

VA FSS Newsletter

Your source for VA Federal Supply Schedule News and Updates

VA FSS Sales Continue to Rise

COVID-19 related spending and other healthcare needs of the federal government and our state and local counterparts have resulted in continued increases to VA FSS schedule purchases. For the first two quarters of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, VA FSS has seen a 10% increase in total sales over FY21 midpoint sales. The largest increases in sales were under Schedule 621 I Professional and Allied Healthcare Staffing, which saw a 16% increase for much needed temporary healthcare staffing procurements, and under Schedule 65 V II Invitro Diagnostics, Reagents, Test Kits, and Test Sets which increased sales by 229%, which includes rapid COVID-19 tests and other important diagnostics.

In examining the breakdown of spending sources, we see that state and local government (SLG) spending increased 358% from the midpoint of FY22 compared to FY21, confirming that SLGs are taking advantage of the ability to purchase from FSS contracts during nationally declared emergencies. Purchases by VA increased by 6.5%, and other federal government agency purchases increased by 8.5%. These upward sales trends reflect the positive impact that the FSS acquisition community is having in providing Schedule users with streamlined purchasing and fair and reasonable pricing.

Inside FSS

News from Director Dan Shearer

Once again, greetings to the tireless FSS Acquisition Community who continue to work together in pursuit of outstanding customer support for the healthcare field across the whole of Government! The spirit of public service is a strong force among FSS employees, vendors, medical professionals, and support staff. It is gratifying to be aligned with you all across the country doing everything possible to leave no customer need unfulfilled. It's really leaving no one behind because healthcare is about individuals, real people with real needs.



When I accepted the position as FSS Director in late 2017, the annual sales were just over \$13B, not a small number; however, we felt that we could do better, provide access to more products and services, and make a dent in Procurement Action

Lead Times. We did not anticipate a pandemic; however, our vision of being a value-added strategic partner in the healthcare field was embraced and given life throughout this crisis. Even given the tremendous 26% growth in sales over the last 4 years, our FSS acquisition community still needs to focus on responsiveness and improving the customer experience, and we cannot rest on our laurels.

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I attended two industry events since May 1, and the positive feedback on FSS employee responsiveness as well as your shared concerns has been valuable information. A common vendor request has been to hold another FSS Industry Day. This may be especially important as many of our veteran vendor teammates are beginning to pass the torch to the next generation. Given the numerous steps in the process we'll be including Industry Day in our FY23 planning.

In the area of outreach and education, FSS submitted two presentation packages to NCMA with the goal of reaching contracting professionals from across the country and the whole of Government at the NCMA World Congress in Chicago July 18-20th. FSS was not selected to present, but several FSS personnel, including myself, will be attending the event. If you are also attending, please feel free to reach out to your assigned Contract Specialist and inquire whether they will be attending so that a time to connect can be arranged. Please be aware that FSS plans to announce an opportunity to engage on refreshing Schedule 66 III Cost-per-Test Clinical Laboratory Analyzers solicitation in the coming months. In the meantime, please dust off your notes on what needs improved or changed in 66 III based on your experiences, and watch your email and the FSS website for an announcement.

We'll close my section with rumor control. Some vendors expressed hearing information that VA FSS is rolling up under and being taken over by GSA. The VA partnership with GSA is firmly established in the Assignment of Functions formally signed in February of 2022 and remains in full effect. We look forward to continuing our great working relationship with GSA, and of course all of you. At this time of year, we pass along congratulations to all the high school and college graduates and their parents who have invested in education that enables service to others. Please enjoy vacations and family time this summer prior to the spending push that typically comes as Schedules are used to obligate end of fiscal year procurement funds.

FSS Working for You

VA Assists Ordering Activities with FSS Procurements



VA FSS has been assisting GSA in their new program effort, [Market Research As a Service \(MRAS\)](#). MRAS is a free service for ordering activities which identifies if a proposed requirement fits within the scope of an existing FSS (GSA or VA) acquisition solution, with a goal of responding in 24-48 hours. It streamlines the Request for Information (RFI) process and consolidates the result into a single, visual report that utilizes keywords, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, and information from GSA Advantage to propose solutions.

As MRAS is still in its infancy, VA FSS is assisting GSA with any healthcare related procurements to determine if the requirement falls within the scope of any VA FSS Schedule product categories, known as Special Item Numbers (SINs), providing an in-depth scope review for these requirements to ensure success of the new program. Recently, we assisted the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in their quest to procure pharmaceuticals. This successful partnership with GSA provided the USDA with the needed information for them to place orders against VA FSS pharmaceutical contracts under Schedule 65 I B and helped to educate our GSA partners about our Pharmaceutical Prime Vendor program and the ordering process under that schedule.

We look forward to continuing to support the MRAS program, our partnerships with GSA, and the resulting sales for our FSS contractors. To learn more about MRAS capabilities, visit GSA's [MRAS](#) web page which includes the Industry Help Request Form and informative training videos on the program.

Reminder!

Attention New Offerors

Just a reminder that VA FSS has suspended 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

Solicitation Packages

The official source for government solicitations is the [Contract Opportunities](#) section of [Sam.gov](#). Some of you may be familiar with its predecessor, FBO.gov, which SAM replaced. Due to some interface issues that VA had with the migration of data from FBO to SAM, most of our published solicitations do not currently link properly to VA systems, resulting in incomplete solicitation packages (the solicitation and any amendments) displaying on SAM.gov. As we refresh each solicitation, a new connection will be made enabling us to properly publish and amend these packages.

Until all solicitation packages are properly displaying in SAM.gov, be sure to access the most recent solicitation package from the web page dedicated to the applicable schedule, accessible under our [VA Schedule Programs](#) web page by clicking on the schedule number. Once you access the schedule specific page, scroll down to the section titled "The Solicitation" where you can access the download link containing a zip file of the complete solicitation package. Note that the solicitation for Schedule 621 I Professional and Allied Healthcare Staffing Services was refreshed in October 2021 and is properly posting to SAM.gov; therefore, the 621 I download link will take you directly to the solicitation package on Sam.gov.

RESOURCES

[FSS Home](#)

[VA Schedule Programs](#)

[Electronic Acceptance of Offers/Proposals](#)

[Contract Catalog Search Tool](#)

[Prospective Contractors](#)

[Current Contractors](#)

[Federal Customers](#)

[Training](#)

[Resource Library](#)

[FAQs](#)

Around the VA

Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers



On August 25, 2021, President Biden signed the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act, also known as the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act, into law. This Act required VA to establish a pilot program to pair service therapy dogs with eligible veterans that have severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The 5-year program provides grants to eligible non-profit organizations to train and provide the service dogs to eligible veterans. Beginning this month, approximately 150 veterans a year will participate in this free, eight week, once-weekly training program. Upon completion, the veteran will be able to adopt the service dog that they assisted in training, and veterinary insurance will be provided by the VA under a provision of the PAWS Act.

According to the November 2020 VA National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, an average of 17.6 veterans died by suicide each day in 2018, and nearly 60% of those had a mental health or substance use disorder diagnosis within the two years preceding their death. Utilizing service dogs as a proven treatment option, the PAWS Act is a vital step towards ending veteran suicide. To read more about how VA is implementing the PAWS program, see [VA's March 30, 2022, Federal Register notice](#).

Pharm Facts!

Upcoming Public Law Annual Pricing Updates



It's never too soon to prepare for the annual pharmaceutical pricing updates required by Public Law 102-585. Contractors should begin reviewing their awarded products to ensure that everything is current, accurate, and complete for a smooth transition into the 2022 Public Law season this Fall. Any 42-2a items that have been discontinued should be removed from contract once the supply has been completely exhausted/removed from the supply chain. Additionally, any 42-2a products that were introduced into the market prior to April 1st of this year must establish permanent pricing on contract no later than September 30th to prevent product omissions during the annual Public Law pricing updates.

Training Center

Understanding Solicitation Amendments & Mass Modifications

To fully understand your responsibilities as an offeror and a contractor, you must understand the importance of solicitation amendments and mass modifications. This article will help you navigate changes in regulations and other special language throughout the offer process and the life of an awarded FSS contract.

Solicitation Amendments

- **What are they?** Amendments are changes to the solicitation that were made after the base solicitation was published. These might include additions, deletions, revisions, or corrections to the base solicitation. You can think of the base solicitation and the amendments as a sort of puzzle, with the amendments either adding new pieces to the puzzle, deleting pieces from the puzzle, or replacing puzzle pieces. The base solicitation and its amendments make up the complete offer package.
- **What do they mean to me?** Amendments must be downloaded, signed, and returned with your proposal package. If there are any parts to fill-in, including any spreadsheets, you must complete those parts within the amendment in lieu of their corresponding part in the base solicitation.

Mass Modifications

- **What are they?** Mass modifications (mass mods) incorporate terms and conditions changes to FSS contracts. Like amendments, these could include additions, deletions, revisions, or corrections to your currently awarded terms and conditions. Mass mods serve to maintain consistent terms and conditions regardless of when your contract was awarded, helping to maintain a level playing field for all FSS contractors.
- **What do they mean to me?** Once issued, mass mods are e-mailed to the designated Contract Administrator for review and signature. All FSS contractors must sign and submit applicable mass mods to the FSS Helpdesk at fss.help@va.gov to be countersigned by your assigned Contract Specialist and incorporated into your FSS contract.

Important!

**CCST
Customer
Support
Issue**



Please be advised that our programmers are working on correcting the display of the pharmaceutical points of contact information for some assigned FSS Contract Specialists in the National Acquisition Center (NAC) [Contract Catalog Search Tool \(CCST\)](#).

The programmers anticipate a resolution to this issue in July. In the interim, please contact the FSS Help Desk at FSS.Help@va.gov to obtain accurate contact information.

Did You Know...

VA Releases FY22 Subcontracting Goals

For all VA FSS contractors with Small Business Subcontracting Plan requirements under the terms and conditions of your contract, please note the below, revised VA minimum suggested goals for FY 2022.

Socioeconomic Category	Subcontracting Goal
All Small Business	17.5%
Veteran Owned Small Business	7.0%
Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business	5.0%
Small Disadvantaged Business (includes Section 8(a))	5.0%
Woman-Owned Small Business	5.0%
Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone Small Business	3.0%

FSS FAQ

How do I resolve sales portal issues?

We recently sent a GovDelivery notice to each Contact for Sales Administration identified under a VA FSS contract, providing some refresher tips on issues with reporting sales through the [VA Sales Reporting System](#), commonly referred to as the VA Sales Portal. VA's central point of contact for issues with reporting sales is our VA Sales Desk e-mail at fssales.ammhin@va.gov. However, many issues can be resolved or even avoided altogether by following some basic processes.



GSA VA Sales Reporting System

...a GSA / VA Sales Portal

- **Do you have no sales for a particular quarter?** Remember that you must report zero sales for that quarter.
- **Do you need to make changes to sales that were previously reported?** Select "Sales Adjustment" from the Sales Reporting Options menu that displays on the right after you log into the site.
- **Do you need to update your Sales Point of Contact (POC)?** Changing your Contact for Sales Administration requires two steps: 1) The change must be processed as a change to the FSS contract via an administrative Request for Modification (RFM) executed by your assigned Contract Specialist, and 2) the new POC must be registered in the portal just like a first-time user. Note that the RFM must be executed *prior to* registering the new POC in the portal.
- **Do you need general information on reporting sales?** Visit our [IFF & Sales Reports](#) web page for basic registration and payment information, the sales reporting timetable by government fiscal quarter, deadlines for remitting the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF), and more.

REMINDER!

IFF/Report of Sales Due

3rd quarter FY 2022 sales reports and Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) payments are due starting on July 1, 2022. **Sales and IFF not received by August 31, 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 during the quarter. The 2nd quarter covers sales from April 1st – June 30th.

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 Events

Top 5 Clauses

- VA FSS Webinar -
*July 28, 2022, 10:00 CT

NCMA World Congress

- Hybrid Virtual/In- Person Event -
Chicago, IL, July 17-20, 2022
*Network with VA FSS Contract
Specialists in Attendance*

Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS)

- VA FSS Webinar -
*Sep 2022, date TBD

**Registration links to be sent via
GovDelivery & posted on 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: HelpDesk.ammhinfss@va.gov, (708)786-7737

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

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

Pharm A Chief, Trevor Martin: Trevor.Martin@va.gov, (708)786-7708

Pharm B Chief, Diana Lawal: Diana.Lawal@va.gov, (708)786-4949

Services Chief, Bob Satterfield: William.Satterfield@va.gov, (708)786-4955

Med Surg A Chief, James Booth: James.Booth@va.gov, (708)786-5223

Med Surg B Chief, Deborah Zuckswerth: Deborah.Zuckswerth@va.gov, (708)786-5128

PMRS Chief, Lydia McKay: Lydia.McKay@va.gov, (708)786-5837

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