

## APD ALERT



### **Government Printing Office (GPO) Waivers and the Use of Commercial Vendors for Reproduction Services**

#### **Background**

Often, the role of the contracting officer is questioned regarding his/her duty to ensure that an appropriate GPO waiver is obtained before a contract is put in place for printing needs that are not performed by the Government Printing Office. In addition, questions frequently arise concerning the legality of using commercial firms (e.g. Kinko's, Office Depot, Staples, etc.) for reproduction services.

#### **Policy Guidance**

AGAR Subpart 408.8 states that “the contracting officer shall verify that the requisite approval (waiver) has been received by the Agency Printing Officer or requisitioner.” Additionally, “the approval shall be maintained in the contract file.” The Government Printing and Binding regulations require that all waivers be obtained from the Government Printing Office (GPO) or Congress, through the Agency and/or Department Printing Liaison. **There is no exception for quantity, dollar amount, or urgency in the regulations – any requirement for printing must be acquired through GPO unless a waiver is obtained from GPO. Waivers must be acquired by working through your Agency Printing Liaison.** All requests for waivers should be submitted through the Agency Printing Liaison for routing to USDA's Office of Communications, Printing Services Division, who will then submit the request to the Government Printing Office. The Office of Communications will obtain approval/disapproval from GPO and then forward it back to the Agency Printing Liaison. Departmental Regulation 1420-001, Composition and Printing, outlines the procedures for submitting requests to the Printing Services Division.

**It is not the responsibility of procurement personnel to obtain these approvals or waivers for printing requirements.** These approvals are required to be included with the requisition and the statement of work before the procurement staff can determine that the requirement is complete and “ready” for procurement action. The ARS Publishing (Print and Electronic) policy is contained in P&P 151.1.

If the purchase card is used, the file must contain the appropriate approval documentation.

Public Law (PL) 102-392, as amended by PL 103-283, July 22, 1994, broadened the term “printing” to include “duplicating.” The terms “duplicating” and “copying” are often used interchangeably. GPO defines “duplicating/copying” as *duplicating equipment employing the lithographic process and automatic copy-processing or copier-duplicating machines employing electrostatic, or other copying processes*. In addition, General Accounting Office decision, B-290901, dated December 16, 2002, included the term “photocopying” in the definition of printing. Therefore, generally speaking, any reproduction work provided by commercial vendors falls under the category of “printing.”

**Note:** The U.S. Joint Committee on Printing has very strict legal standards regarding using Federal funds **for internal/administrative printing** (printing of such materials should be done in-house or as inexpensively as possible.)

### **APD Point of Contact**

If you have any questions regarding this policy memorandum, please contact the Acquisition Programs and Oversight Branch (APOB), on 301-504-1725, or via e-mail at [APOB@ars.usda.gov](mailto:APOB@ars.usda.gov).

### **Agency Printing Points of Contact**

ARS - (301) 504-1670

ERS – (202) 694-5121

NASS – (202) 720-7017

NIFA – (202) 720-4479

ISSUE DATE: August 2011

APD ALERT: 2011-33