

Government Publishing Services Opportunity RFI

Contracting Office Address:

U.S. Government Printing Office, Acquisitions Services, 732 North Capitol Street, NW
Room A332, Washington, DC, 20401

Description:

This synopsis is issued for informational and planning purposes only!

The United States Government Printing Office (GPO) is currently evaluating the functions related to its Sales and Agency Distribution Programs and is seeking alternative revenue sharing models that could be provided by the private sector. GPO is interested in increasing public awareness of its products, enhancing customer access for broader dissemination, expanding distribution channels, and utilizing advanced technologies for the sale, production and distribution of print and tangible publications to the public. GPO is requesting information to determine the types of innovative ideas that private vendors would utilize to provide some or all of the services for a sales and/or agency distribution program. This information will be used to determine the best way to collaboratively structure the Sales and Agency Distribution Programs to enhance the sale and distribution of official tangible publications, to achieve cost reductions, and to move the official GPO brand into mainstream information dissemination channels.

Background:

The GPO is the Federal government's primary centralized resource for gathering, cataloging, producing, providing, and preserving published U.S. Government information in all its forms. Since its inception, under the authority of Title 44 of the U.S. Code, GPO has offered Congress, the courts, and government agencies a set of centralized services that enables them to easily and cost effectively produce printed documents. In addition, GPO has offered these publications for sale to the general public and made them widely available for no fee public access through the Federal Depository Library Program.

Currently, the public can purchase items through the GPO by placing orders via telephone, fax, mail, the Online Bookstore (<http://bookstore.gpo.gov/>), by visiting the GPO Bookstore in Washington D.C., or through the Federal Citizens Information Center in Pueblo, CO (<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/>). Orders are shipped primarily through GPO's distribution facilities in Laurel, MD and Pueblo, CO. Some items are shipped from GPO's bindery line and/or its contract printers.

Currently there are over 3,000 active publications with physical inventory available for sale through the GPO for an average price of \$25. Traditionally, the bulk of the copies for the sales inventory have been printed as part of an offset print run, though the Sales Program is moving away from maintaining a print inventory and towards a print-on-demand (POD) framework. No inventory is kept for the POD publications as they are printed from press optimized pdf files once ordered by a customer. A repository of print-on-demand masters is being created for all information products that fit the technological criteria of POD. Implementation of POD has enabled GPO to increase its current publication title offerings by more than 1,600 additional titles. By utilizing POD technology, GPO is able to greatly increase the number of titles available for sale each year, reduce physical inventory, reduce its distribution in print costs and keep an expanded list of titles indefinitely.

Publications available from GPO cover a broad range of subjects, anything from aviation to health care to education, and are classified using current BISAC Subject Headings. Some of the bestselling publications have

traditionally been *The United States Government Manual*, *The Occupational Outlook Handbook*, and *The Constitution of the United States & The Declaration of Independence*. GPO also sells items in a variety of formats, including CD-ROMS, posters, pamphlets, microfiche, and maps.

In addition, the GPO has over 200 subscriptions for sale. In FY 2004, there were approximately 160,000 paid subscribers for these titles. Subscriptions fall into one of three categories: dated periodicals, irregular subscriptions, and basics & supplements. Dated periodicals are released on a regular frequency. Irregular subscriptions consist of a set number of issues or volumes however there is no predetermined release schedule. Basic & supplement subscribers will receive the basic volume and then will receive any supplements to it as they are published. Some of the more popular subscriptions are the *Code of Federal Regulations*, *FDA Consumer*, and *The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States*.

Although some of the inventory items are printed in GPO facilities, the vast majority is procured by GPO from private printers throughout the United States. The GPO prints or procures approximately 300,000 print jobs a year for its Federal agency customers. As each job is ordered by an agency, an Information Specialist reviews the item to determine its potential for inclusion in the Sales Program based on whether it would be of interest to the public. Traditionally, additional copies are printed for the Sales Program along with the agency's order with the added advantage of incremental pricing. Historically, approximately 1,200 new titles are selected for printing by the Sales Program each year; however, many more titles could be offered for sale utilizing the POD technology.

Once printed, titles that are not directly distributed or set up for POD are sent to a GPO facility for warehousing and distribution. These facilities handle the fulfillment of orders coming in via telephone, fax, mail, and the Online Bookstore. Distribution statistics for both the Laurel, MD, and Pueblo, CO, facilities can be found in Appendix A.

In FY 2004, GPO's Sales Program distributed nearly 4.5 million sales copies to its customers, primarily from the distribution facility in Laurel, MD. About 23% of the orders received are for two or more individual titles. In FY 2004, the Sales Program earned almost \$25 million dollars in revenue. Cost of goods sold was equal to 24.7% of this amount.

In addition, GPO also performs distribution work for other agencies on a reimbursable basis as a part of its Agency Distribution Program. GPO distributed almost 18 million copies in FY 2004 on a reimbursable basis. The majority, close to 14.5 million, of the copies was distributed out of the facility in Pueblo. A large portion of the work performed at Pueblo is on the behalf of GSA's Federal Citizens Information Center and consists of pamphlet mailings.

GPO markets to a wide variety of customers, many of whom are purchasing government information as a reference or guidance tool for the workplace. These individuals are employed at a wide variety of places including libraries, government agencies, businesses, and law firms. Consistent purchasers of government publications have been the public, academic, law, special, school, and government agency libraries that buy the GPO's major subscription and serial publications. GPO has long standing relationships with a number of resellers. It also sells directly to private citizens. Military history publications, national park books, and Senate art publications are among those that appeal to the retail market.

Opportunity:

Operating as a Government agency, the GPO has been limited in its ability to aggressively promote its information products and services. As information that had traditionally been produced in print has migrated to the Internet, the GPO has been slow to evolve and refine its services to meet the changing needs of the public. In addition, GPO has not effectively participated in channels that would help increase visibility and distribution of its offerings to new markets, but is now producing and distributing ONIX records to increase awareness of the wide variety of publications that it offers. Although less than five percent of current sales are to wholesale book dealers, GPO has recently expanded efforts to increase sales to wholesale markets using advance sales and volume discounts. GPO believes that there is a significant opportunity for increased revenue from sales to the general public and resellers with improved marketing and better use of available channels.

It is no longer economically feasible for GPO to continue to operate its Sales and Agency Distribution Programs using its traditional methods. Therefore, GPO is seeking alternative models for its Sales and Agency Distribution Programs that could be provided by innovative relationships with the private sector. GPO is interested in increasing public awareness of its official tangible publications, enhancing customer access for broader dissemination, expanding distribution channels, and utilizing advanced technologies for the sale, production and distribution of print and tangible publications to the public, its traditional customers and resellers. Ideally, the vendor establishing a relationship with the GPO would serve as the "Official Agent" of the GPO funded through revenue sharing. GPO anticipates working with the vendor in some limited aspects and is open to ideas on how this relationship could be developed. GPO could also coordinate the use of internal GPO or GPO contract printing to obtain the initial quantities that the vendor requires, as well as providing for the use of its repository of press optimized pdf files for POD production of publications. Through innovative relationships with the private sector, the GPO hopes to achieve its core mission of "Keeping America Informed" more efficiently and effectively.

Requested Information:

GPO is seeking an "Official Agent" to perform the duties of its Sales and/or Agency Distribution Programs and be the primary distributor for official, authentic government content on a revenue sharing basis. Keeping GPO's goals in mind, please outline how your organization would perform the services of a sales and/or agency distribution program. Services may include but are not limited to the following: inventory acquisition and management, sales, marketing, order processing and fulfillment, customer support, storage, and distribution.

Vendors are hereby requested to submit a statement by May 4, 2005 detailing the approach they would take to perform all or part of the services of a sales and/or agency distribution program. Please include company points of contact, and GSA Schedule number (if applicable). Special attention will be paid to the following key ideas in the responses:

1. How will you advance GPO's core mission of "Keeping America Informed" through your involvement as an "Official Agent" of the GPO?
2. What are some innovative ideas you will implement to enhance the overall distribution of tangible government information?
3. Given the approaches that you've described above, what sort of contractual relationship do you anticipate having with GPO and what form of revenue sharing do you foresee?
4. Why do you feel that your company is especially qualified for this Government Publishing Services Opportunity?

Prior to the release of any formal request for proposals (RFP), GPO will be conducting an informational meeting at its headquarters in Washington, DC. GPO will extend invitations to those vendors who demonstrate the potential to make a positive contribution to the dialogue based on their response to this RFI.

This announcement is a request for information only and does not obligate the GPO in any way. This is not a request for proposal and the GPO will not pay for any information submitted or for any expenses associated with providing information.

For additional information concerning the Government Publishing Services Opportunity please refer to: <http://www.gpo.gov/salesprogramrfi/>. GPO encourages all interested vendors to register on this website so that they can be notified via e-mail when updates are posted.

Original Point of Contact:

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Room A332, Washington, DC, 20401

Place of Performance:

Address: Vendor facility

Postal Code:

Country: USA

Appendix A:

FY 2004 Distribution Statistics

Background Information	Laurel, MD	Pueblo, CO
Annual Shipments Received	2,399 shipments	222 shipments
Quantity Received	73,297 cartons	44,092 cartons
Orders Processed Annually	172,751 sales orders	56,286 sales orders
Copies Distributed	4,103,210 sales copies 4,230,254 agency distribution copies 8,333,464 total copies	341,493 sales copies 14,650,161 agency distribution copies 14,991,654 total copies
Number of Titles Available	7,101 publication and subscription sales titles	743 sales titles 314 agency distribution titles
Single-line vs. Multi-line Fulfillments	77% single-line 23% multi-line	89% single-line 11% multi-line
Mail Carriers	87.9% USPS 5.62% FedEx 6.24% UPS 0.2% GBL	98.8% USPS 1.2% FedEx
Average weight	4.48 lbs.	.89 lbs.
Average weight (By Carrier)	3.82 lbs. USPS 2.42 lbs. UPS 313.29 lbs. GBL	4.41 oz USPS (under 1 lb average weight) 3.53 lbs. USPS (over 1 lb average weight) 32.10 lbs. FedEx
Majority of products being shipped	Books and reports with an average of 225 pages	Pamphlets