

VA FSS Newsletter

Your source for VA Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) News and Updates

Transitioning from DUNS to UEI

For several years now, the Government has been preparing to transition from using a DUNS number, which stands for data universal numbering system, to a unique entity identifier, or UEI. The UEI is a 12-character alphanumeric value, and it is managed, granted, and owned by the government. The FAR and GSAR have changed regulatory language to refer only to a UEI, removing references to a DUNS number, and GSA is preparing all Integrated Award Environment (IAE) systems to use UEIs, including the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) database, Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS), and the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIS). For those companies already registered in SAM, including those with inactive registrations, you have already been automatically assigned a UEI by the system and do not need to take any action. SAM will also assign a UEI to any new registrant.

Currently, SAM records display both the DUNS and UEI for registered companies. However, on April 4, 2022, the Government will cease using the DUNS number and will only use the UEI created in SAM. This means that registrants will no longer have to go to Dun & Bradstreet's site, a third-party provider, to obtain an identifier, thereby streamlining the registration process and making it easier to do business with the federal government. To keep abreast of information on this transition, please visit GSA's [Unique Entity Identifier Update](#) web page. Additionally, you can access the [presentation slide deck](#) or [full recording](#) of GSA's November 3rd online stakeholder forum on getting a UEI.

Inside FSS

News from Director Dan Shearer

Customer experience and corporate metrics are typical anchor points for assessing how well things are going in an organization, and I'll address my "Inside FSS" comments along those lines. FSS continues



to evolve in the area of customer experience which includes person-to-person based assessments. Generally, when people feel treated fairly, listened to, and engaged with responsively, then the customer experience is usually rated better.

Two areas of the FSS Mission and Vision impact the customer experience and ones that we try to live up to: "Contracts that meet the standard" and "Quality Procurement Ownership". Contracts that meet the standard refers to meeting the standard timeframes, procedures, and legal requirements. Quality Procurement Ownership encompasses

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personal responsibility, responsiveness, attention to detail, and thoroughness of thinking used throughout. The Division Chiefs need to hear the “good”, the “bad”, and the “could be better” from our customers. Please reach out to the assigned supervisor and work any unresolved customer experience issues or elevate for my perspective in the resolution process. I believe you will find that although demanding at times in our roles in contract compliance and as good stewards of procurement funds you will have an opportunity to be heard and engaged with in a productive manner.

The overarching corporate metric for FSS is Sales. Sales are purchases to supplier partners which enables them to remain viable - meet financial obligations and profitability goals, upgrade products and services, and implement investment strategies. It also works in a similar way for FSS based on the Industrial Funding Fee (.5% and 1%) generated on each supplier sales dollars which provides operating funds for FSS to meet payroll, pay operating expenses, and make capital investments.

Preliminary sales for FY21 (ending 9/30/21 without adjustments) indicate a positive increase of about 5% above a year ago (FY20). Sales to State and Local Governments, Tribes, and Territories experienced the highest percentage sales increase under Schedule 65VII In Vitro Diagnostic Substances, Reagents, Test Kits, and Sets due to the COVID19 national emergency. We plan to share details and insights next quarter after the process of adjustments is completed. In any case, the preliminary takeaway is that the upward sales trend continues for FSS.

Thank you for the increased mission support you provided in FY21. Excellence Together!

What's New with FSS

621 I Solicitation Refresh

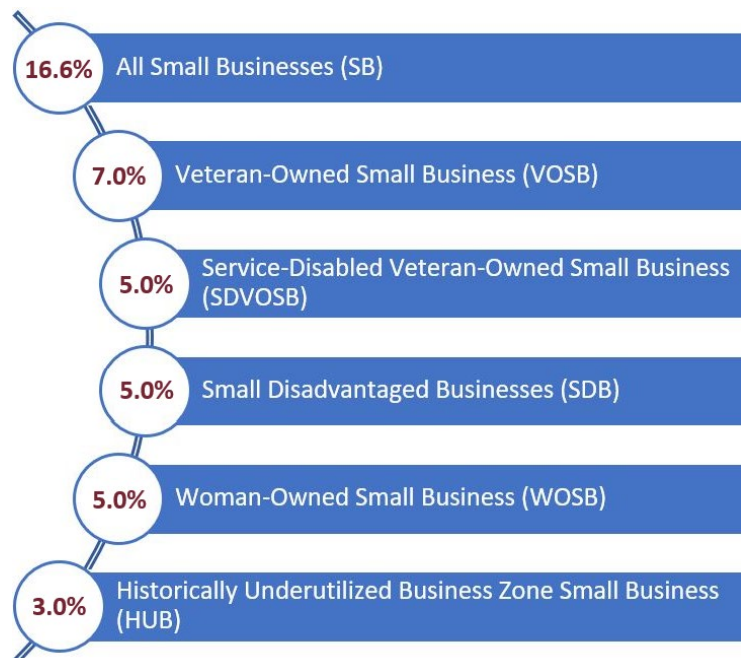
On October 1st, we published a refreshed solicitation for [Schedule 621 I Professional and Allied Healthcare Staffing Services](#), commonly referred to as our Temporary Healthcare Staffing schedule. After a long history of amendments, Schedule 621 I now has a “clean”, streamlined solicitation that has been brought onto the standardized format used for VA FSS solicitations.

The refresh also includes a more user friendly, enhanced version of the Proposed Pricing and Commercial Sales Practices (CSP) Excel file, a new Scope of Solicitation section which adds to and replaces the former Statement of Work, and a new Contractor Qualifications section which builds on the former Technical Proposal. Our refreshed solicitation package consists of the following documents:

- 01 - Solicitation Document
- 02 - Vendor Response Document
- 03 - Proposed Pricing and CSP (Excel)

Updated VA Subcontracting Goals

FSS has posted the revised VA subcontracting goals on our [Small Business Subcontracting Plans](#) web page. These goals are based upon total procurement dollars expended and are the suggested minimum goals for VA Administered subcontracting plans.



Did You Know ...

VETS Turns 40!



This year marks the 40th anniversary of the program we know today as the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) program. It was established by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment in 1981 to provide veterans with opportunities for employment placement, training, and counseling. Initially it served disabled and Vietnam era veterans and now serves all veterans, focusing on underserved veteran communities, including veteran spouses, with more than 370,000 customers served last year.

The [VETS](#) program's website is a robust source of information on such topics as finding a job, including the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program and Transition Employment Assistance for Military Spouses (TEAMS) workshops, along with other resources such as unemployment benefits for student veterans and an employer guide to hiring Vets.

FSS Working for You

Monthly Field Notifications

Last year, in order to improve professional collaboration, FSS began releasing monthly field notifications to VA acquisition and logistic staff which include recently awarded contract details and hyperlinks to those contractors' websites, their catalog of awarded products/services and pricing on the [Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#), and to information on ordering procedures provided on our [Federal Customers](#) web page. FSS also uses this forum to make special announcements, such as the award of antibody tests and our non-availability determinations under the Trade Agreements and Buy American clauses for both disposable medical nitrile gloves and for COVID-19 rapid diagnostic and serology/antibody tests. These monthly e-mailed notifications provide information that empowers the workforce to research, make decisions, and take action to meet procurement timelines as well as to provide visibility for our new FSS contractors.

Attention New Offerors!



Be advised that VA FSS is suspending the requirement for new offerors to complete GSA's Pathways to Success Training while a new VA FSS specific training is under consideration.

Web Wisdom

Small Business Subcontracting Plans

If your company is an other than small business that is required to maintain a small business subcontracting plan under the terms of your contract, then this web page is for you. You will find all of your resources and requirements located in one place on our [Small Business Subcontracting Plans](#) web page!



- **Plan Criteria** – Other than small businesses with a contract value of \$750,000 or more
- **Commercial vs. Individual Plans** – A descriptive comparison of the two plan types
- **VA Subcontracting Goals** – The suggested minimum goals for VA administered plans
- **Subcontracting Plan Training** – A step-by-step plan preparation guide
- **Subcontracting Plan Template** – The most recent FAR compliant, suggested plan template
- **Reporting Requirements** – A step-by-step guide to the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS)
- **Subcontracting Plan Review & Approval Process** – A chart depicting the steps to an approved plan

Training Center

Understanding Disaster Declarations

How does a disaster get declared?

Pursuant to the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#), requests for a Presidential declaration are made by the Governor of the affected State. The Sandy Recovery Improvement Act provides federally recognized Indian tribal governments with the option of pursuing a declaration directly from the President as well. Note that there are two types of disaster declarations provided for in the Stafford Act, emergency declarations and major disaster declarations, and the two types differ with respect to the triggering events as well as the scope and amount of assistance.

- **Emergency Declarations:** Can be declared by the President for any occasion/instance when federal assistance is needed to supplement state and local efforts. The total amount of assistance provided for in a single emergency is capped at \$5 million. Both [Public Assistance \(PA\)](#) and [Individual Assistance \(IA\)](#) are provided for under emergency declarations.
- **Major Disaster Declarations:** Can be declared by the President for any natural catastrophe or any fire, flood, or explosion determined to have caused damage beyond the combined response capabilities of state and local governments. It provides a wide range of federal assistance programs for individuals, public infrastructure, and hazard mitigation, but not all programs are activated for every disaster.

Note that [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) Declarations](#) are different. They are declared by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and last for the duration of the PHE or 90 days (unless extended by Congress). Only federal grant funds may be used to make purchases under PHE declarations. See HHS' [FAQ #14](#) for a comparison of PHE declarations and those made under the Stafford Act.

Where can I find a listing of declared emergencies and disasters?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [Disaster Search Tool](#) lets you search and filter declared disasters and emergencies by state, incident type, and/or year. You can even [Search Your Location](#) to find information on active and past declarations as well as resources such as how to reach your local emergency management offices.

When are non-federal entities eligible to place orders against FSS contracts based on disaster declarations?

The Stafford Act authorizes state and local governments to place orders determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security to facilitate recovery from a major disaster declared under the Act to facilitate disaster preparedness or response, or to facilitate recovery from terrorism or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack. Other qualified organizations are also authorized to place orders as set forth in guidance by the Administrator of General Services in consultation with the Administrator of FEMA.

For more detailed information, explore FEMA's Disaster web pages at <https://www.fema.gov/disaster> to learn more about disaster authorities, historic and current disasters, and getting assistance after a disaster. Please consult the [Stafford Act](#) for definitions of specific words or terms.

FSS FAQ

How do I use GSA Advantage?

GSA Advantage! is an online government shopping and ordering system that provides instant access to millions of products, services, and solutions from thousands of contractors. So, how can you get the most out of using this system?

How can an FSS contractor or offeror use GSA Advantage? Per contract clause 552.238-88 GSA Advantage! and 552.238-77 Submission and Distribution of Authorized Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Price Lists, all FSS contractors must participate in the online shopping service, publishing their awarded terms and conditions along with all awarded items and pricing on GSA Advantage! (with the exception of contract holders -*Continued on next page-*



under Schedule 65 I B who are only required to post their awarded terms and conditions). This permits ordering activities to make direct purchases with contractors for FSS awarded items. Contractors, as well as offerors, can also use this site to compare their offerings and pricing with other contractors to be competitive in the marketplace.

How can a government ordering activity use GSA Advantage? Ordering activities can easily purchase products and services directly from contractors on this site, but they can also use the site to conduct market research for upcoming procurements. They can research available products and services, compare contractor pricing, view contractors' business size for potential set-asides, and fulfill the VA's Vets First requirements. Additionally, they can forward their saved shopping cart to someone else or check out to GSA eBuy to post and directly compete requirements amongst contractors, obtain quotes, and issue orders.

REMINDER! IFF/Report of Sales Due



1st quarter FY 2022 sales reports and Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) payments are due starting on January 1, 2022. Sales and IFF not received by February 28, 2022, are considered delinquent, and the contract is subject to administrative actions including poor performance ratings or cancellation. All VA FSS contractors are required to submit a report via the [VA Sales Reporting System](#) even if no sales occurred under the contract. The 1st quarter covers sales from October 1st – December 31st.

For more information, visit our [Sales Reports & IFF](#) page online. For assistance from our VA Sales Desk, please contact us by e-mail at FSSSales.AMMHIN@va.gov.

Upcoming Webinars

*FY 2022, 2nd Quarter

Option to Extend Package Submission Best Practices

**Date to be announced via GovDelivery & the [FSS Training Webpage](#)*

Useful Links

[FSS Web Portal](#)

[VA Schedule Programs](#)

[FSS Contractors](#)

[FSS Customers](#)

[Training](#)

[Modification Request](#)

[Forms \(RFMs\)](#)

[Contractor Responsibilities](#)

[Small Business Subcontracting](#)

[Sales Reports & IFF](#)

Contact Us!

FSS Contractors Inquiries: Please contact your assigned Contract Specialist

FSS Helpdesk: Phone (708)786-7737 E-mail: HelpDesk.ammhinfss@va.gov

FSS Small Business Liaison, Nicole Stephens: Micole.Stephens@va.gov, (708)786-5156

IFF/Report of Sales (VA Sales Portal) Inquiries: FSSSales.AMMHIN@va.gov

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