



Federal Supply Schedule Contracting (FSS) Newsletter

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Proposed Industry Conference (REVISED)

In the past, the National Acquisition Center (NAC) has held training conferences on a recurring basis to assist, in part, contractors, both new and old to the Federal Supply Schedule (FSS), in developing offers and administering their ongoing contracts. The conference had been an excellent tool for the NAC to share current issues, new regulations and policy, and provide focused training. Unfortunately, the NAC has not been able to host an Industry Conference since 2011. We have heard from many of our current contractors, who have attended these sessions in the past and found them to be very beneficial. Current contractors, along with prospective contractors, requested the NAC to bring these events back. We are happy to announce that the NAC, in partnership with VA's Office of Small and

Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), will be hosting NAC Industry Days, June 30 - July 1, 2015, at the Crown Plaza, Rosemont, IL. For more information and to register, you can go to [Vendor Business Showcase](#). This conference will cover a range of topics pertaining to NAC various healthcare contract programs including national contracts and the VA FSS program.

VA's FSS Service has tentatively scheduled training encompassing the following topic areas;

- Town Hall: Recent Changes and Way Ahead with Q&A
- Trade Agreement Act
- Public Law 102-585, VA Healthcare Act of 1992 (Pharmaceuticals)
- Healthcare Services
- Pre- and Post- Audit Review Process
- Submitting a FSS Offer



- FSS Contract Administration, both basic and advanced Negotiations
- Contract Extensions
- FSS Website Information/Tools
- Electronic Tools

We also intend to host one-on-one sessions with current and potential contractors.

Please be on the lookout to review the full agenda at [Vendor Business Showcase](#).

We are excited about the opportunity to meet with industry and want to ensure a valuable experience for all.

VA/FSS Service to Begin Using Electronic Signatures

“The Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) service will be implementing a new policy allowing Contract Specialists to sign contractual documents electronically.”

The Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) service will be implementing a new policy allowing Contract Specialists to sign contractual documents electronically. This will help to streamline current processes and will support the FSS Service’s efforts in transitioning to a 100% paperless environment.

This new policy will allow Federal Supply Schedule contracting staff to sign any contract document electronically (including

the Standard Form 1449, Standard Form 30, as well as any correspondence). However, the policy will not permit accepting digital signatures from our vendor community. At this time the VA does not have the electronic infrastructure capable of authenticating signatures from external sources.

In short, the signature process for our vendors is not changing at this time. The FSS Service will still require handwritten signatures on all key

contract documents from our vendor community. However, for documents that are signed by the FSS Service, our vendors will begin seeing digital signatures that are authenticated with the Contract Specialist/Contracting Officer’s VA-issued Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card in the near future.

Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OAL) VA FSS Subcontracting Plans

The Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) is aware of the numerous issues that have occurred with the review and approval of prior Small Business Subcontracting plans. We have developed a plan to ensure all plans awaiting review and approval will be completed within the next 90 days, which may cover any performance period within 2014 and/or 2015.

For plans that have not yet been approved by

May 1, 2015, the FSS will incorporate by a supplemental agreement. The contractor will need to recognize and agree that negotiations regarding the plan(s) may need to be conducted; and the FSS CO may require revisions to the plan before final approval. Any unapproved plans shall not be evaluated as a negative performance issue.

On Monday, February 2, 2015, a reminder notice was sent out to all FSS

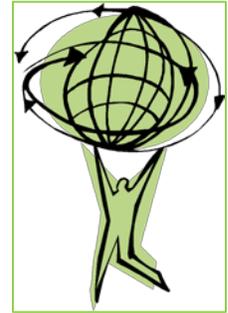
contractors identified as a large business and may require the annual submission of a Small Business Subcontracting.

Please note a small business subcontracting plan is required if the offeror is (1) a large business and, (2) Contract value is at least \$650,000 or more.

Subcontracting Plans continued

All plans shall be submitted with a new offer and 90 days prior to expiration of any existing plan. Ensuing subcontracting plans and any questions with regard to small business plans are to be submitted to the general email address:

Subcontracting.AMMHINVAFSS@va.gov.



Professional Liability Insurance -Schedule 621 I Professional & Allied Healthcare Staffing Services

The Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Service negotiates, awards and administers FSS contracts for Professional & Allied Healthcare Staffing Service. This schedule provides temporary staffing solutions for government healthcare providers. The schedule offers a variety of medical services for

doctors, nurses, therapists, technologists and technicians. Pursuant to contract clause 852.237-7 "Indemnification and Medical Liability Insurance" all companies awarded a contract under this schedule must have evidence of professional liability insurance issued by a responsible insurance carrier of not less than \$1 million per

occurrence/\$3 million aggregate. The contractor must maintain this insurance for the life of the contract without a lapse in coverage. In addition, any subcontractor participating in the contract must also

"Pursuant to contract clause 852.237-7 "Indemnification and Medical Liability Insurance"

maintain and provide evidence of professional liability insurance with the minimum dollar limits of \$ 1 million per claim/\$3 million aggregate.

With respect to the certificate of insurance, the document must identify the VA National Acquisition Center as the certificate holder and include 30 days written notice prior to policy cancellation to the certificate holder. This includes cancellation for non-payment or if the insured elects not to renew. In the event the insurance carrier fails to notify the government within 30 days of a policy cancellation, we require the contractor to complete and provide to their contracting officer a signed "Certificate of Insurance" certification at time of contract award and when there are any policy changes. This certification places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the contractor if there's a cancellation or change of policy.

To ensure the Government's interests are protected, we verify the dollars limits associated with professional liability insurance are not shared with general

liability or umbrella coverage. We will not accept any policies that are shared or umbrella as the pool of money may become exhausted. The dollar limits for professional liability must be separated (i.e. stand-alone) and offer guaranteed coverage for our veterans.

Now, if an FSS contractor has multiple subsidiaries companies that also have an FSS contract, they, too, are also required to maintain separate dollar limits of at least \$1 million per claim/\$3 million aggregate. For documentation and verification purposes, the policy should clearly indicate that separate dollar limits exist for subsidiaries and/or the insurance carrier can include a cover letter with a similar statement.

When a contractor seeks to modify their contract by adding additional states, they must provide proof of insurance coverage for each of the new states from the insurance carrier. The acceptance of proof should be from an authorized representative of the insurance company.

Because we must ensure the safety and well-being of our patients, any contractor that fails to adhere to the contractual requirement of having professional liability insurance will have their contract cancelled or terminated for cause.

Please contact your contract specialist if you have any question about this schedule.

Federal Supply Service

P.O. Box 76
1st Avenue, One Block North of 22nd Street,
Hines, IL 60141

PALT Workload/Priority Coding

Within the Federal Supply Schedule Service, procurement action lead time (PALT) goals are established, which we strive to achieve. Receipt of a sufficient offer, contract extension and modification request packages are paramount for starting a 'good faith' processing PALT clock. Rarely does the FSS Service receive initial proposal packages requiring little to no clarification and/or additional information. While most offers and contractors know that for an offer or extension proposal package for non-service FSS requirements, the average PALT is 180 and 120 days respectively. An average PALT of 240 days is the case for our service FSS requirements. In addition, average PALT for non-pharmaceutical modification requests, average PALT is 60 days.

In addition to the abovementioned PALT, the FSS Service works

from an established priority code of preference that places a strategic focus and urgency on the need of our veterans and other federal customers. For example, expiring contracts for critical items with no alternative support or those with Blanket Purchase Agreements or emergencies or high profile actions will perpetually trump the traditionally known first in first out (FIFO) methodology. FSS Service Director and/or Chiefs will integrally be involved in providing concurrence and/or oversight to aid in ensuring the priority coding is adhered to.

Industry partners are encouraged to consider both the established PALT and priority coding reality and impact as they affect offers, contract extensions and modification requests. If you believe you have provided a sufficient package and little to no communication is received from your assigned contract specialist, feel free to contact the Division Chief

or Service Director, as the situation demands.

We're on the Web!
www.fss.va.gov