
*The Essential Guide to
Government Purchase Cards
(GPC)*

GETTING STARTED – Check Before Each Purchase

1. **Define the Requirement** – Clearly ascertain all the items and or services the requirement will need to accomplish the goal.
 - ❖ Specify the quantity of supplies or scope of services ordered and a determinable date by which delivery of the supplies or performance of the services is required.
 - ❖ Research and determine if alternative brands or vendors can meet your needs. Seek out the best price, quality and/or time to delivery to accomplish your mission’s goals.
2. **Funding** – Cardholders need to verify that they have funding available for the purchase on both the master account BEFORE making the purchase. The funding statement is the Form 4009 and MUST be certified by FM. Please verify this with the account Approving Official (AO).
3. **Mandatory Sources** – Items on this list MUST be purchased from the specified BPAs.
 - ❖ **Office Supplies** – Includes all office products, including toner, paper, pens, calendars, wall clocks, staplers, scissors, etc. (Hint: Look for the blue FSSI indicator next to a vendor on GSA Advantage to know that you are purchasing from the correct vendors.)
 - ❖ **Office Seating BPA** – All office chairs, stackable seats, or any seating that can be used as an office chair (such as student chairs).
 - ❖ **Executive Furniture BPA** – All wooden desks, guest seating, tables, wooden filing cabinets, wardrobes, conference tables, podiums, and book cases.
 - ❖ **IT Products** – Anything that can be plugged into a computer.
 - **AFWAY** – If AFWAY does not have the product you need, you MUST obtain a waiver to proceed. Once a waiver is obtained, the product MUST be purchased from a NetCents vendor. The AFWAY BPAs are:
 - **CCS-2/QEB** – Computers, laptops, tablets, and monitors
 - **DPI** – Scanners, printers, and printing consumables (such as toner)
 - **Cellular** – Cellular phones
 - **ESI** – Software (If not available through ESI, must go to NetCents)
 - **NetCents** – The mandatory source for all other IT products such as speakers, keyboards, mice, televisions, cables, battery backups, CAC card readers, etc.
4. **Priority Sources for Purchases** – Check these sources, in descending order, before making your purchase.
 - ❖ **Supplies:**
 1. Inventories of the requiring agency (The Sheppard List);
 2. Excess from other agencies;
 3. Federal Prison Industries (FPI or UNICOR);
 4. AbilityOne participating nonprofit agencies;
 5. Wholesale supply sources (GSA, DLA, or Department of Veterans Affairs); and
 6. Commercial Sources (GSA Advantage, AF Advantage, or open market in some instances).
 - ❖ **Services:**
 1. AbilityOne participating nonprofit agencies; and
 2. Federal Prison Industries, or commercial sources.
5. **Prohibited Items** – There are a number of items that may not be purchased using a GPC. Please review the non-exclusive list of prohibited items found in AFI 64-117, section 4.5. If in doubt, it is always best to call the GPC Office for assistance!
6. **Coordination** – Please review the attached list for Purchases Requiring Coordination.

COMMODITIES
Tangible Goods or Products

PURCHASES FROM \$0 - \$3,500

Purchasing from a mandatory source:

1. **Examples** – Please see the list of mandatory sources in “Getting Started” Section 3, listed above.
2. **Ordering:**
 - ❖ **Office Supplies** – Search GSA Advantage, and select a vendor that has the blue FSSI indicator. Minimum order amounts can be met by selecting the same vendor for multiple commodities.
 - ❖ **Office Seating, Executive Furniture and IT Supplies not from AFWAY** – If the total requirement (total cost of all commodities) is less than \$3,500, the cardholder shall contact any vendor from the mandatory source list, request a quote, and order the product if reasonable.
 - ❖ **AFWAY Purchases** – Please contact your A/OPC for direction ordering from the DPI, QEB/CCS, ESI or Cellular BPAs.
3. **Waivers** – If a mandatory source does not have the necessary product available, please call the GPC Office. In most cases, the cardholder must obtain a waiver from the commodity council.



Purchasing from a non-mandatory source:

1. It is highly encouraged to purchase from the list of priority sources (the ordered list can be found in “Getting Started” Section 4, listed above) or GSA Advantage.
2. It is permissible to purchase open market or locally, though these purchases are highly monitored. Ensure that the vendor does not charge tax!

Training:

1. All training must be offered commercially off the shelf (COTS). The training must be potentially useable by any company or entity, such as AT&T or JC Penny’s.
2. If the training has been modified to be specific to your organization, it is not permissible to purchase it with the GPC.
3. All training requires a waiver – the SF182. If the training will include any civilian personnel, it must be coordinated with the Training and Education Office at Randolph AFB. If the training will include military personnel only, it is coordinated with the military Unit Training Manager only.

PURCHASES FROM \$3,500 - \$25,000

1. **Note** - When a total requirement will exceed \$3,500, the purchase must be made from a government pre-priced contract. The GPC cannot be used for purchases greater than \$25,000, or to make a purchase from the open market greater than \$3,500.
2. **Obtaining Quotes** - The cardholder must obtain quotes from vendors.
 - ❖ **Mandatory Sources** – Please see the list of mandatory sources in “Getting Started” Section 3, listed above.
 - **Request for Quote (RFQ):**
 - The cardholder must submit the RFQ to at least three vendors listed on the BPA.
 - The RFQ must be posted for no less than three days during the normal year, and five days during end of fiscal year.
 - The cardholder should obtain three quotes from vendors, though occasionally fewer than 3 vendors will respond with a quote.
 - **NetCents** – IT products from NetCents require that a Statement of Objective (SOO) be included with the RFQ. The RFQ must be submitted to all NetCents-2 Products vendors.
 - **Waivers** – If a mandatory source does not have the necessary product available, please call the GPC Office. In most cases, the cardholder must obtain a waiver from the commodity council.
 - ❖ **Non-Mandatory Sources** – GSA Advantage can be used to get quotes; all items on the site have a pre-priced government contract!
 - Search for your item, and look at the vendors who offer it.
 - Contact the vendors and ask if they can provide you with a quote, and if they offer a discount.
 - In GSA Advantage, under the “Features” column:
 -  A red diamond with a dollar sign indicates that a discount is available.
 -  A grey diamond with a V indicates a volume discount is available.
 - If there are at least 2 small businesses available, the cardholder must contact them for a quote, even if their price is higher.
 - In GSA Advantage, the “Socio” column will indicate the size of the business:
 - “O” indicates that the company is a large business.
 - All other letters (“S,” “W,” “D,” and “WO”) indicate a small business and the type of small business, such as woman-owned, disabled veteran, etc.
3. **ECARS Form** – After obtaining quotes, the cardholder needs to complete the ECARS form. The website for ECARS can be found at <https://www.afcontracting.hq.af.mil/gpcreport/>.
 - ❖ **Quotes** – The cardholder will enter the 3 lowest quotes, and indicate their preferred source. If small business are available they must be entered here and the lowest priced small business should be selected.
 - ❖ **Documents** - The cardholder shall upload all supporting documents, including:
 - All quotes that are listed on the ECAR form;
 - A copy of the RFQ or a screen shot of the GSA Advantage page showing all vendors;
 - Coordination forms or letters (WOMS for IT Equipment, HAZMAT, etc.); and
 - A Sole Source Justification Letter or Brand Name Justification Letter (if necessary).
4. **Approval / Declination** - The AO or Alt AO must review and approve the form, then forward the ECAR to the A/OPCs for approval or declination.

SERVICES

The time and effort of a contractor whose primary purpose is to perform an identifiable task rather than to furnish a supply.

Services can be tricky; whenever looking to acquire a service, please contact an A/OPC for guidance on how to proceed.

SERVICES \$0 - \$2,500 – IF THE SERVICE CONTRACT ACT APPLIES

1. **Service Contract Act (SCA)** – The SCA applies to many services being performed by a contractor, however the GPC may be used to purchase services less than \$2,500.
2. **Recurring services** – Services performed at regular intervals having a demand that can be accurately predicted on an annual basis may be purchased with the GPC if they do not exceed \$2,500 per fiscal year. Recurring services requirements estimated to exceed \$2,500 per fiscal year shall be acquired through the servicing contracting office, except in special occasions. (AFI 64-117, 4.1.1.2.1)
3. **Non-recurring services** – These services involve one-time, unpredictable, or occasional requirements, and may be purchased with the GPC up to \$2,500 whenever a requirement occurs. If any doubt exists as to which category a service falls under, the cardholder shall consult with the local contracting office for a written determination. (AFI 64-117, 4.1.1.2.2)

SERVICES \$2,500 - \$25,000 – IF THE SERVICE CONTRACT ACT DOES NOT APPLY

The GPC may be used to purchase services from \$2,500 to \$25,000 in rare instances. The cardholder must contact the contracting office to determine if service needed can be purchased with a GPC, or must be procured by a Form 9.

CONSTRUCTION

Any construction, alteration, or repair to real property.

1. Examples of construction include painting, carpet, wall mounts for televisions, drilling into a wall or floor, etc. Please contact the GPC office prior to initiating a construction project for assistance.
2. Under no circumstances will the GPC be used for a construction purchase greater than \$2,000. Construction purchases in excess of \$2,000 are subject to the Davis-Bacon Act and may only be accomplished by a warranted contracting officer. Please contact the contracting Office for assistance with this type of requirement. (AFI 64-117 4.2.10)
3. Each requirement must be processed through the Base Civil Engineer work order approval process and requires an approved AF Form 332, *Base Civil Engineer Work Request*.
4. Under no circumstances will the GPC be used for any asbestos abatement project.

Tips to Prepare for the End of Fiscal Year

1. Start preparing early! Create a list of requirements so that you know what your organization needs before the money starts dropping.
2. Submit your ECARS early (for more information about ECARS, see “Commodities - Purchases from \$3,500 - \$25,000” below.)
 - ❖ The ECAR is simply a waiver to spend an amount greater than \$3,500; you are not required to spend the money. This way, when money drops during EOY, you are ready to go and not scrambling to spend it.
 - ❖ Be sure to ask the vendor to provide a quote that expires after End of Fiscal Year (1 October.)
 - ❖ It is possible that not all of your ECARS will be funded, but this allows you to prioritize your requirements.

Helpful Links for GPC

Resources

- **General:**
 - The A/OPCs at the GPC Office – contact us!
 - Buy Me University: <http://www.sheppard.af.mil/Contact/BuyMeUniversity.aspx>
 - SAFB GPC Sharepoint: <https://cs3.eis.af.mil/sites/OO-XP-AE-36/default.aspx>
 - PCOLS: <https://pki.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/pcols-web/consent?continueToUrl=/appj/pcols-web>
 - US Bank: <https://access.usbank.com/>
 - ECARS: <https://www.afcontracting.hq.af.mil/gpcreport/>
- **Purchasing resources:**
 - Strategic Sourcing Launchpad: <https://cs.eis.af.mil/sites/10074/afcc/afica/sslp/sslp.aspx>
 - GSA Advantage: <https://www.gsaadvantage.gov>
 - AFWAY: <https://www.afway.af.mil>
 - NetCents: <http://www.netcents.af.mil/>

Training

- GPC Training is available on the SAFB GPC Sharepoint under “Libraries.”
- US Bank (Access Online): <https://wbt.access.usbank.com/Login>

Job-Aids

- US Bank Job Aids are accessible on the SAFB GPC Sharepoint under “Libraries.”
- GPC Job Aids and Templates are available on the SAFB GPC Sharepoint under “Libraries.” Job Aids and Templates specific to Cardholders or Approving Officials are divided into separate folders for your convenience.