

VA FSS Newsletter

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

COVID-19: What FSS Contractors Need to Know

On March 13, 2020, the President declared a national emergency in response to COVID-10. Pursuant to the Stafford Act, this declaration provides State and Local, including Tribal Governments with full access to place orders against FSS contracts. What does this mean for our contractors? We recently sent a letter via Constant Contact to all FSS contract holders in which we answer this question. Highlights of this letter include:

- **Contractor Participation:** Fulfillment of State and Local Government orders is optional; however, we encourage contractors to participate in this time of need.
- **Order Language:** State and Local Government buyers must include specific language on all FSS orders, including a statement that the order is placed under the authority of the GSA Disaster Purchasing program.
- **FSS Sales & IFF Remittance:** Sales to State and Local Governments in their quarterly sales report and remit associated IFF.
- **Purchasing Thresholds:** The micro-purchase threshold (MPT) and the simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) have been temporarily increased for any contract to be awarded and performed in the U.S. Please note that Service Contract Act thresholds remain unchanged.

Read the full letter on our [FSS home page](#) through the link in the carousel.

Inside FSS

The shadow of COVID-19 pandemic clouds hang over us, but through undeserved blessings, outstanding efforts of government personnel, and service driven vendors there are breaks in those clouds and rays of sunshine come through. The Services team added three SARS-COV-2 lab tests (COVID-19) to 6211I Medical Laboratory Testing and Analysis Services, and an acquisition flexibility was added to 621I temporary healthcare staffing creating a methodology called a market differential under the EPA clause in direct support of COVID-19. Also, FSS started a weekly vendor reporting of available temporary healthcare staffing from vendors which is uploaded by VHA for medical centers to see more quickly what staffing is available to each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN). Temporary healthcare staffing plays a critical role at this time of high demand, and 621I vendors are encouraged to review any regulatory flexibilities that allow more freedom of staffing to work across state lines. The FSS contract language is broad enough to accommodate those changes without modification, but vendors need to maintain documentation of the regulatory flexibility.



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In the last month many vendors provided voluntary information on several challenging areas including sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other items. Even if not on FSS contract, my office forwarded that information to sourcing teams across the government. The VA FSS vendor base plays a critical role especially in times of declared national emergency, and the nation is better prepared as a result. It's a little too early to begin thinking about pandemic lessons learned, but some areas of new knowledge for FSS have come to our attention. For instance, FSS did not have an outreach to State and Local Governments, and through our efforts, we researched and established new links with the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO). NASPO, along with The Association of Military Surgeons in the United States (AMSUS) and The Coalition for Government Procurement, partnered with FSS to distribute national emergency contract details directly in emails to their members and posting to their websites.

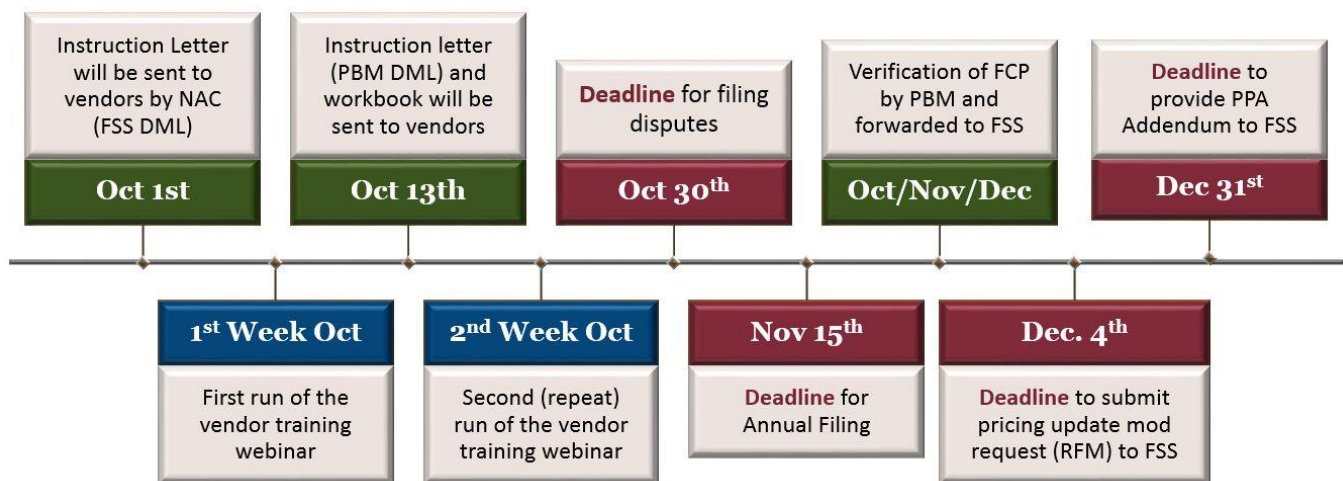
As a decentralized purchasing program FSS relies on our vendor base to exhibit the same level of outstanding willingness to serve the public good for state, local, and tribal governments as we see displayed on a daily basis on behalf of federal agencies. While GSA took the lead on waiving TAA for some of the highest demand items in support of COVID-19, VHA, CDC, HHS, and FEMA Taskforce 3 utilized expanded acquisition flexibilities which allowed them to streamline procurement processes to procure items even sourced outside the USA. These were committed quantity purchases in order to lock down supplies that saw extensive global demand.

Looking ahead is a bit difficult at this time, but we did receive word that our FSS Industry Day will be postponed until FY2021. Thankfully all FSS employees have been able to continue work at our offices in Building 37 or in a liberal telework environment. If it's difficult to reach an FSS employee for assistance currently, feel free to reach out to me directly. We appreciate mutual thoughts and prayers as we rely on each other, to include our VA support employees, contractor custodians, and FSS contractors who help us maintain a high level of operational readiness. Thank you for the continued incredible support of our nation's healthcare needs, and please take a moment to reflect on the value and satisfaction that come from your efforts to be a light shining through the clouds.

Pharm Facts! Public Law Training



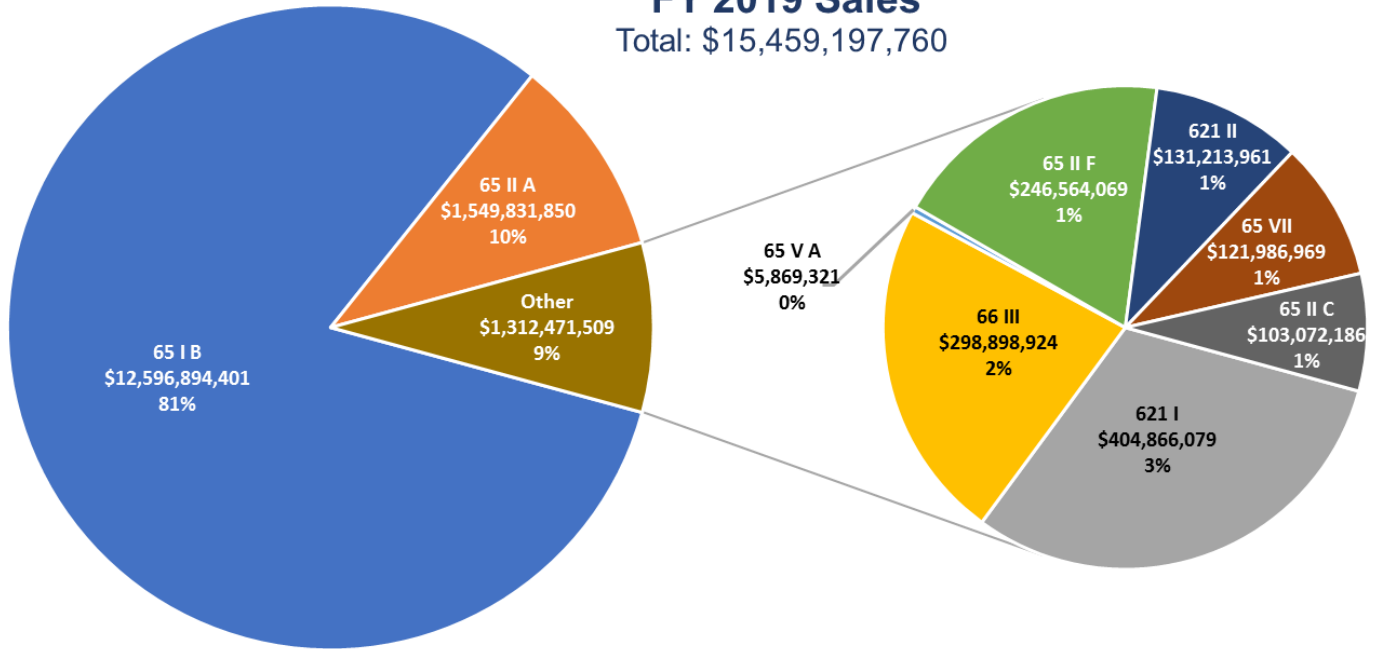
The timeline for the 2021 Public Law season has been set, and we've listened to your feedback. This year FSS will be providing the annual webinar training, repeated in two sessions, earlier in the year to better prepare you for a successful season. Stay tuned to our [Public Law](#) web page and future newsletters for training dates.



Contract Corner

2019 Year in Review

FY 2019 Sales
Total: \$15,459,197,760



Schedule	2019 Contract Awards	2019 Contract Extensions	2019 Contract Modifications
65 I B	76	N/A	2690
65 II A	121	47	2819
65 II C	9	4	224
65 II F	14	5	265
65 V A	0	3	28
65 V II	5	2	111
621 I	35	37	416
621 II	1	1	58
66 III	1	1	59
TOTAL	262	100	6670

What's New with FSS

Digital Signatures

In efforts to simplify document submission and processing, FSS has decided to expand acceptable signature types to include digital signatures as outlined below. We are working to update our instructions for all solicitations and forms to conform to the new requirements. FSS will only accept digital signatures and *will not accept other types of electronic signatures*. A digital signature is a mathematical algorithm routinely used to validate the authenticity and integrity of a document. Digital signatures create a virtual fingerprint that is unique to a person or entity and are used to identify users and protect information in digital documents. Please note, other forms of electronic signatures, such as an image (e.g. JPEG, PNG, etc.) of your hand-written signature, your name typed in cursive font, or a recorded verbal confirmation, shall not be accepted. Digital signatures will be deemed original signatures. PLEASE NOTE, a scanned copy of a document with your wet signature, although not considered a digital signature, remains acceptable.

New Option to Extend Package & e-Mail

FSS has just revised the Option to Extend package in order to streamline the submission process and decrease processing time for exercising a 5-year option. Additionally, FSS has created a new e-mail box for the submission of new/follow-on contract proposals and option packages: FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov. If your contract is approaching the end of its 5-year term, please work with your assigned Contract Specialist to determine whether exercising the 5-year option or submitting a new follow-on proposal is the best option for you.

Web Wisdom

IFF & Sales Reports

Not sure when to report your quarterly sales or where to seek assistance with the VA Sales Portal? Visit our [IFF & Sales Reports](#) web page for answers to these questions and more.

On this Page:

[IFF & Sales Reports](#) | [Reporting Timetable](#) | [Registration & Payment](#)
[IFF Payment](#) | [Assistance](#)

This web page provides information on the VA Sales Reporting System, timeframes/deadlines to report sales and remit the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF), how/when to first register in the system, IFF payment requirements, and VA Sales Portal assistance, which includes assistance with registration, logging into the site, password issues, etc.

This page also provides a link to the VA Schedules Sales Query (SSQ). The SSQ provides quarterly sales data for the past three fiscal years. The data is arranged by schedule, provided in Excel format, and shows sales by SIN for each FSS contractor – a great tool for keeping up with your competition!

For sales and IFF questions, contact the VA Sales Desk at fssales.amhinh@va.gov.

The Importance of POC Maintenance



All FSS contractors are required to keep their Points of Contact (POCs) up to date. This is vital to our communication efforts, ensuring that the correct individual is notified of any reminders, delinquencies, training opportunities, etc. POCs may be contacted via general Constant Contact notices or through specific e-mails sent directly to the contractor. Contract POCs include the following, as applicable:

- *Contract Administrator*
- *Alternate Contract Administrator*
- *Sales Administrator*
- *Ordering Contact*
- *Subcontracting Plan Program Administrator*

Need to update a POC? Download the most recent Administrative Request for Modification (RFM) Form from our [Modifications](#) web page.

Training Center

The Art of Offer/RFM Submission

Submitting proposals to FSS can seem like a daunting process, whether it be a new/follow-on contract proposal, an option to extend package, or a Request for Modification (RFM) package. We want to make the preparation and submittal of these documents a simplified and streamlined process for you; so, we are here to help. Below are some tips and resources to assist you with submitting timely and complete proposal documents.

CONTRACT PROPOSALS

- Completeness
 - ✓ Utilize the most recent version of the solicitation. Go to our [Schedule Programs](#) web page to link to each schedule's page where you can follow the Beta.SAM.gov link to the current version.
 - ✓ Complete the Proposal Submission Checklist (included at the end of the Vendor Response Document) and the helpful step-by-step guides posted on our [Training](#) web page in the "Prospective Contractors – Solicitation Assistance" section.
 - ✓ Visit our [Electronic Acceptance of Offers/Proposals](#) web page for guidance on how to properly submit all of your documents to FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov.
- Timeliness
 - ✓ Data provided in the Price Proposal Spreadsheet, including Figure 515.4-2, must be current, accurate and complete as 60 calendar days prior to proposal submission.
 - ✓ The SF1449 signature date must be no earlier than 10 calendar days prior to submission of the proposal.

OPTION TO EXTEND PACKAGES

- Completeness
 - ✓ Work with your assigned Contract Specialist to ensure that you should be submitting an Option to Extend Package rather than a follow-on contract proposal.
 - ✓ Utilize the most recent Option to Extend package sent to you by FSS. Prior versions will not be accepted.
 - ✓ Submit the complete package (i.e. the fill-in document, the spreadsheet, and any other necessary attachments) to FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov.
- Timeliness
 - ✓ Submit your option package no less than 6 months prior to contract expiration.
 - ✓ For contracts with an annual value exceeding \$3 million, thus requiring review by the VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG), submit your package no less than 15 months prior to contract expiration.

RFM PACKAGES

- Completeness
 - ✓ Utilize the most recent RFM version on our [Modifications Request Forms](#) web page. Prior versions will not be accepted.
 - ✓ Visit our [Modifications](#) web page for general guidance on the modification process, including best practices and submission logistics.
 - ✓ Submit the complete RFM package (i.e. the fill-in document and any required spreadsheets or attachments) to fss.help@va.gov.
- Timeliness
 - ✓ Submit RFMs for changes to your contract in a timely manner, including, but not limited to, maintaining current points of contact and submitting price decreases as soon as possible, but no later than 15 calendar days after the effective date of a triggering event outlined in clause 552.238-75 Price Reductions.
 - ✓ Be cognizant that most RFM effective dates are the 1st and the 15th of the month.

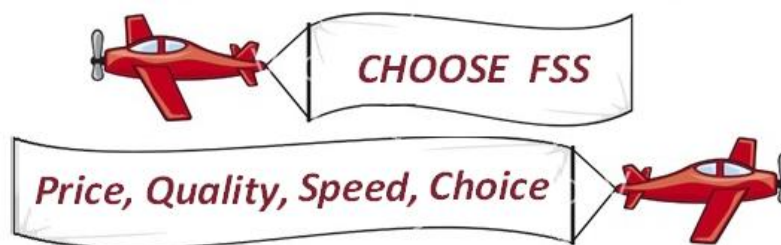
Training Center - Continued

Recent Amendments & Mass Modifications

FSS has recently amended all solicitations to include a variety of changes, including bringing all schedule solicitations current with changes in the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), VA Acquisition Regulations (VAAR), and GSA Acquisition Regulations (GSAR). Some changes of note include the following:

- **Submission Instructions for Electronic Acceptance of Offers** - Created a new e-mail box for offer package submissions (FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov), increased the e-mail size limit (including attachments) to 10MB, ceased accepting CDs, removed the requirement to sign the Signatory Authority Form within 10 days prior to proposal submission, and expanded signature requirements to include digital signatures.
- **GSAR Regulation Numbers** - Revised numerous GSAR clauses and provisions to reflect their newly assigned numbers, per GSAR Change 100. While most regulations only changed to a new number, some had minor revisions to the title or content.
- **New FAR Clauses & Provisions** - Added 52.204-24 Representation Regarding Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment, 52.204-25 Prohibition on Contracting for Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment, and 52.216-32 Task-Order and Delivery-Order Ombudsman.
- **Rentals - Schedules 65 II A and 65 II C only** – Revised the terms and conditions applicable to rental and added a rental agreement template to facilitate placement of rental orders.
- **Price Proposal Spreadsheet Sales Columns** - Added new columns to capture total commercial and government sales as well as columns requesting sales to the proposed Tracking Customer (TC) and to the Government. These new columns facilitate market research and proposal evaluation.

Mass modifications are being issued to incorporate all applicable changes into current FSS contracts. Each designated Contract Administrator will be sent a Constant Contact notice linking to the applicable amendment. Contractors must sign and return the amendment and all continuation pages. Mass Modifications can also be downloaded directly from our [Mass Modifications](#) web page.



FSS FAQ: Where do I send my documents?

Offers (new and follow-on proposals)	FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov
Option to Extend Packages (i.e. 5-year extensions)	FSSOffersandExtensions@va.gov
Requests for Modification (RFMs)	HelpDesk.AMMHINFSS@va.gov
Small Business Subcontracting Plans	Subcontracting.AMMHINVAFSS@va.gov



REMINDER! IFF / Report of Sales Due



2nd quarter FY 2020 sales reports and Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) payments are due beginning on April 1, 2020, but no later than May 31, 2020, after which payments are considered delinquent and the contract subject to 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 2nd Quarter covers sales from Jan 1 – Mar 31.

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 Training & Events

Webinar: Contractor's Guide to Commercial Sales Practices (CSP) Disclosures

Date – To be announced
via Constant Contact and
our [FSS Training
Webpage](#)

*Stay tuned for regular
webinar announcements!*

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, 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, Dave Hackett: David.Hackett@va.gov, (708) 786-4936

FSS Director, Dan Shearer: Daniel.Shearer2@va.gov, (708) 786-4957

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How are we doing? Your feedback is important to us! Please complete our [Customer Survey](#).**

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