

December 15, 2009

## FAS INSTRUCTIONAL LETTER 2010-01

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FAS and VA ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES

FROM:

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SUBJECT: Instructions to Procuring Contracting Officers of the FAS initiative to verify/update GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list information.

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Instructional Letter (IL) is to provide instructions to Federal Supply Schedule Procuring Contracting Officers (PCO) regarding an initiative to increase the accuracy of the catalog/price lists on GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>. The Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) is requiring all Schedule Contractors to verify possible out-of-date catalog/price lists on GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.

2. Background. Schedule contracts require that all Contractors post awarded pricing, terms and conditions (also called the catalog/price list) to GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> within six months of contract award (per clause I-FSS-600). When a modification is executed, if applicable, the catalog/price list must be resubmitted within 30 days of modification execution. VA Schedule 65 I B Contractors are exempt from submitting a catalog/price list for pharmaceutical products that require a doctor's prescription for purchase. GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> Customers have been experiencing instances where catalog/price lists are out-of-date, meaning that catalog/price lists on the website do not reflect current contract information. This has resulted in a negative effect on the integrity of GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> information, as well as conflicts between noncompliant Contractors and Customers.

To ensure that GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> catalog/price lists are up-to-date, FAS identifies, on a weekly basis, Contractors who have not updated the information within the past two years. An e-mail notification is sent to Contractors and Procuring Contracting Officers (PCO), which initiates a 90 calendar day period where the Contractor must update or verify that the catalog/price list is current and accurate or risk having their catalog/price list rendered temporarily inactive from GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.

No extensions to the 90 calendar day period will be granted, even if requested by the PCO.

Having a catalog/price list made temporarily inactive results in an inability for Customers to view or purchase a Contractor's supplies and/or services on GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>. It does not result in the cancellation of the Schedule contract, nor does it result in the inability of the Contractor to respond to quotes sent via eBuy. Furthermore, the Contractor will still have its corporate information listed in eLibrary. In order to reactivate a catalog/price list, Contractors must update their catalog/price list or verify that it is current, accurate, and complete on GSA *Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.

See Section 8, Questions and Answers, for further information.

3. Effective Date. Date of signature.
4. Termination Date. This IL expires one year from the effective date unless cancelled, extended, or incorporated into a handbook.
5. Applicability. This IL applies to all FAS and VA activities awarding and administering Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts.
6. Reference to Regulations. I-FSS-600, Contract Price Lists.
7. Instructions/Procedures.

PCO and Contractor receive an e-mail notification stating that the Contractor has 90 calendar days to either verify or update the catalog/price list posted on *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.

- A. If the 90 calendar days has not expired, the PCO should instruct the Contractor:
  - i. That no extensions will be given.
  - ii. That the Contractor must verify or update the catalog/price list using either the Schedule Input Program (SIP) or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), depending on the method used for their original submission.
  - iii. That the Contractor should notify the PCO once the catalog/price list has been successfully verified or updated.
- B. If the 90 calendar days have expired and the Contractor has not verified or updated the catalog/price list, the PCO should instruct the Contractor:
  - i. That the Contractor's *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> account has been rendered temporarily inactive.
  - ii. That accounts can be reactivated through either SIP or EDI, depending on the Contractor's original method used to upload to *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.
  - iii. That the Contractor should notify the PCO once the information has been successfully verified or updated.
- C. If the 90 calendar day window has passed and the Contractor continues to be delinquent in verifying or updating the *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list after repeated requests and having their catalog/price list temporarily made inactive, the PCO should make a determination on whether the circumstances surrounding this noncompliance warrant a contract cancellation or exercising of the forthcoming option period.

#### 8. Questions and Answers.

#### **Why is FAS asking Contractors to verify/update *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> postings that are two years old or older?**

FAS has decided to have Contractors verify/update catalog/price lists on *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> that have not been changed for two years to avoid the confusion that possible outdated information causes. Inaccurate and outdated information costs Customers, Contractors, and PCOs time and money to resolve.

Verification ensures integrity for all concerned and avoids wasting resources by eliminating the possible conflicts that could occur.

**Does having an account made temporarily inactive on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> mean that the Schedule contract is being cancelled?**

No, the Schedule contract will NOT be cancelled at this time. However, Contractor's catalog/price list will not appear on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>. Cancellation is a determination that the PCO may make if a Contractor is continuously noncompliant in updating or maintaining its GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list. Only the Schedule PCO, or the Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) when so delegated, can cancel the Schedule contract.

**What time frame is considered "out-of-date?"**

Catalog/price lists that have not been updated in two (2) years are considered "out-of-date" and Contract holders are subject to the process, as defined by this IL, of ensuring that all catalog/price list information on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> is current, accurate, and complete.

As soon as a Contractor's GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> posting goes two (2) years with no updates, the Contractor will receive an e-mail informing them to update or verify their catalog/price list to ensure Customers are seeing accurate information. They will have ninety (90) calendar days from the date of that e-mail to either verify or update the catalog/price list. After ninety (90) calendar days, their catalog/price list will be made temporarily inactive on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>.

**How can Contractors avoid having their catalog/price list rendered temporarily inactive?**

Contractors can avoid having their GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list rendered temporarily inactive by updating their catalog/price list within the given time (30 days) after a modification is awarded or by verifying the information at least once every two years. They are encouraged to review their catalog/price list regularly, and update pricing, terms and conditions, as well as model number, and descriptions.

**The Contractor received an e-mail request to update, but their items still appear on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>. What does this mean?**

Receiving an e-mail request to update/verify means the Contractor has ninety (90) calendar days to either verify or update their catalog/price list before it is removed from GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup>. PCOs should encourage them to verify or update their catalog/price list immediately upon receipt of the e-mail to avoid having their GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list made temporarily inactive.

**What if the Contractor's information is still accurate, current and complete, despite being 2 years old?**

If the Contractor has reviewed their catalog/price list and determined that the pricing, terms and conditions are still current and accurate (despite being over 2 years old), they only need to go into SIP and verify utilizing the process shown below. If the Contractor is using EDI, they must submit a verify file through the EDI provider.

**The Contractor's GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list has already been made**

**temporarily inactive. How do they get their information to reappear?**

Once the catalog/price list has been made temporarily inactive, it will not reappear until the Contractor has either verified their catalog/price list or submit an update. Both of these processes can be done through either SIP or EDI, depending on which method they used for their original submission.

**How soon will the verified/updated catalog/price list re-appear on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> following being rendered temporarily inactive?**

In cases where Contractors verify that their catalog/price lists are accurate, this information should re-appear on GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> within a week of verification.

If a Contractor submits an update to their catalog/price list information, the account will be made active within a week of the submission. However, the update will need to go through the standard approval process in which the PCO verifies that the submitted catalog/price list update for upload on to GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> is in accordance with the catalog/price list in the contract.

Contractors who verify their catalog/price list or submit updates within the 90-day timeframe are not in danger of having their GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> catalog/price list being rendered temporarily inactive.

**How does a Contractor verify their current catalog/price list data?**

The update processes for both SIP and EDI users are:

**If using SIP:**

- 1) Open SIP
- 2) Click Tools|Verify Catalog Information
- 3) Select contract to verify (if more than one)
- 4) Click "Catalog info/pricing ok - send notice to GSA"

**If using EDI,**

Please contact a Value Added Network, software provider, or third party consultant to obtain their services. These services use various software packages so you must work directly with them to coordinate file submission. Contact the EDI help desk on 703-605-9444 for more information.

**How does a Contractor update their catalog/price lists?**

Catalog/price list data is updated either through SIP or EDI, depending on which method they used in their original GSA Advantage!<sup>®</sup> submission. Step by step instructions for either method can be found under the "Getting on Advantage" menu on the Vendor Support Center ([vsc.gsa.gov](http://vsc.gsa.gov)).

## Appendix A

### E-mail notification being sent to Contractors and Procuring Contracting Officers

Greetings from GSA:

Your electronic catalog/price list previously submitted to GSA in accordance with Multiple Award Schedule contract clause I-FSS-600-(a) "Contract Price List", has not been updated in over two years. This price list is currently appearing on GSA's online ordering system at [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov).

Old catalogs/price lists typically contain discontinued items and out-dated pricing, which when ordered online, cause problems for agency customers and you, the contractor. Your contract requires that you honor pricing contained in your published catalog, whether printed or electronic.

Within 90-days of this email, you must: 1) submit an electronic catalog/price list update, or 2) verify that your existing online catalog/price list is current and accurate.

In order to do so, you must reply by submitting a file using the Schedules Input Program (SIP) software or EDI, depending on which method you currently wish to use.

If the data and pricing in *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> is current and you use SIP, go to the "Tools/Verify Catalog Information" tab. If the data and pricing in *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> is current and you use EDI you may click here for EDI info or call 703-605-9444.

If using SIP, you must have SIP version 7.3 or greater. If you no longer have the SIP software, you must go to [vsc.gsa.gov](http://vsc.gsa.gov), download then install the software. A new catalog will be required. If you need to upgrade your SIP, open your current version of SIP then close the software. This will start the SIP upgrade process.

If an electronic catalog/price list or verification is not received within 90-days of this email, your catalog will be removed from *GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup>.

If you have questions, contact our Vendor Support Center at [Vendor.support@gsa.gov](mailto:Vendor.support@gsa.gov) or call 877-495-4849.

We appreciate your assistance!

*GSA Advantage!*<sup>®</sup> Team