

# GSA Fact Sheet #2: Is GSA Your Pot of Gold?

## The 10 Most Common GSA Questions

### A Quick Guide to General Services Administration Contracts

Compliments of GMBeckert : GSA Contract Specialists

#### 1. What Is a GSA Contract?

- ❖ A GSA Contract allows you to enter an enormous market
- ❖ GSA serves tens of thousands of buyers for almost 200 federal agencies.
- ❖ GSA "value added" to buyers is "screening" potential suppliers (maybe you).
- ❖ By getting a GSA contract, buyers know that you are viable, and that your price is the lowest you can make it.

#### 2. Is GSA Right For Me?

- ❖ GSA is very competitive.
- ❖ You must provide the lowest prices and discounts you offer to anyone.
- ❖ To win, you will typically need:
  - ❖ An established business
  - ❖ Good financials
  - ❖ References
  - ❖ Copies of invoices
  - ❖ Documents that show pricing and discount history
  - ❖ Patience
  - ❖ Great attention to detail

#### 3. How Do I Get Started?

- ❖ Register with central contractor registry (CCR).
- ❖ Have an established commercial price list.
- ❖ Be ready to sell to the world's largest buying group.
- ❖ Make a marketing time & money commitment.
- ❖ Find the right schedule (solicitation). Be careful!
  - ❖ [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov) -> "Schedules e-Library"
- ❖ Download, print, place in a 3-ring binder.



#### 4. What Are GSA Solicitations?

- ❖ There are about 56 different solicitations covering everything from furniture and farm equipment to high-tech services.
- ❖ Solicitations vary in structure and content, and each solicitation has to be analyzed on its own.
- ❖ They are similar to traditional contracting solicitations, but do not have the structure defined in the FAR.
- ❖ GSA contracting officers follow their own process.

#### 5. How Do I Find the Right Solicitation?

- ❖ Start with the GSA Schedules e-Library (see #3 above).
- ❖ Use search terms or the categories listed on the form.
- ❖ Caution: there is not always a clear product/service distinction and solicitations can overlap each other.
- ❖ Select the appropriate Special Item Numbers (SINs) that match your offerings.

#### 6. OK, I Downloaded This Big File From GSA. Now What?

- ❖ Print it out and place in a 3-ring binder.
- ❖ Divide into tabbed sections according to its organization.
- ❖ Look at each section carefully.
- ❖ Important: read the Instructions To Offerors!
- ❖ Select the SINs appropriate to you.
- ❖ Locate places that have blanks that need to be filled in.
- ❖ Call the point of contact to ask any questions.

#### 7. How Do I Fill Out the Solicitation?

- ❖ Use MS Word to edit the downloaded solicitation.
- ❖ Just fill in the blanks – do not change anything else!
- ❖ Prepare your price list in an Excel spreadsheet.
- ❖ If you have a published product catalog you must provide at least one copy.

#### 8. What Information Will GSA Ask For?

- ❖ Typically They Want:
  - ❖ Past Performance References
  - ❖ Copies of Invoices and shipping orders
  - ❖ Organizational and management information
  - ❖ A marketing plan
  - ❖ Copies of your commercial price list

#### 9. How Do I Prepare the Response?

- ❖ Read (again) Instructions to Offerors.
- ❖ GSA typically requires two identical 3-ring binders ("original" and "copy").
- ❖ Binders are used because you can easily replace individual pages as you "negotiate" your contract.
- ❖ Have a tabbed divider for each section; use printed labels.
- ❖ Include any appendices and the printed price list (if applicable) in the binder.
- ❖ Make sure it all looks tidy and professional.

#### 10. How Long Will It Take?

- ❖ GSA tells us they like to close schedules within 104 days.
- ❖ Our experience shows that it varies:
  - ❖ Schedule 70, project "SWN" = 6 months
  - ❖ Schedule 70, project "PC" = 3 months
- ❖ Survival tip:
  - ❖ Do a good job up front so they do not have to ask for clarifications
  - ❖ If they need more information, it will take longer



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