

IAE Bulletin No. 5

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BPN: Linking the CFO Community and IAE

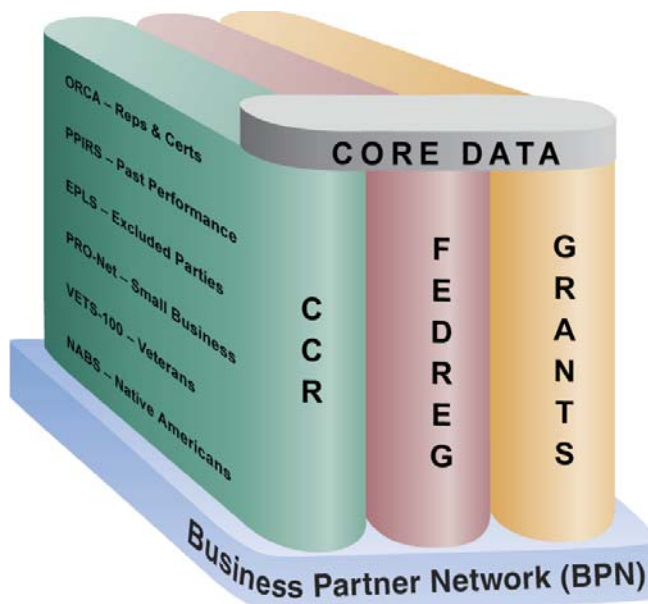


Improving financial performance by integrating the acquisition process

New processes to streamline Federal acquisition have been mandated by OMB and are being developed by the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), one of the eGovernment initiatives identified under the President's Management Agenda. The improvements will impact the CFO community as well as procurement and IT. This bulletin is intended to summarize what is being developed and to highlight the impact of the anticipated changes on the CFO community.

What is the Business Partner Network (BPN)?

The single point of registration and validation of all business partner data for both commercial and intragovernmental acquisitions. BPN is comprised of multiple shared databases including the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) containing the data of commercial vendors and suppliers; the Federal Registration (FedReg) is made up of data of federal government buyers and sellers; and Grants containing the data of grant applicants.



What is the CCR (Central Contractor Registration)?

CCR is the primary vendor database for current and potential government vendors who are interested in being awarded Federal Government contracts. Having a central database will eliminate the many separate vendor databases that are now supported within each agency. It will provide a single up-to-date source. The registration is updated and maintained by the vendors themselves, thus saving maintenance costs while improving accuracy. It has been used by DoD since 1998. In the last two years several civilian agencies have begun to use it.

CCR (Effective Oct. 1, 2003)

A new Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) policy, published Oct. 1, 2003 (Circular 2003-016, FAR case 2002-018), requires that contractors register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database prior to award of any contract or purchase agreement. In addition, the rule requires contracting officers to modify existing contracts no later than December 31, 2003. It advises vendors that the CCR will be the source of EFT account information.

How do I access CCR data?

- Most CCR data is publicly available online at www.ccr.gov
- Government officials with passwords may have read-only access to include proprietary data such as TIN (taxpayer identification number) and EFT data through use of CCR tools via the Internet. Go to www.ccr.gov and click on the Access CCR Data tab.
- Authorized government officials can integrate CCR data extracts into their contract writing and financial systems and will have access to all public, proprietary, and EFT information. For information email contact.ccr@us.ibm.com
- Grantees will also be accessible via the same CCR access.
- Public and proprietary data are available on CD. Go to www.ccr.gov and click on the Access CCR Data tab.

What is FedReg?

FedReg is a central database for Federal agencies that transact business with other Federal agencies. It stores trading partner information required for each buyer and seller such as phone numbers, points of contact, Agency Location Codes (ALCs) and Disbursing Offices (DOs). Through use of a trading partner number (DUNS for civilian agencies or DODAAC for DoD agencies) the data is matched seamlessly to the transaction with no additional key strokes or data entry. Key financial information will be collected with each registration. Authorized Government officials can integrate FedReg data extracts into their financial and contract writing systems and will have access to civilian agency FedReg data.

Fed Reg (Federal Agency Registration)

OMB issued memorandum M-03-01 that mandated the registration of all Federal agencies in the FedReg by January 31, 2003 and the use of standard business rules for all agencies to observe when engaging in intragovernmental exchange activity. For more information on the Intragovernmental Exchange, see IAE Bulletin Number 6, at <http://egov.gsa.gov>. Click on Integrated Acquisition Environment in the gray box.

What is an Agency Registration Official (ARO)?

The individual designated by each Federal agency to be responsible for ensuring all applicable buyer and seller entities are registered in the FedReg.

How do I access FedReg data?

Anyone from a .gov or .mil domain can go to www.bpn.gov, click on Federal Agency Registration and click "Search the Site." See below.

Grantees

In a Federal Register notice on June 27, 2003, OMB policy required agencies to collect DUNS numbers from all applicants beginning October 1, 2003. Applicants using grants.gov will be required to register in the CCR.

What is Grant Registration?

Registrants interested in Grants will be flagged to facilitate editing, data extracts, and reports. At that time CCR will offer search capabilities for grantee data.

FAQs

How will this eliminate redundancy?

For example, each agency will no longer need SF 3881 (ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form) to obtain vendor account data. The information is now centrally captured in the CCR.

Why is the DUNS number used in CCR to identify vendors? Why not TIN?

It is a commercially available number that provides a unique identifier to associate vendor information. DUNS numbers have been used in the Federal Procurement Data System since 1979. DUNS are unique per location, while TINs can be at the corporate level.

How can I be assured that all data is current?

Both vendor and federal records must be validated annually by the registrant. Elements are validated with authoritative sources such as IRS for TINs.

What if a payment goes to the wrong account?

The vendor is now responsible, via clauses included in Federal Government contracts for registering accurate information in the CCR and confirming annually that it is correct. The Government is not liable if the vendor makes an error.

Can agencies use existing COTS software products with the BPN?

Yes. Several agencies are currently interfaced with the BPN for CCR.

What is DUNS + 4?

A registrant has the capability of designating multiple EFT accounts. Each account record is identified by a 4 digit serial number the vendor assigns.

***IAE vision:** A secure business environment that facilitates and supports cost-effective acquisition of goods and services in support of mission performance. Sharing common acquisition functions, processes, and data will enable agencies to make more informed procurement, logistical, and payment decisions.*

