

## News You Can Use

### 621I FSS Words of Advice

[FSS 621I, Professional and Allied Healthcare Staffing Services](#), offers federal Government agencies and other authorized users a vehicle to obtain quality clinical staffing solutions from qualified/experienced companies in an efficient, streamlined and cost effective manner. This schedule assists medical facilities in augmenting their staff in critical times of need by providing a full range of direct and indirect patient care providers that are necessary to support a healthcare system. When preparing a Statement of Work (SOW) for a Request for Quotation (RFQ), please note the following:

- The FSS contractor **AND/OR** the individual service provider (e.g. physician) is responsible for complying with all laws and regulations applicable to labor and employment, such as:
  - Workers compensation;
  - Professional liability and car insurance; and
  - Income tax and social security withholding
- Travel costs must be included as a **separate line item** and reviewed in accordance with all applicable rules and regulations, unless the task order states travel costs will be reimbursed at the rates provided in the Federal Travel or Joint Travel Regulations.
- The ordering activity (not VA FSS) is required to update the [Wage Determination \(WD\)](#) for services under a specific task order in accordance with the [Service Contract Act](#) annually. The WD should be part of the RFQ package (i.e. SOW).
- Ordering activities must treat all Schedule contractors fairly. The ordering activity must evaluate competitive quotes solely on the factors specified in the RFQ evaluation criteria.
- Orders issued to Schedule contractors, which fall into the various socioeconomic groups, may be reported against an agency's annual socioeconomic accomplishments and may be utilized as a primary evaluation factor in source selection.
- VA FSS has already determined that the hourly rates for services contained in the Schedule contractor's pricelist are fair and reasonable. However, the ordering activity is responsible for considering the level of effort and the mix of labor proposed to perform a specific task being ordered, and for determining that the total quoted price is fair and reasonable.
- Although VA FSS has negotiated fair and reasonable pricing, ordering activities may, and are encouraged, to seek additional pricing discounts before placing an order. Ordering activities shall seek price reductions for **ALL**:
  - Orders exceeding the maximum order threshold; and
  - Schedule Blanket Purchase Agreements (*regardless of the dollar value*).
- When seeking additional price reductions, the ordering activity should request that responsive contractors propose discounts by individual labor category, which will allow the ordering activity to obtain deeper price discounts on the higher priced labor categories as contractors are able to offer discounts that vary across the different labor categories.
  - View [ordering procedures for services that require a SOW](#) and Federal Acquisition Regulation [8.405-2](#)
  - View [ordering checklist](#)

## Training Topic

### VA Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Services

- **What is the Mission of VA PBM Services?**  
 The mission of VA's PBM Services is to improve the health status of Veterans by encouraging the appropriate use of medications in a comprehensive medical care setting.
- **What is the role of VA PBM Services?**  
 PBM Services is the VA Program Office responsible for formulary management, prescription fulfillment, procurement, and clinical pharmacy practices. The objectives of the formulary management process are the following:
  - Standardize the drug benefit across the VHA system;
  - Promote appropriate drug therapy;
  - Improve drug safety;
  - Improve the distribution of pharmaceuticals; and
  - Reduce drug inventory and acquisition costs.

The VA has one standardized National Formulary listing of drugs. Regardless of National Formulary designation, all medically necessary medications are made available to Veterans.
- **How does VA PBM Services relate to the FSS and the National Contract Service (NCS)?**  
 The VA National Formulary is driven by safety as the top priority, followed by effectiveness, with cost being the final consideration. A low drug cost cannot be the deciding factor when concerns about the drug's safety and/or effectiveness exist. PBM collaborates with both FSS and NCS to maximize the number of drugs available on contract to VA. FSS contracts are not requirements based; whereas, National Contracts are awarded based on VA requirements. When a VA healthcare provider prescribes a drug for a Veteran, the VA pharmacy must procure these drugs by buying from a National Contract. If the prescribed drug is not available on a National Contract, the VA pharmacy will procure the lowest cost generic equivalent to the drug with a FSS contract.
- **Where can an inquiring party learn additional information about VA PBM?**  
 The PBM Services website is a valuable resource and can be accessed at: [www.pbm.va.gov](http://www.pbm.va.gov). This website includes sections on clinical guidance, drug prices, education, and VA Center for Medication Safety. PBM Services also provides a quarterly on-line newsletter that can be accessed on the PBM Services internet website or subscribed to by sending an e-mail to [stxcollage@va.gov](mailto:stxcollage@va.gov) with "PBM subscribe" in the subject line.
  - [VA National Formulary Frequently Asked Questions](#)
  - View previous editions of the [Ez Minutes Newsletter](#)
  - Access important [Links & Other Resources](#)

## VA FSS Working for You

### VA FSS in Action

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of those that participated in the recent October Vendor Forum here in Chicago. With approximately 100 attendees, we received a lot of great feedback about our progress this past year. As we discussed, we were able to decrease the average duration of modification requests from October 2010 to September 2011 from 79 days to 42 days (a 47% decrease). We also decreased the average duration of pending offers from 227 days to 165 days (a 27% decrease) from October 2010 to September 2011. We are continuing to work on decreasing these timelines even more, and have made great strides during this past year. Please click on the following link in order to download the VA Supplier Relationship Transformation [Opening Presentation](#), [Breakout Session Report Slides](#), or [Forum Survey Results Comparisons](#).

We also were very interested in the comments and suggestions provided for additional opportunities for improvement and growth within our team. One main theme that was continually discussed during the day was your desire for additional vendor training opportunities. We already have plans in place and are moving forward to incorporate training at the NAC's upcoming annual Industry Conference that will be held in March of 2012 in the Chicagoland area that will give basic information and delve into more advanced topics, too. The FSS Service will also be working this year to develop and implement a webinar training program that will discuss individual topics (i.e. CSP, modifications, etc).

As always, if you are experiencing any issues, please do not hesitate to contact Carole O'Brien, Director of the FSS Service, at 708-786-4957 and [carole.obrien@va.gov](mailto:carole.obrien@va.gov) or, Craig Robinson, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary (ADAS) for National Healthcare Acquisitions, at 708-786-5157 and [craig.robinson@va.gov](mailto:craig.robinson@va.gov). Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit."* [Aristotle](#)

If you have any questions/concerns or would like to learn more about a specific topic and/or issue, please feel free to contact the FSS Help Desk by phone at (708)786-7737 and/or by e-mail at [Helpdesk.ammhinFSS@va.gov](mailto:Helpdesk.ammhinFSS@va.gov).

### 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY 2011 Sales Due

At this time, FSS contractors have 23 calendar days left to report their 4<sup>th</sup> quarter FY 2011 (i.e. July 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011) sales figures in accordance with contract [clause 552.238-74](#), Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) and Sales Reporting. Pursuant to this clause, a FSS contractor is required to submit its quarterly Report of Sales and IFF payment within 60 days of the completion of each quarter. Please note all FSS contractors are required to submit their sales data for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (even if no sales occurred under the contract) through the [VA sales portal](#). In order to avoid confusion and having an IFF payment returned, all sales figures should be reported **BEFORE** an IFF payment is submitted to our office (regardless of how the IFF is remitted).

- [Access the VA online sales reporting system](#)
- [View portal user guides](#)

Please direct all IFF and sales reporting related questions to the VA Sales Helpdesk at [FSSSales.ammhin@va.gov](mailto:FSSSales.ammhin@va.gov).

## National News

### Recent Emergency & Disaster Declarations

Under the [Disaster Recovery Program](#), state and local Governments may purchase products/services off of FSS contracts in order to facilitate the recovery from a major disaster. In addition, state and local Government entities may use FSS contracts to purchase products and services in advance of a major disaster declared by the president. State and local Governments are responsible for ensuring that the products/services purchased are to be used to facilitate recovery. As such, there were [six declarations](#) by President Obama in October 2011.

#### MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type	Designated Counties
<a href="#">4038</a>	10/05	MD	Remnants of Tropical Storm Lee	
<a href="#">4039</a>	10/14	NJ	Remnants of Tropical Storm Lee	
<a href="#">4040</a>	10/18	PR	Tropical Storm Maria	
<a href="#">4041</a>	10/28	LA	Tropical Storm Lee	

#### EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Disaster Type	Designated Counties
<a href="#">3342</a>	10/31	CT	Severe Storm	

#### FIRE MANAGEMENT DECLARATIONS

Number	Date	State	Incident
<a href="#">2972</a>	10/03	NV	Indian Creek Fire

- [Disaster Recovery Program FAQs](#)

### Did You Know...

<sup>1</sup>World War I officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of "the war to end all wars."

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day. The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m. The US Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926. An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved on May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday – a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "[Veterans Day Proclamation](#)."

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Accessed on November 3, 2011. <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>.

## Recently Awarded FSS Contracts (October 2011)

### Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Hematology Related Products Contracts (Schedule 65IB)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
J&J Ortho Clinical Diagnostics	VA797F-12-D-0004	Large	
Celgene Corporation	VA797F-12-D-0007	Large	
Tercica, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0025	Small	
Angelini Labopharm, LLC.	VA797F-12-D-0019	Large	

### Medical/Surgical Equipment & Supplies Contracts (Schedule 65IIA)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
LifeSync Corporation	VA797F-12-D-0006	Small	
Omar Medical Supplies, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0012	Small	
Restorative Care of America, Inc. (RCAI)	VA797F-12-D-0011	Small	
Ocelco, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0016	Small	Woman Owned Business
Westprime Systems, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0014	Small	
Computer Products & Supplies, Int'l Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0020	Small	Woman Owned Business
Gottfried Medical, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0009	Small	
Kowa Optimed, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0010	Small	
Lane Enterprises, LLC.	VA797F-12-D-0026	Small	Disabled Veteran Owned Business
Arizant Healthcare	VA797F-12-D-0005	Large	
Communication Science, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0033	Small	
Wy'East Corporation	VA797F-12-D-0038	Small	
Cardiac Science Corporation	VA797F-12-D-0013	Large	
Lindgren-RF Enclosures, Inc. (ETS-Lindgren)	VA797F-12-D-0029	Small	
B&D Customized Service Solutions DBA Allcare Medical Supply	VA797F-12-D-0015	Small	

### Dental Equipment & Supplies Contracts (Schedule 65IIC)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Whip Mix Corporation	VA797F-12-D-0008	Small	

### Patient Mobility Devices Contracts (Schedule 65IIF)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Electro Kinetic Technologies, LLC.	VA797F-12-D-0028	Small	

### Invitro Diagnostics, Reagents, Test Kits, & Test Sets Contracts (Schedule 65VII)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Abbott Laboratories	VA797F-12-D-0036	Large	

### Cost-Per-Test, Clinical Laboratory Analyzer Contracts (Schedule 66III)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Ameritox, Inc.	V797P-7367A	Large	

### Professional & Allied Healthcare Staffing Services Contracts (Schedule 621I)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
AMS Locums	VA797F-12-D-0017	Small	
Specialty Care Services, LLC.	VA797F-12-D-0024	Small	8(A) Business

### Medical Laboratory Testing & Analysis Services Contracts (Schedule 621II)

Company Name	Contract Number	Business Size	Socioeconomic Status
Oxford Immunotec, Inc.	VA797F-12-D-0027	Small	
Ameritox, Ltd.	V797P-7367A	Large	

**\*\*Please visit the [VA Schedule Programs](#) page for a complete listing of all Schedules\*\***

In order to obtain pricing information for all of the companies referenced above or any other FSS contractor, please review the [NAC Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#) or [GSA E-Library](#).