

commercial cards government services

Citibank® e-Business

SUMMER 2001 VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Features:

- *FEMA Leads in Reducing Delinquencies*
- *Can Policy Changes Improve Your Card Program Within Your Agency?*
- *The GSA SmartPay Conference 2001: A Fresh Perspective*

Techie Tip of the Month

Updates:

- *Purchase Program*
- *Travel Program*
- *MasterCard®*
- *Visa®*

A Note from Customer Service

FEMA Leads in Reducing Delinquencies

Prior to implementation of the GSA SmartPay program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had one of the highest delinquency rates for individually billed travel card accounts in the Federal government. Today FEMA has one of the lowest delinquency rates for these accounts. How did the agency achieve these astonishing results? Jim Lucas, FEMA's Chief for Financial Policy and Standards, attributes the success to developing a sound policy, communicating the policy to all Cardholders and training the Agency/Office Program Coordinators (A/OPCs) to manage the program in the agency hierarchy. Supported by the Chief Financial Officer and other senior managers, the policy was disseminated throughout the organization, and both Cardholders and managers are held accountable.

FEMA had a delinquency problem under the previous program, and saw it developing again under GSA SmartPay. "During conversion to the GSA



SmartPay program we turned our attention to improving the management of the program. We discovered that the card issue files and the scrubbed files provided to Citibank didn't match," says Lorraine Norman, FEMA's travel card program coordinator. "We worked hand-in-hand with Citibank

"...both Cardholders and managers are held accountable"

Customer Service to correct the database and close accounts, but by the time this was completed, a significant

see FEMA
continued on page 2

FEMA

continued from page 1

amount of damage had been done.” This contributed to their delinquency problem.

Other initiatives in the pipeline are split-disbursements and salary off-set, according to Lucas.

“We are working closely with the Labor-Management Partnership Council,” he says. “Working as a

“We want to ensure that everyone clearly understands the policies and regulations governing the use of the credit card.”

team, we continue to communicate our message. We want to ensure that everyone clearly understands the policies and regulations governing the use of the credit card, and that

cardholders are held accountable,” says Lucas.

By monitoring trends, Norman anticipated abuse of the card over the holidays. As a preemptive measure, she closed off ATM cash advances in November and December—tradition-

ally low activity months for the agency. To assist agencies wanting to lower their delinquency rates, Norman offers the following advice:

- Base your program on written policy
- Keep hierarchy ratios reasonable
- Train your A/OPCs
- Work with Customer Service
- Monitor hot spots
- Respond to first indicators

For more information, you may contact Lorraine Norman at 202-646-3709. ■

Can Policy Changes Improve Your Card Program Within Your Agency?

The GSA SmartPay program is in its third year, and this may be a good time to review your program policies and procedures. The following questions may be well worth considering.

Would a policy of “pay and chase” be beneficial to my Agency/Organization?

“Pay and chase” is when you pay invoices within a few days of receipt and then reconcile and work discrepancies. The dispute process gives you 60 days to challenge charges that you question or don’t recognize and gives your Agency/Organization the potential to double its rebate checks. Numerous progressive Agencies/Organizations use this process today.

Is my Agency/Organization’s policy for rebate distribution encouraging its entities to improve their processes?

Some Agencies/Organizations prorate rebates back to organizational entities based upon their volume and payment performance. This policy incentivizes each entity to invest in

performance enhancing changes, and provides financial rewards in the form of rebate revenue—a win for everyone.

What policies are keeping my Agency/Organization from fully utilizing the potential of the program?

Many programs restrict certain purchases, which perpetuates the costly purchase order process and limits rebates. One example is policy that restricts Cardholders from using their card to pay for training events even though there is no superior program prohibition. The reduced costs realized by eliminating this high number of purchase orders, and the additional volume rebates earned, makes review of restrictive policies such as these valuable to your program.

The policies and processes that supported successful program management in the past need to be periodically reviewed and updated to better meet the requirements of today’s emerging eGovernment environment while maximizing your rebates. To explore these options contact your senior A/OPC or a member of your Citibank Government Services Team. ■

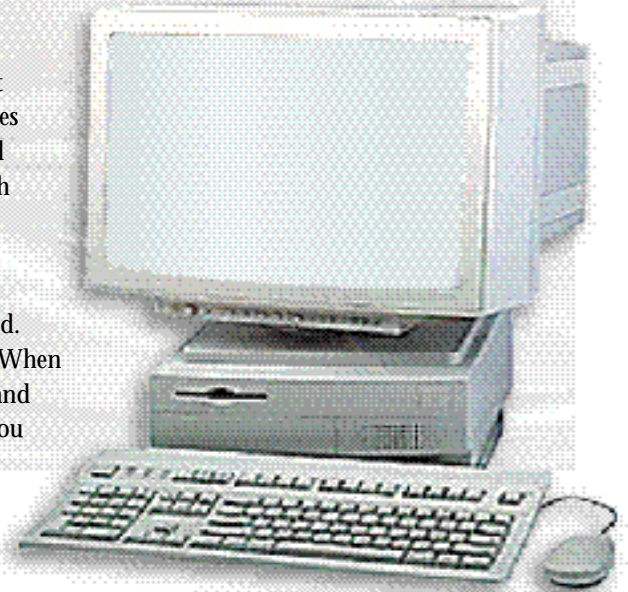
Techie Tip of the Month

Using CitiDirect Reporting Tool Effectively

From within the CitiDirect menu, select the Reports feature. Reports may be run from any level in the hierarchy, subject to your level and permissions. The higher your level in the hierarchy, the more data is available to you, but also the longer it will take to run and download.

Each defined report type has its own set of data options associated with it that may be used to precisely select or filter data. For example, date ranges may be defined for periods such as month or quarter, but custom-defined date ranges may also be used to narrow the scope of information you wish to review. The capability to adjust report parameters makes for a very flexible and powerful tool.

Once a report type is selected and the data options defined, it is submitted. Reports are processed and their status is posted in the CitiDirect Inbox. When completed, the report may be downloaded to your local PC. The speed and time of downloading reports may vary based on the type of connection you have to the Internet and the size of the report. If reports are too large, you will be notified via a message.



The GSA SmartPay Conference 2001: A Fresh Perspective

The Third Annual GSA SmartPay Conference will be held August 14-16, 2001 at The Fontainebleau Hilton Resort in Miami Beach, Florida. All A/OPCs and Designated Billing Office personnel for purchase, travel and fleet business lines are invited to attend.

The purpose of the conference is to give attendees a fresh perspective on GSA SmartPay contract offerings. Citibank will provide exciting new insights into program management, electronic access systems, reports and value added features. Learn about the latest enhancements to electronic account maintenance, account setup, billing and reporting.

To insure a little "down time" with your Citibank Government team, we will again host an all-attendees party on Wednesday evening, August 15th.

Advance hotel reservations may be made with the

Fontainebleau Hilton Resort by calling 1-800-548-8886, the Eden Roc Resort and Spa at 1-800-327-8337, the Wyndham Miami Beach at 1-800-20-EVENT, the Sovereign at 888-201-1489, the Lucerne at 305-673-3337 or the Four Points Sheraton at 800-525-6994. Be sure to mention the GSA SmartPay conference to obtain conference rates. The conference rate of \$75.00 plus tax per night is available until the room blocks are filled, but no later than July 25, 2001.

Registration packages with complete conference information were mailed to potential participants back in May 2001. There are no registration fees associated with this conference. For further information call Professional and Scientific Associates at (800) 772-8232.

For updates on conference events, online registration and updated hotel information, see "In The News" on the GSA SmartPay website at: fss.gsa.gov/services/gsa-smartpay. ■

The 2000 National Association of Purchasing Management (NAPM) Survey Results

Visa recently conducted a survey of attendees at the 2000 National Association of Purchasing Management (NAPM) conference. "Knowledge about the marketplace, and about our customers' needs are critical to Visa and its Members in our efforts to provide the best payment solutions," says David Benjamin, Vice President Commercial Markets Group, Visa, U.S.A. Visa's NAPM results indicated that 67 percent of

respondents currently engage in some form of e-Purchasing, a number that was up 10 percentage points from 1999. "Knowledge about the marketplace, and about our customers' needs are critical to Visa and its Members" Additionally, Visa asked those surveyed to identify the characteristics of "the ultimate payment mechanism." Ninety-eight percent replied that such a payment tool would minimize transaction costs, and 96 percent indicated it would reduce internal processing/integration costs.



Other Visa studies have shown the cost for creating and processing a routine purchase order can be as much as \$100 per order in a corporate environment, and up to \$150 in some Government agencies. "As a global payment leader, Visa is positioned to be a catalyst in promoting more efficient transactions by our customers," said Benjamin. ■

TRADEMARK LEGEND TRADEMARK LEGEND TRADEMARK LEGEND

VISA® is a registered trademark of Visa International Inc. MASTERCARD® is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated.
TAXWARE® is a registered trademark of TAXWARE International, Inc. CITIDIRECT® and CITIBANK® are registered service marks of Citicorp.
SKILCRAFT® is a trademark of the National Industries for the Blind.

MasterCard® Provides Excellent Fleet Tax Recovery



MasterCard, in conjunction with Arthur Andersen and Taxware®, has an exclusive tax recovery program that is the most complete offering on the market today.

The state tax recovery process is a complicated one. Not all states treat the issue the same. Oregon, for example, eliminates the state tax at the pump for Federal agencies -- simple, easy. Unfortunately, they are the only state that does. In the others there is a morass of rules and regulations that vary from state to state, and even by fuel type.

The bottom line is simple: however the state tax filing has to be done -- by state, card-issuer or Federal Agency/Organization -- we go the extra mile. MasterCard and Citibank do every-

thing legally possible to assure that your agency receives the maximum tax recovery possible. Whether by posting credits to your Agency/Organization's billing or by facilitating recovery of taxes directly from state authorities to you, we are working to maximize your return.

For small Government agencies or large, Citibank's MasterCard Government Fleet Card helps Government fleet managers cut, control and more closely monitor the costs of keeping their fleet on the road. ■

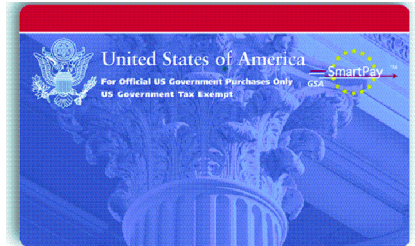
Citibank is a Strong Supporter of JWOD Program

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program was established by Congress to give opportunities for employment to Americans who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The JWOD Program leverages the Federal government's purchasing power by designating SKILCRAFT® and other JWOD products and services as preferred sources of supply for all Federal entities. In support of the program, Citibank is proactive with its Cardholders, encouraging compliance with JWOD and communicating the business benefits of ordering SKILCRAFT products.



National Industries for the Blind (NIB), a private organization, helps to create and sustain jobs for Americans who are blind. These individuals work under the JWOD Program in NIB-associated entities across the country. The National Institute for the Severely Handicapped (NISH), NIB's sister entity, provides these same services to people with other severe disabilities. Over 36,000 people who are blind or severely disabled are employed as part of the JWOD Program, which has enjoyed bipartisan support at the highest levels since its inception in 1938.

SKILCRAFT products – made



Purchase Program Update

through the JWOD Program - deliver quality, value and convenience and can be purchased on www.jwod.com, through GSA Advantage!, on the GSA single award schedule, at authorized commercial JWOD distributors and at military base supply centers. ■

New Delinquency Policies



Travel Program Update

During the past several months Citibank has been meeting with Agencies/Organizations to address increased delinquencies throughout the GSA SmartPay program. Trend data indicate significant delinquencies continue to increase across the entire Government portfolio. Both Citibank and the Government continually look for new measures to deter and to minimize delinquencies. Accordingly, two new policies are being implemented.

First, any Individually Billed Travel (IBT) account with two or more non-

sufficient fund (NSF) checks within a twelve-month period will be cancelled.

Second, accounts with two or more suspensions and a third delinquency, occurring within a twelve-month period, will be cancelled.

Citibank's senior management has expressed serious concern with the current state of several Government programs, and the bank asks that all A/OPCs increase their awareness of delinquency management and redouble their efforts to turn around this negative trend. ■

A Note From Customer Service

Let Citibank's Collection Group Help You

In order to facilitate uninterrupted Government travel, Citibank's Customer Service team has a collections group available to assist Government employees who encounter difficulties paying their Citibank GSA SmartPay individually billed travel account balance. Our overall goal is to collect past due amounts on these accounts with the understanding and support of the Cardholder and the Agency/Organization.

We realize delinquencies can be embarrassing. Therefore, we remain sensitive to the Cardholder's needs while working to collect these outstanding balances. To reduce the many misconceptions concerning collection activities, the Citibank collections group considers it vital to work closely with Agencies/Organizations and Cardholders. The collections group offers numerous solutions to resolve past due balances and welcomes suggestions to improve the collections process.

It is important for all program participants to understand their contractual obligations to pay on time and the potential impact of

The collections group offers numerous solutions to resolve past due balances

new policies for those who do not. A key role of our collection group is to educate Cardholders and A/OPCs about the

Always professional, our collections group considers their efforts as a partnership. We believe this partnership is the ideal approach to It is important for all program participants to understand their contractual obligations to pay on time

reducing delinquencies. The collections group is available to Cardholders and A/OPCs Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm EST and on Friday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm EST. If you have questions, or you wish to discuss a delinquency issue, you may reach the team at 1-800-473-1393. ■

How to Contact Customer Service

Call:

Toll Free (800) 790-7206
 Collect (904) 954-7850
 Fax (904) 954-8710
 or (904) 954-8713

Mailing Address:

Citibank GCS
 P.O. Box 45134
 Jacksonville, FL 32232-5134

Citibank Government Customer Service Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.



Commercial Cards Government Services News: Information for GSA SmartPay Program Officials



Commercial Cards Government Services publishes this newsletter quarterly to provide information about products, services and issues vital to those Government personnel managing and participating in the GSA SmartPay program. Questions and comments about this publication may be directed to gina.depina@citicorp.com

© Copyright 2001 by Citibank (South Dakota) N.A. All rights reserved.