

Handout D

Advantages of using GSA Multiple Award Schedules¹

- ✓ No Posting/Publication (*FedBizOpps* Synopsis) Requirement.²
- ✓ Flexibility in Adding Agency-Specific Clauses and Provisions.³
- ✓ Contractors Are Already Determined Responsible.⁴
- ✓ No Dollar Limitation on Orders⁵
- ✓ GSA Schedule Electronic Tools Assist Market Research, Dissemination of Requests for Quotes (RFQs), and Ordering.⁶
- ✓ Recurring Requirements Can Be Satisfied With Flexible Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreements Rather Than Agency Indefinite Quantity Contracts.⁷
- ✓ Agencies Retain Maximum Flexibility for “Best Value” Source Selections.⁸
- ✓ GSA Schedules Are a Higher Priority Source to Be Considered Before Soliciting Open-Market Commercial Sources for Supplies or Services.⁹
- ✓ Statutory “Competition” Requirements Have Already Been Met.¹⁰
- ✓ Large Pool of Available Contractors Offering a Wide Variety of Commercial Services and Products.¹¹
- ✓ Task Orders Need Not Be Fixed-Price; Schedules Permit Labor Hour and Time & Material Task Orders.¹²
- ✓ Agencies Can Utilize Discretionary Small Business Set-Aside Authority to Meet Small Business Goals.¹³
- ✓ Unit Prices Are Already Determined Fair & Reasonable at the Schedule Contract Level.¹⁴
- ✓ Agencies Are Free to Negotiate Discounts from GSA Schedule Contract Pricing.¹⁵
- ✓ Schedule Contractors Can Team Across Schedules for All-Schedule Solutions to Complex Requirements.¹⁶
- ✓ Streamlined RFQ and Ordering Procedures Simplify and Save Time Compared to Complex FAR Part 15 Procedures.¹⁷

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- ✓ Ordering Agencies Can Retain Full Control Over Their Task Orders; GSA Permission is Not Required to Place Schedule Orders.¹⁸
- ✓ GSA Schedules Support the Use of the Government Commercial Purchase Card as an Ordering and Payment Mechanism.¹⁹
- ✓ Subcontracting Plans are not Required for Orders²⁰
- ✓ GSA Provides Classroom and Online Training for Agencies on How to Use GSA Schedules.²¹

END NOTES

¹ Comments on this document can be addressed to brad.demers@gsa.gov.

² [FAR 8.404\(a\)](#) refers. The lack of a 10-day posting requirement and the exemption from the synopsis requirement further reduces procurement lead time for Schedule orders. Note [FAR 8.404\(g\)](#) requirements for Recovery Act procurements.

³ Schedule contract clauses are shown for each contract at www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov. Once there, type in the contract number in the search field. Click on the contractor name in the result, and then click on “view specifics for this contract” link under Contract Clauses/Exceptions. Agencies may add to their orders any clauses, terms and conditions not conflicting with the FAR or the clauses in the Schedule contract (e.g., agencies may add [options](#), award term provisions, performance incentives, etc.).

⁴ Ordering agencies are not required to make a separate [FAR 9.1](#) responsibility determination for Schedule contractors as that determination has already been accomplished by the Schedules Contracting Officer. [Advanced Technology Systems, Inc., B-296493.6, October 6, 2006.](#)

⁵ The Minimum Order amount on Schedule contracts is very low, typically \$300 or less. The so-called “Maximum Order Limitation” (MOL) is a misnomer because it actually places no dollar limitation on the authority of the ordering activity to place an order for any amount. The MOL amount has no practical effect on orders. It is simply the point at which a Schedule contractor could decline the work by notifying the ordering activity in accordance with the Order Limitations Clause (52.216-19) of their Schedule contract. However, due to the competition requirements for Schedule orders, it is highly unlikely for this to *ever* occur as a contractor who chooses not to participate in an order above their MOL would simply not quote on that RFQ.

⁶ Agencies can use [Schedules eLibrary](#) to determine which Schedule(s) and Special Item Numbers SIN(s) are necessary to meet their requirements. Searching service contracts pricelists at [GSA Advantage](#) using keywords from the PWS can assist in market research. Accessing those same pricelists is important when the agency enduser is preparing a Government estimate for acquisition planning. GSA [eBuy](#) can be used as a “sources sought notice” to post a Request for Information (or even a Draft RFQ for comment) visible to all holders of a particular Schedule SIN. In the RFQ phase, the *eBuy* website can be used to send out the Schedule order RFQ. (In addition, *GSA Advantage* can be used for the quick and easy process of online shopping and ordering for products.)

⁷ See <http://www.gsa.gov/bpa> and FAR [8.405-3](#) for information on Schedule BPAs. Schedule BPAs can be Single-Award or Multiple-Award just like indefinite quantity-type contracts. Agencies have the same flexibility with Schedule BPAs (non-conflicting clauses, options, source selection, price discount negotiations, etc.) as they do with Schedule orders. Schedule BPAs, which are simplified acquisition methods for both supplies and services, offer significantly lower procurement lead times when compared with the resources necessary to establish agency IDIQs. In addition, because BPAs are not “contracts” for

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many FAR purposes, ordering agencies have enhanced flexibility. (For a discussion of this issue with case references, visit [THIS](#) page on interact and scroll down to “BPA ISSUES”).

⁸ Neither FAR SubPart 8.4 nor the terms of the Schedule contracts place any restriction on the flexibility of the ordering agency to establish desired order evaluation factors or source selection procedures. Because FAR Part 15 does not apply to Schedule orders or Schedule BPAs (see note 17 below), Schedule ordering permits streamlined and simplified source selection. Agencies can evaluate quotes for Schedule orders or BPAs from anywhere in the Best Value Continuum from low-price-technically-acceptable to full best value evaluation.

⁹ [FAR 8.004](#) states that agencies should consider satisfying their requirements for supplies and services from GSA Schedules in preference to commercial (open-market) sources.

¹⁰ Schedule BPAs and orders are considered to be issued using full and open competition. [FAR 6.102\(d\)\(3\)](#). When placing orders against GSA Schedules or establishing Schedule BPAs, ordering agencies shall not seek competition outside the MAS program. [FAR 8.404\(a\)](#). When agencies use the [FAR 8.405-1](#) and [-2](#) ordering procedures, the requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act (CICA) of 1984 have been met.

¹¹ Over 20 million supplies and services are available on GSA’s Multiple Award Schedules program. A particular [Schedule](#) can typically have many hundreds of available contractors representing the whole range of socioeconomic categories.

¹² Schedule contracts for services include FAR 52.212-4 Alternate I allowing for Time and Material and Labor Hour orders (T&M/LH) provided a Determination and Findings (D&F) is prepared in accordance with [FAR 8.404\(h\)\(3\)](#).

¹³ Reference [FAR 8.405-5](#).

¹⁴ Reference [FAR 8.404\(d\)](#). However, for DOD, see [Class Deviation 2014-O0011](#)

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, [FAR 8.405-4](#): “...the ordering activity *shall* seek a price reduction when the order or BPA exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold.”

¹⁶ See <http://www.gsa.gov/cta> for FAQs on Schedule contractor teaming and information on the contents of a Contractor Team Agreement (CTA). It is important to note that Schedule CTAs are NOT to be mistaken for [FAR 9.106 CTAs](#). Subcontractors are NOT CTA members under Schedule CTAs.

¹⁷ Nothing in FAR Part 15 applies to Schedule orders or BPAs. Reference [FAR 8.404\(a\)](#). Ordering activities failing to treat a Schedules procurement under FAR 8.4 as a streamlined acquisition and instead relying on the more complex Part 15 acquisition procedures do so at their peril. The United States Court of Claims has specifically held that FAR Part 15 is not applicable to MAS orders. See [Ellsworth Associates, Inc. v United States, 45 Fed. Cl. 388 \(1999\)](#). The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has also stated that FAR Part 15 does not apply to Schedule orders. See [Computer Products, Inc., B-284702, May 24, 2000](#). If a formal FAR Part 15 negotiation process or something akin to it is utilized (e.g., “debriefing” or “Competitive Range Determinations”), GAO may use FAR Part 15 as guidance in reviewing an agency's actions. See [ACS Government Solutions Group, Inc., B-282098.2, B-282098.3, June 2, 1999](#). Discussions with contractors are not required for Schedule orders. Instead the Ordering CO can seek additional information regarding an RFQ without triggering Part 15 discussion rules. See [Intelligent Decisions, Inc., B-274626.2, December 23, 1996](#) and [ViON Corporation, B-283804.2, January 24, 2000](#).

¹⁸ There are GSA offices that will (for a fee) act as an agency’s Ordering Officer. But those “[assisted services](#)” are not required in order for agencies to directly issue and administer their delivery/task orders against the GSA Schedules. **Ordering activities pay no fee to GSA to issue their own orders against a Schedules contract.** (The GSA Schedule contract prices already include a 0.75% Industrial Funding Fee

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which the Schedule contractors remit to GSA. Ordering activities receiving a quote from a Schedule contractor with a 0.75% IFF added to the quote should inform the contractor that the Schedule price already includes the IFF. Ordering Officers may wish to contact the GSA Contracting Officer if necessary.)

¹⁹ All GSA Schedules require contractors to accept the purchase card for Schedule orders at or below the micropurchase threshold. Most contractors also choose to accept the purchase card for orders above the micropurchase threshold. (See each contractor's *GSA Advantage*-posted pricelist for more information.).

²⁰ All GSA Schedules awarded to other than small businesses have a subcontracting plan at the contract level. In accordance with [FAR 19.705-2\(e\)](#) a contract may have no more than one plan. Even if an ordering activity were to erroneously implement a subcontracting plan at the order level, FPDS would not recognize said plan and thus be ineligible for credit due to the inability to report in the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System.

²¹ GSA websites like *eBuy* and *GSA Advantage!*[®] include tutorials. Additional resources for training on the Schedules program are available at www.gsa.gov/masnews. For in-depth detailed information/discussions on ordering professional services visit: <https://interact.gsa.gov/groups/services-ordering-solutions-avoiding-mas-confusion>