



▶ Maximizing the Speed and Value of IT Acquisitions

- ▶ Information Technology Acquisition Center
- ▶ Group 70 Information Technology Multiple Award Schedule

▶ Maximizing the Speed and Value of IT Acquisitions

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WELCOME

Used correctly, IT products and services can streamline an agency, expedite processes and add capabilities. Coincidentally, these are all qualities of GSA Federal Supply Service's Information Technology Acquisition Center.

Our office exists to help your agency succeed in acquiring the IT services and products you need to succeed at your mission. To do so, we administer the Group 70 Multiple Award Schedules (MAS), contracts that help you maximize the value of your IT purchases, and at the same time streamline the entire process.

This brochure explains how the Group 70 Multiple Award Schedules work. In the first section, we provide information for the buyers of these products and services in federal, state and local agencies (also referred to here as the "customers"). In the second section, we include information specifically for contractors who are listed on the Schedule, or who wish to be. And in the final section, we provide information about resources and contacts that will be useful to all parties involved.

IT Savings, Selection Extended to State and Local Governments!

The E-Government Act of 2002 allows state and local governments to purchase information technology using GSA Schedule 70 contracts. For further information, please refer to the Cooperative Purchasing section on Page 9 of this publication.

Reasons to Shop on Schedule

- ▶ Built-in FAR compliance
- ▶ Meets all competition requirements
- ▶ Prices pre-determined to be fair and reasonable
- ▶ Less paperwork and documentation
- ▶ Simplified on-line ordering
- ▶ Most Favored Customer and Volume Discounts

- ▶ Further price reductions available even on discounted items
- ▶ Expedited Delivery: Many deliveries overnight or within two days
- ▶ Easy Payment Options: Contractors accept Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card

- ▶ Blanket Purchase Agreements save time and money
- ▶ No Commerce Business Daily Synopsis Requirements (GSA has already issued the synopsis)
- ▶ No maximum order limitations
- ▶ Schedule orders may be counted towards meeting small business goals
- ▶ Compliance with environmental requirements for applicable services and products



Focus on Your Mission.

We'll Handle the Details.

Determining an agency's IT needs and selecting the right products or services to meet them is a challenge. But amazingly, that's often the easy part. More difficult is managing the thicket of contracting vehicles, regulations, processes, forms, and contacts necessary to acquire the goods or services once they have been identified and budgeted for.

We Specialize in Making Acquisitions Easier

If you're a contracting officer tasked with IT purchases, you probably have your hands full handling internal customers' requests. That's why at the Federal Supply Service's Information Technology

Acquisition Center, we focus on three key functions:

- ▶ **Maintaining a leading edge understanding of all of the newest technologies, products and services useful to government clients**
- ▶ **Identifying the most reliable contractors, and negotiating flexible contracts with the best prices**
- ▶ **Administering a streamlined, Web-enabled system to allow you to shop for and purchase the products and services that best meet your needs**

A More Effective Path to Best Value

To help you maximize your IT expenditures, we've expanded and improved our entire Group 70 MAS. In fact, the Schedule is now the most comprehensive, convenient IT and telecommunications source anywhere on the Web.

Use any web browser to log onto the IT Acquisition Center homepage (www.gsa.gov/itcenter) and click on Schedules e-Library. Here you can search by product or service category, contract number, contractor name, contractor business size, or even by a specific equipment/service code. You can also link directly to a contractor's FSS price list.

Buying on Schedule lets you avoid administrative costs often associated with open market buying.



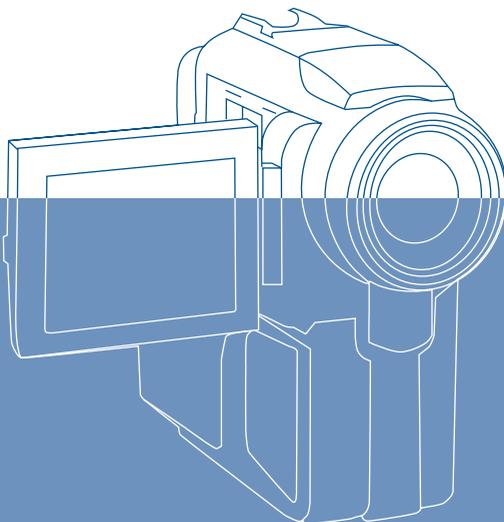
SCHEDULE

Our streamlined acquisition procedures let you respond quickly to seize new opportunities and situations. What's more, our acquisition solutions deliver measurable benefits as well. Specific examples include:

- ▶ **Best Value Pricing** — All of our contracts feature “Most Favored Customer” discounts and access to volume discounts; additional price reductions may be obtained on a case-by-case basis
- ▶ **Expedited Procurement** — Order products right from your desk, using GSA *Advantage!*™ and your Government-wide Commercial Purchase Card
- ▶ **Rapid Delivery** — Many items bought on Schedule can be delivered within days, sometimes even overnight
- ▶ **Fair Terms and Conditions** — Our contracting professionals have already negotiated them for you

Best Value Means Saving Money — and More

Buying on Schedule lets you avoid administrative costs often associated with open market buying. That means no more searching for vendors, developing technical documents, analyzing competitive bids, travel, or contract administration. Best Value also means making your purchasing easier and less time consuming.





Acquisition Services

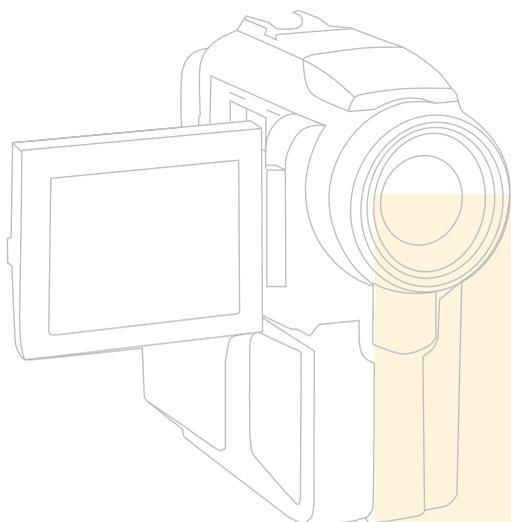
Tailored to Your Needs

The Multiple Award Schedule has become the most widely used acquisition vehicle in government for many reasons. One reason is its Made to Order (MTO) capability, which makes commercial acquisition options available to the federal government. As a result, you can tailor your acquisition to meet your needs, and make the acquisition as rapidly as you like by working with quality commercial companies for services and products.

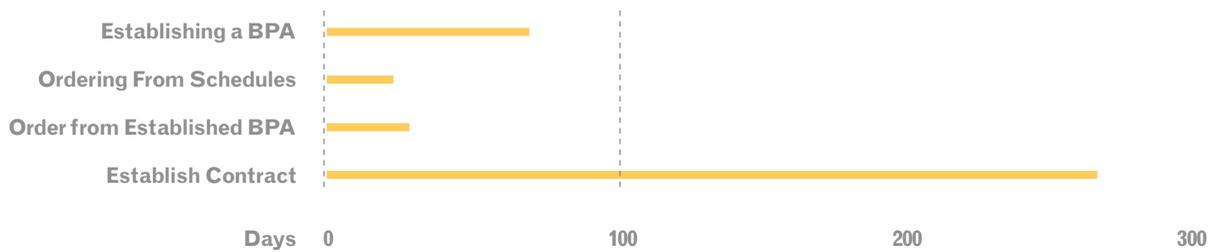
Better yet, even greater price reductions may be available. The Schedule's price reduction clause allows contractors to offer further reductions on a listed price. To see if any are available on your purchase, just ask. Usually, these reductions apply to large-volume purchases, but as a purchaser you're free to negotiate individual price reductions, and contractors are likewise free to offer spot discount pricing.

A Schedule that Grows as Your IT Needs Grow.

The Group 70 MAS includes thousands of companies that are pre-approved to do business with you. In addition, companies listed on Schedule are free to work with dealers, resellers, and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to meet your specialized needs. Consequently, virtually any company you want to deal with is accessible through the Schedule. In addition, companies may submit proposals to be placed the Group 70 MAS at any time. This means that we'll be adding new contractors on a regular basis as they qualify for inclusion.



Speed and Efficiency: Average Time Savings for Federal Supply Service Customers



Adapted from the Johnson & Johnson Associates, Inc. study, "Impact of FAR 8.4 Comparative Analysis of Customer Elapsed-Time Savings," Nov. 13, 1998. (see <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/sched/far-84impact.html>)

DEFLECTION

Blanket Purchase Agreements Save Time and Money

Use the Group 70 MAS to make Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) to save time at every step of acquisition, from shopping to delivery.

How much time can you save? According to a recent independent study, it takes an average of 49 days to establish a BPA under a GSA schedule; 15 days to issue an order under the Schedule; and 13 days to issue an order against a Schedule BPA. In contrast, the ID/IQ agency process takes on average a total of 268 days.

Blanket Purchase Agreements offer an easy, direct, and flexible approach to purchasing option for speeding up procurement — especially if you have ongoing needs or want to combine contractors. With BPAs, you don't need to compare prices, restate requirements, or make separate determinations of fair and reasonable pricing. You may also choose to use multiple BPAs for your purchasing needs. Just be sure to first determine which contractors meet the necessary technical specifications before you establish the BPA, and then follow normal ordering procedures.

We have included a sample BPA in this booklet. Feel free to photocopy this document and use it for setting up BPAs with your Schedule contractor(s).

How to Set Up a BPA

It's surprisingly easy to establish a BPA. You simply need to:

- ▶ Define your agency requirement
- ▶ Estimate your quantities and delivery requirements

- ▶ If your BPA estimate exceeds \$2,500, follow FAR 8.4 ordering procedures - click on *GSA Advantage!* and look at a minimum of three price lists, and be sure to seek price reductions

- ▶ Once your "Best Value" determination is complete, you and the contractor(s) sign the BPA
- ▶ Review the BPA at least annually to ensure that it remains a best value for your agency



Use Contractor Team Arrangements

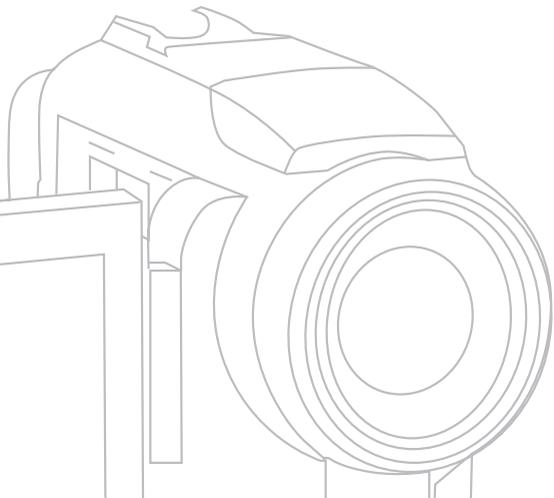
To Acquire “Total Solutions”

As IT technologies and telecommunications expand, they're also converging. In response, many contractors have begun teaming up to offer wider services or more specialized offerings. The IT Schedule (along with other FSS features) accommodates these teaming configurations, and allows your agency to set up BPAs for them. You can even request a total “Teaming Solution” that brings together your own team of contractors, tailor-made for your needs.

Contractor Team Arrangements combined with the Federal Supply Schedule Program provide Federal customers a powerful commercial acquisition strategy. They need not be limited to similar contractors; any number and type of contractors, as long as they are GSA Schedule contract holders, can team together to provide a total solution for you — whether that solution includes products or services, IT or non-IT in nature. For full details and answers to your questions, go to www.gsa.gov/schedules and click on the link for Contractor Team Arrangements.

In the spirit of acquisition reform, all Federal agencies have been encouraged to facilitate innovative contracting/acquisition approaches. Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 1.102 provides Guiding Principles to ensure that the Federal Acquisition System:

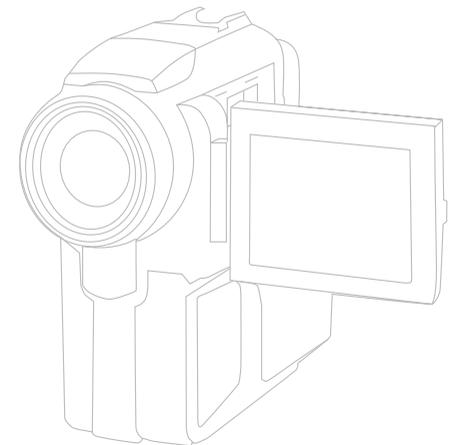
- ▶ **Satisfies its customers in terms of cost, quality, and timeliness of delivery**
- ▶ **Maximizes the use of commercial products and services**
- ▶ **Considers contractors' past performance**
- ▶ **Promotes competition**
- ▶ **Minimizes administrative costs**
- ▶ **Conducts business with integrity, fairness, and openness**
- ▶ **Fulfills public policy objectives**



SOLUTIONS

Each member of an "acquisition team" is to exercise personal initiative and sound business judgment. They are responsible for making acquisition decisions that deliver the best value product or service to meet the customers' needs. FAR 1.102-4 further empowers Government team members to make acquisition decisions within their areas of responsibility including selection, negotiation and administration. The contracting officer has the authority to the maximum extent practical, to determine the application of rules, regulations and policies.

Federal Supply Schedule customers may find more information about this subject in FAR 9.6 - Contractors Team Arrangements. The policy and procedures outlined there provide for more flexibility and allow innovative acquisition methods when using the Federal Supply Schedules. Customers are encouraged to review this section.



A Powerful Acquisitions Solution

Use the Group 70 MAS for:

- ▶ Blanket Purchase Agreements
- ▶ Contractor Teaming Arrangements
- ▶ Streamlined Acquisition Processes
- ▶ Simplified Ordering

- ▶ Best Value Determination
- ▶ Maximum Order Provisions
- ▶ Pre-Negotiated Prices
- ▶ Availability of Further Price Reductions

- ▶ On-line Ordering through *GSA Advantage!*
- ▶ Government Purchase Card Acceptance
- ▶ Expedited Delivery
- And more!



Total Mobile Solutions for Government Agencies

Today's federal workplaces, offices and programs are constantly changing. To accomplish their missions, government employees may need to work in distant locations but still be linked to home office operations.

eirô (short for E-connected Intelligent Remote Operations) is a unique suite of offerings in the FSS Schedules, covering a wide array of wireless services and products that are crucial to a mobile government work force. **eirô** solutions enable you to:

- ▶ **Connect your remote staff wherever they are located**
- ▶ **Seamlessly establish network connected operations when and where you need them**
- ▶ **Bring the latest wireless remote mobile communications and computing advances to your program or office**

In addition to purely functional benefits, **eirô** helps federal agencies meet a variety of legislative requirements and regulations. For example, by facilitating telecommuting work alternatives, an agency can do its part to help reduce commuting and its negative impact on the environment.

At the same time, agencies can make progress in family-friendly work initiatives by seeing to it that working parents have the ability to work from home. While virtually any federal government agency could benefit from **eirô**, specific customers include:

- ▶ **Government travelers**
- ▶ **Telecommuters**
- ▶ **Employees in non-traditional work spaces**
- ▶ **Federal law enforcement officers, emergency relief workers, and other employees requiring electronic interface with their customers (IRS, DoD, etc.)**

eirô has solutions for agencies at any level of mobile sophistication. **eirô** services and products available from FSS Schedules include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ **Evaluating organizational structure**
- ▶ **Conducting needs analysis**
- ▶ **Implementation services**
- ▶ **Education and training**
- ▶ **Human resources support**

- ▶ **Design of appropriate office environments**
- ▶ **Specific IT technology**
- ▶ **And more**

In short, wherever wireless connectivity plays a role, **eirô** can help. By featuring quality expertise for targeted needs, **eirô** provides leveraged business solutions that result in time and process savings. Consider **eirô** as your "one-stop-shop" for cutting edge mobile solutions.

Get Mobile Technology Fast

One of the key advantages of **eirô** is that as part of the Group 70 MAS, acquisition is fast and easy. Once you've found the products or services you need, standard FSS ordering procedures apply. Customers familiar with the ordering process may contact **eirô** contractors directly. Or, if you have questions about services and products available through **eirô**, just call GSA's IT Center Hotline at 703-305-3038 for more information.

Cooperative Purchasing

Means New IT Acquisition Opportunities

The E-Government Act of 2002 included a provision that allows state and local governments and entities to purchase information technology products and services using Schedule 70 contracts. By purchasing through these contracts, state and local customer benefit from leveraged pricing, and can often buy more for less.

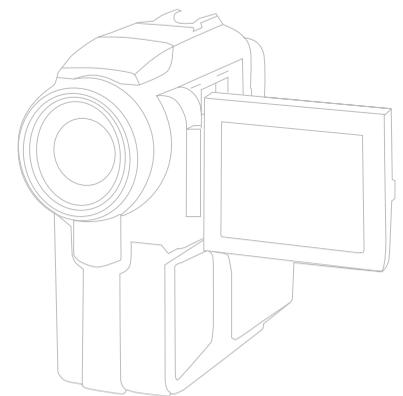
Referred to as the Cooperative Purchasing program, eligible state and local entities include the 50 states, all counties, municipalities, cities, towns, and townships. Tribal governments, public authorities, school districts, colleges, and institutions of higher education are also authorized to use the Group 70 MAS program.

Cooperative purchasing enables states to buy directly from a schedule; therefore, no state contract is needed. State and local preference programs are not waived or otherwise affected by cooperative purchasing. Contractors may accept all state and local government issued credit cards for orders places under Group 70 MAS.

For information on which Schedule contractors participate in this program, visit the Schedules e-Library (www.gsa.gov/elibrary). Participating vendors are designated by a COOP PURCH symbol for easy identification.

IMPORTANT – Because each state has its own procurement regulations and legislation, proper research is required to ensure that all current state/local level acquisition regulations are met. Many states still need to make legislative changes to procurement procedures.

NOTE: An Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) is included in the price of supplies and services available to state and local entities to cover the administrative costs incurred to operate the schedules program.



How Cooperative Purchasing Works

The entire program is voluntary, for you as well as the contractor. Although GSA will assist you in learning how to use Schedule 70, the U.S. Government is not a party in the contract. Exact procedures may vary according to your location, in general Cooperative Purchasing involves you following these steps:

- ▶ **Research your acquisition using GSA's online tools, GSA Advantage! And e-Library**
- ▶ **Tailor requirements to needs without conflicting with existing GSA Terms and Conditions**

- ▶ **Solicit offers from selected contractors**
- ▶ **Evaluate the options and make your selection in accordance with stated evaluation criteria**
- ▶ **Issue/make award/order**
- ▶ **Receive your products or services from the contractor**
- ▶ **Pay the contractor according to your contract**

GSA receives an Industrial Funding Fee directly from the contractor.

Training Available

Visit www.gsa.gov/itcenter and click on the Cooperative Purchasing link under "Other GSA Topics."

If you have additional questions, please call Tom Corcoran at (703) 305-7291.



How to Order through GSA

Services

Refer to the Ordering Procedures for Services section covering executive, administrative and/or professional services.

Ancillary (product-related) services priced at hourly rates or other types of fixed pricing should be purchased using the ordering guidelines of FAR 8.404.

Products

Orders under \$2,500

Place order directly with contractor for the item that best meets your needs.

Orders over \$2500

You must first make a "Best Value" determination, as required by FAR 8.404.

You can do this in either of two ways:

- ▶ Review GSA's electronic ordering system, **GSA Advantage!** at www.gsaAdvantage.gov; or
- ▶ Review three schedule price lists (by visiting **GSA Advantage!** or by consulting additional Schedule contractors' price lists)

To determine "Best Value," consider the following factors:

- ▶ **Special service/product features that are required but not provided by comparable services/products**
- ▶ **Trade-in options**
- ▶ **Probable life of the item selected vs. that of a comparable item**
- ▶ **Warranties**
- ▶ **Maintenance availability**
- ▶ **Past performance**
- ▶ **Environmental and energy efficiency considerations**

Using GSA Advantage!

This on-line electronic ordering system allows customers to search for products, review delivery options, and place orders. To access *GSA Advantage!* —

- ▶ **You must be able to connect to the Internet**
- ▶ **You must have access to a web browser (i.e., Netscape, Internet Explorer)**
- ▶ **Use your web browser to connect to the GSA homepage at www.gsaAdvantage.gov**
- ▶ **Select *GSA Advantage!* On-Line Shopping Service**



SERVICE

When you have completed your Best Value determination, follow these steps:

- ▶ **Request price reductions from Schedule contractor(s) appearing to provide a best value**
- ▶ **Place the order with the Schedule contractor providing the best value**

If you need more information or assistance, e-mail *GSA Advantage!* at gsaAdvantage@gsa.gov, or call 1-877-472-3777. If you are unable to connect to the Internet, contact your GSA Customer Service Director for assistance (see Page 23 of this document).

Purchase Cards

Agencies may make payments for oral or written delivery orders by using the Government Purchase Card, a uniquely numbered GSA SmartPay credit card issued to named individual Government employees or entities for official Government purchases.

Effective March 20, 1998, GSA began requiring Federal Supply Schedule contractors to accept the GSA SmartPay purchase card as a method of payment for acquisitions up to the micro-purchase threshold of \$2,500. The card may be used for payment in excess of this threshold if the using agency and contractor agree. Please note, however, that payments made using the Government SmartPay purchase card ARE NOT eligible for any negotiated prompt payment discounts.

The contractor shall not process a transaction for payment through the credit card clearinghouse until the purchased supplies have been shipped or services performed. Unless the cardholder requests correction or replacement of a defective or faulty item in accordance with other contract requirements, the contractor shall immediately credit a cardholder's account for items returned as defective or faulty.

Information about the GSA Fleet, Travel and Purchase Payment System is available within your agency's written internal operating procedures and on the Internet at www.fss.gsa.gov/services.

Documentation

Minimum documentation is generally all that is required (e.g., contractor's name, item purchased and price paid). Additional documentation is necessary when the requirement is defined to a particular brand name and only for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold (see FAR 8.404(b)(7)).



How to Order through GSA

(continued)

Incidental Items

For your convenience, you may add open market (i.e., non-contract) items to a Federal Supply Schedule BPA or an individual task/delivery order. To do so, you must clearly label the additional items as such on the order, follow all applicable acquisition regulations, and ensure that the price reasonableness has been determined for the open market items.

Environmental Products

After considering price, availability, and performance requirements, some customers may determine that their acquisition needs can best be met by purchasing an EPA-designated item. To accommodate such needs, we have requested our

Schedule contractors to identify such products on their individual catalogs and/or price lists and (wherever possible and/or feasible) identify items that:

- ▶ **Have recycled content (meet EPA-designated item criteria)**
- ▶ **Are energy and/or water-conserving (e.g., Energy Star)**
- ▶ **Have reduced pollutants (e.g., low volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, and are chromate-free)**

Customers should review contractor literature and contact the contractor directly to obtain complete information regarding environmental claims. For more information, please visit www.gsa.gov/environment.

Variable Contract Periods

Generally, Federal Supply Schedules do not have prescribed beginning or ending dates. Rather, the schedule periods are continuous and feature contracts with periods that commence on the Date of Award (DOA) and expire in five years (exclusive of any options) from the DOA.

Leasing

Equipment offered on a Federal Supply Schedule may be leased. Guidelines for leasing include:

- ▶ **Once you have selected the equipment you require, you must determine whether it is more advantageous to lease or purchase it. Your contracting officer should compare the leasing terms offered by the third-party leasing companies in the Schedule as well as those offered by the Schedule equipment sellers. For example, except for Lease to Ownership (LTOP) arrangements, most IT leases require the ordering agency and the leasing contractor to determine the market value of the equipment at the end of the lease term (i.e., its residual value) as part of the initial lease agreement. After you have selected the best leasing terms, your contracting officer should compare the advantages of leasing to those of direct purchase. The Office of Management and Budget offers guidance for how to conduct an economic analysis to compare the economic impact of leasing vs. purchasing (see OMB Circular A-94, par. 13, available at: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars).**

- ▶ **Leasing requires your agency's commitment to all the terms and conditions of the lease. If your agency's annual appropriations process requires issuing supplemental funding documents, please be sure your procurement and accounting systems are capable of generating the required documents in a timely fashion. Customers should also submit "renewal delivery orders" in a timely manner to ensure that their lease does not expire.**

Canceling or Terminating a Lease

Court decisions have held that termination for convenience should only be employed when the agency no longer has a requirement for the equipment. For example, if an employee retires and the position will not be filled, there may be equipment that is no longer needed. In such a case, termination of a lease for that equipment could be appropriate. However, a desire for something that is merely different, newer, or better is not a justification for the premature cancellation of a lease. Your agency should only cancel a lease for lack of funds in the event that your organization itself is no longer funded.

Authorized Users

The agencies and activities described below may use contracts established under this Federal Supply Schedule:

- ▶ **All federal agencies and activities in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches**
- ▶ **Government contractors authorized in writing by a federal agency pursuant to 48 CFR 51.1**
- ▶ **Mixed-ownership Government corporations (as defined in the Government Corporation Control Act)**
- ▶ **The Government of the District of Columbia**
- ▶ **Other activities and organizations authorized by statute or regulation to use GSA as a source of supply**

Customer questions regarding activities authorized to use this schedule should be directed to Customer Relations contact point identified on Page 24.

We're Here to Help

For further assistance in ordering with **GSA Advantage!**, call:

General Customer Service
Tel: (703) 305-3038
IT.Center@gsa.gov

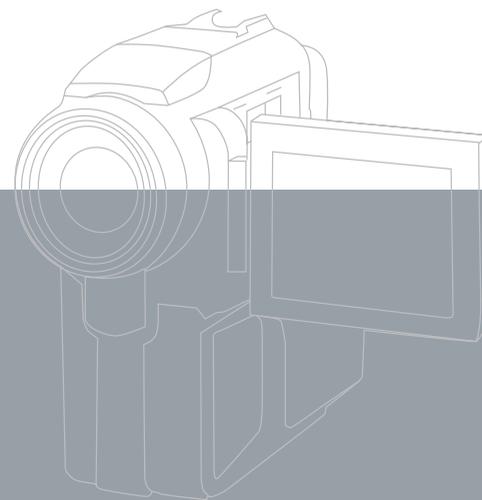
Customer Service Advocate
General Services Administration
Federal Supply Service
IT Acquisition Center
1941 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202

Antoinette Scott
Tel: (703) 605-0526
Fax: (703) 308-1445
antoinette.scott@gsa.gov

To request copies of schedules, customers should contact:

General Services Administration
Centralized Mailing List Service
Warehouse 9, Southend
501 West Felix Street
Fort Worth, TX 76115

Tel: (817) 334-5215
Fax: (817) 334-5227
cmls.gsa@gsa.gov





How to Order through GSA

(continued)

Geographic Coverage

All Federal Supply Schedules provide contractors the opportunity to offer worldwide coverage. Schedule contractors have three categories of geographic coverage to offer:

- ▶ **Domestic:** covers delivery to the 48 contiguous states; Washington, DC; Alaska; Hawaii and Puerto Rico
- ▶ **Worldwide:** covers delivery domestically AND overseas
- ▶ **Overseas Only:** covers delivery to overseas destinations other than Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico

Trade-Ins

Trade-ins will be considered against the purchase of new equipment and will be used in determining that your purchase represents the “best value” and results in the lowest overall cost alternative (considering price, special features, administrative costs, etc.) (see FAR 8.404). If equipment was traded in as part of the purchase arrangement, the documentation

should show the type, brand and value of the equipment exchanged. Trade-ins should comply with provisions of the Federal Property Management Regulations 101-46.

Performance Incentives

When performance is a critical factor in meeting your agency’s mission, you can use performance incentives and award fees to motivate and reward Schedule contractors. Just come to an agreement with your contractor on the incentives that relate to the achievement of specific and objectively measurable targets.

Performance-Based Ordering

We encourage you to use performance-based statements of work to clearly describe the end results you need when making your purchases. Then, the schedule contractor will respond with the best solution to meet your needs. When used together with performance incentives, performance-based ordering reduces your overall administrative burden.

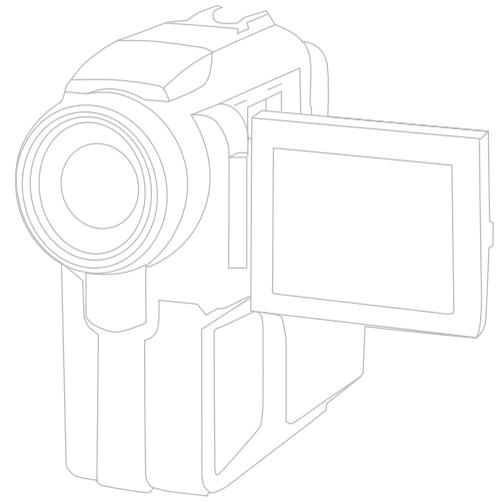
Ordering Procedures for Services

(Executive, Administrative and/or Professional)

Procedures for Services Priced on GSA Schedules at Hourly Rates

FAR 8.402 contemplates that GSA may occasionally find it necessary to establish special ordering procedures for individual Federal Supply Schedules or for some Special Item Numbers (SINs) within a Schedule. GSA has established special ordering procedures for services that are priced on Schedule at hourly rates. These special ordering procedures take precedence over the procedures in FAR 8.404.

GSA has determined that the rates for services contained in the contractor’s price list applicable to this Schedule are fair and reasonable. However, the ordering office using this contract is responsible for considering the level of effort and mix of labor proposed to perform a specific task being ordered and for making a determination that the total firm-fixed price or ceiling price is fair and reasonable.



PERFORMANCE

(a) When ordering services, ordering offices shall—

(1) Prepare a Request for Quotes:

(i) A performance-based statement of work that outlines, at a minimum, the work to be performed, location of work, period of performance, deliverable schedule, applicable standards, acceptance criteria, and any special requirements (i.e., security clearances, travel, special knowledge, etc.) should be prepared.

(ii) A request for quotes should be prepared which includes the performance-based statement of work and requests the contractors to submit either a firm-fixed price or a ceiling price to provide the services outlined in the statement of work. A firm-fixed price order shall be requested, unless the ordering office makes a determination that it is not

possible at the time of placing the order to estimate accurately the extent or duration of the work or to anticipate cost with any reasonable degree of confidence. When such a determination is made, a labor hour or time-and-materials proposal may be requested. The firm-fixed price shall be based on the hourly rates in the schedule contract and shall consider the mix of labor categories and level of effort required to perform the services described in the statement of work. The firm-fixed price of the order should also include any travel costs or other incidental costs related to performance of the services ordered, unless the order provides for reimbursement of travel costs at the rates provided in the Federal Travel or Joint Travel Regulations. A ceiling price must be established for labor-hour and time-and-materials orders.

(iii) The request for quotes may request the contractors, if necessary or appropriate, to submit a project plan for performing the task and information on the contractor's experience and/or past performance performing similar tasks.

(iv) The request for quotes shall notify the contractors what basis will be used for selecting the contractor to receive the order. The notice shall include the basis for determining whether the contractors are technically qualified and provide an explanation regarding the intended use of any experience and/or past performance information in determining technical acceptability of responses.



How to Order through GSA

(continued)

Ordering Procedures for Services

(continued)

- (2) Transmit the Request for Quotes to Contractors:
 - (i) Based upon an initial evaluation of catalogs and price lists, the ordering office should identify the contractors that appear to offer the best value (considering the scope of services offered, hourly rates and other factors such as contractors' locations, as appropriate).
 - (ii) The request for quotes should be provided to three (3) contractors if the proposed order is estimated to exceed the micro-purchase threshold, but not exceed the maximum order threshold. For proposed orders exceeding the maximum order threshold, the request for proposal should be provided to

additional contractors that offer services that will meet the agency's needs. Ordering offices should strive to minimize the contractors' costs associated with responding to requests for quotes for specific orders. Requests should be tailored to the minimum level necessary for adequate evaluation and selection for order placement. Oral presentations should be considered, when possible.

(3) Evaluate Quotes and Select the Contractor to Receive the Order:

After responses have been evaluated against the factors identified in the request for quotes, the order should be placed with the schedule contractor that represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative (considering price, special qualifications, administrative costs, etc.) to meet the Government's needs.

- (b) The establishment of Federal Supply Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) for recurring services is permitted when the procedures outlined herein are followed. All BPAs for services must define the services that may be ordered under the BPA, along with delivery or performance time frames, billing procedures, etc. The potential volume of orders under BPAs, regardless of the size of individual orders, may offer the ordering office the opportunity to secure volume discounts. When establishing BPAs ordering offices shall—
 - (1) Inform contractors in the request for quotes (based on the agency's requirement) if a single BPA or multiple BPAs will be established, and indicate the basis that will be used for selecting the contractors to be awarded the BPAs.



- (i) **SINGLE BPA:** Generally, a single BPA should be established when the ordering office can define the tasks to be ordered under the BPA and establish a firmfixed price or ceiling price for individual tasks or services to be ordered. When this occurs, authorized users may place the order directly under the established BPA when the need for service arises. The schedule contractor that represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs should be awarded the BPA.
- (ii) **MULTIPLE BPAs:** When the ordering office determines multiple BPAs are needed to meet its requirements, the ordering office should determine which contractors can meet any technical qualifications before establishing the BPAs. When multiple BPAs are established, the authorized users must follow the procedures in (a)(2)(ii) above and then place the order with the Schedule contractor that represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs.
- (2) **Review BPAs Periodically:**

Such reviews shall be conducted at least annually. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the BPA still represents the best value (considering price, special qualifications, etc.) and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs.
- (c) The ordering office should give preference to small business concerns when two or more contractors can provide the services at the same firm-fixed price or ceiling price.
- (d) When the ordering office's requirement involves both products as well as executive, administrative and/or professional, services, the ordering office should total the prices for the products and the firm-fixed price for the services and select the contractor that represents the greatest value in terms of meeting the agency's total needs.
- (e) The ordering office, at a minimum, should document orders by identifying the contractor from which the services were purchased, the services purchased, and the amount paid. If other than a firm-fixed price order is placed, such documentation should include the basis for the determination to use a labor-hour or time-and-materials order. For agency requirements in excess of the micropurchase threshold, the order file should document the evaluation of Schedule contractors' quotes that formed the basis for the selection of the contractor that received the order and the rationale for any trade-offs made in making the selection.



Information for Contractors

www.gsa.gov/itcenter

GSA's Federal Supply Schedules, also known as Multiple Award Schedules (MAS), are contracts that allow federal customers to acquire more than 4 million services and products directly from more than 8,600 commercial suppliers.

GSA Schedules cover a vast array of commercial items — from office supplies and copier paper to systems furniture, from computers to laboratory equipment, and services ranging from accounting to graphic design to landscaping. Customers can order services and products using the *GSA Advantage!* online ordering system.

Within this broad range of contracts, Group 70 MAS focus on products and services in the field of IT and telecommunications.

The Group 70 MAS was designed to meet the IT acquisition needs of federal government agencies, and now the schedule is available to an even larger customer base at the state and local levels as well (see Cooperative Purchasing, Page 9). At the same time, Group 70 MAS is intended to streamline access to government customers for approved vendors.

How to Become a GSA Contractor

To become a GSA Schedule contractor, a vendor must first submit an offer in response to an applicable GSA Schedule solicitation. GSA awards contracts to responsible companies that offer commercial items falling within the generic descriptions in the GSA Schedule solicitations.

GSA Contracting Officers determine whether prices are fair and reasonable by comparing the prices/discounts that a company offers the government with those that the company offers to its commercial customers. This negotiation objective is commonly known as "most favored customer" pricing. To make this comparison, GSA requires offerors to provide commercial price lists and disclose information regarding their pricing/discounting practices.

To get started, download and review the solicitation by visiting <http://www.gsa.gov/schedule70solicitation>.

Creating Opportunities for Small Businesses

The General Services Administration and the Small Business Administration (SBA) strongly support the participation of small business concerns in the Federal Supply Schedules Program. To enhance small business participation, SBA policy (for details visit: www.sba.gov) allows agencies to include in their procurement base and goals the dollar value of orders expected to be placed against the Federal Supply Schedules, and to report accomplishments against these goals.

This information should be used as a tool to assist ordering activities in meeting or exceeding established small business goals. It should also encourage consideration of small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small businesses when making a best value determination.

Basic Guidelines for Using Contractor Team Arrangements

Federal Supply Schedule contractors may use “Contractor Team Arrangements” (see FAR 9.6) to provide solutions when responding to a customer agency’s requirements. These team arrangements can be included under Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs), which are permitted under all Federal Supply Schedule contracts.

Orders under a team arrangement are subject to terms and conditions of the Federal Supply Schedule contract. Participation in a team arrangement is limited to Federal Supply Schedule contractors.

In general, here is how a contractor team arrangement works:

- ▶ **The customer identifies their requirements**
- ▶ **Federal Supply Schedule contractors may individually meet the customer’s needs, or may submit a Schedules “Team Solution” to meet the customer’s requirement**
- ▶ **Customers make a best value determination and award**

For more information contact:

www.gsa.gov/schedules

Tel: (703) 305-6566

Fax: (703) 305-6594

Easily Keep Up with What’s New

Things are always changing in the government IT purchasing world. There is an easy way to keep well informed of everything that’s new. Simply visit www.gsa.gov/schedules. Below is just a brief sampling of the topics you can explore.

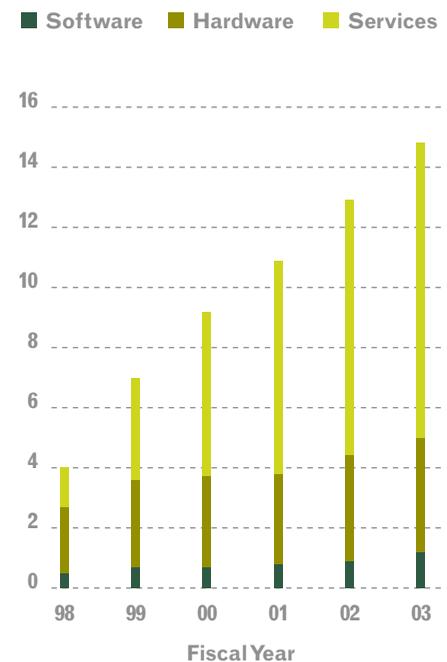
- ▶ **Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act***
- ▶ **Corporate contracts**
- ▶ **Free training on GSA Advantage! for industry**
- ▶ **Ordering procedures for services**
- ▶ **SBA goals**
- ▶ **Schedules e-Library**
- ▶ **Impact of FAR 8.4 – Comparative Analysis of Customer Elapsed Time Savings (downloadable PDF)**
- ▶ **Multiple Award Schedule Program Owner’s Manual (downloadable PDF)**
- ▶ **Schedule news and events**
- ▶ **Customer Assistance Guide**
- ▶ **Wheel of Services Brochure**
- ▶ **Legal Corner**
- ▶ **Best practices**

***Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act** requires — as of June 21, 2001 — that federal agencies make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. For questions and answers regarding Section 508 visit www.section508.gov and click on the related links.

Need Copies of Schedules?

To request copies of schedules, vendors must contact the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-488-3111.

Growth in Schedule 70 Sales, 1998-2003 – in Billions of Dollars



Definitions

Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) — A listing of contracts awarded by GSA. GSA awards contracts to multiple companies supplying comparable services and products.

Schedule — A grouping of GSA contracts with similar traits, awarded under the same set of standard terms and conditions, i.e. Information Technology Schedule 70.

Solicitation — Standard set of terms and conditions used by GSA to establish MAS contracts. The schedule 70 solicitation is a standing solicitation with no closing date.

Special Item Number (SIN) — Classification used in GSA MAS contracts to distinguish different categories of products and services under each schedule.

Offers — A proposal by one person or entity to another that is intended to create legal relations on acceptance by the person or entity to whom it is made.

Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) — A simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for services and supplies. They are “accounts” established with Schedule contractors by customers.

Request for Quote (RFQ) — A request for pricing and additional information to successfully fulfill a specific statement of work.

Best Value — Process used to select services or products to meet your needs.

Best Value determinations ensure good business decisions by the use of factors other than price, such as training, technical qualifications, probable life, etc.

Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (ID/IQ) — Contracts that do not specify an exact amount or time or delivery. All MAS are ID/IQ.

Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) — 0.75% fee on all quarterly sales that is included in contract pricing and must be reported and remitted to GSA quarterly.

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) — Series of laws and regulations, regulating all Federal acquisitions and procurement.



Resources for Customers and Contractors

e-Tools

The GSA suite of online tools described below allow federal customers to conduct market research, obtain quotes, and purchase millions of products and services available under the GSA Multiple Award Schedules Program. In addition, they provide a marketing venue for participating vendors, on which they can post product, pricing, and contact information, learn of customers who are seeking quotes, and more. Together, they put the power of Internet shopping and purchasing to work ... and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

www.gsa.gov/elibrary

Schedules e-Library is the online source for the latest information on GSA and VA Federal Supply Schedule contract awards. Schedules e-Library provides information on those suppliers with contracts and the millions of products and services they offer. Customers can search this data by Schedule contractor's name, contract number, Special Item Number (SIN), Schedule Number, or keyword.

www.gsaAdvantage.gov

GSA Advantage! is the online shopping and ordering system that provides fast and easy access to thousands of GSA contractors and millions of services and products. Although anyone may browse the site, only federal government employees with governmentwide SmartPay purchase cards or GSA Activity Address Codes may shop here. This online tool lets customers compare prices, features, and terms — and find the right product at the right price, delivered when they need it. Customers can even shop from overseas!

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www.gsa.gov/ebuy

e-Buy, part of *GSA Advantage!*, is an online Request for Quote (RFQ) tool that facilitates the process of soliciting quotes for the wide range of commercial services and products offered by GSA Federal Supply Schedule contractors. For buyers, e-Buy maximizes purchasing power by increasing Schedule contractor participation in the bidding process, resulting in best value purchase decisions. For Schedule contractors, e-Buy provides greater opportunities to learn of customers who need their products and services — and provides a fast and streamlined method for submitting quotes.

How e-Buy Works

Using the e-Buy system, buyers in federal agencies (and other federal governmental organizations) may prepare and post RFQs for specific services and products for a designated period of time. Buyers indicate a Federal Supply Schedule SIN category for each RFQ, a designation that determines which Schedule contractors may receive e-mail notification of the RFQ.

Only those contractors who have submitted catalogs for inclusion in *GSA Advantage!* may participate in e-Buy and receive requests for quotes. If they have done so, they are automatically listed under their awarded SIN categories. Buyers may notify all sellers listed under a particular SIN

category or may choose to notify a smaller number of sellers. (FAR 8.4 and the Ordering Procedures for Services require buyers to obtain three or more quotes for purchases over the micro-purchase threshold.)

Contractors not notified may still submit a quote for an RFQ placed under their awarded SIN. It is advisable to check the e-Buy site daily for RFQ opportunities since e-mail notification is not guaranteed. Contractors who wish to submit quotes must do so via e-Buy. Once an RFQ has closed, buyers then evaluate and accept the quote that represents the best value. Buyers may then issue an order to any contractor whose quote was accepted.



Resources for Customers and Contractors (continued)

Government buyers with accounts on *GSA Advantage!* may use e-Buy by logging in through *GSA Advantage!*. Buyers who shop *GSA Advantage!* may also designate specific services and products in their shopping carts to be posted to e-Buy for quotes prior to purchase. Buyers may also attach any documents (such as a Statement of Work) to their RFQs. This is especially useful for services.

Contractors must login at the Vendor Support Center to use e-Buy. Contractors' quotes are not visible to other Schedule contractors; only the buyer can view contractor names and quotes.

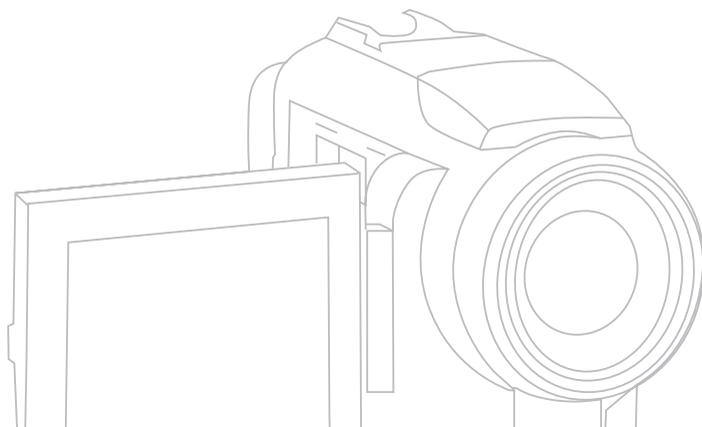
Contractors may not include open market items in their quotes. They may, however, include an attachment with their quotes, and are permitted to contact the buyer via e-mail if clarification is needed.

e-Tools Training

In order to assist customers, contractors, and employees in receiving the latest information about these online tools, GSA is providing a series of training materials, marketing tools, and statistical data which may be viewed or downloaded by visiting www.gsa.gov and clicking on one of the items under the e-Tools menu.

Assistance and Training for Customers and Contractors

GSA Customer Service Directors can help you with specialized training on any or all of the GSA e-Tools. To find a Customer Service Director in your area, please visit www.gsa.gov/fss and click on the "Office of Marketing." From there, click on "Customer Service Directors" to find the one nearest to you.





The Information Technology Industry Government Council

To maximize the value of government IT commerce among all parties concerned, we have established a broad-based group called the Information Technology Industry Government Council. The Council's mission is to foster the growth and use of the IT Acquisition Center's Group 70 MAS programs and partnership among the GSA, other governmental entities, and industry.

The Council is comprised of representatives from the buyers' side (including FSS, Federal, state, and local governments) and that of our business partners (including vendors on the Schedule). Council positions are decided upon through an application process once every three years. Industry members must be Schedule 70 holders, although some exceptions apply.

The Council meets on a quarterly basis to educate, research and develop, promote and market the Schedules program,

establish best practices, and provide an open forum for communication. Other activities are underway on a committee level, including initiatives in e-Tools, teaming/subcontracting, cooperative purchasing, and training, education, and communication. The Council serves strictly in an advisory capacity only. It does not create or establish policy or new programs for the IT Acquisition Center. For more information, please contact Lindsay Levine at lindsay.levine@gsa.gov.

"The use of Schedule 70 allows us the luxury of gaining the benefits of competition in a streamlined environment, critical to a new agency seeking to meet mission critical requirements. The large number of premier contractors available on Schedule 70 allows us the ability to acquire goods and services from the leaders in the industry at the best value to our agency. Program officials appreciate the shortened procurement process enabling them to accomplish their program goals. We go to the schedules as a first choice when developing our acquisition strategies."

— Daryl Shall, Contracting Officer and TSA Infrastructure Division Director.

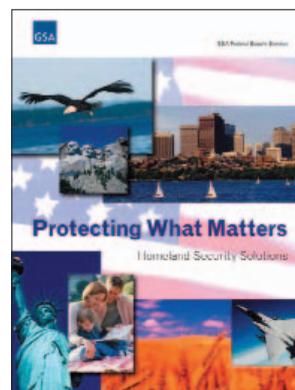
Supporting Homeland Security Efforts

GSA is dedicated to supporting the nation's Homeland Security Efforts, as are the contractors listed on Schedule. Together, we have the people and contracts in place to provide expert Homeland Security solutions for any agency.

For more information about services and products or to order the new, free catalog, "Protecting What Matters – Homeland Security Solutions," (Publication Code 5-3-00175), please call (866) GSA-1177, or contact:

U.S. General Services Administration
Centralized Mailing List Services
e-mail: cmls@gsa.gov

New Publication — Available FREE!



Contact Numbers for the Federal Supply Service IT Acquisition Center

GENERAL INFORMATION

IT.Center@gsa.gov
(703) 305-3038

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(703) 305-5492

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(703) 605-0522

Antoinette Scott
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(703) 605-0526

CONTRACT OFFERS PENDING

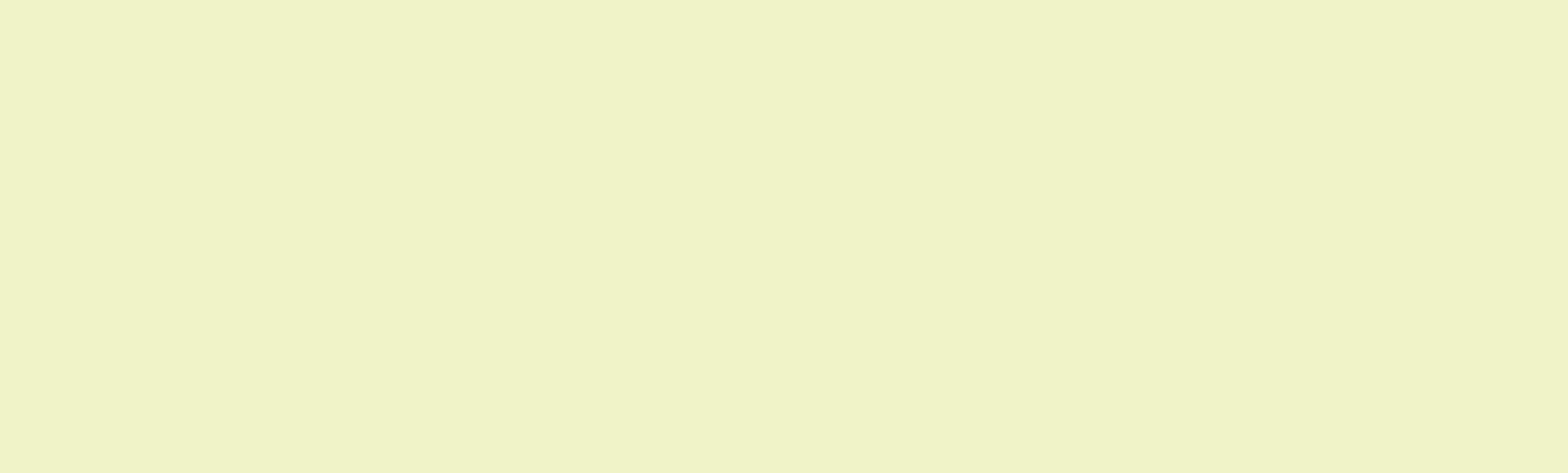
Pam Rodgers
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FOIA

Theresa McGill
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(703) 305-6164

WEBSITE CONTENT

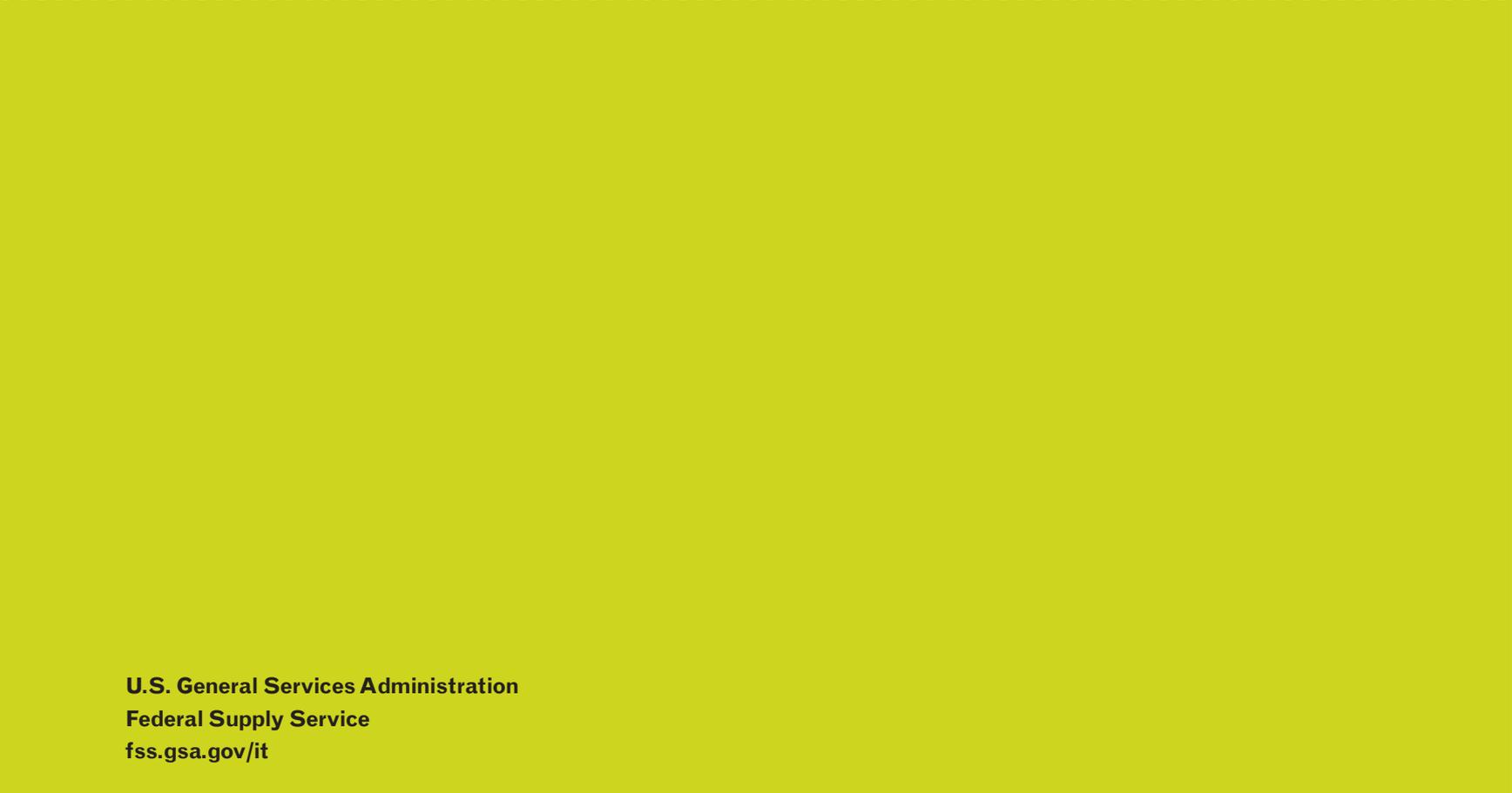
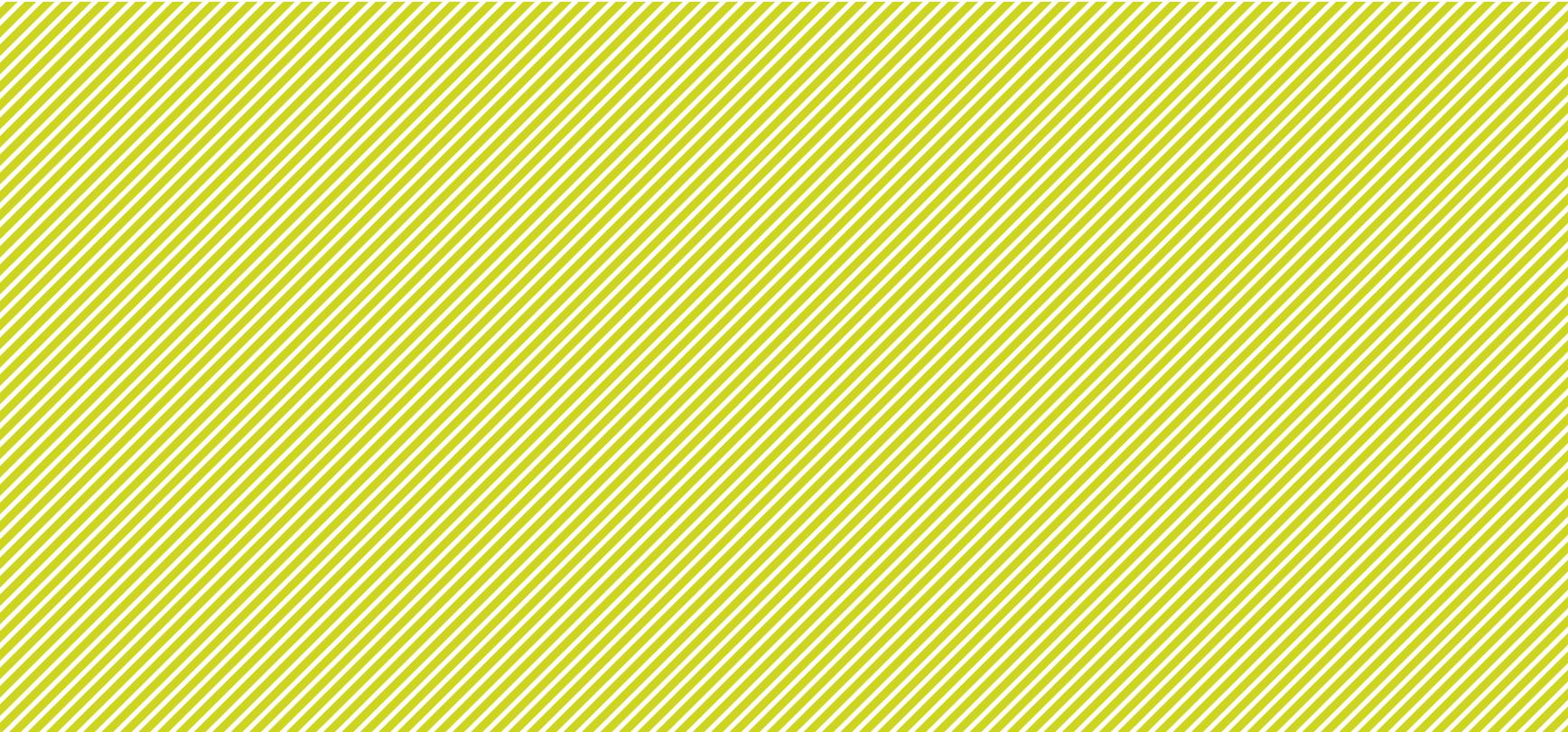
David Orcutt
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fss.gsa.gov/it



Smarter Solutions



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Federal Recycling Program
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▶ Contract Award Fax Request

▶ Group 70 Information Technology Multiple Award Schedule

▶ fss.gsa.gov/it

Request For Contract Award Information

Customers requesting contract award information (i.e., list of Contractors) should fill in the following information.

Fax the request to: 703.308.4168

Customer Name _____

Fax Number _____

Mailing Address _____

Contract award information requested for

Schedule Number: _____

or Special Item Number: _____





▶ Best Value Blanket Purchase Agreement

▶ Group 70 Information Technology Multiple Award Schedule ▶ fss.gsa.gov/it

(Insert Customer Name)

In the spirit of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (Agency) _____ and (Contractor) _____ enter into a cooperative agreement to further reduce the administrative costs of acquiring commercial items from the General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule Contract(s) _____.

Federal Supply Schedule contract BPAs eliminate contracting and open market costs such as: the search for sources; the development of technical documents and solicitations; and the evaluation of bids and offers. Contractor Team Arrangements are permitted with Federal Supply Schedule contractors in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 9.6.

This BPA will further decrease costs, reduce paperwork and save time by eliminating the need for repetitive, individual purchases from the Schedule contract. The end result is to create a purchasing mechanism for the Government that works better and costs less.

Signatures:

	Date		Date
Agency		Contractor	

Blanket Purchase Agreement

BPA Number _____ **(CUSTOMER NAME)** _____
Pursuant to GSA Federal Supply Schedule Contract Number(s) _____, Blanket Purchase Agreements, the Contractor agrees to the following terms of a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) EXCLUSIVELY WITH (Ordering Agency) :

(1) The following contract services/products can be ordered under this BPA. All orders placed against this BPA are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract, except as noted below:

Item (Model/Part Number or Type of Service):	Special BPA Discount Price:

(2) Delivery Destination:	Delivery Schedule/Dates:

- (3) The Government estimates, but does not guarantee, that the volume of purchases through this agreement will be _____.
- (4) This BPA does not obligate any funds.
- (5) This BPA expires on _____ or at the end of the contract period, whichever is earlier.
- (6) The following office(s) is hereby authorized to place orders under this BPA:

- Office Point of Contact** _____
- (7) Orders will be placed against this BPA via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), FAX, paper, or oral communications.
 - (8) Unless otherwise agreed to, all deliveries under this BPA must be accompanied by delivery tickets or sales slips that must contain the following information as a minimum: (a) Name of Contractor; (b) Contract Number; (c) BPA Number; (d) Model Number or National Stock Number (NSN); (e) Task/Delivery Order Number; (f) Date of Purchase; (g) Quantity, Unit Price, and Extension of Each Item (unit prices and extensions need not be shown when incompatible with the use of automated systems; provided, that the invoice is itemized to show the information); and (h) Date of Shipment.
 - (9) The requirements of a proper invoice are as specified in the Federal Supply Schedule contract. Invoices will be submitted to the address specified within the task/delivery order transmission issued against this BPA.
 - (10) The terms and conditions included in this BPA apply to all purchases made pursuant to it. In the event of an inconsistency between the provisions of this BPA and the Contractor's invoice, the provisions of this BPA will take precedence.

***IMPORTANT** — A new feature to the Federal Supply Schedules Program permits contractors to offer price reductions in accordance with commercial practice. Contractor Team Arrangements are permitted with Federal Supply Schedule contractors in accordance with FAR Subpart 9.6.