

National Dispatch Standard Operating Guide for I-BPA Resources

May 2025 Revision

A Guide for Dispatchers & Incident Support Personnel

Note: This guide is for VIPR I-BPA agreements/resources only. National contracts (Caterers, Showers, Firefighting Crews) have their own ordering procedures and information about those can be found in the respective contract.

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire>

AIMS solicited I-BPAs have a SOG located on the NICC page for reference.

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1.0 Introduction

The intent of this guide is to provide standard operating guidelines to dispatchers and incident support personnel in the mobilization and demobilization of contracted resources under the Incident Blanket Purchase Agreement (I-BPA) program. This guide is intended to supplement the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization, as well as geographic area & local mobilization guides.

This guide has been developed in accordance with federal agency guidelines for contracted resources and established business practices as outlined in the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization, the Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management, dispatch guides, and in accordance with the solicitation language set forth within the I-BPA and the Forest Service Procedures, Guidance, and Instructions (PGI).

The guidelines established in this document do not preclude the Government at any time from mobilizing agency owned or agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources prior to mobilizing contracted resources for incident support.

This guide will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Annual review will be facilitated by WO FAM Contract operations. For questions related to this document please email the VIPR team at sm.fs.vipr@usda.gov.

2.0 General Information

In January of 2009, the Forest Service introduced its web-based application, the Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) system. This application is designed to solicit, award, and administer preseason Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs). VIPR supports the 2005 USDA OIG audit findings requiring the Forest Service to implement a more rigorous approach to managing preseason incident agreements and to comply with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

VIPR has an interface to the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC). This interface allows pertinent vendor and resource information to be shared electronically to reduce errors and increase the efficiency of dispatching. I-BPA resources are dispatched using the IROC application.

The Bureau of Land Management is using the Procurement Information System for Management (PRISM) for establishing preseason agreements but follows the same guiding principles and procedures established for the Forest Service and outlined in this guide.

The standard operating guidelines developed within this guide utilizes Forest Service guidelines in incident procurement of contracted resources. Other federal agencies and state cooperators may have their own established agreements and guidelines for incident support and may or may not follow these guidelines depending on agency jurisdiction of the incident.

3.0 Reference Information

The information provided in this section directs the user where to find additional information on guidelines and procedures for mobilization and demobilization of contracted resources and information pertaining to incident procurement.

National Information/Links

National Interagency Standards for Mobilization

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>

USDA Forest Service Procurement & Property Services – Incident Procurement

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/business/incident/>

DOI Bureau of Land Management Contracting

<https://www.blm.gov/services/national-operations-center>

USDA Forest Service – Incident Business Practices

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/ibp>

NWCG Incident Business Committee

<http://www.nwcg.gov/committees/incident-business-committee>

NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management (PMS 902)

<http://www.nwcg.gov/committees/incident-business-committee/publications>

USDA Forest Service Virtual Incident Procurement System (VIPR)

https://www.fs.usda.gov/business/incident/vipr.php?tab=tab_d

Geographical Area Information/Links

Geographical Area Coordination Centers (GACC)

<https://gacc.nifc.gov/>

Information for contracted equipment is provided under the Equipment/Supply link located on each GACC website menu.

4.0 Types of Agreements (IBPA vs EERA)

The Forest Service has developed national solicitation templates for Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs), to provide consistency in the acquisition methodology, methods of hire, and equipment typing and standards. The Forest Service national solicitation templates for equipment are available at the following website: [Incident Procurement - Solicitations - vipr \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/vipr/procurement/solicitations)

I-BPAs are awarded preseason using a best value award process and by using the Choosing by Advantages (CBA) methodology to determine the dispatch priority. The basis for the award can be found in the solicitation template. The CBA determines the priority dispatch order for the equipment on the Dispatch Priority List (DPL) based on price and various equipment and/or specified attributes.

For documenting awarded agreements the Forest Service I-BPAs use the SF-1449 generated by the VIPR system. BLM may use the SF-1449 or the OF-294.

A National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs has been developed by the Forest Service, identifying a cycle for competing equipment that is commonly used to support incidents. I-BPAs are solicited on two primary levels (national and zone) as identified in the National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs. This solicitation plan is located at the following website: [National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs - resources \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/vipr/procurement/solicitations)

NOTE: Agencies solicit for contracted resources based on their local and geographic area needs and therefore may not solicit for all contracted resources listed in this guide. Some geographic areas have collaborated on the solicitations with their federal and state cooperators by identifying which agency will take the lead for specific resource categories. In this case, some contracted resource categories may or may not be on a DPL provided by the Forest Service or BLM, but on a DPL or source list provided by another federal or state cooperator. Dispatch procedures for agreements awarded by cooperators may vary from Forest Service and BLM agreements based on the host agency policy and other determining factors. In geographic areas where this occurs, follow local and geographic area ordering procedures.

National I-BPAs

One single solicitation is issued for all GACCs. Duration is typically five (5) years.

Zoned I-BPAs (previously Regional)

One solicitation is issued for each zone covering all dispatch locations in the zone that will host those resources. In special circumstances a Region/GACC may have a dedicated solicitation for a unique resource. The duration of the agreement can be three (3) or five (5) years.

Incident-only EERAs

Incident-only EERAs are used to sign up contracted resources not available through the I-BPA competitive process due to availability or exhaustion of the DPL, and resources hired through other established dispatch ordering procedures. Incident-only EERAs are valid only for the

duration of the incident they were assigned to. Once the incident releases the contracted resource the agreement is no longer valid.

Forest Service at-incident EERAs will use the OF-294 form. BLM may use the SF-1449 or the OF-294 form for incident-only EERAs.

Types of Agreements: I-BPA vs. EERA

TYPES OF AGREEMENTS		
	I-BPA	EERA
Solicitation	Yes - Competitive Solicitation	No – Non-competitive
Duration of Agreement	3-5 Years	Incident-only
Form Used	SF-1449	OF-294
System Used	VIPR (FS) / PRISM (BLM)	Not system generated

Note: This guide is for I-BPA agreements/resources only. National contracts (Caterers, Showers, Firefighting Crews) have their own ordering procedures and information about those can be found in the respective contract. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire>

5.0 Dispatch Priority

Dispatch priority will be given to contracted resources under competitive I-BPAs for extended attack incidents when ordering contracted resources. The Government intends to dispatch contracted resources based on this dispatch priority for other than the initial attack exceptions referenced in these guidelines.

Dispatch priority for contracted resources does not preclude the Government from using any agency owned or agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources for initial attack or extended attack/large fire support before ordering/mobilizing contracted resources under agreement. Agency-owned and/or agency cooperator resources may be requested at any time.

Exceptions to Dispatch Priority

The following exceptions apply to dispatch priority of competitive I-BPA's:

A) Initial Attack (IA) – dispatchers may follow the “closest forces” concept and utilize locally available resources (agency, agency cooperators, neighborhood agreements with agency & agency cooperators) according to agency and incident needs. The DPL is not required to be used during an initial attack and Contractor resources may or may not be used.

NOTE: If the DPL is used for IA, the dispatcher may order the closest contracted resource (closest forces) to the incident to meet date and time needed. Whenever possible, based on the availability and date and time needed, the established DPL ranking should be followed.

B) Tribal preference policy established within reservation jurisdiction.

C) The Government normally will dispatch contracted resources in accordance with this protocol; however, the number of resource requests in process and the actual fire conditions at the time of dispatch may require deviation from normal procedures to respond effectively to such conditions. Any such deviation will be within the discretion of the Government and will not be deemed a violation of any term or condition of the agreement or these guidelines. (D.6 of the solicitation)

When any of the above identified exceptions are utilized for an incident, dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or IROC).

Dispatchers may not hold contracted resources in reserve as a contingency force in a non-pay status when that resource is available.

Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs)

Dispatch Priority Lists are generated for all contracted resources awarded under competitive I-BPAs. Each contracted resource has an identified Host Dispatch Center within their agreement and may only be dispatched by their Host Dispatch Center. The Host Dispatch Center may be a local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), if the GACC has chosen to host contracted resources. A DPL will be posted to the web providing the priority listing for each resource category awarded under an I-BPA, and available in IROC via the VIPR to IROC interface. Host Dispatch Centers with VIPR Dispatch Priority Lists will see VIPR I-BPA resources populating the Resource tile and the VIPR tab under the Manage Request to Fill tab in IROC. Resource items that are not in VIPR may be hand entered into IROC and may be found on a separate tab on the Manage Request screen.

Note: If the VIPR to IROC interface is not available or DPLs are not showing in IROC, please email the missing DPL information to the VIPR support team at sm.fs.vipr@usda.gov. In this situation dispatchers should utilize the published hard copy DPLs at the following website: [VIPR Dispatch Priority Lists \(DPL\) - vipr \(usda.gov\)](#)

Dispatch procedures for cooperator solicitations (state & other federal agencies) may vary from Forest Service solicitations based on the host agency policy and other determining factors. In geographic areas where this occurs, follow local and geographic area ordering procedures.

Dispatch Priority Lists will be linked to the GACC Web sites under Equipment/Supplies. This website will provide a link to the Forest Service DPLs at: [VIPR Dispatch Priority Lists \(DPL\) - vipr \(usda.gov\)](#) Individual GACC websites may be accessed at: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/>.

Agency Contracting Officers (CO) may notify Host Dispatch Centers and/or GACCs immediately when any changes occur on the DPL such as equipment replacements, suspension of resources, or termination of an agreement. The Host Dispatch Center shall ensure the most recent version of their DPL is utilized. This can be accomplished by checking the DPL website utilizing the date/time stamp on the published DPLs, comparing the DPL to the resource items in IROC and through communications with the Contracting Officer.

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Host Dispatch Centers will follow the established DPL ranking order when ordering contracted resources in the following categories:

- Ambulance/EMT
- Bus, Crew Carrier
- Chipper
- Clerical Support Unit
- Communications Trailer
- Dozer
- Engine
- Excavator
- Faller Module (Single & Module)
- Feller Buncher
- Fuel Tender
- GIS Unit
- Gray Water Truck
- Handwashing Station (Trailer Mounted)
- Heavy Equipment Task Force
- Helicopter Operations Support Trailer
- Incident Base Unit
- Mechanic w/Service Truck
- Mobile Chainsaw Repair
- Mobile Laundry Unit
- Mobile Sleeper Unit
- Mulcher/Masticator (Boom Mounted)
- Mulcher/Masticator (Strip)
- Portable Air Traffic Control Unit
- Potable Water Truck
- Pumper Cat
- Refrigerated Trailer
- Road Grader
- Skidder
- Skidgine
- Softtrack
- Sleeper Units
- Tractor Plow
- Transport
- Vehicle w/Driver
- Water Tender (Support)
- Water Tender (Tactical)
- Weed Washing Unit

NOTE: Resource categories listed above are subject to change depending on agency(s) needs, requirements, and solicitation schedules. The most current list of resource categories solicited under the IBPA program can be found at: [Incident Procurement - VIPR Preseason Agreements - vipr \(usda.gov\)](#)

How to Use the DPL

All requests for contracted resources will be created and filled or placed in the Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC) using established ordering procedures. The VIPR to IROC interface allows for automatic loading of vendor and resource information into IROC for those resources identified in this guide.

When receiving a request for which I-BPA resources may be utilized, the dispatcher will use the DPL within their Host Dispatch Center. Dispatchers and Contracting Officers will not call/dispatch Contractors from other Host Dispatch Centers' DPLs. To utilize Contractors from other Host Dispatch Centers' DPLs, the ordering dispatcher must follow established dispatch ordering channels. Available Contractors on the DPL must be contacted in the order of their DPL ranking and availability status corresponding with their available area (local, state, GACC, National.) If a contractor is showing available local, state or GACC and the request is from outside the GACC, then they may be bypassed.

Note: Contracting Officers (COs), Dispatchers, Buying Team Members, Finance Section Chiefs, Procurement Unit Leaders, and Purchasing Agents are authorized to place orders against this agreement. COs may contact IBPA resources and assist in ensuring vendors are

statused correctly and ensure the dispatch channels are being utilized correctly, but COs should not be contacting IBPA resources with the intent to put them on an EERA.

If an incident orders a specific type of equipment with a special attribute, (e.g., dozer with winch) the dispatcher may contact the first available Contractor on the DPL with the specific attribute identified. ***Only the attributes that are listed on the DPL may be utilized to deviate from the DPL ranking. Special attribute requests must be documented on the resource order form in special needs.***

The Contractor is required to ensure their status in the IROC system is accurate at all times. See section 8 in this guide for more guidance regarding vendor status.

When receiving a call from their Host Dispatch Center, the Contractor shall confirm ability to meet the date/time needed as identified on the resource order and confirm the actual location of resource requested. If the Contractor has an unavailable status, cannot be reached, not at identified location per agreement, not able to meet the date/time needed, or unable to provide the requested resource(s), the dispatcher may proceed with contacting the next available contractor identified on the DPL. If unable to contact the Contractor utilizing the published phone numbers on the DPL, the dispatcher may proceed to contact the next available Contractor on the DPL.

Note: There is no specific waiting time identified between phone calls when attempting to contact available Contractors on the DPL. The dispatcher should determine a reasonable call back time based on date and time needed to use for the current call down, document it, and use it consistently until the call down is complete. Substitution (swapping) of the resource item ordered under an I-BPA by the contractor is not allowed. The VIN or Serial Number of the resource item must match what's dispatched.

Contracting Officers advise that the documentation in IROC on resource orders should be rudimentary and basic. The audience that has access to IROC and resource orders, especially other contracted vendors, is not entitled to the detailed information relayed to the dispatcher such as full names, phone numbers or the detailed reasoning for declining an assignment. This causes more workload to the Contracting Officers. Examples of basic documentation are: Accept, travel, decline, operator, etc. Complete detailed documentation from the call-down should be available to the CO upon request and should be maintained in CAD or in a local documentation system of record.

Dispatchers will document all detailed actions and contacts in an appropriate system of record, CAD or local documentation process, including those Contractors who are contacted and the specific response or result of that interaction. Examples:

- ***E-23 Contractor A, contact name, phone #, called MM/DD/YYYY, actual time, left message with # minutes response time. Did not return call.***
- ***E-23 Contractor B, contact name, phone #, called MM/DD/YYYY, actual time, decline/not available.***
- ***E-23 Contractor C, contact name, phone #, called MM/DD/YYYY, actual time, accepted, mobilization info, operator name/manifest, filled and emailed to email address.***

Requests will be placed according to established ordering procedures as outlined in the appropriate Mobilization Guide (National, Geographic and/or Local). Contracted resources will be utilized according to their respective DPL.

NOTE: As referenced under Dispatch Priority in Section 5 of this guide, the Government will normally dispatch contracted resources in accordance with this protocol; however, the number of resource requests in process and actual fire conditions at the time of dispatch may require a deviation from normal procedures to respond effectively to such conditions. Any such deviation will be within the discretion of the Government and will not be deemed a violation of any term or condition of the agreement with the USFS or BLM. *This deviation is applicable to all dispatch tiers, local, geographic, and national, when fire activity, conditions and/or preparedness levels reflect the need for this deviation.*

6.0 Source List

A Source List may be generated from agreements that are not competed through a competitive process or may be a list of available Contractors who do not yet have a valid agreement. Dispatchers must ensure an agreement is in place prior to dispatching a resource. If no agreement exists, then a Contracting Officer will need to be involved in the ordering/agreement process. The Source List may be based on when the date of the agreement is signed, price or other determining factor determined by the agency, and not by a “best value” determination. Federal, state, and local agencies may use source lists for some equipment categories.

How to Use a Source List

Check with the appropriate agency for protocol on how to use Source Lists for contracted equipment. Agency protocol may vary on how to use a Source List and may be sorted by an agency specific ranking method.

Source List / EERA Fill with Agreement in IROC

Naming conventions and data entry standards shall apply when a resource item is entered into IROC when using the “Fill with Agreement” option. This information is located on the IROC website at: <https://famit.nwcg.gov/node/2465>. Click on “Data Entry Standards” for the current standards for resources and vendors.

NOTE: Incident-only EERAs are incident specific and cannot be reassigned to another incident.

7.0 Mobilization of Contracted Resources

Initial Attack

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The following guidelines are applicable for initial attack (IA) occurring on Federal Lands (USFS & BLM) or any land under agreement and protected by these federal agencies, and for cooperating agencies using contracted resources under agreement with the USFS and BLM.

During IA, dispatchers may utilize the concept of closest forces. Contracted resources may or may not be ordered depending on incident needs. Host Dispatch Centers may use neighborhood/border agreements for agency and agency (Federal, state, or local) cooperator resources, Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs), Source Lists, and incident only EERAs to meet IA needs.

Any incident specific needs will be clearly outlined in special needs. Examples: requests for additional self-sufficiency over the first 24 hours, health and safety requirements, double shifted, will take sooner, etc.

If a DPL or a Source List is used for IA, the dispatcher may order the closest contracted resource to the incident to meet immediate needs. However, whenever possible based on the date and time needed, the established DPL ranking should be followed. Incident-only EERAs should be requested only if all other contracted resources cannot meet the incident's needs.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or IROC).

Additional information on procedures is located under the Dispatch Priority section of this guide, and under the Forest Service solicitation language found within the agreement in Section D.6.1, Dispatch Priority.

Transition from Initial Attack to Extended Attack

If the incident transitions from IA to extended attack, incident only EERAs for contracted resources utilized on the incident may or may not be replaced with contracted resources from the DPL based on the decision by the Incident Commander (IC) to meet specific incident objectives or operational needs. However, if additional contracted resources are requested by the IC, the DPL will be used.

Extended Attack

The following guidelines are applicable for extended attack/large fire support incidents occurring on Federal Lands (USFS & BLM) or any lands under agreement and protected by these federal agencies, and for cooperating agencies using contracted resources under agreement with the USFS and BLM.

The Host Dispatch Center must exhaust all available resources on their DPL (in accordance with this guide) prior to placing requests for contracted resources outside of their dispatch center to neighboring dispatch centers or the GACC. Based on date/time needed, the Host Dispatch Center may need to follow GACC guidance or direction, if applicable, for deviating from utilizing VIPR resources.

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Any incident specific needs will be clearly outlined in special needs. Examples: requests for additional self-sufficiency past the first 24 hours, health and safety requirements, double shifted, will take sooner, etc.

Orders for contracted resources will be placed with the first available Contractor identified on the Host Dispatch Center's DPL unless:

- 1) Contractor is unavailable
- 2) Contractor cannot be reached
- 3) Contractor's resource is not at location identified per agreement
- 4) Contractor is unable to meet the date and time needed
- 5) Contractor cannot provide requested resources

IROC has drop down selections to be utilized for reasons to bypass a resource.

If the contractor contacted cannot meet the above requirements, then the dispatcher may proceed with contacting the next available Contractor identified on the Host Dispatch Center's DPL.

When receiving a call from their Host Dispatch Center, the Contractor shall confirm:

- 1) Contractor's resource is at location identified per agreement
- 2) Contractor can meet the date and time needed
- 3) Contractor can provide requested resources in accordance with the agreement (including special needs)

If the agreed upon date and time is different than what the resource order states, the dispatch center that created the request should edit the resource order to reflect the new date and time needed. NOTE: If any of the special needs or date and time needed change, review the call down and consider starting from the beginning to give all vendors equal opportunity to accept the assignment.

The Contractor shall check in with the incident at the date and time agreed upon when dispatched with the appropriate resource ordered and identified on the resource order.

Substitution (swapping) of resources on an I-BPA by the contractor is not allowed.

Dispatchers will document all actions and contacts in the appropriate system of record (CAD or IROC).

Prior to departing for the incident, the Contractor shall provide the Host Dispatch Center a manifest or the complete name of each person dispatched with the contracted resource, and the Estimated Time of Departure (ETD) and Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) from point of dispatch to incident reporting location.

Host Dispatch Centers may use a FAX or email to provide a hard copy of the resource order to the Contractor prior to their departure to the incident. The Contractor shall furnish a copy of the agreement, resource order and request information upon arrival and check in at the incident.

8.0 Availability of I-BPA Resources

The Contractor is required to ensure their status in the IROC system is accurate at all times (available/unavailable). Contractors can do this most efficiently through the Vendor Status capabilities in IROC (<https://famit.nwcg.gov/node/2886>.) Acceptable forms of communication to the dispatch center are outlined in the agreement. If the Government becomes aware that a contractor is unavailable but has not updated IROC then the Host Dispatch Center, with concurrence of the vendor, has authority to change the Contractors status to unavailable with documentation in IROC in the documentation portion of the resource item.

NOTE: If a dispatch center feels that vendor status is not representative of the vendor's status and needs to be changed for accuracy and cannot get concurrence with the vendor, the dispatch center should communicate with the vendors contracting officer and develop a solution.

Contractors are considered unavailable if they have already accepted an assignment, if their equipment or operator are not able to accept assignments, and at the discretion of the Contractor.

When contracted resources display an unavailable status, the resources will not be eligible for dispatch under these guidelines.

Note: Vendor Status capability is available only to contracted resources populated via the VIPR to IROC interface as an inventory resource item and if available through the Host Dispatch Center. Refer to Resource Items, Section 5 of this guide for a list of contracted resources identified as resource items.

Contracted resources cannot be held in reserve as a contingency force in a non-pay status when that resource is available.

9.0 Reassignment of I-BPA Resources

Reassigned from Incident to Incident

Based on resource availability and incident needs a contractor may be reassigned from one incident to another.

Released to Host Dispatch Center

Contractors shall not seek out reassignments once released from the incident to the Contractor's Host Dispatch Center. Any new resource order must originate from the Contractor's Host Dispatch Center identified in their agreement.

10.0 Demobilization of Contracted Resources

The Incident Commander (IC) will determine the priority of demobilization. When demobilizing contracted equipment, Contractors with agreements awarded as a result of competitive solicitations, shall be given priority to remain on the incident over equipment with incident only EERAs, unless the IC determines it necessary to deviate based on a specific incident need or objective.

Incident-only EERAs are for the duration of the incident only and will terminate at the end of the incident.

11.0 Cancellation of Contracted Resources

If the resource order is cancelled after the resource order has been confirmed, filled, and the resource is in route to the incident, the resource is considered mobilized. Payment will be made in accordance with the agreement by the incident agency as found on the resource order.

12.0 IROC Ordering/Filling Procedures for Contracted Resources

When ordering and filling requests with contracted resources, consider incident needs, location of the incident, and the requested date/time needed. I-BPA resources, if allowed in the agreement, have requestable attributes. Examples: Tenders all-wheel drive, dozer with grapple, excavator self-leveling, etc. Determine the type of resource needed by taking into consideration narrow, steep, mountainous roads. The incident/Ordering Manager is responsible for providing dispatch with the appropriate and sufficient incident resource needs. Dispatchers are not responsible for making tactical decisions for the incident. The VIPR IBPA Resource Typing and Attributes Table was created to assist ordering personnel and dispatchers in equipment typing and attribute information. This can be found on the NICC website under reference materials. *For more detailed equipment information, refer to the I-BPA language in the agreement.* Once this information is identified and the order is placed in IROC, consult the appropriate DPL or Source List.

When ordering and filling requests with contracted resources, follow the national guidelines outlined in the Interagency Standards for Resource Ordering Guide (ISROG), applicable mobilization guides, and the Interagency Resource Ordering System (IROC) Users Guide.

NOTE: Typing information for resources have been identified in agency(s) solicitations. Although certain resource typing has been identified in IROC, some resources may not be identified by type as identified in the agency(s) solicitation/agreement. When applicable, type of resource should be specified in “special needs” of the request on the resource order form.

Additional Tools and Information

IBPA National Contracting Catalog Guide