

Simplified purchase agreements will be a GPO procurement option for agencies to use for small local purchases, providing them with the maximum possible convenience and control. Simplified purchase agreements will allow agencies to directly place their orders for printing and information products on the basis of "best value," a concept embracing price and other factors such as responsiveness, business practices, convenience, courtesy, and attention to detail. The agreements also allow agencies to take into account elements of past performance such as work quality, reliability, and schedule compliance.

The new process assures fair and reasonable prices and allows for use of the *Government Paper Specification Standards* and GPO's Quality Assurance Through Attributes Program (QATAP), ensuring continued consistency, compliance with established standards, and quality control in the Government's printing and information products. In addition, simplified purchase agreements alleviate an administrative burden on Federal agencies by providing for GPO payment to printing contractors. GPO will also maintain a detailed accounting of all work performed under simplified purchase agreements.

The new streamlined procurement process provides other benefits as

well. Use of the simplified purchase agreement process for buying exceptional or infrequent items will facilitate the development of more focused direct deal term contracts for agencies, resulting in lower prices. It will provide local small businesses with a vehicle through which they can market their services directly to Federal agencies. Agency use of simplified purchase agreements will also help combat the problem of "fugitive documents" by ensuring that products ordered against the agreement are included in GPO's Federal Depository Library Program.

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY

GPO printing and binding customers have several payment options: credit cards, the Treasury Department's Online Processing and Collection (OPAC) System, and the increasingly popular deposit account.

As agencies discover the ease of using a GPO deposit account to pay for their printing orders, they often increase the amount of funds on deposit. Under a deposit account arrangement, the customer estimates the cost of printing requirements and transfers funds to an account at GPO. As printing and binding charges are incurred, GPO debits the account balance and provides the customer with a monthly statement.

*With immediate
electronic access to
their deposit account
balances, GPO's
customers can now
manage their
printing budgets
more efficiently.*



Highlights (continued)

GPO's new passport binding line will ensure necessary production capabilities and help to eliminate photo substitution and fraud.

Recently, GPO developed a web page specifically for printing and binding customers with deposit accounts. After providing the account number and password, a customer's detailed account activity and balance is displayed for the current month. The customer may also view account activity for prior months and see the amount billed for the year to date. A special spreadsheet button on the web page allows the customer to immediately download the data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and create agency reports. With immediate electronic access to their deposit account balances, GPO's customers can now manage their printing budgets more efficiently. Numerous positive comments and suggestions were received at a demonstration of the web page for the Interagency Council on Printing and Publications Services in July 1999.

DOD AND GPO IMPLEMENT OPAC COLLECTION PROCEDURES

GPO and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in Charleston, SC, and Indianapolis, IN, entered into agreements that allow GPO to collect printing bills for most DOD orders via the Treasury Department's Online Payment and Collection (OPAC) System. This has resulted in an immediate increase in cash to

GPO of about \$20 million. GPO agreed to change its procedures to accommodate DFAS's need for line item accounting data in exchange for the right to collect printing bills electronically.

GPO ACQUIRES NEW U.S. PASSPORT BINDING LINE

GPO acquired a new binding line for the production of U.S. passports in 1999. The new system replaced equipment which had been in place since 1986. GPO produces all U.S. passports for the State Department.

Cumulative passport production has been greater than 60 million passports on the existing system. Production in FY 1999 was 6.7 million passports. Passport production requirements are expected to increase by approximately 5 percent annually for the next several years. The new equipment, which was acquired from Uno Seisakusho Company, Ltd., under competitive bidding procedures, will ensure the necessary production capability. Total equipment and site preparation costs for the new system were approximately \$3.6 million.

The State Department introduced a new photo digital passport in November 1998. The new passport book no longer employs the lamination process, but has the data page coated with a secure coating that is applied by GPO's new silk

