

GSA PROPOSAL GUIDE

It can be a maze. GSA Proposal Help knows the way!

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**Learn the required
elements of a GSA
Proposal for
Products**

**Prepare your
documents in the
format GSA
requires**

**Complete your
proposal using the
Six-Step ProcessSM**

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**Tracie Grant
Principal Consultant**



**GSA PROPOSAL
HELP**

Includes Sample Documents and Templates

GSA PROPOSAL GUIDE
Using GSA Proposal Help's
SIX STEPS TO A GSA PROPOSAL

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GSA Proposal Guide

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Foreword

Tracie Grant is a contract management consultant who helps companies needing GSA Multiple Award Schedules. Currently the owner and principal consultant for Contract Management Consulting and its two divisions, GSA Proposal Help and GSA Proposal Guide, Ms. Grant is continually updating her products and services to help businesses break into the lucrative federal government marketplace. This book is written for those in the GSA proposal trenches by one in the trenches beside them. Ms. Grant has been working with GSA schedules since 1994 and has written this book based on the challenges and successes she has seen over the last 18 years.

For additional information go to www.gsaproposal.net or www.gsaproposalhelp.com

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Introduction

So you are ready to explore getting a General Services Administration (GSA) Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and potentially accessing the billions of federal dollars that run through the GSA MAS program. If you are like many business owners wanting a GSA Schedule, you have searched for information on the internet, and you may have even found the solicitation, but you have either thought you had no clue as to how to begin, or you have downloaded all the documents and now you know you have no clue how to work through that 100-page-ish solicitation document or its 5-20 attachments!

This book has been written to help you pull together your information for a GSA MAS proposal. We have listed the steps (and their related sub-steps) that we use to guide our clients as they develop their winning GSA proposals. While this book is not a guarantee that you will put together a winning proposal, and does not address every question that can come up during the proposal writing process, it does contain the methodology we use when helping clients complete their GSA proposals. It is our hope that our Six-Step ProcessSM can help you develop your own winning GSA proposal.

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Quick Note: There are also Department of Veterans Affairs Federal Supply Schedules which work through the GSA FSS program and on the same premise as the GSA MAS. (See FAR 38.101(d)). This book does not specifically address these schedules (which are for medical supplies and services), and though they are based on the same principles as a GSA MAS, there can be significant differences in solicitation requirements.

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The GSA Process

The GSA process we have followed over the years to help our clients receive and maintain GSA Multiple Award Schedule contracts includes the following elements:

- 1) Proposal (or offer) Preparation
- 2) Proposal Submission
- 3) GSA Review of Proposal (currently taking up to a year for some schedules)
 - a) Clarifications
 - b) Financial Review
 - c) Negotiations
 - d) Final Proposal Revision
- 4) Contract Award
- 5) GSA Advantage upload and input
- 6) Marketing
- 7) Orders and Delivery
- 8) Ongoing Contract Administration and Contract Compliance

Our focus in this book is the proposal preparation portion of the above process though we may touch on the other elements as we go.

Proposals (also referred to as offers) are prepared by contractors (also referred to as vendors) who want to receive GSA contracts to sell to the federal government. These proposals are prepared in response to one of the GSA MAS solicitations that are located on FedBizOpps (www.fbo.gov). Finding the right GSA MAS solicitation can be tricky when searching through FedBizOpps so we suggest using GSA's eLibrary located at www.gsaelibrary.gov. We have a step-by-step example later in this book to help you find the GSA solicitation that is right for you.

As of February, 2012 there were 39 different solicitations that cover a wide array of products and services (see "Appendix" for the list). As for the GSA proposal process itself, we tell our clients that the GSA proposal process they are going through will basically "vet" them as vendors and, when successful, will provide them with a ticket to access billions of dollars in federal sales. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to read all solicitation documents and ensure that they meet all solicitation requirements. Don't skip this important step! The Six-Step ProcessSM which is laid out in this book is to be used in conjunction with the solicitation and any checklists provided by GSA.

Key note: Developing a winning GSA proposal is not a project to pass along lightly to someone who is new to the company to help them learn about the company, or because their workload is not yet over the top. This project requires knowledge and decisions from the experienced, knowledgeable leaders of your company. If you are going to pass this on to a new employee, make sure you give them all the support they will need!

Initial Questions – Are you ready for a GSA MAS?

The first thing we do when a client wants to dive into the GSA process is ask these five questions:

- 1) Do you have a commercial price list?
- 2) Do you follow your commercial price list?
- 3) Do you have at least \$100,000 in sales over the last year or two and will you be able to sell at least \$25,000 through your GSA schedule (if awarded) within the next two years and then every year after that?
- 4) Is your product compliant with the Trade Agreements Act (i.e. is it made in the USA or a designated country)?
- 5) Is your company able to show that it is financially responsible?

If you can say yes to these five questions, this may be the time for you to complete a proposal for one of the most respected and effective federal government contracting vehicles. The GSA Schedule program is open to all businesses whether large or small as long as they meet GSA's requirements and submit a winning proposal to GSA, so don't let your size hold you back.



When you see this sign,


it's time to stop and

assess your situation,

make a choice, and/or

document information.

ARE YOU READY FOR A GSA SCHEDULE? Complete the following by reading the parameter in Column 1, choosing the best-fitting statement in Column 2 and writing the corresponding points in Column 3:

Column 1 (Parameter) Read this statement and choose the option in Column 2 which fits best.	Column 2 (Check the statement which fits your current status.)	Column 3 “Points”
Commercial Price List (CPL) Status	<input type="checkbox"/> I have a written CPL (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I have an informal CPL and can formalize it in writing (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I have no CPL, but can try to make one (1 pt)	
Status of Commercial Practices	<input type="checkbox"/> I follow my CPL to a “T” (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I generally follow my CPL, but there are some clients I have to discount outside my parameters (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I discount as needed to make sales regardless of what is written in my CPL. I have to survive and that takes sales. (1 pt)	
Annual sales for last year (and good past performance)	<input type="checkbox"/> over \$99,000 and excellent past performance (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> between \$25,000 - \$99,000 and/or good past performance (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> less than \$25,000 and/or not much past performance (1 pt)	
My products are made in the USA or a designated Country (see page _____ for a current list).	<input type="checkbox"/> All my products are TAA compliant or I only sell services. (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> Some of my products are TAA compliant and I sell services as well. (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> None of my products are TAA and I sell no services. (1 pt)	
I have two years of strong financial statements to show my financial acuity, and an adequate accounting system. (QuickBooks has generally been acceptable)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have two-to-three years of excellent financials, and an excellent accounting system. (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I have two-to-three years of reasonable financials <or> my solicitation doesn’t require two years, and my accounting system is adequate. (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> I have financials, but things have been mighty tough and they don’t look that great. (1 pt)	
Add up all the points you have written in column 3 and write the total here 		
<p>How to interpret your score:</p> <p>11-15 points – This may be the perfect time for you to take advantage of the GSA MAS program and prepare a proposal. You may have an excellent chance at completing a winning GSA proposal.</p> <p>6-10 points – A GSA Schedule may be within your grasp; but you may want to tighten up your business practices as you work towards your proposal to enhance your chance at completing a winning GSA proposal.</p> <p>1-5 points – You may wish to examine your business practices and results before you embark on the preparation of a GSA MAS proposal. You may be able to complete a winning GSA proposal, but the odds do not look so good at this time. Call us for a free consultation to be sure – 801-949-8323.</p>		