

ELECTRONIC VALUE TRANSFER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS):

1. Question: What is EVT?

Answer: **Electronic Value Transfer** - Any transfer of funds which is initiated by the use of an electronic value transfer device (a credit card, charge card, debit card or electronic value transfer via ACH, Fedwire or CHIPS). To New York State agencies and other authorized users of the EVT contract it means the ability to accept credit/charge cards, debit cards and ACH transactions as payment for services, fines, fees or taxes.

2. Question: What is the EVTA?

Answer: **Electronic Value Transfer Administrator**, designated by the EVT legislation enacted in 1998 as the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. The EVTA is responsible for:

- Establishing policies and direction for state agencies regarding EVT,
- Evaluating the costs and benefits associated with various electronic commerce solutions,
- Overseeing the efficient implementation of state agency programs.

3. Question: How are EVT services made available to State and local agencies?

Answer: **EVT Services** are provided by Financial Service Providers (FSPs) through contracts available from the NYS Office of General Services. There are three contracts for this program. The principle contract is with National Data Payment Systems (AKA Global Payments, Inc. and National Data Corporation), who handles all payments transactions. The remaining two contracts are with American Express and NOVUS/Discover (pending negotiations) for the purposes of paying monthly AMEX and Discover transaction fees.

4. Question: Who can use the EVT contracts?

Answer: **Authorized Users** of the EVT contracts fall into three (3) categories:

- a) State Agencies authorized pursuant to NYS Finance Law, § 4-a, to accept electronic payments, including any department, board, bureau, division, commission, committee, council, office of the State, or other governmental entity with statewide jurisdiction.
- b) Any local government authorized to accept electronic payments pursuant to New York General Municipal Law, Article 2, §5.
- c) Any other entities, authorized pursuant to NYS Finance Law, § 163, to utilize NYS centralized service contracts.

NOTE: Entities other than State agencies should review their local laws to ensure there are no barriers to their accepting credit card and other forms of EVT payments.

5. Question: Which Credit/Charge Cards will be accepted under this contract?

Answer: The four major credit/charge cards will be accepted: **MasterCard®**, **VISA®**, **Discover®** Novus (pending negotiations) and **American Express®**. Authorized Users may make their own determinations as to whether to accept all four or a smaller subset of the credit cards available. However, Authorized Users are encouraged to accept all cards if possible.

6. Question: How does an agency establish a program to accept credit cards?

Answer: After an agency has made a policy determination at the highest levels to implement an EVT program, the first step is to designate a properly authorized person to contact the EVTA and complete an EVT Program Plan Application. The EVT Program Application is available on the EVTA web-

site at: <http://www.tax.state.ny.us/evta/> or contact the EVTA at 518-485-0441. They will assist you with all of the requirements, procedures and forms necessary to set up an EVT program within your agency.

7. *Question: What is a Debit Card?*

Answer: A **Debit Card** is an electronic payment card that can be processed either on-line similar to an ATM card or off-line like a credit/charge card. On-Line Debit Card transactions are processed through the ATM networks and require entry of a PIN (Personal Identification Number) by the cardholder. This authorizes funds to be directly debited from the Device Users account. Off-Line Debit Card transactions are processed through the credit/charge card networks with funds being debited from the cardholder's account within a few days.

8. *Question: What is an ACH Transaction and what are Fedwire and CHIPS?*

Answer: **ACH Transaction** - Automated Clearing House transactions include ACH Debits, ACH Credits and electronic check processing and clearance. In an ACH Debit transaction, a payor provides their bank account information to the agency to which he/she owes money. The agency then initiates through the EVT contractor an electronic automated clearinghouse transaction that debits the payor's bank account and credits the account designated by the agency. In an ACH Credit transaction, a payor initiates the transfer of funds through his/her bank by providing his/her bank with the amount to be transferred and the agency's bank account information. The payor's bank then initiates an electronic automated clearinghouse transaction that debits the payor's bank account and credits the account designated by the agency.

Fedwire is an electronic payment system owned and operated by the Federal Reserve Bank that acts as an intermediary in funds transfer for Fedwire participants. It handles bank to bank transactions.

CHIPS - Clearing House Interbank Payment System - an electronic payment system developed by the New York Clearing House that transfers funds and settles transactions in U.S. dollars among banks around the world. It is the central clearing system in the United States for international transactions.

9. *Question: What are Transaction Fees?*

Answer: **Transaction Fees** are service costs charged to an Authorized User by the EVT contractor for processing EVT transactions on a per transaction basis. They include all of the following fees.

Authorization Fee - Fees charged by the EVT Contractor to Authorized Users to obtain an authorization. The fees vary depending on the interface being used between the Authorized User and the EVT Contractor. **Interchange & Assessment Fee** - Fees set by the credit/charge card associations that are passed through to the Authorized User. These fees vary based upon which category (e.g. cardholder present or cardholder not present) the transaction falls under.

Processing/Access Fee - A base processing fee which can be a percentage of the transaction value, a flat fee or a combination of both.

10. *Question: What are Blended/Bundled Rates?*

Answer: Fees that combine or "blend" the rates of the various categories used to determine the Interchange and Assessment Fees and "bundle" the blended Interchange & Assessment rate with all other fees (i.e., Authorized fees, Processing/Access fees and Other Services Fees) into a single rate for all MasterCard and Visa transactions

11. Question: Are there any limitations to the solutions provided by the EVT Financial Service Provider (FSP) contracts?

Answer: Yes. The FSPs (Global Payments, Inc., American Express and NOVUS/Discover - pending negotiations) can meet your needs for processing credit card, debit card and other forms of EVT transactions, providing Point of Sale (POS) terminal devices and basic customization required to process your payment transactions. However, if you need an Internet payment application, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, web hosting services for Internet applications or other more technical solutions, you may need a technology service provider to partner with the FSP.

12. Question: How do I obtain the technology service providers I may need?

Answer: If Authorized Users need assistance to obtain technology service providers, they may avail themselves of the OGS "Computer Consulting, Systems Integration and Training" contracts, also known as the Backdrop contracts.

13. Question: What are Backdrop Contracts?

Answer: Backdrop Contracts are OGS Statewide contracts that are uniform in their Back-Drop Terms and Conditions. They are used to provide computer related services. Each contract may cover Consulting, Systems Integration (SI) and Training for numerous Categories of Expertise, including Application Development, Data Conversion, GIS, Help Desk Services, Imaging, and Internet/Intranet Services, to name a few. These contracts pre-qualify contractors on a continuous recruitment basis to supply services to all authorized users. The contracts establish not to exceed pricing for each contractor. The actual cost to an authorized user of these services is established per project using the "mini-bid" process.

14. Question: What is the Mini-Bid Process?

Answer: The mini-bid process is the process whereby an Authorized User develops a project definition outlining their specific requirement and solicits bids from all pre-qualified backdrop contractors to determine the best value solution. The Authorized User forwards their project definition to all Backdrop Contractors that have been pre-qualified in the area of expertise called for in the scope of work. The backdrop contractors that have been solicited then have the option of submitting a bid for the project. The backdrop contractor submitting the proposal providing the best value to the Authorized User is then awarded a contract. From development of the project specifications to the project award takes up to ten weeks, a fraction of the time when compared with the traditional RFP procurement. Project awards shall be based on "Best Value." The mini-bid process is fully detailed in the associated Agency Guidelines available from the Procurement Services Group.

Except where an agency can justify single or sole source procurement or where the requirement does not exceed \$5,000, this process is required for an Authorized User to utilize the computer consulting, training, and systems integration contracts.

The mini-bid process offers these additional benefits:

- Agencies are not required to advertise in the Contract Reporter.
- Contractors are pre-qualified for services under the Back-Drop Contracts.

- Since the Back-Drop Contracts contain all the terms and conditions, there is no need to include this language in the PD or RTS. This allows the issuing entity to concentrate on describing the project.
- OGS-supplied templates standardize the preparation of bid documentation, and, for New York State agencies, may simplify the bid process.
- The process ensures adherence to competitive bidding practices.
- For New York State agencies, there are no special requirements or forms (for example, the H100) for the Division of Budget.
- OGS' expertise in developing and administering contracts may reduce administrative overhead.
- For EVT, the Authorized User's Implementation Plan submitted to the EVTA can supply much of the detail needed for the Project Description.

15. Question: What services are available on Backdrop Contracts?

Answer: For purposes of the EVT contract, the services available on backdrop contracts include computer Consulting and Systems Integration for:

- Applications Development Mainframe
- Applications Development Mid Range
- Applications Development PC
- Electronic Commerce (EC) & Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
- Internet/Intranet Application Services
- Point-Of-Sale Systems (POS)
- Telecommunications
- Internet and IVR Hosting services

Other services are available and new services may be added in the future.

16. Question: How do Backdrop Contracts fit into EVT?

Answer: The Computer Consulting and Systems Integration backdrop contracts can be used to develop EVT systems.

- ◆ **Consulting Services** includes the qualified, professional ability of the contractor to offer **analysis, recommendations, design or programming** expertise to New York State relating to information technology systems with regard to various categories of expertise. Said expertise must include a current knowledge of the technology marketplace, related information technology issues and trends.
- ◆ **Systems Integration (SI) Services** requires the contractor to assume **principal responsibility** and liability for recommending and procuring hardware, software and related products, and to provide consulting services for a "total solution." In order to obtain a Back-Drop Contract, the SI contractor was required to show prior, substantial experience as a Systems Integrator, including principal responsibility for project management and acquisition of project materials or components from third party sources.

An Authorized User can contract with the SI backdrop contracts to provide the equipment and software needed for a complete system and the EVT Contractor for processing services.