



GSA Federal Supply Service

# Multiple Award Schedules Program Owner's Manual

## Commercial Acquisition Vehicle



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## ***Multiple Award Schedules Program Owners Manual***

In your continuing role as business advisors, we recognize that procurement is not just following rules and regulations. Rather, it is a process of making sound business decisions.

Today we have new rules and operate in a different kind of environment. Your task now is to implement these new tools and develop efficient acquisition strategies. We have created this manual to assist you in your new role.



## ***Tips at a Glance...***

As you read through this manual, look for these helpful tips. Following them will save you time and money.



### ***Power Buying Tip***

These tips are identified by the icon to the left. Read them carefully; they create an opportunity for savings. They are designed to save you money.



### ***Nuts and Bolts Tip***

These tips, identified by the icon shown here, are “how-to’s,” designed to help make your tasks easier.

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# Welcome...

## to Our Multiple Award Schedules Program

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### **Our Commitment to You**

At the General Services Administration (GSA), our commitment to excellence is continuous. We provide policy leadership and expertly managed space, services, products, and solutions at “Best Value” to enable Federal employees to accomplish their missions.

### **GSA’s Federal Supply Service (FSS) Mission**

Our mission is to be the preferred source of Best Value commercial services and products to the Federal Government. We develop commercial solutions and programs to enhance our customers’ ability to perform both their present and future missions.

### **Things to Know About Using This Manual**

Thank you for selecting the U.S. General Services Administration, Federal Supply Service, *Multiple Award Schedule (MAS)* Program as your commercial acquisition vehicle. The *Owner’s Manual* has information about all the features, terms, and conditions of the MAS Program.

The MAS Program is a widely accepted commercial acquisition vehicle offering you many benefits and millions of commercial services and products. The MAS Program incorporates the benefits of procurement reform. As a buying member of our worldwide family, we’re proud to support your agency’s mission and confident you share this pride.

MAS contracts bridge commercial buying practices, offering flexibility and a direct buying relationship with industry.





### ***Read this manual before you take action***

Please read this manual carefully to become familiar with its many features.

While this manual explains the MAS program and gives you helpful tips and guidance, it does not replace existing procurement regulations. Following the FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulations) and using the manual will help you make sound business decisions.

The MAS Program provides many benefits covered in this manual, such as:

- ▼ state-of-the-art technology
- ▼ commercial services and commercial off-the-shelf products
- ▼ volume discount pricing
- ▼ direct customer/industry relationships
- ▼ continuous competition
- ▼ real-time market pricing
- ▼ shorter lead-times and lower administrative costs.

After you have gone through the manual once, return to it for information about a specific question or when you need additional information. For ease of finding information quickly, you can use:

- ▼ the *Contents* list — At the beginning of the manual, the *Contents* list identifies the main subjects covered in each section and tells you where to find the information. Each subject is divided into a separate section for easy understanding.
- ▼ the *Index* — To use the *Index*, turn to the back of the manual and search for the word (or related words) that best describes the information you want. The *Index* contains a listing of subjects covered in this manual.

## Are You a Buying Member?

You are a buying member if:

you are an employee of:

- ▼ an Executive agency
- ▼ a Federal agency

**or** you are:

- ▼ a cost-reimbursable contractor authorized in writing by a Federal agency to use MAS contracts

(See FAR 51.1 or go to [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/ordering](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/ordering), click on *Contractor Use of Federal Supply Schedules*.)

- ▼ a mixed-ownership Government corporation
- ▼ the District of Columbia

- ▼ an activity or organization authorized by statute or regulation to use MAS contracts as a source of supply

## List of Acronyms

Below you'll find acronyms that appear in this manual. Where it is appropriate, we've also given you the website location of the organization.

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
CAG	Customer Assistance Guide — publication — <a href="https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/multimedia">fss.gsa.gov/schedules/multimedia</a>
EPA	Economic Price Adjustment
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation — <a href="http://www.arnet.gov/far">www.arnet.gov/far</a>
FSS	Federal Supply Service (as in GSA FSS contract) — <a href="https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules">fss.gsa.gov/schedules</a>
GSA	General Services Administration — <a href="http://www.gsa.gov">www.gsa.gov</a>
ID/IQ	Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity
MAS	Multiple Award Schedule
OMB	Office of Management and Budget — <a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB">www.whitehouse.gov/OMB</a>
RFQ	Request for Quotations
SBA	Small Business Administration — <a href="http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov">www.sbaonline.sba.gov</a>
SIN	Special Item Number
SOW	Statement of Work
U-MAS	U-Multiple Award Schedules Campus — <a href="https://fss.gsa.gov/UMAS">fss.gsa.gov/UMAS</a>

## **Multiple Award Schedules**

A Multiple Award Schedule (MAS), also known as a Federal Supply Schedule ([fss.gsa.gov/schedules](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules)), is a listing of contracts awarded by GSA, Federal Supply Service. GSA awards contracts to multiple companies supplying comparable services and products.

Schedule contracts are awarded to responsible companies that offer commercial services or products, at varying prices, provided that prices are determined fair and reasonable. GSA's negotiation objective is commonly known as "most favored customer" pricing. Once GSA awards the contracts, buying members order directly from the Schedule contractor.

## **Overview of the MAS Program**

Creating and maintaining a competitive environment is the key to success in the acquisition strategy process. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) establishes priorities for using Government supply sources to satisfy your agency requirements. (See FAR 8.001 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).)

## **Services**

In descending order of priority for services, these are:

- ▼ Services available from the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (See FAR 8.7 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far))
- ▼ Mandatory Federal Supply Schedules (See FAR 8.4)
- ▼ Optional Use Federal Supply Schedules (See FAR 8.4)
- ▼ Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (See FAR 8.6)
- ▼ Commercial sources.

## Supplies

In descending order of priority for supplies, these are:

- ▼ Agency inventories
- ▼ Excess agency inventories (See FAR 8.1 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far))
- ▼ Federal Prison Industries, Inc. (See FAR 8.6)
- ▼ Products available from the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (See FAR 8.7)
- ▼ Wholesale supply sources such as stock programs of the General Services Administration (GSA) (See 41 CFR 101-26.3), the Defense Logistics Agency (See 41 CFR 101-26.6), the Department of Veterans Affairs (See 41 CFR 101-26.704 and military inventory control points)
- ▼ Mandatory Federal Supply Schedules (See FAR 8.4)
- ▼ Optional use Federal Supply Schedules (See FAR 8.4)
- ▼ Commercial sources

The MAS Program provides the competitive environment for you. The FAR states that orders placed under the MAS Program are considered to be issued pursuant to full and open competition (FAR 6.102(d)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)) when following MAS ordering procedures of FAR 8.4 (See section 3, *Basic Operations*, page 19 of this manual).

These procedures are established by the Administrator of GSA and are consistent with the requirement of 41 U.S.C. 259(b)(3)(A). Therefore, when placing orders, agencies need not:

- ▼ seek further competition
- ▼ synopsize the requirement in the *Commerce Business Daily*
- ▼ make a separate determination of fair and reasonable pricing (See also FAR 16.505(b)).



### **Power Buying Tip**

Buying members are not required to follow FAR 15 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far) when using the MAS Program.

Buying members have the opportunity to make a Best Value determination (considering price, features and administrative expenses) necessary to meet the Government's needs.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

The Economy Act does not apply to the MAS Program (See FAR 17.500 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far))

## **Authority to Use FSS Multiple Award Schedules**

GSA awards and administers the MAS Program pursuant to Section 201 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949. Under this program, GSA enters into Government-wide contracts with commercial firms to provide commercial services and products at stated prices for given periods of time.

Federal agencies place orders directly with Schedule Contractors, and deliveries are made directly to the customer. These contracts can be used by all Federal agencies worldwide. (See GSA Order ADM 4800.2D, dated January 3, 2000, [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/ordering](http://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/ordering)).



### ***Nuts and Bolts Tip***

All buying members are identified in GSA Order ADM 4800.2D. Other entities include:

- ▼ Executive agencies, other Federal agencies, mixed-ownership Government corporations, and the District of Columbia;
- ▼ Government contractors authorized in writing by a Federal agency pursuant to 48 CFR 51.1; and
- ▼ Other activities and organizations authorized by statute or regulation to use GSA as a source of supply.



### **How the MAS Program Works**

The MAS Program is a powerful provider of commercial solutions. GSA awards competitive, indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts to those companies who give the Government the same or better discounts than their best customers, and these discounts are passed on to you.

The steps GSA takes in the acquisition process to establish Schedule contracts are similar to those of any Federal acquisition. A step-by-step approach is given below to help you understand this process.

### **Steps GSA Takes When Awarding a Schedule Contract**

#### **Step 1. Acquisition Planning**

GSA/FSS conducts market research and electronically posts pre-solicitation notices and synopses. Pre-solicitation conferences are also held with industry and buying members like you.

Small business set-aside determinations are made for each MAS solicitation. Solicitations are then electronically posted on FedBizOpps [www.fedbizopps.gov](http://www.fedbizopps.gov), which serves as the one-stop gateway to federal procurement opportunities.

#### **Step 2. Solicitations/Offers**

Offers are solicited from prospective businesses. Offers can be submitted at any time. Standing solicitations are refreshed and updated as contract terms and conditions change.



### Step 3. Evaluation

After offers are received, each individual offer is evaluated on its own merit. Offerors are provided additional opportunities to submit supplementary information when deficiencies exist. Discussions are held with offerors whose offers are deficient in order to bring them in line for award consideration.

During the evaluation process, the contracting office also works closely with the small business representative and reviews and evaluates supplier data. Historical data is reviewed, including current information on other existing contracts and information gained through market research.

Prior to award, a responsibility determination is made and **may include** the following:

- ▼ Past Performance
- ▼ Financial capability assessment
- ▼ Audit.

Discount practices are examined and evaluated. Contracting Officers identify the offerors “most favored customer” and prepare negotiations. A price analysis is performed where prices are determined fair and reasonable based on historical data, sales information provided, and other market research techniques.

### Small Business/Subcontracting/Public Law 95-507

Contracts awarded under the MAS Program are in compliance with Public Law. (P.L.). 95-507 ([www.sbaer.uca.edu/docs/publications/pub00116.txt](http://www.sbaer.uca.edu/docs/publications/pub00116.txt)).

MAS offerors whose anticipated contract value is \$500,000 or more must include percentage goals for subcontracts with small business firms and a description of how the goals will be achieved.

GSA negotiates with large businesses who are required to submit a subcontracting plan. These plans outline in detail the contractor’s specific goals

and activities which will enable Federal Government business to “flow down” to these small concerns.

#### **Step 4. Negotiations**

Negotiations are conducted and proposal revisions are submitted by the prospective Schedule contractor. Upon the conclusion of negotiations, the Contracting Officer will:

- ▼ Reject unacceptable offers
- ▼ Determine if prices are fair and reasonable
- ▼ Negotiate most favored customer pricing.

In those instances where the offer is from a small business concern and a non-responsibility determination has been made, a request for a Certificate of Competency (COC) is prepared.

#### **Step 5. Contract Award**

Award is made to acceptable offers considering price and other factors.

#### **Step 6. Award Notification**

Schedule contractor notification includes discounts, terms, and conditions of award.

#### **Step 7. Distribution of Award Information**

GSA posts contractor information on the Schedules E-Library. You can access Schedules E-Library by going to [fss.gsa.gov/elibrary](https://fss.gsa.gov/elibrary). Contractors distribute a Schedule pricelist/catalog.

Award information is available online on GSA *Advantage!* [www.gsaAdvantage.gov](https://www.gsaAdvantage.gov). (See section 9, GSA *Advantage!* on page 55.)

## ***How GSA Creates New Schedules or New Product Lines***

Establishing new Schedules or new service and product lines within existing Schedules is often created in response to a request from Federal customers. Likewise, Schedules are created by examining commercial and Government trends.

A Federal Supply Schedule is not created unless the anticipated sales for a 1-year period is at least \$1,00,000. Once the Schedule is established, individual contractors must generate a minimum of \$25,000 sales annually to retain their contracts.

## ***How GSA Adds or Deletes Services and Products to Existing Multiple Award Schedule Contracts***

Schedule contractors can request a modification to their contract to add services or products at any time during the life of their contract.

The services or products requested to be added must fall within the generic requirements of the Schedule solicitation, and the prices negotiated are fair and reasonable. This ensures the Government's access to the latest state-of-the-art technology.

Schedule contractors can also delete services or products at any time. Generally, contractors follow their commercial practices of adding and deleting services or products to their Schedule contract.

## **The Advantages of the MAS Program**

When placing an order using Schedule contracts, you will realize numerous benefits.

Some of the benefits of using Schedules include the following:

### **Administrative savings**

Using the MAS Program significantly reduces acquisition time. A study conducted regarding the MAS Program found that it takes a customer an average of:

- ▼ 49 days to establish a Blanket Purchase Arrangement (BPA) under a GSA Schedule
- ▼ 15 days to issue an order under a Schedule contract
- ▼ 13 days to issue an order under a Schedule contract where a BPA has already been established.

This compares to an average of 268 days to put a contract in place by the Federal Government.

The average time for the private sector to put a contract in place is 77 days. If you are interested in the details of the study, it is posted at [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/bestpractice](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/bestpractice). Click on *Impact of Far 8.4*.

### **“Best Value”**

Best Value is a 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:

- ▼ Probable life of the item selected
- ▼ Environmental and energy efficiency considerations
- ▼ Technical qualifications
- ▼ Training

- ▼ Past performance
- ▼ Trade-in considerations
- ▼ Warranty
- ▼ Maintenance availability
- ▼ Administrative costs.

### **Latest technology**

Schedule contractors are able to offer the latest technology because requests for modifications can be submitted to GSA any time. Since there are multiple sources under the MAS Program, you have the flexibility to change contractors in order to access the latest in technology at all times.

### **Knowledge**

GSA is partnering with industry experts — from small innovative companies to Fortune 500 firms who understand the services and products sold to the Government.

GSA works with you to understand your needs. It is this link that brings the private sector and you, the buying member, together in the knowledge supply chain.

### **Pricing**

GSA negotiates competitive contracts with commercial partners who give us the same or better discounts than their best commercial customers. The pricing environment is constantly changing.

GSA allows Schedule contractors to lower their contract prices at any time. Buying members may also seek price reductions at any time. The potential for achieving price reductions increases when you have a large requirement which is clearly defined.

## Other benefits

Other benefits include:

- ▼ Reduction of the acquisition cost/process
- ▼ Volume purchase prices
- ▼ Easy payment options
- ▼ Schedule orders count toward small business goals
- ▼ Wide selection of commercial services and products
- ▼ No order limitation.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

You can use the Governmentwide commercial purchase card when ordering from Schedules.

Schedule contractors are required to accept the Governmentwide commercial purchase card under the micro-purchase threshold and are encouraged to accept it for all orders. (See *Special Features, Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card* on page 32.)







### Ordering Procedures

The MAS Program facilitates relationships between the private sector and you, the buying member. Now, only the actual purchase remains for you to do.

GSA awards the contract. You simply order in accordance with FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).



#### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

When you place an order against a Schedule contract – that's exactly what it is, an order; it is NOT a contract.

GSA has determined prices to be fair and reasonable by comparing the price or discounts that a company offers the Government with the price or discounts that the company offers to its own commercial customers. This allows you to fulfill your requirement by making a Best Value selection of the service or product that meets your needs.



#### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

When agency requirements are to be satisfied through using Federal Supply Schedules as set forth in FAR 8.4, the simplified acquisition procedures of FAR 13 and the small business provisions of FAR 19 do not apply, except for the provision of FAR 13.303-2(c)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).



The ordering procedures described on pages 19-20 (See also *Appendices A* and *B*) have been established by GSA.



**Power Buying Tip**

Services and products may be combined on a single order.

**Note:** A full description of the following procedures can be found in *Appendices A and B* in the back of the manual.

<b>Ordering procedures</b>	
<b>Services that require a Statement of Work</b>	<b>Services and products, no Statement of Work required</b>
<p><b>Under the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold</b></p> <p>Place the order directly with contractor for the item that best meets your needs</p>	<p><b>Under the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold</b></p> <p>Place the order directly with contractor for the item that best meets your needs</p>
<p><b>Over the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Prepare a Statement of Work (SOW)</li> <li>▼ Send your Request for Quote (RFQ) and SOW to 3 Schedule contractors</li> <li>▼ Evaluate and make a Best Value selection</li> </ul>	<p><b>Over the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold, as required by FAR 8.404</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Review the GSA <i>Advantage!</i> online electronic ordering system, then make a Best Value determination, or review 3 Schedule contractors' pricelists</li> <li>▼ Select the Best Value (considering price, plus administrative costs)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Over the maximum order threshold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Prepare an SOW</li> <li>▼ Send your Request for Quote (RFQ) and SOW to more than 3 Schedule contractors AND seek price reductions</li> <li>▼ Evaluate and make a Best Value selection</li> </ul>	<p><b>Over the maximum order threshold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Follow the procedures for orders over \$2,500</li> <li>▼ Review additional price lists or use GSA <i>Advantage!</i> online shopping service</li> <li>▼ Seek price reductions from Schedule contractors that represent Best Value</li> <li>▼ Place your order with the Schedule contractor offering the Best Value</li> </ul>

## Ordering procedures

### Services that require a Statement of Work

#### Documentation

- ▼ At a minimum, document orders by identifying the services purchased, the Schedule contractor from which the services were purchased, and the amount paid
- ▼ If other than a firm-fixed priced order is placed, include the basis for the determination to use a labor-hour or time-and-materials order
- ▼ For agency requirements over the micro-purchase threshold, document the evaluation of Schedule contractors' quotes that formed the basis for selecting the contractor that received the order and the rationale for any trade-offs made in making the selection

### Services and products, no Statement of Work required

#### Documentation

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

## Debriefings

Nothing in the FAR prohibits debriefings. The information and format is at the discretion of the buying member's activity.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

When you follow the procedures of FAR 8.4, **limit your review to Schedule contractors.**

### **Agencies Receive Small Business Credits**

The Small Business Administration (SBA) requires agencies to include in their procurement base and goals the dollar value of orders expected to be placed against the GSA Schedules.

Agencies now include orders placed against Schedule contracts in their annual small business goals and accomplishments. SBA and GSA strongly support the participation of small business concerns in the MAS Program.

### **Blanket Purchase Agreements**

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

A Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with Schedule contractors is another way to leverage your buying power. Buying members may establish BPAs with Schedule contractors as long as they do not contain terms inconsistent with the Schedule contract (See FAR 13.202(c)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)).

Buying members and Schedule contractors can agree to administrative protocols within the scope of the contract to expedite ordering, payment, and delivery. Based on the potential volume of business, the Schedule contractors may offer increased discounts than those available under their contract (regardless of the size of the individual orders).



### **Power Buying Tip**

BPAs are your ultimate buying vehicle. They reduce administrative costs and eliminate the need for repetitive, individual purchases from the Schedule contract.

Your agency can enter into a BPA after making a Best Value determination as required by FAR 8.4.

### **The Value of a BPA**

BPAs offer you several advantages. They help you:

- ▼ Leverage agency requirements
- ▼ Obtain a wide variety of items
- ▼ Obtain commercial services and products for one or more offices
- ▼ Establish long-term supplier relationships.



### **Power Buying Tip**

Contractors may offer additional discounts based on the potential volume of business that may be generated by a BPA. **Guaranteed requirements** increase your ability to obtain better pricing.

## **What a BPA Can Do for You**

BPAs offer you several benefits. They:

- ▼ Have contractual terms and conditions contained in the Schedule contract
- ▼ Eliminate contracting and open market costs (the need for solicitations and synopsis requirements)
- ▼ Have shorter lead-times
- ▼ Reduce inventories
- ▼ Satisfy recurring requirements
- ▼ Reduce acquisition costs through quantity discounts
- ▼ Help you obtain a better value by leveraging through volume purchasing
- ▼ Reduce the number of transactions (number of individual invoices, monthly billing work in accounts payable).

## **Setting Up a BPA**

BPAs are established directly with Schedule contractors. Negotiations with Schedule contractors allow you to negotiate price reductions based on the total estimated volume of the BPA, regardless of the size of individual orders.

It's easy to establish a BPA. As the buying member, you need to:

- ▼ Define your agency's requirement
- ▼ Estimate your quantities and delivery requirements
- ▼ Follow FAR 8.4 ordering procedures (See section 3, *Basic Operations*).

Generally, a single BPA should be established when you can easily define requirements (services and products) ordered under the BPA and a firm-fixed price or ceiling price can be established.

## Single BPAs

If you have determined that a single BPA will meet your needs, your work is done. In other words, once you've established one BPA, you do not need to make a Best Value selection for every order – you already did that when you set up the BPA.

## Multiple BPAs

Multiple BPAs (BPAs with more than one contractor) are appropriate when you determine that more than one BPA is needed to meet your needs. When you set up multiple BPAs, first determine which contractors are technically qualified, then establish BPAs with them. Pricing can be established at this time at **or** when the orders are placed.

If you've established multiple BPAs, you will need to send specific orders to the multiple BPA holders and a Best Value selection will need to be done as **each order is placed**. For example:

<b>Establishing BPAs</b>		
<b><i>If...</i></b>	<b><i>Then...</i></b>	<b><i>And...</i></b>
You can clearly identify the tasks you are purchasing, such as mail management (accepting incoming mail and mail distribution)	Follow the procedures in <i>Appendix A</i>	Make a Best Value selection and establish a single BPA.  (Note: You can place all orders with the BPA holder without further Best Value selections.)
You can't clearly define your task, such as program management support for multiple offices	Follow the procedures in <i>Appendix A</i>	Determine technically qualified contractors and establish multiple BPAs.  (Note: Specific task orders will be competed among this group of BPA holders and a Best Value selection will be made each time a task order is placed.)

## **Elements Needed in Your BPA**

- ▼ Name of Schedule contractor
- ▼ Schedule contractor number
- ▼ BPA number assigned by you
- ▼ Description of requirements
- ▼ Prices and/or discounts
- ▼ Extent of obligation
- ▼ List of individuals authorized to purchase under the BPA
- ▼ Delivery information, including locations and times
- ▼ Frequency of ordering and invoicing.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

The RFQ should tell the Schedule contractors if you intend to establish a single or multiple BPA. It should also tell them the selection criteria you will use for award.

## **Setting Up a Cooperative MAS BPA**

If multiple Federal agencies decide to consolidate their requirements and obtain greater discounts, this needs to be done **before** the BPA is established. To ensure you obtain Best Value, the BPA must reflect the requirements of all users with an estimate of the quantity.

Identify all users as signatories when a cooperative BPA is established. If there is more than one agency, then each must sign the BPA.





### **Power Buying Tip**

Agencies that team together to develop cooperative BPAs stretch their purchasing dollar.

**Obligation of Funds:** An MAS BPA does not require the obligation of funds. Funds are obligated when orders are placed against the BPA.

### **Length of a BPA**

BPAs cannot exceed the Schedule contract period. If GSA exercises an option to extend the term of the Schedule contract, the BPA can be extended as well.

However, it is important to always perform annual reviews to determine whether the BPA is still considered a Best Value to you and meets your needs.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

MAS contracts have a base contract period of 5 years with three 5-year option periods.

### **A Sample BPA**

A sample BPA format is available to help you capture the necessary information. To download a copy of a sample BPA, go to [fss.gsa.gov/bpa](https://fss.gsa.gov/bpa). Click on *Blanket Purchase Agreements Format*, and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

For additional guidance on BPAs, visit the *U-MAS Virtual Campus* at [fss.gsa.gov/UMAS](https://fss.gsa.gov/UMAS) or *FSS Contractor Guide* at [fss.gsa.gov/contractorguide](https://fss.gsa.gov/contractorguide).

Information is also available at [fss.gsa.gov/bpa](https://fss.gsa.gov/bpa). Click on *MAS/BPA Practice Tips*.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

Additional clauses that change the scope of the MAS contract cannot be added to MAS BPAs. However, special provisions may be added provided they do not conflict with the terms and conditions of the Schedule contract, such as: organizational conflict of interest clauses or key personnel to any individual MAS BPA.

If your BPA requirement increases or changes so significantly that it changes the scope of your existing BPA, you may want to consider establishing a new BPA.

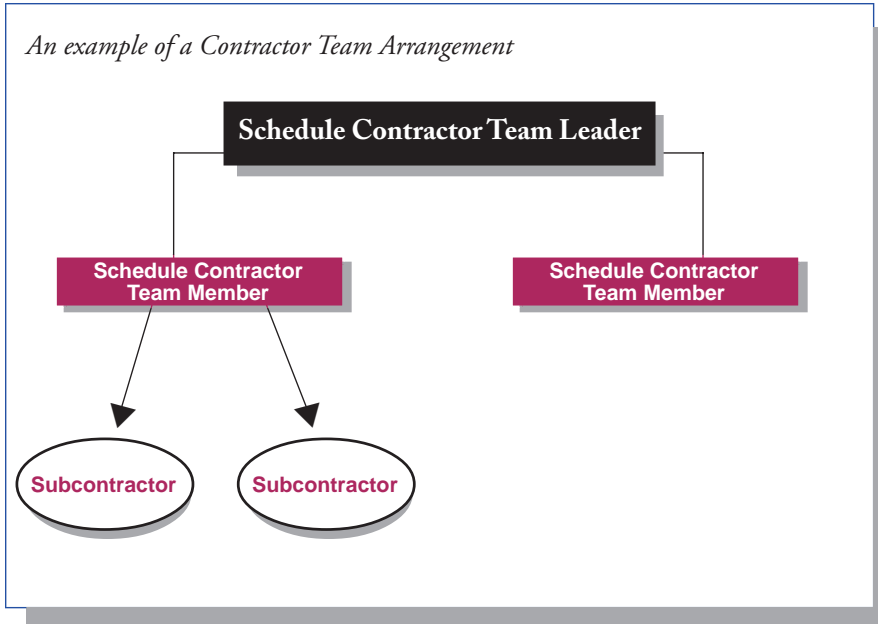
## **Contractor Team Arrangements**

The concept of Contractor Team Arrangements was introduced to offer you a creative solution to your buying needs. Using Contractor Team Arrangements is a way to achieve flexibility and is a powerful acquisition strategy.

Teaming allows Schedule contractors to deliver an end-to-end solution from multiple industries. Schedule contractors may propose a team solution or you may solicit for a team solution. Such arrangements also enhance the ability of small business concerns to participate.

As with any order, when you use a team arrangement under the MAS Program, it is considered to be a competitive procedure (FAR 6.102(d)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](https://www.arnet.gov/far)). In fact, using team arrangements may increase competition among Schedule contractors and offer additional opportunities to contractors who would otherwise not be able to handle some of these requirements on their

own. This is particularly true for small business concerns who are then able to compete for large requirements.



Contractor Team Arrangements are created when two or more Schedule contractors join together to provide a solution to meet your needs. Such arrangements provide another excellent source of quality service.

Some key features of these arrangements include:

- ▼ Participation in a Contractor Team Arrangement is limited to Schedule contractors offering to provide a total solution when responding to your agency's requirements.
- ▼ Contractors can form these arrangements at their discretion **without** prior approval from the buying member's office.

- ▼ Ordering activities should follow FAR 9.6 ([www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)) when using Contractor Team Arrangements.
- ▼ Ordering activities must still follow the ordering procedures explained in section 3, *Basic Operations*, and make a Best Value selection.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

- ▼ Team members may use subcontractors under their Schedule contract to fulfill requirements.
- ▼ However, each team member must have a Schedule contract.
- ▼ These subcontractors do not necessarily have to have a Schedule contract.

Orders placed under a Contractor Team Arrangement are subject to the terms and conditions of the Schedule contract holders. They independently abide by the terms of their individual contracts, but one contractor can be designated by the team as Contractor Team Leader.

The order should include:

- ▼ the appropriate contract numbers
- ▼ a list of services or products to be provided
- ▼ the agreed-upon pricing.

Contractor Team Arrangements can also be included under a BPA. The BPA should address the details, arrangements, or administration of the Contractor Team Arrangement.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

- ▼ A copy of the Contractor Team Agreement should be available for your review. Their agreement should spell out who is responsible for doing which tasks, identify prices, etc.
- ▼ One member of the Contractor Team can act as the single point of contact for the buying member.

GSA is not required to approve such actions; and all terms and conditions of the existing Schedule contracts still apply (warranty, price changes, reporting 72A sales).

Depending on the buying member, you may want to arrange to have contact with just one contractor or with all contractors – it's up to you as the buying member.

The order for services and/or products (task/delivery orders) can be addressed to the Team Leader who is then responsible for coordinating the various tasks/products among the team members.

For additional guidance on Contractor Team Arrangements, go to [fss.gsa.gov/cta](https://fss.gsa.gov/cta).

See also *Federal Supply Schedules* and *Contractor Team Arrangements FAQs* at [fss.gsa.gov/FAQ/schedules](https://fss.gsa.gov/FAQ/schedules).

## **Delinquent Performance, Termination of Orders, Disputes**

### **Termination for Cause, refer to FAR 8.4**

As the buying member, you may terminate any one or more orders for cause in accordance with FAR 49, *Termination of Contracts*. Should the contractor claim that the failure was excusable, you shall promptly refer the matter to the Schedule contracting office. See *Disputes* on page 32. Any repurchase shall be made at as reasonable a price as possible, considering the quality required by the Government, delivery requirement, and administrative expenses. See FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

If a contractor fails to perform on an order, as the buying member, you may terminate the order for cause or give the contractor further opportunity to perform by modifying the order to establish a new delivery date (obtaining consideration as necessary). Refer to FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).

### **Termination for Convenience, refer to FAR 8.4**

Ordering offices may terminate individual orders for the convenience of the Government. Only the GSA Schedule contracting officer may terminate any or all items covered by the Schedule contract for the convenience of the Government.

Before terminating orders for convenience, the ordering office must attempt to enter into a “no-cost” cancellation agreement with the contractor. All actions taken regarding terminations for convenience must comply with the applicable requirements in FAR 12.403 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).

### **Disputes, refer to FAR 8.4**

Using Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR), as provided at FAR 33.214 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far), is encouraged. The ordering office must refer all unresolved disputes under orders to the GSA Schedule contracting office for action under the Disputes clause of the contract.

### **Environmental Identification**

To assist our customers' efforts in complying with the requirements of environmental laws and Executive Orders, (considering price, availability and performance requirements), our Schedule contractors have been requested (where possible and/or feasible) to identify items that:

- ▼ Have recycled content (e.g., EPA-designated items with specific content requirements)
- ▼ Are energy- and/or water-saving (e.g., Energy Star)
- ▼ Have reduced pollutants (e.g., low volatile organic compounds [VOC's] and chromate-free).

Note: Customers should review contractor literature and contact the contractor directly to obtain complete information about environmental claims.

Applicable guidance can be found in FAR 23, DFAR 223 and on our environmental website at [fss.gsa.gov/enviro](http://fss.gsa.gov/enviro).

### **Governmentwide Commercial Purchase Card**

Executive Order 12931 dated October 13, 1994, urged agencies to expand the use of their Governmentwide commercial purchase card program and to delegate micro-purchase authority to program officials rather than keeping it within procurement offices. The GSA SmartPay Program has many benefits, including:

- ▼ Flexibility

- ▼ Choice
- ▼ Performance-base refunds
- ▼ Streamlined electronic payment process
- ▼ Simplified accounting.

Based on the above, GSA now **requires** Schedule contractors to accept the Governmentwide commercial purchase card for orders at or below the micro-purchase threshold of \$2,500. Schedule contractors are, of course, encouraged to accept the Governmentwide commercial purchase card for all orders. In addition, GAO has found that more and more MAS customers recognize the administrative and cost-saving features of the Governmentwide commercial purchase card.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

The GSA SmartPay contracts provide Federal agencies with a new way to pay for commercial goods and services, as well as travel- and fleet-related expenses. With GSA SmartPay, you have a choice of leading-edge card services to help you do your job more efficiently.

When you use GSA SmartPay, you are eligible to receive a refund on your net charge volume. Visit [fss.gsa.gov/services/gsa-smartpay](https://fss.gsa.gov/services/gsa-smartpay) for more information.





## **Modular Purchasing**

Buying members can use modular purchasing to ensure that what they purchase meets their long-term needs. For example, instead of establishing a BPA for a Document Management Center in all your offices across the nation at one time, you could implement the BPA for Document Management Centers in modules. Module 1 could be for the Northeast region. If everything goes smoothly, then you could purchase Module 2 for the Southeast region.

This type of purchasing options allows you to make sure that what you get works; it also addresses time constraints that some buying members are faced with.

## **Performance Incentives**

Performance incentives may be agreed upon between the contractor and the buying member on individual orders or BPAs under the MAS program. The buying member must establish a maximum performance incentive price for the services and/or total solutions on individual orders or BPAs.

Incentives should be designed to relate results achieved by the contractor to specified targets. To the maximum extent practicable, buying members shall consider establishing incentives where performance is critical to the agency's mission and incentives are likely to motivate the contractor. Incentives shall be based on objectively measurable tasks.

## **Price Reductions**

Schedule contractors are able to offer one-time, spot discounts from established Schedule contract prices (FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)). Such commercial buying practices were introduced to empower you to negotiate higher discounts without doing a new procurement.

Schedule contractors can give one buying member a discount without passing the discount on to the entire Federal Government (FAR 8.4). In essence, this

provision allows the contractor to offer — and the Government to avail itself of — spot pricing in the commercial market.

At the same time, Schedule contractors can be more competitive by offering higher discounts to a single buying member without offering the same higher discounts to all authorized users. This method also allows Schedule contractors to react more immediately to the commercial market place, move inventory, respond to technological advancements, etc.

However, if promotional discounts are being given across the board commercially, these likewise shall be also given to all authorized users.



### **Power Buying Tip**

Spot pricing allows the Schedule contractor to reduce the Schedule price to an individual buying member **any time**. This allows both you and the Schedule contractor to take advantage of promotions, inventory excess, items that are being phased out, etc.

## **Standing Solicitations/Variable Contract Periods**

Industry has the opportunity to submit offers under “MAS standing solicitations.” This feature provides our commercial partners with the ability to offer state-of-the art services and products to you.

Contracts may be awarded for a full 5-year period, regardless of when offers are submitted (hence the term “variable” contract period). Identical items may be awarded to more than one contractor.

The terms and conditions of solicitations are “refreshed” or periodically updated to incorporate the latest changes resulting from new laws and/or regulations, as well as changes introduced within the Federal Supply Service to enhance the MAS Program. Schedule contractors may add new items any time.

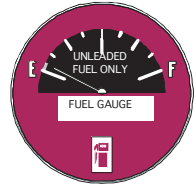
Both of these features provide you — our buying members — with fast and convenient access to the latest services and products.

### **Worldwide Coverage, Expedited Delivery**

Schedule contracts offer delivery from nationwide to worldwide since FSS expanded the scope of its Schedule contracts. This expansion now provides our Schedule contractors with opportunities to increase their services to you. When responding to solicitations, suppliers now have the choice of offering:

- ▼ **Worldwide**, which covers both domestic **and** overseas delivery
- ▼ **Domestic**, which covers delivery to the 48 contiguous states; Washington, D.C.; Alaska; Hawaii; and Puerto Rico
- ▼ **Overseas Only**, which covers delivery to overseas destinations **other** than Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

Many contractors can now deliver overnight or within days.



## Economic Price Adjustments

Schedule contracts allow contractors to increase or decrease prices according to their commercial practice.

- ▼ Requests for price decreases may be submitted to the GSA Contracting Officer any time during the contract period.
- ▼ Schedule contractors can only request price increases to be effective on or after the first 12 months of the contract period where the increase results from reissuing or modifying the contractor's commercial catalog or pricelist used as the basis for the contract award.



### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

For administrative convenience, incidental (non-schedule) items may be added to an FSS BPA or an individual order **if**:

- ▼ the items are clearly labeled as such on the order
- ▼ all open market acquisition regulations have been followed
- ▼ price reasonableness has been determined by the ordering activity for the open market items.

## **Incidental items**

It is important to recognize GSA has not negotiated or evaluated prices for those services and products that are not listed in Schedule contracts. Therefore, **you must comply with the requirements for full and open competition by following all applicable acquisition regulations and determining price reasonableness.**

For example, (depending on the threshold) some of the acquisition regulations you must follow are:

- ▼ Follow synopsis requirements in FAR 5.101 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)
- ▼ See FAR 13 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far) for requirements over \$2,500 and under \$100,000
- ▼ Reserve the requirements, as applicable, under FAR 19
- ▼ Determine pricing is fair and reasonable
- ▼ The terms and conditions of the open market instrument would apply to incidental items.

## **Leasing**

Leasing is an option under the MAS Program, offered on a variety of Schedules. A search of Schedules E-Library will quickly identify those schedules where leasing is available. (See section 10, *Customer Assistance Worldwide*, page 61.)

The presence of leasing on the MAS Program does NOT imply a recommendation by GSA for leasing. The decision to lease is at the discretion of the buying member.

Only equipment offered on a Federal Supply Schedule may be leased. Some guidelines for leasing are as follows:

- ▼ Once you have selected the equipment, you then need to determine whether it is more advantageous to lease or purchase it.

- ▼ The Contracting Officer should compare the leasing terms offered from the third-party leasing companies in the Schedule, as well as those offered by the Schedule equipment sellers.
- ▼ Once the best leasing terms have been selected, the Contracting Officer can compare the advantages of leasing with those of direct purchase. OMB Circular A-94, par. 13, at [www.whitehouse.gov/OMB](http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB), describes the economic analysis that is to be used in determining the economic impact of leasing vs. purchasing.
- ▼ Leasing requires a commitment on the agency's part for all the terms and conditions of the lease for the full term of the lease.
- ▼ If an agency has annual appropriations that require issuing supplemental funding documents, the agency's procurement and accounting systems must be capable of timely generation of the requirement documents.

### **Renewals**

Customers must also be mindful of submitting “renewal delivery orders” in a timely manner to ensure that their lease does not expire.

You may cancel a lease when:

- ▼ the organization is no longer funded
- ▼ the requirement no longer exists.

You may NOT cancel a lease because of a desire for something different, newer, or better.

## Maximum Order

The Maximum Order threshold (MO) is designed for buying members to get lower prices for orders above the threshold. It is the level, or trigger point, for you to seek additional price reductions.

The MO is listed on every MAS contractor pricelist. The MO allows Schedule contractors to accept “any size” order, reducing the need for buying members to conduct duplicative and repetitive procurements for items already under contract.



### Power Buying Tip

Buying members ask for a price reduction for orders above the MO. The contractor may:

- ▼ Offer a lower price
- ▼ Offer the current contract price
- ▼ Decline the order.

## Modification Clause

The MAS Program permits contractors to offer new technology any time. This feature promotes the ability for the Government to have immediate access to the latest commercial services and products. See *How GSA Adds or Deletes Services and Products to Existing Multiple Award Schedule Contracts* in section 2.

## Trade-ins

Trade-ins will be considered against the purchase of new equipment and will be used in determining the Best Value purchase at the lowest overall cost; i.e., the price of the item plus administrative costs (See FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far)).

If equipment was traded in as part of the purchase arrangement, the file **should** show the type, brand and value of the equipment exchanged. Trade-ins should comply with provisions of the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR) 101-46 at [www.access.gpo.gov/nara/](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/), then click on Code of Federal Regulations.



### Power Buying Tip

Trade-ins are an allowable payment method and can be applied directly to the MAS purchase.





# 6

## Maintenance: Your Responsibility

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### Optimizing Your Buying Performance

#### **GSA — The Service Agency**

As the service agency, GSA works in conjunction with both ordering agencies and contractors. Each member has roles and responsibilities. As a service agency, GSA provides ordering instructions and guidance. Instructions are available both electronically and in hardcopy.

#### **Buying Members — Self-Regulation**

As buying members and business advisors, you, too, have a responsibility to care about meeting your agency's missions. You also need to know your Schedule options, understand them, and manage them wisely.

A variety of options are available to satisfy your requirements, such as:

- ▼ Governmentwide commercial purchase card
- ▼ BPAs
- ▼ Contractor Team Arrangements
- ▼ Modular Purchasing

Depending on the options you select:

- ▼ First consider what the value of each tool is to your overall buying strategy.
- ▼ Second, self-regulate. Follow the ordering procedures correctly.
- ▼ Last, be results oriented. Know what you are buying, particularly in the area of services. Ask for solutions, not just labor hours. State what you

expect to accomplish. You may get a more innovative or entrepreneurial approach than you originally anticipated.

Asking three different contractors for a solution may mean that you get three entirely different solutions, and possibly a more cost-effective approach.

### **Responsibility**

State your requirement or objective clearly in order to obtain the best solution. The “best” acquisition approach for a particular requirement, project, or program can be determined only after examining each requirement.

As buying members, structure your purchases to obtain the ultimate leverage of your requirement.



#### **Nuts and Bolts Tip**

Create your acquisition strategy:

- ▼ Start with a competitive requirement (i.e., a performance-based SOW)
- ▼ Use oral discussions
- ▼ What gets measured, gets accomplished
- ▼ Manage the process.

## Understanding a Statement of Work

### The Purpose of an SOW

A Statement of Work (SOW) is essential when purchasing commercial services. SOWs are read and interpreted by Government and industry personnel with diverse backgrounds, such as engineering, science, accounting, law, contracting, and other business fields.



### Power Buying Tip

There are three primary objectives of the SOW:

- ▼ Be logical and readable.
- ▼ Identify and emphasize the critical elements.
- ▼ State exactly what is required — that is, the deliverables, due dates, and basic requirements — that constitute what the Contractor must do in order to receive payment.



### ***Nuts and Bolts Tip***

A performance-based SOW is written to ensure that contractors are free to determine how to meet the Government's performance objectives. Using a performance-based SOW:

- ▼ should lead to more cost-effective acquisitions and better value
- ▼ holds the contractor accountable for the end results
- ▼ maximizes contractor control of the work processes and allows for innovation in approaching various work requirements.

Your SOW should contain the following elements:

- ▼ Background
- ▼ Objectives
- ▼ Scope
- ▼ Tasks or requirements
- ▼ Selection criteria
- ▼ Deliverables or delivery schedule
- ▼ Government-furnished equipment and Government-furnished information
- ▼ Security
- ▼ Place of performance
- ▼ Period of performance.

These elements are explained on the following pages.

## **Background**

- ▼ Describes the project in very general terms
- ▼ Discusses the purpose of the project — in other words, why the project is being pursued and how it relates to other projects
- ▼ Includes, as necessary, a summary of statutory authority or applicable regulations
- ▼ Provides copies of pertinent background materials, including them in a *Reference* or *Attachment*.

## **Objectives**

- ▼ Provides a concise overview of the project and how the results or end products will be used
- ▼ Includes your goals and objectives.

## **Scope**

- ▼ Covers the general scope of the work the contractor will be performing.

## **Tasks or Requirements**

- ▼ Describes detailed work and management requirements
- ▼ Spells out more precisely what is expected of the contractor in the performance of the work.

## **Selection Criteria**

- ▼ Gives selection criteria
- ▼ Identifies objective standards of acceptable performance to be provided by the contractor.

### ***Deliverables or Delivery Schedule***

- ▼ Describes what the contractor shall provide
- ▼ Identifies the contractor's responsibilities
- ▼ Identifies any specialized expertise and services, training, and documentation, as applicable
- ▼ **Clearly** states the deliverables required, the schedule for delivery, the quantities, and to whom they should be delivered
- ▼ Describes the delivery schedule in calendar days from the date of award
- ▼ Identifies the type of documentation (printed and electronic) to be provided, as well as those quality indicators desired by the Government.

### ***Government-Furnished Equipment and Government-Furnished Information***

- ▼ Identifies any Government-furnished equipment (GFE) and Government-furnished information (GFI)
- ▼ Identifies any limitations to be provided to the contractor.

### ***Security***

- ▼ States the appropriate security requirements, as necessary, for the work to be done

### ***Place of Performance***

- ▼ Specifies whether the work is to be performed at a Government site or the contractor's site

### ***Period of performance***

- ▼ Specifies the performance period, i.e., hours, days, weeks, or months, etc.

## **Using Oral Proposals**

Oral proposals allow you the opportunity to understand the contractor's proposals. As buying members, using oral proposals is strongly encouraged. Communication is key to ensuring you get what you need. Refer to FAR 16.505(b)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).

### **The Advantages of Oral Presentations**

- ▼ Are more like the commercial sector
- ▼ Promote efficient face-to-face communication
- ▼ Increase satisfaction
- ▼ Minimize massive technical proposals
- ▼ Decrease proposal lead-times, resulting in shorter buying time
- ▼ Reduce proposal costs significantly, including fewer protests.



## ***Language Tips for Your Statement of Work***

- ▼ Prefer simple words, phrases, and sentences.
- ▼ Be concise, precise, and consistent. Keep sentences short and to the point.
- ▼ Use active verbs.
- ▼ Avoid passive verbs.
- ▼ Avoid “should” or “may” because they leave the decision for action up to the Contractor.
- ▼ Use “shall” when describing a provision binding on the contractor. Use “will” to indicate actions by the Government.
- ▼ Be consistent when using terminology.
- ▼ Avoid redundancy.
- ▼ Avoid vague or inexact words and generalizations.
- ▼ Avoid catch-all and open-ended phrases, such as, “is common practice in the industry,” “as directed,” or “subject to approval.”
- ▼ Define technical terms.
- ▼ Avoid using “any,” “either,” “and/or,” “etc.”
- ▼ Use abbreviations or acronyms only after spelling them out the first time they are referenced.
- ▼ Make available any document referenced, including the date or version.
- ▼ Indicate, if appropriate, desired design output, verification, and how design changes will be managed.

For additional information, refer to *U-MAS (U–Multiple Award Schedules) Virtual Campus* at [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS).



### ***Nuts and Bolts Tip***

The following forms of communications may be used:

- ▼ electronic communications
- ▼ oral discussions
- ▼ written communications.

Note: A Request for Proposal, as defined by FAR 15, may not be used.





Free parking – always available – free information, and free access describe the following electronic tools. They have been designed to provide additional guidance and instruction to assist you.

### **U-MAS (University – Multiple Award Schedule Virtual Campus)**

The University – Multiple Award Schedule (U-MAS) Virtual Campus was developed to assist you in your changing role as a business advisor to your customers. U-MAS will help you structure commercial solutions under the MAS Program.

The course curriculum consists of a series of classrooms designed to provide a comprehensive and practical approach.

The U-MAS Virtual Campus:

- ▼ Provides online training accessibility
- ▼ Provides the latest information about changes in the MAS Program
- ▼ Is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, FREE of charge
- ▼ Provides information to best leverage your MAS buy.

You can visit U-MAS [fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS](https://fss.gsa.gov/schedules/UMAS).

### **FSS Contractor Guide**

The *Contractor Guide* is an electronic document available to the general public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free of charge. It contains information on policies, procedures, and regulations and is meant to promote awareness within industry.

It also contains an overview of the MAS Program and information on the MAS process. Additional links are provided on a variety of websites, as well as information on additional resources. Visit the *FSS Contractor Guide* [fss.gsa.gov/contractorguide](https://fss.gsa.gov/contractorguide).

## **FedBizOpps**

FedBizOpps is a Government-wide Internet-based information system for announcing government acquisitions. It:

- ▼ Serves Government buyers by providing them with the capability to post solicitations on the Internet
- ▼ Serves industry suppliers by allowing them to search for Government acquisition opportunities
- ▼ Enhances public access to the Federal Government's business opportunities by providing online access 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

FedBizOpps has been designed as a single entry point for suppliers to search government acquisition opportunities across departments and agencies.

Visit FedBizOpps at [www.fedbizopps.gov](https://www.fedbizopps.gov).

## **GSA's Answer to e-Business**

*GSA Advantage!* is our electronic online shopping and ordering system. *GSA Advantage!* provides online access to over several thousand contractors and millions of services and products.

Many of these items may be available for delivery in a few days. Governmentwide commercial purchase card is accepted.

By using *GSA Advantage!* you can perform price reviews/comparisons as stated in FAR 8.4. It allows you to browse or park your “cart” to finish your order at a later time.

With *GSA Advantage!* you can:

- ▼ Search for items using keywords, part numbers, National Stock Numbers, supplier names, contract numbers, etc.
- ▼ Compare features, prices, and delivery options
- ▼ Configure products and add accessories
- ▼ Place orders directly online
- ▼ Review delivery options
- ▼ Select a convenient payment method
- ▼ View order history to track status, reorder, or cancel.

## **How to Access** [www.gsaAdvantage.gov](http://www.gsaAdvantage.gov)

You must be able to connect to the Internet and you must have access to a web browser (i.e., Netscape, Internet Explorer).

- ▼ Use your web browser to connect to the GSA FSS home page at [fss.gsa.gov/schedules](http://fss.gsa.gov/schedules).
- ▼ Select **GSA Advantage!** – Online Shopping Service.

### **If you need more information or assistance, contact:**

- ▼ Internet e-mail address: [GSA.Advantage@gsa.gov](mailto:GSA.Advantage@gsa.gov)
- ▼ GSA *Advantage!* voice-mail hotline: **(703) 305-7359**

If you are unable to connect to the Internet, contact your GSA Customer Service Director for assistance (See *Customer Service Directors*, in section 10.).

## **Signing on to GSA Advantage!** [www.gsaAdvantage.gov](http://www.gsaAdvantage.gov)

To shop *GSA Advantage!* you will need either:

- ▼ a Governmentwide commercial purchase card (no password), or
- ▼ a GSA Activity Address Code (AAC) and a password.

An AAC can be obtained from GSA by clicking on *Apply for an AAC* at the sign-on screen.

You may also browse *GSA Advantage!* using the *Browse* option at the sign-on screen. In order to browse, you will be asked to enter a zip code. You will not need a Governmentwide commercial purchase card or AAC to browse.

For additional information, a handbook is available online and can be downloaded at [www.gsaAdvantage.gov](http://www.gsaAdvantage.gov).

## **Security**

GSA *Advantage!* utilizes the industry standard secure sockets layer (SSL) technology. SSL encrypts the transfer of information between your browser and our server.

## **Technical Problems**

If you have technical questions, are experiencing technical problems, or have a suggestion about how we may better serve you, please call the GSA *Advantage!* hotline at **(703) 305-7359** or e-mail us on the web at [GSA.Advantage@gsa.gov](mailto:GSA.Advantage@gsa.gov).

## **Order Status Questions**

For shipping, transportation, or billing discrepancies on NSN items, contact GSAs National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at **1-800-488-3111** or click on *Report Order Problem* at the Main Menu Screen for a pre-addressed form in GSA *Advantage!* (or on the web at [RODSM.NCSC@GSA.GOV](mailto:RODSM.NCSC@GSA.GOV)).

For order status, follow-ups, etc., you should contact the supplier directly. The Schedule contractor's name and phone number is printed on the order summary you received at checkout and also through order history/status.





## 10 **Customer Assistance Worldwide**

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The FSS Customer Program is carried out by a worldwide network of supply and service professionals. Customer Service Directors (CSDs) are happy to make periodic visits to your office and offer seminars on a variety of useful topics.

- ▼ Call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) for questions or assistance.

Toll free: 1-800-488-3111  
DSN 465-1416

Hours of operation:                      Monday – Friday  
7:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. CST

1500 East Banister Road/  
Building 4/  
Kansas City, MO 64131/

Email: [rodsm.ncsc@gsa.gov/](mailto:rodsm.ncsc@gsa.gov)

- ▼ Locate the *Customer Service Director* assigned to your area at [fss.gsa.gov/csd](http://fss.gsa.gov/csd).
- ▼ Contact the appropriate Acquisition Center for specific service and product assistance. See section 10, *Customer Assistance Worldwide*, page 63.

▼ If you are an overseas customer, for your convenience, the following direct lines have been established to better serve you:

**Pacific Rim**

Commercial: (808) 541-1776  
DSN 438-4960

**Europe, Africa, and the Middle East**

Commercial: 011-49-69-699-7985  
DSN 330-6085

***Federal Supply Service Information Center***

The Center maintains a library of Federal Supply Schedules and authorized contractor catalog pricelists. It is also a receiving point for customer and contractor questions regarding FSS services and supplies.

Center personnel provide telephone assistance.

Call: (703) 305-6477  
DSN 327-1022  
1-888-377-0070  
(703) 308-4168 fax

## Emergency Desk-side Assistance

### Schedules E-Library (Contractor Award Information)

Schedules E-LIBRARY

The Schedules E-Library is the official and only online source for complete Schedules and contract award information. Information is updated daily to ensure access to the latest schedules and contracts.

You can find out which suppliers have a contract, and what's available by using various search options, e.g., Schedule contractor's name, contract number, Special Item Number, Schedule Number, or keyword.

This program utilizes the advances of electronic commerce while providing you access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to Schedules E-Library at [fss.gsa.gov/elibrary](http://fss.gsa.gov/elibrary).

Other features include:

- ▼ Access to information on millions of services and products
- ▼ The latest information on Schedule program changes
- ▼ Direct link to the GSA *Advantage!* Online Shopping for e-Business
- ▼ New and improved look for easier browsing and navigation
- ▼ New "preview" pages allow you to jump directly to the areas you need without unnecessary paging
- ▼ Ability to download Schedule information by Schedule or SIN
- ▼ More contractor websites and e-mail addresses
- ▼ More enhancements are on the way!

If you don't have access to the Internet, you can get a list of the current contractors from the FSS Information Center. See section 10, *Customer Assistance Worldwide*, page 60.

Consult the contractor's catalog/price list for more detailed ordering information, such as:

- ▼ Contract items awarded
- ▼ Maximum order provisions
- ▼ Geographic coverage (delivery area)
- ▼ Contract price or discount
- ▼ Quantity discounts
- ▼ Prompt payment terms
- ▼ Governmentwide commercial purchase card terms
- ▼ Commercial delivery terms
- ▼ Expedited delivery
- ▼ Ordering addresses
- ▼ Payment addresses
- ▼ Warranty provision
- ▼ Export packing charges
- ▼ Applicable terms and conditions of rental, maintenance, installation and repair
- ▼ Environmental and energy efficiency

**Customer Assistance Guide** [fss.gsa.gov/pub](https://fss.gsa.gov/pub), click on CAG

This Guide is published for the convenience of our customers and is available, free of charge, to authorized users of GSA sources of supplies and services. You may obtain copies from:

U.S. General Services Administration/  
Centralized Mailing List Service/  
P.O. Box 6477/  
Fort Worth, TX 76115/

(817) 334-5215      (817) 334-5561 fax      email: [CMLS.gsa@gsa.gov](mailto:CMLS.gsa@gsa.gov)

Mailing List Code: OSSC-0003

### **FSS Acquisition Centers**

FSS takes advantage of the Government's buying power and, through its professional expertise, can guarantee quality, convenience, and efficient service to our customers. The products and services we offer Federal agencies run the gamut: office equipment and supplies, laboratory equipment, paint, tools, ADP equipment and software, copiers, furniture, vehicles, and an array of service contracts for such things as charge cards and financial management services.

To streamline operations, FSS has organized its supply support functions into Acquisition Centers. Products and services are assigned to specific GSA Acquisition Centers for procurement and related supply functions including, inventory management, engineering, and requisition processing functions. Please direct your inquiries to the appropriate Acquisition Center. You'll find nine centers listed on the following pages.

**Automotive Division** [fss.gsa.gov/vehicles](https://fss.gsa.gov/vehicles)

*Customer contact point:* Monica Bumbray (703) 308-2277

*e-mail:* monica.bumbray@gsa.gov

- ▼ Vehicular equipment and accessories
- ▼ Tires, pneumatic and retread services
- ▼ Construction and highway maintenance equipment
- ▼ Firefighting and waste disposal vehicles
- ▼ Enclosed concession, mobile sound shell stage, dry cargo van, refrigerated cargo van trailers
- ▼ Aerial lift vehicles
- ▼ Vehicular bodies
- ▼ Steel storage shelves for automotive parts
- ▼ Attachments for construction, snow, and highway maintenance equipment

**General Products Center** [fss.gsa.gov/genprod](https://fss.gsa.gov/genprod)

*Customer contact point:* Genni Brown (817) 978-4545

*e-mail:* [genni.brown@gsa.gov](mailto:genni.brown@gsa.gov)

- ▼ Temporary clerical and professional services
- ▼ Guard services
- ▼ Security and facility management solutions
- ▼ Law enforcement and security equipment
- ▼ Indoor/Outdoor athletic, park, and recreational equipment, supplies, uniforms
- ▼ Boats, engines, floating barriers, buoys
- ▼ Food service equipment and supplies
- ▼ Lodging supplies (toiletries, linens, etc.)
- ▼ Forklifts, material handling and shop equipment
- ▼ Energy, power distribution, and lighting solutions
- ▼ Chemical products
- ▼ Janitorial and cleaning equipment, chemicals, and supplies
- ▼ Prefabricated buildings (guard buildings, warehouse storage units, office space)
- ▼ Construction and building materials



**GSA Hardware Superstore** [fss.gsa.gov/superstore](https://fss.gsa.gov/superstore)

*Customer contact point:* Stan Fjoser (816) 926-6760

*e-mail:* Stan.Fjoser@gsa.gov

- ▼ Lawn and garden equipment and cattle guards
- ▼ Household and office appliances
- ▼ Hardware store
- ▼ One-Stop Paint Shop
- ▼ Sealants, adhesives and corrosion
- ▼ Preventatives and preservatives
- ▼ Tools, tool sets and tool kits, industrial-quality hand-precision measuring tools, electric tools, pneumatic tools, woodworking and metal working machinery and equipment and accessory items

The Hardware and Appliances Center provides innovative procurement vehicles designed to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers. The following services will soon be available:

- ▼ Grounds maintenance
- ▼ Tree planting, trimming, removal
- ▼ Pest control
- ▼ Snow and ice removal
- ▼ Support products
- ▼ Support training and consultation services
- ▼ Introduction to new services
- ▼ Application of chemical compounds
- ▼ Surface preparation

You can make purchases a variety of ways through the Hardware Store 51V. We offer Walk-in/Walk-out service, so that you can actually use your Governmentwide commercial purchase card to make register purchases.

A newest addition to the Hardware Store is the Sears Parts Direct contract award, effective January 3, 2000. The Hardware Store offers 4 million parts and accessories that encompass 400 manufacturers.

**Information Technology Acquisition Center** [fss.gsa.gov/it](http://fss.gsa.gov/it)

This website also provides a detailed contract data base search.

*Customer contact point:* Antoinette Scott (703) 305-3038

*Fax:* (703) 308-1445

*e-mail:* IT.Center@gsa.gov

**Computer equipment, services, and supplies**

- ▼ EC services
- ▼ Information assurance
- ▼ Desktop management
- ▼ Cellular phones, pagers, and related services
- ▼ Financial management services software
- ▼ Equipment and software for the physically challenged
- ▼ IT services
- ▼ Leasing equipment
- ▼ Maintenance
- ▼ Telecommunications equipment
- ▼ Radio equipment
- ▼ Software
- ▼ Training
- ▼ Used equipment
- ▼ Cables
- ▼ Millennium conversion products

**Management Services Center** [fss.gsa.gov/mgmtservices](https://fss.gsa.gov/mgmtservices)

*Customer contact point:* Joan Rodgers (253) 931-7900

*e-mail:* joan.rodgers@gsa.gov

- ▼ Energy management services
- ▼ Environmental advisory services
- ▼ Logistics Worldwide (LOGWORLD)
- ▼ Mail management services
- ▼ Management, Organizational & Business Improvement Services (MOBIS)
- ▼ Translation and interpretation services

**National Furniture Center** [fss.gsa.gov/furniture](https://fss.gsa.gov/furniture)

*Customer contact point:* Lela Leakey (703) 305-7003

*e-mail:* lela.leakey@gsa.gov

- ▼ Office and systems furniture
- ▼ Packaged furniture
- ▼ Household furniture
- ▼ Floor coverings
- ▼ Special use furniture
- ▼ Household and commercial furnishings (draperies, lamps, wall art, artificial plants, etc.)
- ▼ Security equipment (security filing cabinets, safes, etc.)
- ▼ Communications equipment (TV monitors and cameras, mini-studios, audio recording equipment, etc.)
- ▼ Telecommunications equipment (telemetry, underwater sound, radar, visible and invisible light communication, signal data and night vision equipment)

The National Furniture Center also offers complete turnkey service, including project management and installation.

**Office Supplies and Paper Products** [fss.gsa.gov/ofcsol](https://fss.gsa.gov/ofcsol)

*Customer contact point:* Beatrice Cotto (212) 264-8233

*e-mail:* [beatrice.cotto@gsa.gov](mailto:beatrice.cotto@gsa.gov)

- ▼ Training products and services
- ▼ Educational media (publications, law books, lending library, subscriptions)
- ▼ ADP and telecommunications supplies
- ▼ Office products and services
- ▼ Packing and sanitary products and services
- ▼ Human resource services

**Office and Scientific Equipment Center** [fss.gsa.gov/ofcequip](https://fss.gsa.gov/ofcequip) or [fss.gsa.gov/scientific](https://fss.gsa.gov/scientific)

*Customer contact point:* Stephen A. Mial (703) 305-3044

*e-mail:* [stephen.mial@gsa.gov](mailto:stephen.mial@gsa.gov)

- ▼ Copiers – digital and analog
- ▼ Document management products and services
- ▼ Office equipment
- ▼ Photographic equipment supplies and services
- ▼ Video services
- ▼ Laboratory services
- ▼ Digital cameras
- ▼ Test and measurement equipment and services
- ▼ Avionics test equipment and unmanned aerial vehicles
- ▼ General purpose laboratory equipment and services
- ▼ Chemistry, biochemistry, and clinical instruments and services
- ▼ Geophysical and environmental analysis equipment and service

**Services Acquisition Center** [fss.gsa.gov/services](https://fss.gsa.gov/services)

*Customer contact point:* Vivieca Lee (703) 305-7073

*e-mail:* [vivieca.lee@gsa.gov](mailto:vivieca.lee@gsa.gov)

- ▼ Financial asset services
- ▼ Audit and financial management services
- ▼ Business information services
- ▼ GSA SmartPay
- ▼ Government-wide employee relocation services
- ▼ Marketing, media, and public information services
- ▼ Domestic express small package delivery services
- ▼ Professional engineering services



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## Appendix A:

### Ordering Procedures for Services (Services that Require a Statement of Work)

---

GSA developed these special instructions for ordering services when a Statement of Work is required. FAR 8.402 contemplates that GSA may occasionally find it necessary to establish special ordering procedures for individual Schedules or for some Special Item Numbers (SINs) within a Schedule. These procedures take precedence over the procedures in FAR 8.404(b)(2) through (b)(3) [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far).

GSA has determined that the rates for services contained in the contractor's price list are fair and reasonable. However, if you are using these Schedule contracts, **you are still responsible for:**

- ▼ considering the level of effort and mix of labor proposed to perform a specific task being ordered
- ▼ making a determination that the total firm-fixed price or ceiling price is fair and reasonable.

Based on quotes requested from three Schedule contractors that appear to offer the Best Value (considering scope of services offered, hourly rates, contractor's locations, and other factors, as appropriate), you are instructed to select the one that best meets your needs.

When ordering services, ordering offices shall—

- ▼ Prepare a Request for Quotes (RFQ)
- ▼ Transmit the RFQ to Schedule contractors
- ▼ Evaluate quotes and select the Schedule contractor to receive the order.

## Prepare a Request for Quotes

At a minimum, prepare a performance-based statement of work that outlines,

- ▼ the work to be performed
- ▼ location of work
- ▼ period of performance
- ▼ deliverables
- ▼ applicable standards
- ▼ acceptance criteria, and any special requirements (i.e., security clearances, travel, special knowledge, etc.).

Prepare an RFQ which includes the performance-based statement of work and requests the Schedule 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 buying member 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.

The RFQ may request the Schedule contractors, if necessary or appropriate, to submit a project plan for performing the task and information on the

Schedule contractor's experience and/or past performance performing similar tasks.

The RFQ **shall** notify the Schedule contractors what basis will be used for selecting the Schedule contractor to receive the order. The notice **shall** include the basis for determining whether the Schedule 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.

### **Transmit the RFQ to Schedule Contractors**

- ▼ Based upon an initial evaluation of catalogs and price lists, the buying member's office should identify the Schedule contractors that appear to offer the Best Value (considering the scope of services offered, hourly rates and other factors such as Schedule contractors' locations, as appropriate).
- ▼ The RFQ should be provided to three Schedule 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 quotes should be provided to additional Schedule contractors that offer services that will meet the agency's needs. Buying members should strive to minimize the Schedule contractors' costs associated with responding to RFQs 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.

## **Evaluate Quotes and Select the Schedule Contractor to Receive the Order**

After responses have been evaluated against the factors identified in the RFQ, 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.

### **Documentation**

- ▼ Buying members, at a minimum, should document orders by identifying the Schedule contractor from which the services were purchased, identify the services purchased, and the amount paid.

If other than a firm-fixed priced 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 micro-purchase 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.

- ▼ When the buying member's office's requirement involves both products as well as executive, administrative and/or professional services, the buying member's office should total the prices for the products and the firm-fixed prices for the services and select the Schedule contractor that represents the greatest value in terms of meeting the agency's total needs.



## **Appendix B:** **Ordering Procedures for Services and Products** **(No Statement of Work Required)**

---

The following ordering procedures **must** be followed, as required by FAR 8.404 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far) when ordering products and/or services that do **not** require a Statement of Work when using the MAS Program.

### **Orders under the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold**

You can place the order directly with contractor for the item that best meets your needs.

### **Orders over the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold**

As required by FAR 8.404, **you are required** to:

- ▼ Review the GSA *Advantage!* online shopping service
- or
- ▼ Review 3 Schedule contractors' pricelists
- ▼ Then make a Best Value determination
- ▼ Select the Best Value (considering price, plus administrative costs)
- ▼ Place the order directly with the Schedule contractor of your choice.

### **Orders over the maximum order threshold**

Each Schedule contract has an established maximum order threshold.

- ▼ Follow the procedures for orders over \$2,500
- ▼ Review additional price lists or use “GSA *Advantage!* online shopping service
- ▼ Seek price reductions from Schedule contractors that represent Best Value
- ▼ Place your order with the Schedule contractor offering the Best Value.

You should follow the ordering procedures explained above. If further price reductions are not offered, an order may still be placed if you determine that it is appropriate.

### **Documentation**

- ▼ Minimum documentation is generally all that is required (e.g. contractor’s name, items purchased and prices paid).
- ▼ Additional documentation is necessary when your requirement is defined to a particular brand name and only for orders exceeding the micro-purchase threshold.
- ▼ When you follow the procedures of FAR 8.4 [www.arnet.gov/far](http://www.arnet.gov/far), buying members **should limit your review** to the information provided by **Schedule contractor**

## **Need more copies of this manual?**

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**Fax** your request to us at (817) 334-5561



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the MAS Program visit  
our web sites:**

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**GSA Advantage!**

• [www.gsaAdvantage.gov](http://www.gsaAdvantage.gov)

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