
ARC Monthly Bulletin – September 2008

Valuable information for ARC's customers

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1. Have an Opinion about this Bulletin?

This past May, we began publishing this monthly bulletin, and now we are eager to see what you think. Everyone receiving this bulletin is encouraged to provide feedback on the topics covered, the format, etc. You can send your comments to ARCCommunicationsMailbox@bpd.treas.gov, or to Jessica Metz at jessica.metz@bpd.treas.gov or 304-480-5527.

2. SmartPay 2 Moves Forward

The ARC Project Team has been working with Citi, Northrop Grumman, and the pilot customer to successfully transition the customer to the SmartPay 2 charge card program. Although there will be some key differences in the government-wide November transition to SmartPay 2, the pilot transition helped the ARC Project Team understand the overall process that will take place and the timing needed to ensure a seamless transition for the rest of Treasury and ARC's customers. The ARC Project Team hosted a Lessons Learned meeting on September 10th and received good feedback and ideas to use going into the wider November rollout. For more information on the SmartPay 2 Transition, please see ARC's [SmartPay 2 website](#), or contact Shaun Willison at shaun.willison@bpd.treas.gov or 304-480-7286.

3. Updated Strategic Business Plan includes IT Services

When our Strategic Business Plan was released in July, the section for Information Technology Services was incomplete. The Strategic Business Plan has now been updated, and the latest version has been posted to our website ([Strategic Plan](#)). If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Yanok at 304-480-7236 or michelle.yanok@bpd.treas.gov.

4. Expanding Continuity Capabilities for our Customers

ARC is expanding our continuity capabilities by establishing our Help Desk Number (304-480-8000) at an alternate site. In the event that ARC's primary facility is deemed inoperable and/or inaccessible, we will have the capability to transfer our Help Desk Number. By establishing this number before an emergency situation exists, we are ensuring that our customers experience a smooth transition from normal operations to continuity of operations if we were to activate our Business Continuity Plan (BCP). For more information regarding our BCP, contact Amy Miller at 304-480-7257 or amy.miller@bpd.treas.gov.

5. TSP Contribution Limit Reminder

Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) who hit the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) annual contribution limit before the end of the tax year will miss out on agency matching contributions. The contribution limit for the 2008 tax year is \$15,500.

TSP contributions—including agency matching contributions—from FERS-covered employees will stop when the annual limit is reached. To maximize agency contributions, FERS employees should continue investing at least five percent of salary—the amount that produces the maximum agency contribution—through every pay period of the tax year. (Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System receive no agency contributions to TSP and are not affected by this issue.)

TSP's [elective deferral calculator](#) can assist you in calculating your remaining biweekly contributions to maximize agency contributions. You can also read more about the TSP annual contribution limit at tsp.gov/forms/oc91-13.pdf. To find out how to change your TSP contribution amount, contact Janet Moore at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

6. Reminder about Hatch Act Restrictions

With the presidential elections approaching, now is a good time to remind Federal employees of the restrictions on their political activity under the Hatch Act. Information about the Hatch Act and its impact on Federal employees can be found at osc.gov/ha_fed.htm. For more information about Hatch Act restrictions, contact your agency's ethics officer.

7. Status Update on SSN Conversion in GovTrip

GovTrip has delayed the Social Security number conversion until further notice to allow for additional time to test the conversion process. As soon as ARC receives a "go live" date, we will pass the information along to you.

We apologize for the inconvenience. If you have any questions, please contact the Travel Services Help Desk at 304-480-8000, option 1 or travel@bpd.treas.gov.

8. GSA Amends Contract for Employee Relocation Services

GSA amended the Statement of Work for Schedule 48, Employee Relocation Services. Highlights of the major changes include:

- Requesting alternative pricing options based on mortgage payoff versus mortgage servicing by the contractor and whether or not a network of independent service providers will be required.
- Clarification on treatment of negative equity/equity deficit situations with some flexibility for the agency and contractor to determine procedures to allow the employee time to obtain financial assistance or to disqualify the employee from the Home Sale Services Program and pay the contractor for expenses incurred.
- Allowing the ordering agency to work with the contractor to determine what constitutes a special handling transaction (e.g., homes with appraised values in excess of \$1,000,000, homes in remote areas, homes where the owner is in foreclosure, etc.).
- Requesting discounts from basic pricing for excluding prepayment penalties, double deed recording fees, and delayed appraisals.
- The limited use of foreclosures in comparing the property criteria to establish the anticipated sales price of the home.

ARC is working internally to ensure that we continue to provide our customers quality relocation services. If you have any questions, please contact Lee Buckingham at 304-480-8420 or lee.buckingham@bpd.treas.gov.

9. New Law May Expand the Use of Central Contractor Registration

Proposed OMB guidance for implementing the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 requires the use of the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system for federal financial assistance applicants and recipients. CCR is a centralized online registration system where payees maintain their banking and other identifying information. The proposed guidance is effective for fiscal year 2009.

The new requirement applies to any Federal agency that provides financial assistance subject to the Transparency Act which includes: grants, cooperative agreements, loans, loan guarantees, subsidies, insurance, food commodities, direct appropriations, and other financial assistance transactions that authorize the non-federal entities' expenditure of federal funds.

Exemptions to this code apply to individuals and individual transactions less than \$25,000. Exceptions to the CCR registration apply to Federal agencies receiving awards from another federal agency, foreign entities if the Federal agency deems it impractical, and an entity to which the Federal agency grants an exception based on need to protect the entity's clients.

For additional information regarding this proposed regulation, you can visit regulations.gov and search on "Transparency Act Guidance" or contact Peggy Grygiel at 304-480-7068 or peggy.grygiel@bpd.treas.gov or contact Joyce Deem at 304-480-7254 or joyce.deem@bpd.treas.gov.

10. FMS Relocates Bulk Payment File Processing Site

The Financial Management Service (FMS) recently announced their efforts to relocate the transmission of bulk payment request files from the Hyattsville Regional Operations Center to the Kansas City Regional Operations Center (KROC) by fiscal year 2009 and has advised agencies to establish a communication line with the new location.

Bulk payment request files generally consist of multiple payments from a single Agency Location Code (ALC) due to either the number of payments (i.e. more than 60) or the number of Treasury Account Fund Symbols (i.e. more than 10) generated in a single payment batch.

ARC has a fully tested dedicated line into KROC that will provide a seamless transition when FMS makes this change.

For additional information regarding the relocation of FMS's bulk payment file processing site, you can visit www.fms.treas.gov/finconn/july_aug/ja_article9.html or contact Matt Conrad at 304-480-7004 or matt.conrad@bpd.treas.gov.

11. Unanticipated Year-End Requirements

Year-end program review activity commonly generates previously unforecasted acquisition requirements. If such requirements are identified in FY08, customers are asked to make immediate contact with their procurement support team leader or manager at 304-480-7137. Early contact is necessary to determine if sufficient processing time remains to award purchase orders in accordance with procurement regulations. The procurement office may not be able to accommodate some late-year funded requirements. For additional information contact Richard Barlament at 304-480-7218 or richard.barlament@bpd.treas.gov.

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