

Vendor Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to questions are in **bold**.

1. What is a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA)?

A BPA “is a simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for supplies or services by establishing “charge accounts” with qualified sources of supply (FAR Subpart 13.303-1).” A BPA is not a contract and may be cancelled at any time by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the vendor.

2. Is a vendor required to have a BPA before doing business with the NIH?

No, a BPA is not required to do business with the NIH.

3. What are the benefits of having a BPA to the NIH and the vendor?

The benefits of a BPA to the NIH include: vendor discounts and pre-negotiated terms and conditions.

The benefit to the vendor is that a BPA makes it easier to have an order placed as well as increases the ability of a vendor to receive future order. In addition, the BPA Program Branch markets the BPA Program and its BPA vendors.

4. How do I obtain a BPA?

A vendor should contact the BPA Program Branch at BPAProgramBranch@mail.nih.gov or 301-496-5212 in order to speak with a Procurement Analyst. The Branch will determine whether:

- **The vendor has products/services that will benefit the NIH**
- **Has past performance (within the last two years) of doing simplified orders (including purchase card) with the NIH and**
- **The vendor will offer discounts against its commercial catalog.**

If approved, an Open Market (non-FSS BPA in accordance with FAR 13.3) BPA with a \$25K limitation per BPA Call will be established with the vendor.

5. What types of businesses are you looking for?

The BPA Program is looking for businesses that provide commercial items/services to NIH in the simplified arena. We are particularly interested in small businesses and businesses that sell products/services that are used in the medical/research field (medical supplies, lab services, etc.).

6. I'm an IT service vendor, should I apply?

We currently are not accepting IT service vendors as this requirement is being supplied by another NIH Office. The NIH's Information Technology Acquisition and Assessment Center (NITAAC) handles IT procurements and is an HHS Strategic Sourcing Vehicle. More information on NITAAC can be found at <http://nitaac.nih.gov/nitaac/>.

7. What is the period of performance on the NIH BPA?

A BPA is established for one year and is reviewed each year for usage and pricing. If pricing continues to be reasonable and there is usage on the BPA, the BPA is renewed for another year.

8. What should I do once I have a BPA?

Once a BPA has been established you may market your BPA to NIH customers. A listing of buyers is found at the NIH BPA website. <http://oamp.od.nih.gov/dsaps/bpa-program>

9. As a BPA vendor, where should I go for payment/invoicing issues?

The vendor should contact the buyer on the BPA Call or the Office of Financial Management (OFM) at 301-496-6088 to discuss any payment/invoicing issues.