

GSA PSS: Information for Ordering Offices

The following ordering procedures were developed by GSA to assist customer agencies in the purchase of services that are priced at hourly rates.

Procedures for Services Priced on GSA Schedules at Hourly Rates

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

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

When ordering PSS services ordering offices shall:

I. Prepare a Request for Quotation

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

B. A request for quotation should be prepared which includes the performance-based statement of work and requests the contractors submit either a firm-fixed price or a ceiling price to provide the services outlined in the statement of work. A firm-fixed price order shall be requested, unless the ordering office makes a determination that it is not possible at the time of placing the order to estimate accurately the extent or duration of the work or to anticipate cost with any reasonable degree of confidence. When such a determination is made, a labor hour or time and materials proposal may be requested. The firm-fixed price shall be based on the hourly rates in the schedule contract and shall consider the mix of labor categories and level of effort required to perform the services described in the statement of work. The firm-fixed price of the order should also include any travel costs or other incidental costs related to performance of the services ordered, unless the order provides for reimbursement of travel costs at the rates provided in the Federal Travel or Joint Travel Regulations. A ceiling price must be established for labor hour and time and material orders.

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

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

limited to schedule contractors who are small business concerns as permitted by paragraph (ii)(A) below, the request for quotations shall notify the contractors that will be the case.

II. Transmit the Request for Quotes to Contractor

A. Based upon an initial evaluation of catalogs and pricelists, the ordering office should identify the contractors that appear to offer the best value (considering the scope of services offered, hourly rates and other factors such as contractors' locations, as appropriate)

B. The request for quotation should be to three (3) contractors if the proposed order is estimated to exceed the micro-purchase threshold, but not to exceed the maximum order threshold. For proposed orders exceeding the maximum order threshold, the request for quotation should be provided to additional contractors that offer services that will meet the agency's needs. Ordering offices should strive to minimize the contractors' costs associated with responding to requests for proposals for specific orders. Requests should be tailored to the minimum level necessary for adequate evaluation and selection for order placement.

III. Evaluate proposals and select the contractor to receive the order

After responses have been evaluated against the factors identified in the request for quotation, 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.

Blanket Purchase Agreements

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 13.201(a) defines Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) as "...a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing 'charge accounts' with qualified sources of supply." The use of Blanket Purchase Agreements under the Federal Supply Schedule Program is authorized in accordance with FAR 13.202(c)(3), which reads, in part, as follows:

Federal Supply Schedule contracts contain BPA provisions to enable schedule users to maximize their administrative and purchasing savings. This feature permits schedule users to set up "accounts" with Schedule Contractors to fill recurring requirements. These accounts establish a period for the BPA and generally address issues such as the frequency of ordering and invoicing, authorized callers, discounts, delivery locations and times. Agencies may qualify for the best quantity/volume discounts available under the contract, based on the potential volume of business that may be generated through such an agreement, regardless of the size of the individual orders. In addition, agencies may be able to secure a discount higher than that available in the contract based on the aggregate volume of business possible under a BPA. Finally, Contractors may be open to a progressive type of discounting where the discount would increase once the sales accumulated under the BPA reach certain prescribed levels. Use of a BPA may be particularly useful with the new Maximum Order feature. See the Suggested Format, contained in this Schedule Pricelist, for customers to consider when using this purchasing tool.

The establishment of Federal Supply Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) for recurring services is permitted when the procedures outlined herein are followed. All BPAs for services must define the services that may be ordered under the BPA, along with delivery or performance time frames, billing procedures, etc. The potential volume of orders under BPAs, regardless of the size of individual orders,

may offer the ordering office the opportunity to secure volume discounts. When establishing BPAs ordering offices shall:

I. Inform contractors in the request for quotation (based on the agency's requirement) if a single BPA or multiple BPAs will be established, and indicate the basis that will be used for selecting the contractors to be awarded the BPAs.

A. **SINGLE BPA:** Generally, a single BPA should be established when the ordering office can define the tasks to be ordered under the BPA and establish a firm-fixed price or ceiling price for individual tasks or services to be ordered. When this occurs, authorized users may place the order directly under the established BPA when the need for service arises. The schedule contractor that represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs should be awarded the BPA.

B. **MULTIPLE BPAs:** When the ordering office determines multiple BPAs are needed to meet its requirements, the ordering office should determine which contractors can meet any technical qualifications before establishing the BPAs. When multiple BPAs are established, the authorized users must follow the procedure in (3)(ii)(B) above, and then place the order with the schedule contractor that represents the best value and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs.

II. Review BPAs periodically. Such reviews shall be conducted at least annually. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the BPA still represents the best value (considering price, special qualifications, etc.) and results in the lowest overall cost alternative to meet the agency's needs.

III. The ordering office should give preference to small business concerns when two or more contractors can provide the services at the same firm-fixed price or ceiling price.

IV. When the ordering office's requirement involves both products as well as PSS services, the ordering office should total the prices for the products and the firm-fixed price for the services and select the contractor that represents the greatest value in terms of meeting the agency's total needs.

V. The ordering office, at a minimum, should document orders by identifying the contractor the services were purchased from, the services purchased, and the amount paid. If other than a firm-fixed price order is placed, such documentation should include the basis for the determination to use a labor-hour or time-and-materials order. For agency requirements in excess of the micro-purchase threshold, the order file should document the evaluation of schedule contractors' proposals 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.