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Sprint, Integrators Itching for Orders

Sprint Communications isn't the only one dialing for dollars now that the telco has won the first part of the General Services Administration's multibillion-dollar FTS 2001 contract. Eight systems integrators are champing at the bit to help agencies transition from the old long distance and data network contract to the newer contract, which has more flexibility, a wider range of capabilities and more complex billing functions, according to GSA.

To help agencies take advantage of the new contract, GSA awarded the Technical Management and Support Services (TMS) contract last year to TRW, Boeing, Booz-Allen & Hamilton, DynCorp, Science Applications International Corp., Seta, Sherikon and Unisys. Industry officials expect the first task orders for TMS to be issued by February. The TMS contract could be worth \$3 billion over five years.

"We have been looking at transition services as a way to build relationships with more agencies," said Robert Cann, group senior vice president of customer solutions and services for SAIC.

John Moliere, vice president of telecommunications integration for systems integrator Sherikon of Chantilly, Va., noted that TMS contractors must develop an in-depth knowledge of the customer that can translate into more work with the agencies. "This can be a giant opportunity for us," he said.

The opportunity isn't over for Sprint, either. The telco beat out AT&T and MCI WorldCom last month for the first of the two FTS 2001 contracts, and it is bidding on the second contract as well. The latter is set for award by the end of this month. Both contracts have a minimum value of \$750 million, but GSA estimates they will be worth \$5 billion over eight years.

The FTS 2000 contract allotted Sprint 24 percent of the government's long distance business; AT&T got the rest.

"FTS 2001 is going to be more of a free market contract," said James Payne, assistant vice president of Sprint's Government Systems Division.