GSA Networx Transition Update

January 2012
Bulletin Seventeen

Introduction

This bulletin provides critical information about increased efforts to complete the transition of services from the General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) Integrated Technology Services (ITS) FTS2001 Continuity Bridge contracts to Networx contracts. Over the next few weeks, GSA will begin disconnecting Agencies' services on FTS2001 Continuity Bridge contracts.

The General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Technology Service (FTS) FTS2001 contracts provide a broad spectrum of wide area telecommunications services to government users worldwide, and the Networx acquisition provides replacement contracts to which the Agencies can transition to maintain services provided by the FTS2001 contracts. The contracts were renewed as sole source Continuity Bridge contracts in 2011, with a 6-month base period and one 6-month option period, in order to give Agencies additional time to transition services to Networx contracts. GSA exercised the options on all Continuity Bridge contracts; therefore, the contracts will expire in May and June 2012 (specifically, CenturyLink (Qwest): May 5, 2012, Sprint: May 31, 2012, Verizon (MCI) and AT&T: June 30, 2012).

General Background

- The Continuity Bridge contract extensions were justified based upon requests from five Agencies (Department of Commerce, Social Security Administration, Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, and Department of the Interior) for additional time to complete their transitions. Many other Agencies have continued service under the Continuity Bridge contracts.
- As of January 13, 2012, 159 Agencies and Tribal Organizations have disconnected 100% of their services from the Continuity Bridge contracts. Another 108 Agencies and Tribal Organizations are not yet fully disconnected; this includes *all* cabinet-level Agencies and *all* CIO Council Agencies *except* for Executive Office of the President and National Science Foundation.
- Special exceptions: GSA will invoke contract clauses of the Bridge Contracts to extend services under FTS2001 for a few specific agencies requiring maximum time to transition. All other Agencies must be disconnected from the Continuity Bridge contracts by May and June 2012.
- The additional time for the special exceptions will expire in March 2013. Those Agencies that GSA does allow to extend to March 2013 must disconnect all services by that time and move them to Networx or find themselves with no GSA contract vehicle to continue services.

Consequences at Contract Expiration

Agencies that must be disconnected by May and June 2012, but are not, may experience the following:

- Blocked long distance (LD) voice services or loss of very low rates for LD service.
  - Once the Continuity Bridge contracts expire, contractors have no obligation to continue to provide LD voice services, particularly as Agencies have no obligation to pay for these services unless a new contract is established. Such a contract would require the Agency conduct a sole-source justification and contract award; the contractors will have difficulty offering lower rates given the low volume and short-term nature of these new contracts.
  - Some contractors may provide users with LD voice service but not at GSA contract rates; these contractors will likely charge "casual" rates up to $1.50/minute. Users will not likely be aware of the higher rates until their billing organizations receive invoices and research the increases. At that time, the Agencies will have little legal basis on which to dispute the charges.
  - Agencies' recourse will be to immediately order the services on the Networx contracts and endure the ordering intervals before rates are reduced.
- Deactivation of dedicated network connections, wireless and satellite communications, wide-area network connectivity, internet connections, and other network services such as web hosting and security services.
  - Services may be deactivated or erroneously billed at much higher rates.
  - These services are much more difficult to reactivate and transition to Networx, resulting in long gaps in mission-critical operations.
- Loss of the benefit of centralized billing with GSA. Agencies will receive invoices directly from the service providers and be obligated to process them for payment with their own Agencies' resources.

An Agency authorized to extend to March 2013 must be fully transitioned by then or face the same consequences as above. In addition, the agency will have to perform either of the following:

- Negotiate and manage its own alternative sole source contracts. This is a lengthy process that may require Agency resources not previously programmed to conduct an acquisition. It may also require intensive involvement from Agency personnel who are trying to complete the transition to Networx but must stop and support the acquisition. Acquisitions are subject to protest, further increasing the time and labor required.

- Prepare and approve a sole source justification and award a short-term task order to temporarily move services from the Continuity Bridge contract to the same service provider's Networx contract and subsequently complete the transition to the

Networx provider the Agency previously selected through the Fair Opportunity process.

GSA's Action Plan

At this time, GSA must address non-transitioned services. GSA will manage the disconnect of services for Agencies in a phased approach as follows:

Agencies not actively working disconnects	Early Feb 2012
Services with no identifiable Agency owner	Feb 2012
Agencies awaiting contractor actions	Feb 2012
Services behind GSA's Regional Systems	Mar 2012
GSA-Assisted Transitions	Mar 2012
Remaining Agencies to be disconnected by contract expiration	Early Apr 2012
Emergency Action Period for Special Exceptions	Jun 2012-Mar 2013

Recommended Course of Action for Agencies

- Transition all services to the Networx contracts and disconnect them from the Continuity Bridge contracts before June 2012.
- Contact your Continuity Bridge contractors to take action to avoid adverse consequences and complete your transition as soon as possible.

For Networx-related questions and assistance contact GSA's Help Desk at 866-472-0274 or networx.support@gsa.gov or contact your TSM designated at www.gsa.gov/gam.

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