

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

# FSIS DIRECTIVE

2100.6  
Revision 3

1/2/25

## GOVERNMENT PURCHASE CARD

### CHAPTER I - BASIC PROVISIONS

#### I. PURPOSE

This directive provides instructions regarding government purchase card (GPC) procedures for micro-purchases. FSIS revised this directive in its entirety, with updated procedures and responsibilities for the operation of the GPC program and to incorporate instructions for record retention of purchase cardholder (CH) files.

##### KEY POINTS:

- Introduces new SharePoint site for [USDA's Government Purchase Card \(GPC\) Program](#)
- Establishes policies and procedures for making micro-purchases to include dollar thresholds
- Establishes duties and responsibilities of CHs and Approving Officials (AOs)
- Outlines training requirements for CHs and AOs
- Describes use and security of the GPC
- Describes record retention requirements for CH files

#### II. CANCELLATION

FSIS Directive 2100.6, Purchase Card, Revision 2, dated 1/15/14

#### III. BACKGROUND

A. The GPC is the preferred FSIS method to purchase and pay for micro-purchases for official Government business use only. As stated in [48 CFR, Chapter 1, Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#), micro-purchases are purchases of supplies or services using simplified acquisition procedures—the aggregate amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold (MPT) listed below in Chapter III--General Requirements, I. General, A. Micro-Purchase Threshold (MPT).

B. The GPC is not to be used for personal purchases under any circumstances. Failure to properly use and safeguard the card will result in cancellation of card authority and possible disciplinary or adverse action. Intentional misuse or fraudulent use of the GPC is sufficient for adverse action, including termination of employment. The GPC program adheres to all Federal, Departmental, and FSIS acquisition requirements.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic

**OPI:** OPPD

C. USDA regulations and GPC policy are outlined in the following:

1. USDA Contracting Desk Book at: [USDA Acquisition Workforce SharePoint site](#); and
2. USDA Purchase Card Service Center (PSCS) at: [USDA Government Purchase Card \(GPC\) SharePoint site](#).

#### **IV. ELIGIBILITY**

FSIS employees are eligible to obtain and use the GPC. Contractors, collaborators, volunteers, temporary employees (e.g., administratively determined), and temporary students cannot either be issued a GPC or serve as an AO. The AO is to ensure that the employee receives the appropriate training requirements and certifications and that all purchases made using a GPC comply with the procedures outlined in this directive.

#### **V. REQUESTING A NEW CH OR AO**

A. New requests for a GPC and/or an AO are to be made through the Office of Management (OM), Administrative Services Division (ASD), Procurement Management Branch (PcMB) by the direct supervisor or AO of the employee e-mailing the Agency Program Coordinator (APC) at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov). Purchase card and Approving Official Appointment Request forms can be found at [USDA GPC Program Forms](#).

B. APCs are to e-mail new CHs or AOs the requirements for training along with relevant documents.

C. CHs and AOs, upon completion of training, are to provide the APC via e-mail at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) copies of all training certificates to be retained in the agency network files individually by employee for audit purposes. If certificates cannot be located for mandatory GPC training, employees are to retake current USDA GPC training. GPC refresher training certificates may not be used as initial mandatory GPC training.

D. If the employee has more than one program role (i.e., CH and AO), they will be required to complete all lessons for all of the functions performed and pass the exam.

E. Employees are required to have a separate user profile for different roles with the GPC program and if they have a travel card.

F. The FSIS [Mission Area Senior Contracting Officer \(MASCO\)](#) is responsible for ensuring participants are adequately trained in the USDA GPC Program.

#### **V. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

A. Requests for a new CH or AO are to be e-mailed to [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov). The APC is to send an e-mail providing directions for the trainings and forms to be completed based on the role requested.

B. CH, AO and APC training can be found at [USDA GPC Program Training](#). Click on the applicable roles and fully read the document to ensure all required trainings and documents are completed. The training certificates are to be dated within 1 year from the date of the request for a GPC.

C. Upon completion, the CHs or AOs are to send all documents to the APC at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) for review and to set up the CHs or AOs account in US Bank.

D. In accordance with [OMB Circular A-123](#), all CHs and AOs are to be trained in GPC policies and procedures in order to receive a GPC with micro-purchase authority.

E. Training consists of micro-purchase regulations and procedures and [US Bank's AXOL \(Access Online\)](#) training as annotated in [USDA GPC Program Guide Training](#) Sections 4, 4.1 thru 4.2.

F. CHs and their AOs are to certify that they received the training, understand the regulations and procedures, and know the consequences of inappropriate actions.

G. Refresher training is required every 2 years as stated in [USDA GPC Program Guide Training](#) Section 4.3 CHs and AOs will receive a notification by e-mail when refresher training is needed.

H. Additional training will be required upon violation of GPC policy.

## **CHAPTER II - RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **I. PURCHASE CARDHOLDERS (CHs)**

A. CHs are responsible for all purchases made with the GPC. The spending limits for CHs are displayed in [AXOL](#). CHs are to:

1. Ensure purchases comply with all laws, statutes, FAR, Departmental and agency regulations, and this directive. The GPC is only used for firm-fixed-price purchases.
2. Ensure that funds are available and obtain proper authorization prior to purchasing goods or services;
3. Verify with the vendor prior to purchase that they accept the GPC;
4. Reconcile GPC transactions using AXOL monthly, ensuring entry of proper accounting codes and [Budget Object Classification Codes \(BOCCs\)](#);
5. Complete and upload documentation for all GPC transactions in AXOL, including [Form AD-700](#), and the following supplemental documentation: requisitions, invoices, packing slips, receipts, [USDA GPC Forms National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) 889 form](#) as applicable, and include any other supporting documentation, such as electronic confirmation for all purchases made over the counter, by telephone, or via the internet. The amount invoiced and paid is to match the quote and price or be lower than the approved funding document;
6. Use the card for official use only;
7. Not allow anyone other than the actual CH to use the GPC;
8. Use the required supply sources found in [USDA GPC Program Guide 10.4 Required Sources](#);
9. Ensure that accountable and sensitive property costing (\$5,000 or more) is entered into a locally managed personal property database and reported to the ASD's Property Management Branch (PMB). Examples of accountable and sensitive property include: machinery and equipment, laboratory equipment and IT hardware;

10. Call US Bank's customer service representative and e-mail the FSIS APC at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) immediately to report a lost GPC;
11. Notify US Bank of any billing discrepancies (e.g., disputes) posted by disputing a transaction in AXOL when following US Bank's guidelines for disputing transactions;
12. Notify the APC via e-mail at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) of name, telephone, address, or other account changes (e.g., defaulted accounting code; changes in AO, Division, agency, or department);
13. Change passwords as required; and
14. Complete the Purchase Card Check Destruction form found at [USDA GPC Program Guide Forms](#) and forward the form to the AO for signature when the card is no longer needed. Submit the signed form to the APC via e-mail at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) for termination. All transactions are to be reconciled before termination of the card.

B. FSIS requires CHs to reconcile their transactions no later than 30 days after the transaction appears in AXOL, including completion of all mandatory fields and uploading documentation. Transactions not reconciled by CHs and AOs after 60 days from the posting date will be automatically suspended by US Bank.

C. CHs' failure to reconcile accounts in a timely and accurate manner can cause inaccuracies in FSIS' status of funds information and constitute grounds for management to cancel the GPC and possibly impose disciplinary or adverse action against the CHs.

D. CHs' failure to cite correct BOCCs can cause the National Finance Center (NFC) to erroneously issue or not issue Form 1099-MISC to vendors.

E. CHs are to enter a complete item description and date goods/services received in AXOL identifying the items purchased for all transactions. If item(s) purchased are authorized under an FSIS issued contract award document, the Order Number (known as Procurement Instrument Identifier (PIID) is required to be enter in AXOL.

F. The Purchase Card Service Center (PCSC) imposes penalties on a CH's account if the CH fails to reconcile transactions more than 60 days after a transaction appears in AXOL.

**NOTE:** AXOL is the US Bank's electronic system for managing card accounts. CHs can purchase goods and services (including construction) within their designated authority, as required by the Government, subject to funds availability.

G. CHs are to stop using the GPC 3 weeks prior to leaving the agency to ensure transactions in AXOL get reconciled.

H. CHs transferring to other USDA agencies are to terminate the GPC with the current agency as the GPC does not transfer between agencies.

## **II. AGENCY PROGRAM COORDINATOR (APC)**

A. The APC working directly with the CHs, AOs, and PCSC personnel and bank personnel to establish and maintain the day-to-day operation of the GPC program within FSIS. The APC coordinates the implementation of the GPC program within FSIS through the Departmental Program Manager (DPM), who is in the USDA, PCSC. The APC manages the program for FSIS and is the contact the DPM and the bank. The FSIS APC can be reached via e-mail at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov).

B. APC duties include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Conducting oversight of the GPC program, ensuring compliance with laws, regulations and policies;
2. Establishing GPC policies and procedures, if required, and maintaining agencywide communication;
3. Responding to any external/internal audits by due dates;
4. Auditing program compliance and file retention;
5. Overseeing and responding to USDA Data Compliance Reports, overseeing the use of Insights on Demand (IOD), an analytical data mining system, use for monitoring and reviewing purchasing activity and tracking compliance. Ensuring all USDA IOD Questionable Transaction Report exceptions are reviewed and closed in accordance with [Section 8.9 USDA GPC Program Guide](#);
6. Identifying potential program application/enhancements and submitting them to PCSC for review;
7. Ensuring accounts and user profiles are closed out in AXOL;
8. Reporting fraud, waste, and abuse in accordance with agency policy;
9. Finalizing approval transactions only when an AO has left the agency, or AO has reconciled for a CH that has left (on rare occasions). APC cannot Approve and Final Approve the same transaction due to separation of duties;
10. Approving requests for GPC in AXOL;
11. Terminating GPC accounts and removing user profiles upon employee's separation;
12. Training and providing guidance to CHs and AOs; and
13. Coordinating compliance for GPC refresher training requirements.

## **III. APPROVING OFFICIAL (AO)**

A. USDA policy requires that the Supervisor of Record (SOR) be the AO for the CH to maintain oversight and approval responsibility for GPC activity of CHs under their purview. The SOR may delegate the authority to an Alternate AO (AAO) in accordance with [Section 3.4.1 USDA GPC Program Guide](#). However, this does not absolve the SOR of the responsibilities over the CH's job performance and GPC transaction activity. A CH is to have only one AO.

B. Requirements to be an AO include:

1. Being the same grade or higher than the assigned CH;
2. Satisfying USDA GPC AO training requirements;
3. Being in the CH supervisor's chain of command and/or in the same program as the CH; and
4. Designating in writing by the SOR for the CH(s) on the Approving Official Appointment Request form that can be found at [USDA GPC Forms](#).

C. AAOs outside the chain of command or program area are to have a written detailed justification from the SOR submitted to the APC on how the AAO will meet the criteria to provide AO oversight for the CH transactions in accordance with [Section 3.4 of the USDA GPC Program Guide](#). If justification is not provided, the APC is to reject the request.

D. AOs are to:

1. Determine who under the AO's authority are to receive GPCs;
2. Determine the Single Purchase Limit (SPL), Monthly Purchase Limit (MPL) in accordance with USDA's MPLs found in [Section 2.2 Figure 4 USDA GPC Program Guide](#);
3. Ensure that cards issued under the AO's authority are properly used for official Government business.
4. Ensure that GPC authority is not conferred upon employees whose use of the card would give rise to a conflict of interest;
5. Complete required AO GPC training before submitting a purchase card application to the APC;
6. Ensure that each CH completes the required GPC training before submitting the GPC application to the APC. The AO is to review the GPC application to ensure that the CH's name matches Human Resource Office (HRO) records and that they submit the completed GPC application to the designated APC. The application is to include the prospective CH's official name as entered in the personnel database, work address, telephone number, e-mail address, accounting information, and training certifications. The application also is to include the AO's demographic information, e-mail address, and training certifications;
7. Ensure that CH approve transactions monthly and before a CH departs from the agency;
8. Verify program code and BOCC are correct and match what is shown on the Form AD-700;
9. Verify purchases made under an existing FSIS award reference the award PIID number in the Custom Fields tab in AXOL;
10. Recommend disciplinary action or other appropriate action for misuse of the GPC and notify the APC of the action taken;
11. Notify the APC of a CH's absence because of extenuating circumstances;

12. Notify the APC of questionable transactions or possible misuse of the GPC;
13. Recommend to the APC the cancellation of open GPCs with no activity over a period of 12 months;
14. Provide justification to the APC on open GPCs that are inactive for the account to remain open;
15. Review CH transaction activity monthly to verify that the transactions are necessary and proper;
16. Ensure that CH maintain adequate receipts or supporting documentation for each purchase; and
17. Finalize approval of CH transactions within 30 days of CH approval. CH account will be suspended if the transaction are not final approved within 60 days of transaction posting date.

E. AOs are to notify the APC via e-mail at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov) of the following changes:

1. Changes in CHs 'name (e.g., because of marriage, divorce, or legal name change);
2. Transfers of CHs to a different AO; and
3. Changes in organizational location (e.g., division, agency, or department).

F. If a CH departs the agency, the AO is to:

1. Review the CH's transaction activity;
2. Ensure all transactions are in Final Approved status;
3. Notify APC 3 weeks prior to CH leaving the agency to ensure all transactions are final approved;
4. Ensure that any recurring charges have been canceled;
5. Collect the GPC from the CH;
6. Ensure the CH submits a completed Purchase Card Check Destruction form that can be found at [USDA GPC Forms](#); and
7. Ensure the card is destroyed.

**NOTE:** The retention period for purchase card documentation referenced in Chapter II Responsibilities, I. Purchase Cardholders, A.5 is 6 years from the date of purchase. Documentation that exceeds size limitation of AXOL is to be retained within the program areas office for the 6 years from the date of the purchase.

G. AOs are to approve transactions selected for final approval no later than 30 days after a transaction has been submitted.

H. If an AO fails to give final approval to selected transactions within a total of 60 days, the account of the CH assigned to the AO will be suspended by US Bank. Deactivated accounts will be re-activated by US Bank 24 hours after all transactions are given final approval. If a CH's unreconciled transactions are more than 120 days from the transaction posting date that have not been final approved by the AO, the account will be terminated by US Bank, per [USDA GPC Program Section 7.9.2 Suspended](#). CHs



whose account is terminated must request to become a new CH and will be treated as a new GPC participant. They will be required to take all new initial mandatory GPC training and cannot reapply to the USDA GPC Program for 6 months from the date of termination.

I. AOs are to certify that they have received a copy of the CH's transaction documentation. AOs are to review and approve all transactions on the CH's account using the [USDA GPC Forms AO Purchase Checklist](#) as a guide and Item descriptions that are included in the transaction documentation.

J. AOs are to certify that required documentation is uploaded in AXOL.

#### **IV. BILLING OFFICE CONTACT**

NFC is the designated billing office contact for all CHs. The NFC pays electronic invoices and schedules payment with the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

#### **V. OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS (OGE)**

A. OGE's Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch apply to CHs. CHs are to address questions regarding the propriety of a particular purchase before making the purchase.

B. CHs are to contact one of the following for guidance or questions:

1. APC, ASD PcMB by e-mail: [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov);  
or
2. Ethics Officer, Office of Ethics by e-mail: [Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov](mailto:Ethics-FoodSafety@usda.gov).

### **CHAPTER III - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **I. GENERAL**

A. Micro-Purchase Threshold (MPT). Per FAR 2.101, the MPT means an acquisition of supplies (e.g., equipment, subscriptions, or general office supplies) or the aggregate amount of which does not exceed \$10,000. For USDA purposes, the MPTs for supplies, services, and construction are:

1. Supplies (e.g., office supplies, subscriptions, and equipment) is \$10,000;
1. Services is \$2,500; and
2. Construction is \$2,000.

B. Single Purchase Limit (SPL). The SPL is a dollar amount for procurement authority delegated to the CH. A "single purchase" is the total of those items purchased at one time from a particular vendor. SPL includes all shipping, handling, taxes (if applicable by state), merchant surcharges, fees, and any other costs associated with the transaction based on the requirement at the time of need. Multiple items may be purchased at one time using the card; however, no single purchase may exceed the CH's authorized single purchase limit and the MPT. Only warranted Contracting Officers may have higher limits with their warrant authority.



C. Monthly Purchase Limit (MPL). The MPL is the monthly dollar amount allowed in each month for a CH to spend and includes all transactions, reconciled or not. The MPL resets on the 8th of each month. USDA has established three SPLs for micro-purchases as required limits that the AO will determine as the limits on the GPC request form:

Single Purchase Limit	Monthly Purchase Limit
\$2,500	\$10,000
\$4,999	\$25,000
\$10,000	\$50,000

**NOTE:** CHs cannot exceed the MPT or their SPLs; however, the SOR may request in writing an increase to the MPL based on the needs of the position which can be permanent or raised for a specific period.

D. Competition. CHs can make purchases within the MPT without soliciting competitive price quotations if the price is reasonable. Such purchases are to be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers. (See [FAR Part 13.203\(a\)\(2\)](#)).

E. CHs are required to adhere to the requirements of [FAR 8.001](#), which requires agencies to acquire supplies and services from designated sources. CHs are to review required sources in [USDA GPC 10.4 Required Sources](#) prior to placing an order with a commercial vendor.

F. The USDA Contracting Desk Book, Part 408, Required Sources of Supplies and Services mandates the use of [Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative for Office Supplies \(FSSI OS\) Contracts](#) and the use of the Next Generation Delivery Services (NGDS) contract for small package delivery.

**NOTE:** Business cards are listed in [USDA GPC 10.4 Required Sources](#) but CHs are not allowed to purchase business cards and are to contact the ASD, Printing, Graphics, and Distribution Staff (PGDS) at: [FSIS.printing@usda.gov](mailto:FSIS.printing@usda.gov).

G. Open Market Purchases. Open market vendors can be used only when mandatory sources cannot provide items and the NDAA 889 Certification is obtained. CHs and AOs are to review [USDA GPC 10.8 NDAA Section 889](#) for additional guidance. A blank NDAA 889 Certification form can be found at [USDA GPC Guides](#). If the proposed contractor does not have a Section 889 representation in [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov); [GSA 889 Representation Tool](#) or has a representation on the certification form that states that: (i) the vendor “does” provide covered telecommunications equipment/services as part of its offered products or services, or (ii) the vendor “does” use covered telecommunications equipment/services or any equipment system or service that uses covered telecommunications equipment or service, CHs are to comply with the following:

1. Information Technology (IT) Purchases. CHs are to refer all IT purchases to the procurement office for potential purchase by contract; or
2. Purchases Other than IT. By placing an order with the proposed merchant, CHs are to certify that market research was conducted, and other merchants were considered, which will be included in the transaction documents uploaded in AXOL.

H. Recurring Services include acts of a repetitive nature in which a written or verbal agreement is made between the Government and the vendor for a specific period. Total aggregate amount for the consecutive year which the service commitment is made:

1. **Under \$2,500:** CHs may use the GPC.

2. **Over \$2,500:** are to be obligated and paid through the Integrated Acquisition System (IAS). GPC use is not authorized unless warranted or the Service Contract Labor Standards Exemption applies.

**EXAMPLE:** A copier rental requirement for 12 months at \$300 per month (for a total cost of \$3,600) would exceed the threshold and is to be requisitioned through IAS to be obligated and paid for in IAS.

G. Exemption. Purchases under the MPT are exempt from the requirements of the [Buy American Statute](#) that requires the U.S. Government to purchase U.S. made products.

H. AbilityOne Program. Purchases made under the AbilityOne program require Government agencies to buy selected products and services from nonprofit agencies employing individuals who are blind or severely disabled. Products furnished include, but are not limited to, office supplies (e.g., SKILCRAFT brand-named cleaners and other supplies). For a current list of authorized AbilityOne distributors, access the following websites:

1. AbilityOne <http://www.abilityone.gov>;
2. National Industries for the Blind <http://www.nib.org>; or
3. SourceAmerica <https://www.sourceamerica.org/>.

I. Buy Green. CHs are to be aware of USDA's "buy green" policy. FSIS attempts to acquire recycled products made with recovered waste materials, specifically those products designated by the Environmental Protection Agency, and to give preference to recycled, environmentally preferable, and energy-efficient products and services in accordance with the goals and policies Green Purchasing standards. CHs are to refer to [USDA GPC Program Guide Green Purchasing](#) for detailed information.

J. CHs are to show preference to recycled content and biobased products whenever they are of reasonable cost per [FAR Part 13.203\(a\)\(2\)](#) and meet technical requirements. CHs are to consider environmental factors in all purchasing decisions and give preference to those products and services designated by or recommended in Federal green purchasing preference programs. CHs are to refer to the [USDA Bio Preferred website](#) for laws and regulations.

K. CHs are to identify purchases as green purchases in AXOL refer to section [USDA GPC Program Guide 10.3.1 Mandatory Fields for GPC Transactions](#).

## II. YEAR-END RECONCILIATION

Calendar Yearend. CHs and AOs are to approve all transactions visible in AXOL by December 31. This approval assists NFC in preparing year-end reports to the IRS. Failure to issue timely and accurate approval can cause inaccuracies in agency status of funds information. At the end of each fiscal year, CHs and AOs are to approve all transactions visible in AXOL. If transactions are not expected to appear in AXOL by mid-September of the current fiscal year, CHs and AOs are to submit a period-end estimate to the Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). CHs and AOs are to refer to the current annual year-end notices for additional information. CHs and AOs are to approve all transactions no later than 30 days after the end of the fiscal year.

### III. DIRECT ENTRY PAYMENT

A. Direct entry payment is a financial transaction made directly to the vendor. CHs are to use direct entry payment only if the vendor will not accept payment by the GPC and no other vendor can be used. CHs are to prepare [Form AD-700](#) for each request. The form states that the vendor will not accept the GPC, and CHs are to explain why no other vendor can be used.

B. For these payments, the CH is to provide the following documentation to OCFO:

1. [Form AD-700](#) signed by the authorized program official, with appropriate shorthand code and BOC;
2. Approved invoices;
3. TIN, Unique Entity ID assigned by SAM.gov (System for Award Management) and banking information;
4. Reason for [Debt Collection Improvement Act](#) waiver if banking information is not available.

C. The CH is to provide the required documentation, listed above to the OCFO in time to make payments under the [Prompt Payment Act](#) guidelines. The due date for making an invoice payment is the later of the two following events:

1. 30 days after the designated billing office receives a proper invoice from the contractor; or
2. 30 days after Government acceptance of supplies delivered or services performed.

D. The CH is to send documents by e-mail or eFax to: [FSCGeneral@usda.gov](mailto:FSCGeneral@usda.gov); eFax: 1-833-643-2258;

E. Upon receipt of all documents, the FSC will process the payment through the Financial Management Modernization Initiative using the non-obligating type of payment voucher; and

F. For audit purposes, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer requires all original documentation or copies with the statement "In Lieu of Lost Original," with original signatures and the payment voucher (generated by FMD) for audit purposes.

### VI. PROHIBITIONS/UNAUTHORIZED USE

CHs are to become familiar with the items that are prohibited in [USDA GPC Program Guide 10.2 Prohibited Items](#). AOs are not to "final approve" transactions in AXOL for any of the prohibited purchases/uses listed [USDA GPC Program Guide 10.2 Prohibited Items](#). The AO is to reject the transaction back to the CH. Failure to reject the transaction back to the CH may result in removal from the AO role.

## **V. TAX EXEMPTION**

A. Supplies and services purchased using the GPC are paid directly by the Federal Government and are usually tax exempt. The card is imprinted with the statement, "U.S. Government TaxExempt" and CHs are to inform the vendor that the purchase is for "official US Government business" and is not subject to state or local sales tax.

B. There is not a blanket exemption for taxes. Only state sales and use taxes are exempt. CHs may have to pay any local or tourism taxes.

C. Taxes vary by state, and CHs are to refer to the [GSA SmartPay State Tax Website](#) and [FAR Part 29](#) to ensure compliance.

D. If CHs are charged a state sales tax, CHs are required to make every effort to remove the sales tax paid with the vendor. CHs are to document attempts made to avoid paying state sales tax by notating the receipt or invoice that sales tax paid was unavoidable or unrecoverable.

## **VI. REQUIRED SOURCES FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES**

The General Services Administration, through the FSSI has awarded indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts for office supplies. This FSSI initiative is called [Federal Strategic Sourcing Initiative for Office Supplies \(FSSI OS\) Contracts](#), and it is a mandatory source for office supplies for the USDA. Any USDA employee with a CO's warrant or the authority to acquire office supplies by GPC may use the OS4 IDIQ contracts within purchase limits. No additional competition is required.

## **CHAPTER IV - USE AND SECURITY**

### **I. AUTHORIZED USE**

A. CHs are to use the GPC to purchase commercially available goods and services within the CH's single purchase limit. These purchases are subject to all Federal, Departmental, and FSIS acquisition regulations and procedures. There are mandatory approval chains for each office. For certain requirements, additional approvals are required as stated in the [Customer Guide on Pre-Procurement Approvals](#). The following purchases are authorized:

1. Sales tax (If the merchant refuses to waive it, see Chapter 3, paragraph IV);
2. Advance payment for subscriptions are authorized under [31 U.S.C. 3324](#); and
3. Advance payment (e.g., registration fees and training).

B. Requisition (Funding Authority): CHs are to support purchases by some form of requisition obtained prior to making a purchase. CHs are not to authorize purchases unless funding is secured. The requisition may be in the form of an e-mail, IAS requisition, blanket fund authorization, procurement request (AD-700), or other written communication from an individual who has the authority to approve the expenditure (including the accounting code(s) appropriate for the purchase and dollar amounts). CHs in charge of their own funds cannot sign their own requisition or funding document. CHs who fail to get requisitions are to refer to [USDA GPC Program Section 9 Administrative Actions](#).

C. Accountable or Sensitive Property: CHs are to promptly initiate action to place purchased accountable or sensitive property on a locally managed personal property database in accordance with department and agency procedures.

D. Rent, Space (short term): Rental of commercially available goods is available on a short-term basis of up to 180 days. (e.g., storage and other special purpose space for temporary or emergency use.)

E. Training: CHs can pay for training if the amount does not exceed the CH's single purchase limits of:

1. Up to \$2,500 for FSIS-customized training; and
2. Up to \$10,000 for commercial off-the-shelf training.
3. If the training contractor does not accept the GPC, an SF-182 is to be sent to the FSC for processing. State in the submission whether training is customized or off-the-shelf and include a valid invoice, training dates, total costs, and list of attendees (if applicable).
4. If the training exceeds these levels, the training requests are to be submitted through IAS. The one exception is if the training is conducted by another government agency.

F. Meetings and Conferences: CHs are to hold all conferences, meetings, and seminars at the most cost-effective location, considering such factors as meals, lodging, transportation, and rental of conference rooms. Only agency heads or their designees can authorize an exception to this rule. When most attendees are Washington, D.C.-based personnel, for example, CHs are to use a Washington, D.C., metropolitan area facility.

G. CHs are to use the following order of preference for FSIS-sponsored meetings, conferences, seminars, and similar events:

1. Local USDA facilities;
2. Other local Federal government facilities; and
3. Facilities outside the FSIS employees official duty station.

H. Factors to consider include costs for:

1. Meals;
2. Lodging;
3. Transportation; and
4. Conference room rental.

I. Electronic and Information Technology (E&IT) Purchases: CHs to ensure that all E&IT purchases (e.g., hardware, software, printers, copiers, maintenance or support on information technology systems and site licenses) are:

1. Approved in writing by FSIS's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) as directed in the [Customer Guide on Pre-Procurement Approvals](#); and
2. Approved for Section 508 compliance by FSIS, OCIO before purchasing with documentation placed in the CH's file.
3. To receive approval to purchase E&IT, CHs are to complete [FSIS Form 1360-6](#), *Enterprise Request for Change* and submit it to FSIS, OCIO at: [CMTeam@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:CMTeam@fsis.usda.gov);

J. Telecommunications: To receive approval to purchase telecommunication products, CHs are to complete [FSIS Form 1360-6](#) and submit it to FSIS, OCIO at [CMTeam@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:CMTeam@fsis.usda.gov). All telecommunication requirements are to be approved for Section 508 compliance by OCIO before purchasing.

K. Printing and Copying: CHs are not authorized to obtain any printing or copying by outside sources. CHs are to contact ASD, PGDS at [FSIS.printing@usda.gov](mailto:FSIS.printing@usda.gov) for printing and copying.

L. Furniture and Equipment. CHs are to receive prior written approval for furniture and equipment orders from the PMB, ASD, before purchasing in accordance with the [Customer Guide on Pre-Procurement Approvals](#).

M. Reprint Envelopes: CHs are not authorized to obtain envelopes or reprint of envelopes by outside sources. CHs are to contact the ASD, PGDS at [FSIS.printing@usda.gov](mailto:FSIS.printing@usda.gov) for envelopes.

N. Private Sector Temporary (PST) Employees:

1. CHs can pay for a PST if:
  - a. They have prior written approval from HRO; and
  - b. The cost does not exceed the \$2,500 single purchase limit.
2. PSTs cannot exceed 120 working days in a 24-month period. Extensions beyond the initial 120 workdays require written justification by the program office explaining why the PST needs to be extended and approval by HRO. As required by regulation, the use of PSTs cannot exceed the maximum limit of 240 workdays. (See [5 CFR, Subchapter E, Part 300](#)).

O. Maintenance Agreements for Equipment: CHs can pay for maintenance agreements for the current fiscal year if the annual amount does not exceed the CH's single purchase limit.

P. Non-Monetary Awards: Per [USDA Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 4040-430, Employee Performance and Awards](#) and [FSIS Directive 4451.5, FSIS Outreach, Recruitment, and Non-Monetary Recognition Programs](#), CHs may purchase non-monetary awards within the parameters for the appropriate expenditure of public funds. Non-monetary awards are only authorized when presented based on achievement. Mission areas, agencies, and staff offices are to ensure non-monetary items are not given in the context of gifts, keepsakes, or mementos. Non-monetary awards based on career milestones or retirement are prohibited, except in Section 6e(5)(d) and (e) of the DR. [FSIS Directive 4451.5](#) provides instruction for ordering FSIS-branded items. CH are to provide written supporting documentation for the purchase of these items in AXOL along with a completed Form AD-700.

R. Office Supplies. CHs may place orders for supplies for employees who are permanently remote or have a reasonable accommodation to have office supplies delivered to their home. Otherwise, employees are to pickup office supplies from the office.

S. CHs are not to order their own supplies or equipment for home delivery to retain separation of duties.

## **II. LAPSE IN APPROPRIATION**

A. The USDA GPC program could experience a possible Lapse in Appropriations (LiA).

B. In the event of an LiA:

1. CHs are to complete reconciliation for the current fiscal year transactions in AXOL including all required documentation, reallocation, entering comments, and routing to their AO for final approval. This should be completed before the conclusion of the maximum of 4 hours of orderly shutdown process.
2. AOs are to review transactions that have been sent in the Manager's Approval Queue and provide final approve to transactions that are correctly reallocated to the correct funding, including mandatory comments, with all required documentation is uploaded. Transactions missing any of the required items are to be rejected immediately to the CH for corrections. Again, this should be completed before the conclusion of the maximum of 4 hours of orderly shutdown process.
3. Initially, the CH's limits will not be reduced to allow FSIS to complete mission essential tasks. USDA and/or FSIS will monitor LiA and my revisit the direction.
4. During an LiA, the GPC can only be used by those who are appropriately authorized to work during the shutdown and can only use applicable appropriation authority (e.g., multiyear/no-year money that has not expired, trust funds, etc.) The Anti-Deficiency Act prohibits most agencies from incurring obligations in the absence of appropriations (unless otherwise allowed by law or for emergencies involving the safety of life or limb, the protection of property, or other excepted services).

## **III. SAFETY MEASURES AND INTERNAL CONTROL**

A. CHs are always to safeguard their user IDs and passwords. Sharing this information increases risk, reduces accountability, and is a security violation. CHs are to notify the APC immediately if they:

1. Have reason to believe their user ID and password are compromised; or
2. Encounter problems with their user ID or password.

B. Third Party Payments. Third-party payment processors are companies that offer e-commerce/internet payment solutions for online payments for commercial transactions. Examples include PayPal, Venmo, Square, Stripe, and Zelle. Transactions made with a third-party payment merchant are considered high risk for returning items and ensuring the merchant's name is captured in AXOL. Third-party merchants may not always accept returns, exchanges, or give refunds. US Bank will not get involved in a dispute for a transaction processed through a third-party payment processor. The CH is to deal directly with the merchant to resolve any issues, or the issues would have to be handled as a claim through the agency's financial office.



#### **IV. CARD MISUSE, FRAUD, OR CONTINUED VIOLATION OF PURCHASE CARD POLICY**

Misuse of the GPC will cause the agency to withdraw the GPC from the CH. Like misuse, fraud can occur in several different ways. If an AO notes questionable purchases on a CH's account statement, they are to report fraud, waste, and abuse to the Office of Human Resources Labor Employee Relations Division (LERD), the MASCO, and the APC. LERD and the MASCO determine the appropriate administrative and disciplinary or adverse action for misuse. If activity is detected that is fraudulent, the APC will notify the Office of the Inspector General for investigation. Penalties may include written reprimands, suspension, or removal from service (see [USDA GPC Program Guide Section 9 Administrative Actions](#)). In addition, the CH may be liable for financial reimbursement of the purchase payment. Subsequent violations of the GPC policy will also result in the agency's withdrawal of the GPC from the CH. Violations of the GPC Program will result in the recommended agency administrative actions identified in [USDA GPC Program Guide Section 9 Administrative Actions](#).

#### **V. RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

CHs are to upload and retain all document and receipts relating to micro-purchases in AXOL. Documentation that exceeds size limitation of AXOL is to be retained within the program areas office for 6 years from the date of the purchase. CHs are to destroy the files after 6 calendar years from the date of purchase.

#### **VI. QUESTIONS**

Refer questions to the ASD PcMB at [FSISProcurement@usda.gov](mailto:FSISProcurement@usda.gov).



Assistant Administrator  
Office of Policy and Program Development