..... www.arnet.gov/far

Federal Agencies Directory (LSU library) ..... www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/

Federal Computer Week ..... www.fcw.com

Federal Procurement Data Center ..... http://fpds.gov/

GSA*Advantage!*® ..... www.gsaadvantage.com

GSA Expo ..... www.expo.gsa.gov

GSA Home Page ..... www.gsa.gov

GSA Regional Small Business Centers ..... www.gsa.gov/smallbusiness

GSA eLibrary ..... www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov

GSA SmartPay® Purchase Card Program ..... www.gsa.gov/gsasmartpay

GSAM General Services Acquisition Manual ..... www.arnet.gov/gsam.html

Government Executive Magazine ..... www.govexec.com

Militarylife.com ..... www.militarylife.com/

Online Representation and Certifications ..... http://orca.bpn.gov

Security Clearances ..... www.dss.mil/GW/ShowBinary/DSS/index.html

Small Business Administration ..... www.sba.gov

Smart Card Links ..... www.gsa.gov/smartcard

USA Spending ..... www.usaspending.gov

Vendor Support Center ..... http://vsc.gsa.gov

72A Quarterly Reporting System http:72a.gsa.gov

1122 Program: Counterdrug Program www.gsa.gov/1122program

Frequently Used Acronyms

AAC ..... Agency Activity Address Code
ACO ..... Administrative Contracting Officer
ADR ..... Alternative Disputes Resolution
BPA ..... Blanket Purchase Agreement
CAV ..... Contractor Assistance Visit
CCR ..... Central Contractor Registration
CTA ..... Contractor Team Arrangement
D&B ..... Dun and Bradstreet
DFAS ..... Defense Finance Account System
DLA ..... Defense Logistics Agency
DoD ..... Department of Defense
DODAAC ..... Department of Defense Activity Address Code
EFT ..... Electronic Funds Transfer
eSRS ..... Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System
FAR ..... Federal Acquisition Regulation
FPDS-NG ..... Federal Procurement Data Systems – Next Generation
GSA ..... General Services Administration
GSAM ..... General Services Administration Acquisition Manual
GSAR ..... General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation
GWAC ..... Governmentwide Acquisition Contract
IFB ..... Invitation for Bid
IFF ..... Industrial Funding Fee
IOA ..... Industrial Operations Analyst
ISR ..... Individual Subcontracting Report
MAS ..... Multiple Award Schedule
NCO ..... New Contractor Orientation
ODC ..... Other Direct Cost
OEM ..... Original Equipment Manufacturer
PCO ..... Procurement Contracting Officer
PTAP ..... Procurement Technical Assistance Program
RC ..... Report Card
RFP ..... Requests for Proposals
RFQ ..... Request for Quote
SIN ..... Special Item Number
SSR ..... Summary Subcontracting Report
TAA ..... Trade Agreements Act
VSC ..... Vendor Support Center

Success is our plan – and you can make it a reality!

4 inch folder flap with 4 slits for business cards folds into this space.
(all notes for reference only, DO NOT PRINT)

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GSA

U.S. Government Services Administration

Administrative Report Card

SAMPLE

Administrative Report Card

Successful!

Contractor's Name: Example Inc.

Contract Number: GS--F---A

Contractor Report Card
Not for Past Performance Evaluation

	Category 1	Answer Selection Options
1	Did the contractor demonstrate compliance with the scope of their contract?	Yes/No
2	Did the contractor demonstrate compliance with the Trade Agreements Act?	Yes/No
3	Is the price list being used by the contractor the current approved price list?	Yes/No
4	Does the contractor have a system in place that substantially identifies, tracks and reports GSA sales accurately and completely?	Yes/No
If #4 "No"	Do contractor sales records match GSA reported sales?	Yes/No
If #4 "No"	If there are dealers, are dealer sales being collected in the contractor's system and included in the 72A report?	Yes/No/NA
5	Is the contractor meeting or exceeding minimum contract sales requirement in accordance with the Contract Sales Criteria clause?	Yes/No
6	Does the contractor have a system in place to monitor the "basis of award" customer discount relationship?	Yes/No
7	Did the contractor charge customers the contract price or lower?	Yes/No
8	Is the contractor complying with the Economic Price Adjustment clause of the contract?	Yes/No/NA
9	If a Commercial or Individual Subcontracting Plan is required, did the contractor meet the goals specified in the plan or is the contractor progressing toward meeting the goals specified in the plan?	Yes/No/ NA/Not Delegated
10	Is the contractor accurately identifying products that have environmental attributes?	Yes/No

The above items are deemed critical. Failure to meet any one (1) of these items will result in a rating of SERIOUS CONCERNS EXIST.

	Category 2	
11	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, are the contractor's Reports of Sales on time?	Yes/No
12	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, has the contractor remitted the Industrial Funding Fee on time?	Yes/No
If #12 "No"	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, is the contractor free of ACO issued claims?	Yes/No
13	Is the contractor up-to-date on GSA*Advantage!®*?	Yes/No

Contractor Report Card
Not for Past Performance Evaluation

	Category 2, continued	Answer Selection Options
14	Is the contractor delivering timely based upon a sampling of orders?	Yes/No/NA
15	Is the contractor honoring warranty terms of the contract?	Yes/No/NA
16	Is the contractor capable of accepting the Government wide Commercial Purchase card?	Yes/No/NA
17	Is the contractor's records location and administrative representative information correct? (e.g., address, phone, fax, e-mail, etc.)	Yes/No
18	Has the contractor complied with Change of Name and/or Novation Agreement requirements?	Yes/No/NA
19	Since the issuance of the most recent Report Card but no more than 36 months back, is the contractor free of cure notices issued by the Schedule Contracting Officer (PCO or ACO)?	Yes/No
20	If there are participating dealers, are the dealers listed and current in the contract pricelist and GSA*Advantage!®*?	Yes/No/NA
21	If the contract has prompt payment discounts, are the prompt payment terms shown on the invoices?	Yes/No/NA

Items in Category 2 are mandatory, but not critical. If all Category 1 items are met: failure in one (1) item in Section 2 will result in a VERY GOOD rating; failure in any two (2) or three (3) items from this section will result in a SATISFACTORY rating; failure to meet four (4) or more items in Category 2 will result in a MARGINAL rating.

	Category 3	
22	Is the contractor being proactive in proposing to add and delete items from the contract?	Yes/No/NA
23	Does the contractor accept credit cards over the micro-purchase threshold?	Yes/No
24	Is the contractor using all applicable e-contracting tools (e.g., e-Mod, e-Buy, ePay)?	Yes/No
25	Does the contractor offer second tier pricing discounts on blanket purchase agreements issued against this contract?	Yes/No/NA
26	If there are contractor teaming arrangements, do these arrangements address how customer service and warranty issues will be resolved?	Yes/No/NA
27	Is the contractor free from bankruptcy proceedings?	Yes/No

EXCEPTIONAL rating: Must be Very Good and no more than one (1) failure in Category 3.

Please contact your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) Jane Doe – (202) 555-1234; jane.doe@gsa.gov, with any questions regarding your Administrative Report Card.