

Management Services Center News You Can Use

October 2012

We hope you are enjoying this new electronic format of the Management Services Center (MSC) quarterly newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you current on changes to the schedules managed by the MSC and provide information to help you be successful. Please let us know if there are any topics that you would like to see addressed in upcoming newsletters. If you do have ideas or suggestions that you would like to see in the Newsletter, please send that information to Staci Oetting at staci.oetting@gsa.gov.

News Articles:

- [Agency Advocate Information](#)
- [How does Ebuy work?](#)
- [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- [MSC Modification Instructions](#)

Agency Assistance is Available

If you have an agency that needs assistance in understanding GSA Schedules or has a question, here are two points of contact to assist the agency:

Tony Cecchi, (253) 931-7258, Anthony.cecchi@gsa.gov
Maureen Duckworth, (253) 931-7514, Maureen.duckworth@gsa.gov

Maureen and Tony can:

Answer contracting questions,
Provide scope reviews on task orders,
Provide FAR references,
Walk agency staff through eLibrary and other on-line resources,
do Requests For Information,
answer procedure questions, etc.

Please share these POCs and their contact information with as many agencies as possible. When an agency clearly understands the power of the Schedule and the ease of use, Schedule usage is routine.

Myths and Facts that Affect Schedule Sales

Federal agencies often avoid GSA Schedules due to misunderstanding the Schedules program. You can increase the chance of a sale by providing the agency with important facts about the Schedules program. Here are some common misconceptions and real answers:

1. Myth - There is a maximum dollar amount for each task.

Fact – There is no limit on the dollar amount for Schedule procurement.

-Maximum Order (MO) is a term appropriate to orders for products – the company has the ability to turn down an order above the MO (A small vendor gets an order for \$1.5M worth of pencils. She doesn't have that many pencils so she turns down the order.)

-The agency is obliged to follow the rules related to the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) which means they must request a discount if the task is estimated to be over \$150K (the current SAT). The vendor does not have to provide a discount but often does for large tasks. Services are different than products because the vendors bid on a task (products are just ordered) and wouldn't bid on a task they did not want.

2. Myth – A contractor cannot bid beyond his current award period.

Fact – Schedule contracts are awarded in a base period of 5 years with 3 options of 5 years each option.

Contractors are often legally sending in quotes (and being awarded tasks) beyond the current awarded period. In the case of a general Schedule contract, an option is usually awarded if a company has qualifying sales (if they have a contract with an agency they have qualifying sales) and no performance problems. Once a task has been awarded, the agency will verify that the GSA Schedule contract is still in effect prior to award of a task option. If an agency representative would like confirmation on the health of the contract and/or the option award they are encouraged to contact the GSA Contracting Officer for that contract.

3. Myth – There is an additional fee to use the contract.

Fact – The established prices in each GSA contract already include a fee of .75 of one percent that is paid by the contractor (to GSA) after payment is received from the agency. In the usual case of an agency handling its own task order – no other fee is incurred.

If an agency asks GSA to perform contracting/management services (rather than being done by the agency) a fee is charged. GSA calls this 'Assisted Services'. Assisted Services can range from writing the task order to paying and managing the contractor performance. The complexity of the services requested will drive the fee. The fee is negotiated between GSA Assisted Services staff and the agency.

4. Myth – A subcontractor needs to have a GSA contract

Fact – A subcontractor has no privity with the federal government in a Schedule procurement. There is no requirement for any sort of a relationship to GSA in order to be a subcontractor. The prime contractor is completely responsible for the work and payment of the subcontractor.

5. Myth – An agency should accept a quote from a company that can do the work even if the company is not awarded that particular Special Item Number (SIN).

Fact - The Request For Quote (RFQ) identifies a SIN that is required. Only the companies awarded that SIN are eligible to send quotes on that task. Companies that have not been awarded that SIN have not been successfully screened for past performance for the scope of work.

e-Buy is an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool that can be used to create RFQ submissions for Schedule supplies and services on GSA Advantage!

[How Does eBuy Work?](#)

Using the [eBuy](#) system, federal agency (buyers) may prepare and post Requests for Quotations (RFQs) for specific supplies (products) and services offered under GSA Schedules.

Each RFQ is posted in the eBuy system for a designated period of time, and is assigned to a GSA Schedule Special Item Number (SIN) category by the buyer. The category assignment determines which Schedule (contractors) may receive the email notice to submit quotations. Contractors are automatically listed under their awarded SINs or functional categories.

For GSA Schedules, buyers may notify all sellers listed under a particular SIN category, or may choose to notify a lesser number of sellers. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\) 8.405](#) stipulates that buyers must provide the RFQ to at least three Schedule contractors for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold. Contractors not notified may still submit a quotation for an RFQ placed under their awarded SINs.

Once an RFQ has closed, buyers may then evaluate and accept the quotation that represents the best value. Buyers may then issue an order to any contractor whose quotation was accepted.

More About Buyers

Government users who have an account on *GSA Advantage!*[®] may use eBuy.

Buyers who shop *GSA Advantage!*[®] may also designate specific supplies and services in their shopping carts to be posted to eBuy for quotations prior to purchase.

Buyers may attach any documents (such as a Statement of Work) to their RFQs. The ability to attach documents is particularly useful when the requirement is for services.

More About Sellers

GSA Schedule contractors are advised to check the eBuy site each day for RFQ opportunities, since email notification is only going to the companies elected by the agency. Any company, awarded that SIN, may submit a quote with or without an email notice.

Contractors not notified may still submit a quotation for an RFQ placed under their awarded SIN.

Contractors who wish to submit quotations must do so at the eBuy website. All contractors must register with the [Vendor Support Center \(VSC\)](#) to participate in eBuy and receive RFQs.

GSA Schedule contractors who have their catalogs posted to *GSA Advantage!*[®] are eligible to submit quotations through eBuy. Contractors are automatically registered in eBuy under their awarded SINs.

Contractors' quotations are not visible to other contractors. Only the buyer can view contractor names and quotations.

Contractors may include attachments with their quotations. Open market items, however, may not be included in their quotations. If clarifications are needed, contractors may contact the buyer via email.

There is an e-Buy Training session that takes about 10 minutes. All you need to get started is your Contract number and Password as provided by the Vendor Support Center, vendor.support@gsa.gov.

Benefits to Schedule/Technology Contractors

eBuy provides a variety of benefits to [GSA Schedule](#) and Technology contractors:

- Maximizes the opportunities for contractors' participation by notifying them of new government requirements for their specific supplies (products) or services;
- Saves contractors money by reducing the cost of finding government business opportunities and reducing lead time and cost to submit quotations;
- Provides an interactive capability for contractors to communicate requirements and quotations via the web and email;
- Helps contractors establish new business relationships as new opportunities are discovered;
- Provides a fast, efficient, and easy-to-use electronic Request for Quotation (RFQ) system that streamlines the acquisition process;
- Increases sales potential by making contractors more aware of new business opportunities;
- Provides valuable information on the federal marketplace, allowing contractors to expand their customer bases;
- Provides valuable information on state and local government requirements, allowing Schedule contractors participating in the [Cooperative Purchasing Program](#) and the [Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program](#) to expand their customer bases; and,
- Saves time, since business opportunities are sent directly to contractors via email and quotations can be sent electronically.

System for Award Management (SAM)

In May 2012, the first phase of the System for Award Management (SAM) migration had taken place. SAM aims to combine the multiple federal procurement related web portals into one easy, streamlined system to eliminate redundancies and prevent data conflicts.

SAM replaces CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS.

If you have been using those systems, you should now go to www.sam.gov to find your information. Training tools are available on the SAM website to help you get familiar with SAM. Start by going to www.sam.gov, and then click on the SAM HELP tab. Under User Help you will find the full User Guide as well as Quick Start Guides

and Helpful Hints that will help you create an account, migrate your roles, perform updates, and search for the information you need.

You can also view those guides at www.Acquisition.gov.

PLEASE NOTE: SAM is completely free of charge for both registrants and users.

If you had an active record in CCR, you have an active record in SAM. Unless a change in your business circumstances requires a change in order for you to be paid or to receive an award, you should not have to update your record until October 15 or later. SAM will send notifications to the registered user via email 60, 30, and 15 days prior to expiration of the record. You can search for registered entities by going to www.sam.gov and typing the DUNS number or business name into the search box.

MSC Modification Instructions for Contractors

When it is time for you to modify your contract it will be useful for you to use the Modification Instructions. These instructions will give you all the information that you will need to submit a modification. Please click on the link below and it will take you to the instructions. The updated instructions are dated September 2012.

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/247261>