
ARC Monthly Bulletin – November 2008

Valuable information for ARC's customers

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1. ARC Welcomes FDA

ARC is pleased to welcome the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as its newest customer. ARC began processing international relocations for FDA effective September 8, 2008.

2. Commercial Hosting Update

ARC is actively engaged in a project to migrate the Oracle E-Business Suite/PRISM shared environment to Oracle On Demand's (OOD) hosting services. We have examined the data center as part of an initial security risk assessment, installed hardware for the production environment and 3 non-production instances, and completed initial data migration, including the following upgrades:

- Oracle E-Business Suite – 11.5.10.2
- Oracle Discoverer – 10g
- Oracle Database – 10g

We are currently performing code and functional testing, as well as updating the Certification and Accreditation (C&A) package to include the OOD architecture. Some of the upcoming tasks include:

- Additional Data Migrations
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT)
- Hands-on User Training
- Updating User Guides
- Contingency Testing and Disaster Recover Exercises
- Security Testing

ARC is working aggressively with Oracle to finalize the migration schedule and will provide the UAT, training, and "go-live" dates to affected customers upon finalization. For more information on the commercial hosting project, contact Lance Gainer at 304-480-8185 or lance.gainer@bpd.treas.gov.

3. Plans for Universal Communication System

To ensure that our customers are notified immediately in the event of an emergency, ARC is implementing the Universal Communication System (UCS) for customer notification purposes. This system will be used to initiate an automated phone notification informing our customers that we have activated our Business Continuity or Pandemic Plan. Once possible, personal contact will be made to provide customers with additional information regarding the event.

ARC sent an email to each agency requesting the primary and backup points of contact who should receive this notification. All emergency communications will be sent to these individuals identified by their agency. Our goal is to implement, test, and have the system operational by the end of FY 2009. Customers should expect to receive a test notification within this time period. Please refer any questions to Amy Miller at 304-480-7257 or amy.miller@bpd.treas.gov.

4. SmartPay 2 Card Program Alert

SmartPay 2, the Federal Government's new charge card program, is set to begin November 30, 2008. All cardholders should have received their cards by this point. It is imperative that once cards are received, cardholders call the number listed on the front of the cards to verify receipt of their cards. Only those cards that have been verified will be included in the mass activation that happens on November 30th. If you have any questions on SmartPay 2, you can contact Pam Enlow, Agency Program Coordinator for the Travel Card Program, or Susie Daugherty, Agency Program Coordinator for the Purchase and Fleet Card Program. You can also check the ARC SmartPay 2 website at <https://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/smartpay/fssmartpay.htm>.

5. Convenience Check and PayPal Logs

Within the next few weeks, ARC will send out email reminders to purchase card holders with specific instructions for submitting the 2008 Convenience Check and PayPal logs. These logs are an integral part of the 1099 reporting process and our only source of information for reporting these payments. Please submit your logs to: ARC1099@bpd.treas.gov by December 31, 2008. For questions or additional information, please contact Sherri McLain at 304-480-8416 or sherri.mclain@bpd.treas.gov, or Denise Holbrook at 304-480-8415 or denise.holbrook@bpd.treas.gov.

6. 2008 Federal Benefits Open Season

The 2008 Federal Benefits Open Season runs from November 10, 2008, through December 8, 2008. The annual open season allows eligible federal employees to elect or make changes to Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) coverage, and Flexible Spending Account (FSA) contributions. The

2009 brochures, plan comparison tools, and other open season resource materials are available on the Office of Personnel Management's website (www.opm.gov/insure).

For more information about the open season, contact Janet Moore at 304-480-8275 or benefits@bpd.treas.gov.

7. Human Resources Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

ARC's HR staff recently conducted a customer satisfaction survey with several customers who were selected to survey because of their size and because they receive a broad range of HR support from ARC. The survey targeted the entire employee population for these customers, and asked specific questions related to our service lines as well as general questions related to responsiveness, accuracy, availability, and overall satisfaction. We asked supervisors additional questions related to our HR services.

In summary, we received 1160 responses, with 95 percent of employees and 97 percent of supervisors indicating satisfaction with our HR services. For their information, each agency surveyed has been provided with their own specific results. ARC is analyzing the results to determine where refinements to current processes might prove useful.

For more information, contact Mike Cundiff at 304-480-7130 or mike.cundiff@bpd.treas.gov.

8. ARC DEU Audit Findings are Favorable

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently conducted an audit of ARC's Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) functions. OPM delegates to agencies the authority to hire from the general public. Agencies, in turn, are held to strict standards in carrying out this work. To ensure that our delegated examining work was appropriately conducted, OPM reviewed 25 cases representing a cross-section of occupations for which our customer agencies hire. At least one case was reviewed for each customer receiving our staff acquisition services.

In the audit, OPM found no major issues such as illegal appointments or erroneous application of veterans preference. OPM also remarked positively that we are in the process of improving a past practice of using only one crediting plan to rate positions posted at two grade levels.

OPM will document the audit results in a final written report in the coming weeks and will provide a written summary of findings to each agency included in the audit. Overall, OPM found the ARC staffing specialists to be "enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and caring about the work they performed for their customers."

For more information about the OPM audit results, contact an ARC supervisory staffing specialist at 304-480-8342 or fesbinquiries@bpd.treas.gov.

9. Change in Travel Authorization/Voucher Fee Processing

The GovTrip travel authorization/voucher (TAV) fee enhancement took place on November 10, 2008. This enhancement changes how the TAV fee is charged and paid making it easier for travelers to reconcile their travel card statements.

The TAV fee is no longer charged to the traveler's individually-billed credit card or the agency's centrally-billed account. Northrop Grumman (NG) receives payment directly for the TAV fee when the voucher or local voucher is paid. The TAV fee remains a non-mileage expense in the authorization/voucher and local voucher. The payment totals screen reflects the amounts paid to the traveler, the credit card vendor, and NG.

If a document created prior to the enhancement is in the routing process, the TAV fee pays directly to NG when the document is stamped signed or approved.

For additional information concerning the TAV fee change, please contact the Travel Services Help Desk at 304-480-8000 option 1 or travel@bpd.treas.gov.

10. Prices Increase on GSA Schedule for Relocation Home Sale Vendors

ARC currently obtains relocation homes sale services (e.g. guaranteed home sale) through the General Services Administration's (GSA) Contract, Schedule 48. Under the current contract, GSA has approved significant economic price adjustments for the vendors due to conditions in the housing market. As a result, our customers will see an increase in fees for these services. ARC will continue to monitor the status of the newly amended GSA contract.

For additional information, please contact Lee Buckingham at 304-480-8420 or lee.buckingham@bpd.treas.gov.

11. ARC Automates Relocation Travel Voucher Process

ARC recently automated its manual posting of relocation travel vouchers for ARC payment customers by developing an interface to the Bureau's core accounting system, Oracle Federal Financials.

ARC personnel prepare and process relocation travel authorizations and vouchers using moveLINQ, a Government-compliant, web-based system that automates relocation expense management processes, policy, and entitlement for both domestic moves and international relocations.

Previously, ARC personnel manually entered the travel voucher information from moveLINQ into Oracle to record and generate the payment. The new interface streamlines our payment process and allows us to provide better service to our customers. ARC automated the authorization process in 2007.

For additional information, please contact Lee Buckingham at 304-480-8420 or lee.buckingham@bpd.treas.gov.

12. Small Business News

Our procurement services area is pleased to report that once again, we helped our customers reach or exceed the small business goals they established for FY 2008. We have worked diligently to identify a list of well-qualified small business vendors available to meet customers' needs and plan to continue to expand the list – and your options – during the upcoming year. To meet increasing expectations in the small business goals area, we plan to track performance monthly, and report the progress achieved to our customers and their procurement teams. We remain committed to meeting your procurement needs and expectations as you work to accomplish your mission. For additional information regarding our small business program, contact Tracy Packard at 304-480-7291 or tracy.packard@bpd.treas.gov.

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