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REPORT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

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74-0002



Need To Improve Management And Operations Of Regional Printing Procurement Offices

B-114829

Government Printing Office

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES

~~904700~~

090447

FEB. 20, 1974



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-114829

The Honorable Wayne L. Hays, Chairman
Joint Committee on Printing
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On January 5, 1973, you asked us to review the operations of the Regional Printing Procurement Offices to determine how well they are serving Government agencies' printing needs. This report responds to your request.

We did not obtain written comments because of the close liaison with your staff and with officials of the Government Printing Office. However, we did discuss our findings and recommendations with your staff and with the Public Printer.

We are sending copies of this report to the Public Printer. We will not distribute this report further unless you agree or publicly announce its contents. Please note that this report contains recommendations to the Public Printer. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Re-organization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions he has taken on our recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations, not later than 60 days after the date of the report, and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report. When we obtain your agreement to release the report, we will send copies to the four committees to notify them of our recommendations to the Public Printer.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James B. Stacks".

Comptroller General
of the United States

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D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

The Joint Committee on Printing wanted to know how the Government Printing Office (GPO) was implementing its Federal Printing Procurement Program.

Because the Committee was particularly interested in how well GPO's Regional Printing Procurement Offices (RPPOs) were procuring commercial printing for Federal agencies, GAO reviewed RPPO operations.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

During fiscal year 1972, the first full year of program operation, RPPOs procured commercial printing valued at about \$38 million. In fiscal year 1973, the value increased to about \$56 million. (See p. 3.)

The Government incurred additional costs because RPPOs did not always offer printing to the lowest responsive bidders. This occurred because:

1. RPPOs manually evaluate print orders, so the possibility of making errors is greater than if more sophisticated techniques were used.
2. RPPOs often make awards for orders weighing 500 pounds or

more on the basis of their experience instead of determining the lowest responsive bidders.

Improper awards could be reduced if automatic data processing were used to evaluate responsive bids. (See p. 6.)

RPPOs spend inordinate amounts of time in processing low-value contracts. The prices they charged clients are not sufficient to cover the costs incurred in obtaining this printing. GPO should encourage agencies to obtain low-value printing on their own.

In addition, RPPOs have not taken full advantage of GPO's authorization to solicit fewer bids on small orders. (See p. 10.)

Customer agencies have complained about the long delay in receiving bills for printing services. Presently an agency receives the bill about 3 months after the contractor ships the printed material. GPO could substantially reduce costs and speed up the billing process by eliminating unnecessary verifications of contractor's invoices and customers' billings. (See p. 14.)

RPPOs have not fulfilled their responsibility of meeting with agencies to resolve and prevent printing problems. Some RPPOs have

not effectively informed the printing industry about the functions and objectives of the Federal Printing Procurement Program. (See p. 19.)

--Reduce reviews of contractor invoices and customer billings and provide for a sample post-audit of both reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GAO recommends that the Public Printer:

- Accelerate the program for using automatic data processing equipment to analyze all bids, regardless of weight.
- Require RPPOs to use the simplified purchase procedures rather than the normal bid procedures for procurements of \$2,500 or less.
- Analyze the surcharge to determine whether small, medium, and large dollar print orders are charged a proportionate share of costs incurred, and if not, adjust the surcharge rates accordingly.
- Encourage agencies to contract directly for most of their low value printing needs.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The Public Printer generally agrees with the matters discussed in this report. Concerning GAO's recommendations and suggestions the Public Printer has taken action to implement the use of automatic data processing equipment to analyze bids (see p. 19) and he has agreed to continue to study alternative systems which would speed up the billing procedures. He also agreed to consider the other recommendations and suggestions.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE

The present \$150 ceiling on the agencies' procurement authority could be raised to bring it more in line with the procurement practice used by GPO for awards which require only one solicitation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Joint Committee on Printing asked us to review the Government Printing Office's (GPO's) implementation of its Federal Printing Procurement Program. The program's main goal is to reduce the amount of Government-produced printing by obtaining commercial printing.

RPP0 ESTABLISHMENT

A 1967-68 study by the Joint Committee on Printing showed that decentralized printing services and more extensive use of commercial printing were needed. As a result, the Committee authorized GPO to establish Regional Printing Procurement Offices (RPPOs) to procure commercial printing for Federal agencies and to give them technical advice on printing. GPO established a total of 14 RPPOs with 117 employees in all but 2 of the 12 GPO regions. (See map on p. 5.) Federal agencies are required to obtain their printing through these RPPOs.

VOLUME OF BUSINESS

The amount of commercial printing RPPOs handle has been increasing each year. During fiscal year 1972, the first full year of program operations, RPPOs procured about \$38 million worth of commercial printing. In fiscal year 1973, they procured about \$55.8 million worth, of which \$38.3 million was under term contracts. Printing jobs with special features could not be done under term contracts but were done under 18,600 individual bid contracts instead; these amounted to about \$17.5 million.

PROGRAM SUCCESS

Measuring the program's success is difficult because:

1. There is no standard on how much commercial printing should be obtained.
2. We do not know if the yearly increase in commercial printing represents an increase in the total commercial procurement because we could not determine the total dollar value of commercial printing which agencies procured before RPPOs were established.

APPENDIX

Letter dated January 5, 1973, from
the Joint Committee on Printing

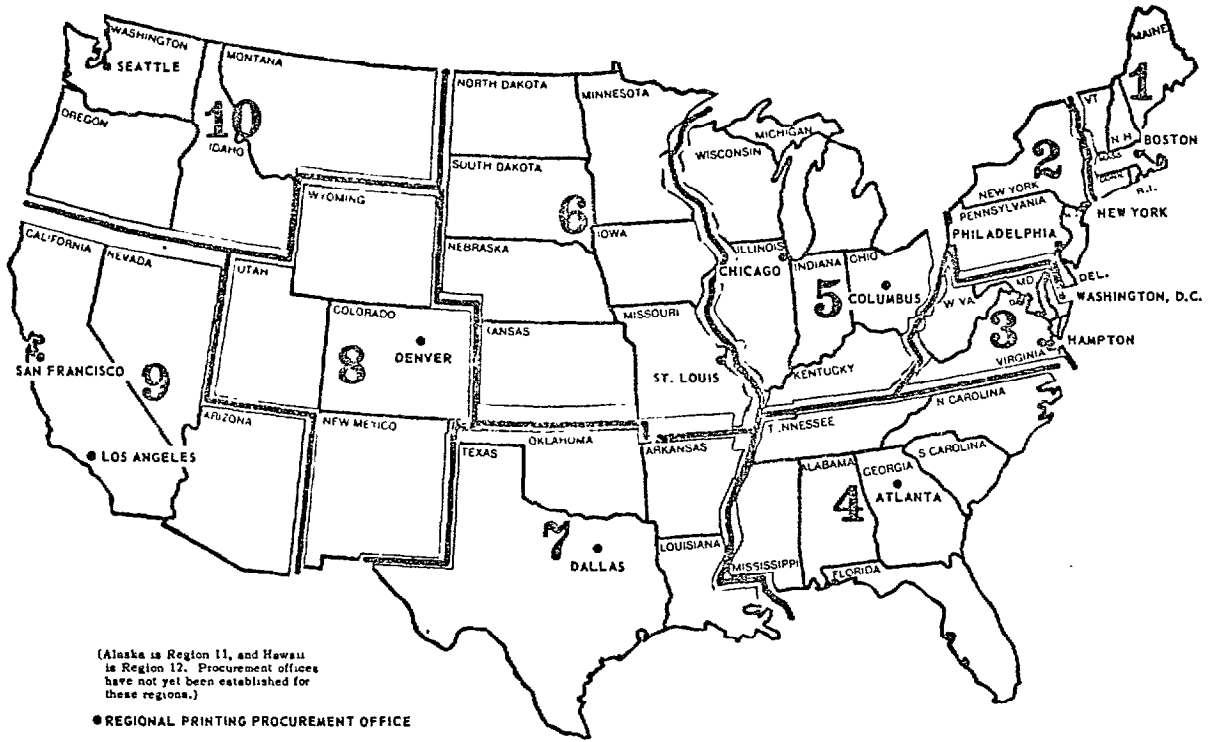
ABBREVIATIONS

- GAO General Accounting Office
- GPO Government Printing Office
- RPPPO Regional Printing Procurement Office

SCOPE OF REVIEW

We made our review at GPO headquarters, Washington, D.C., and at six RPPOs--Atlanta; Chicago; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas; Philadelphia; and San Francisco--to assess their efficiency in obtaining printing for Government agencies. We examined printing orders and other financial records and discussed printing procurement with RPPO officials. We also interviewed commercial printers and customer agencies to obtain their views on RPPO operations.

FEDERAL PRINTING REGIONS AND REGIONAL PRINTING PROCUREMENT OFFICES



CHAPTER 2

CONTRACT AWARDS NEED IMPROVEMENT

The Government incurred additional costs because RPPOs did not always offer printing to the lowest responsive bidders. This occurred because:

1. RPPOs manually evaluate print orders, so the possibility of making errors is greater than if more sophisticated techniques were used.
2. RPPOs often make awards for orders weighing 500 pounds or more on the basis of their experience instead of determining the lowest responsive bidders.

If automatic data processing replaced manual processing, improper awards could be reduced and printing specialists could devote more time to technical duties. In addition, the Government could reduce costs, considering that it incurred about \$51,000 in additional costs on the 125 orders we selected for examination and that over 82,000 orders under term contracts were placed in fiscal year 1972.

AWARDS UNDER GENERAL-USE CONTRACTS

Each of the 14 RPPOs has established 4 general-use contracts for procuring printing and binding of books and pamphlets of various sizes and flatsheet forms. These contracts are open end, indefinite-quantity contracts.

To evaluate one contractor's proposal against another, RPPOs include, in the invitations for bid, estimates of the quantity, number of pages, and certain specialized features which Government agencies expect to purchase within the year. However, RPPOs do not guarantee that these estimates will be the actual requirements. On the basis of these bids, RPPOs determine which printer is the lowest bidder for all line items under the contract (lowest aggregate bidder).

Under these general-use contracts, an order for printing weighing less than 500 pounds is offered first to the lowest bidder, then to the second lowest, and so on until the order is accepted. Since the prices of the aggregate low bidder

may not be the most favorable for any one line item, GPO reserves the right to make an award by directly computing the quoted prices and transportation costs.

PROCEDURES NOT FOLLOWED

The Chicago RPPO did not follow the procedures specified in the general-use contracts. We tested 10 high-value orders weighing over 500 pounds which the RPPO placed during fiscal year 1973 and found it had awarded the orders to the lowest aggregate bidders without directly computing the bidders' prices. After evaluating these prices we found that half of the orders were not awarded to the lowest bidders. Awarding the orders to the lowest bidders could have saved about \$2,200, as shown below.

<u>Contract number</u>	<u>Number of orders selected</u>	<u>Cost based on</u>		<u>Additional cost</u>
		<u>Lowest aggregate bidder</u>	<u>Direct computations</u>	
1500	3	\$ 8,059	\$ 6,443	\$1,616
1501	3	9,699	9,081	618
1502	2	13,278	13,278	-
1503	<u>2</u>	<u>24,635</u>	<u>24,635</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>10</u>	<u>\$55,671</u>	<u>\$53,437</u>	<u>\$2,234</u>

The Chicago RPPO manager said that this RPPO lacked sufficient manpower to evaluate individual orders and that using GPO's weight criterion instead of a cost criterion to decide whether to evaluate costs might be outmoded. The Chicago RPPO manager believed that the weight criterion was based on nationwide contracts where transportation charges varied greatly.

Because RPPOs receive bids from contractors in the same geographic areas, contractors' transportation charges do not vary greatly. Therefore, we believe GPO should consider whether the weight criterion appropriately determines which orders to directly compute in selecting the low bidder.

ERROR IN DETERMINING LOWEST BIDDER

The Atlanta RPP0 incorrectly determined the lowest bidder on one general-use contract. The bidder's total bid was computed at about \$800,000, whereas it should have been more than \$1.3 million. Between June 1, 1972, and April 30, 1973, the RPP0 erroneously awarded at least 70 orders to this bidder, which cost the Government an additional \$16,000.

Atlanta RPP0 records did not contain evidence that orders over 500 pounds had been individually evaluated or that they had been offered to the lowest bidders. After we brought this to the manager's attention, the RPP0 started keeping records of orders individually evaluated.

USING A COMPUTER TO AWARD ORDERS

To determine the feasibility of using a computer to evaluate orders, we developed a program for selecting the lowest bidder. We evaluated 31 orders issued under 1 contract awarded by the Columbus RPP0 and determined that 7, each weighing more than 500 pounds, had not been awarded to the lowest bidders. The following tabulation shows the contract prices of these awards and the computed prices for the lower bids not considered.

<u>Order number</u>	<u>Contract price</u>	<u>Computed price</u>	<u>Additional cost</u>
1	\$129,208.50	\$ 98,181.80	\$31,026.70
2	3,021.60	2,287.80	733.80
3	1,656.00	1,155.00	501.00
4	560.35	380.50	179.85
5	450.25	294.40	155.85
6	312.00	307.20	4.80
7	310.50	306.55	3.95
	<u>\$135,519.20</u>	<u>\$102,913.25</u>	<u>\$32,605.95</u>

According to the printing specialist at this RPP0:

--About 30 minutes is needed to manually evaluate an order on a term contract. The average term contract contains prices for approximately 142 line items.

- On the basis of the current workload, it would be physically impossible to evaluate all orders over 500 pounds because it would take too much time.
- For the most part, personal judgment is used to determine the sequence of bidders for orders over 500 pounds, although orders are occasionally evaluated.

The computer program we developed makes it possible to select the lowest bidder in a matter of minutes. Besides saving time, it decreases the amount of errors causing improper awards.

Using our computer program model, we estimated that an automated system could save around \$90,000 if they were installed at RPPOs. We demonstrated the system to GPO officials, and as a result GPO has installed a computer terminal in one RPPO on a test basis. Once a workable system is devised, GPO hopes to install terminals in other RPPOs.

CONCLUSIONS

Since manual evaluation is time consuming, RPPOs do not individually evaluate orders over 500 pounds. Thus, the proper sequence of bidders is not always identified, and the Government pays more to obtain printing. Automating the evaluation process to identify the lowest responsive bidders on term contracts could improve RPPOs' efficiency and reduce their workload.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Public Printer accelerate the program for using automatic data processing equipment to analyze all bids, regardless of weight.

CHAPTER 3

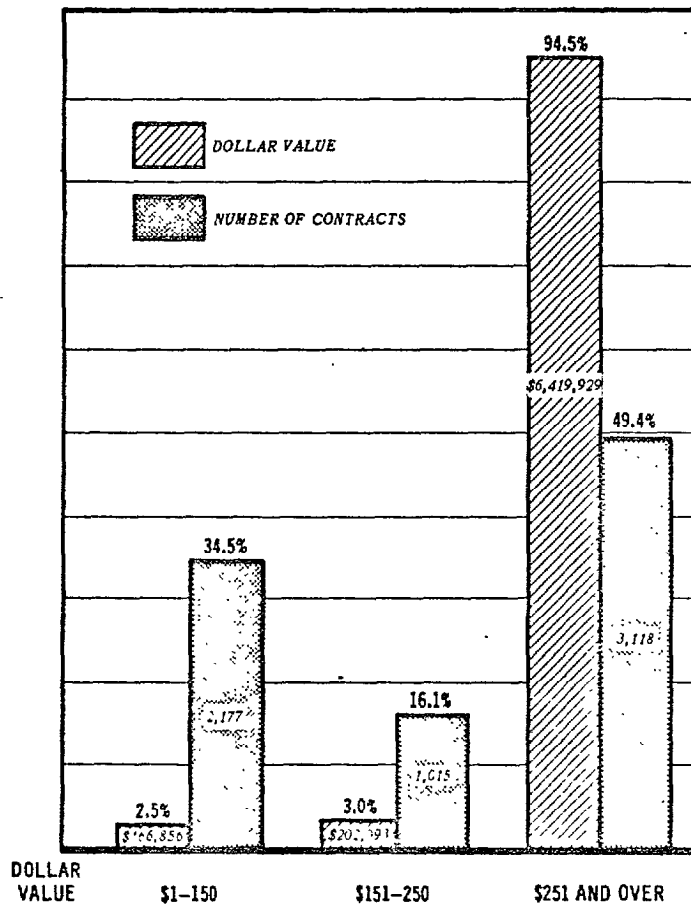
CHANGE IN PROCEDURES NEEDED

RPPOs spend inordinate amounts of time in processing low-value contracts. The surcharge made to customers does not sufficiently cover the costs incurred in obtaining this printing. In addition, RPPOs have not taken full advantage of GPO's authorization to solicit fewer bids on small orders.

VOLUME OF LOW-VALUE CONTRACTS

During the first 9 months of fiscal year 1973, 34.5 percent of the total number of individual bid contracts the six RPPOs awarded were valued at \$150 or less, and 16.1 percent were valued between \$151 and \$250. However, the 51 percent accounted for only \$369,000, or 5-1/2 percent, of the dollar value of all the individual contracts awarded, as shown in the following graph.

INDIVIDUAL BID CONTRACTS



INDIVIDUAL BID PURCHASE PROCEDURES

Under normal bid procedures, written specifications are usually sent to 20 qualified bidders. GPO has simplified purchase procedures for awards of \$2,500 or less and has also issued procedures for small purchases of \$500 or less. Only one solicitation is required for an order of \$250 or less if the price quoted is reasonable. For orders between \$250 and \$2,500, three bidders must be contacted, usually by telephone. GPO's simplified procedures are consistent with the Federal Procurement Regulations and the Armed Services Procurement Regulation.

RPPOs have not taken full advantage of the simplified procedures. For example, during the 9 months ended March 30, 1973, the Dallas RPPO awarded 482 individual bid contracts--each for less than \$500--179 of which it solicited under normal, rather than simplified, bid procedures.

We believe RPPOs should use the simplified procedures when processing bids of \$2,500 and less. The Commission on Government Procurement believes the \$2,500-ceiling should be raised to \$10,000. In a recent report the Commission stated:

"Mandatory procedures for small transactions in excess of \$2,500 require a great deal of extra paperwork, time, and frustration, and discourage many companies from competing. This results in additional costs and longer delivery schedules."

COSTS TO PROCESS LOW-VALUE CONTRACTS NOT RECOVERED

GPO adds a 6-percent surcharge on each order costing \$10,000 or less to defray the administrative cost of procuring printing.

Although we did not determine the amount of time spent in processing individual bid contracts, we made some estimates at the Atlanta RPPO. The Atlanta Manager estimated that this RPPO spends about 41 percent of its time processing individual bid contracts. We estimated that about 16 percent was spent on processing contracts valued at \$150 or less, 7 percent on contracts valued between \$151 and \$250, and 18 percent on contracts valued over \$250.

The Atlanta RPPPO employees' salaries for 9 months amounted to \$105,000. On the basis of the amount of time this RPPPO spent on low-value contracts, it cost \$16,800 to process contracts valued to \$150 and \$7,350 to process contracts valued between \$151 and \$250, or a total of \$24,150. This cost exceeded the \$5,375 surcharge added to customer agencies' billings by \$18,775 and does not include rent, office supplies and equipment, or other nonpayroll costs.

PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY

Committee regulations allow agencies to purchase individual printing, costing \$150 or less, directly from commercial printers if it

- is not of a continuing, repetitive nature;
- is not conducive to establishing open end, indefinite-quantity contracts; and
- cannot be ordered against existing GPO contracts.

Agencies gave various reasons for not fully using this option. One agency said it was more advantageous to use the RPPPO since the 6-percent surcharge was less than the cost for internal processing, and another said its procurement system was not conducive to using the procurement authority.

We believe RPPPOs should encourage agencies to use their procurement authority. Several agencies were using the authority, and some agencies told us that, if their procurement authority were raised to \$250, they could handle the extra work without increasing their staffs.

CONCLUSIONS

RPPPOs award numerous low-value contracts, but the costs of handling these awards exceed the amounts charged the agencies. These costs to the Government might be reduced if RPPPOs solicited fewer bids on small orders, a procedure authorized by GPO and consistent with Government regulations, and if agencies were encouraged to directly procure more of their printing needs under \$150, as authorized by the Joint Committee on Printing. However, we are not proposing that GPO refuse to handle low-value contracts because some agencies may not be able to obtain printing on their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Public Printer:

- Require RPPOs to use simplified purchase procedures rather than the normal bid procedures for procurements of \$2,500 or less.
- Analyze the surcharge to determine whether small, medium, and large dollar print orders are charged a proportionate share of costs incurred, and if not, adjust the surcharge rates accordingly.
- Encourage agencies to contract directly for most of their low-value printing needs.

- - - -

The Public Printer agreed with our finding concerning the use of simplified purchase procedures and indicated that the RPPOs will be encouraged to use these procedures where appropriate. He also said the surcharge was always a matter of concern and that they would study the surcharge situation to determine whether an alternative method is necessary to insure a more equitable charge to the customer.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE

The present \$150 ceiling on agencies' procurement authority could be raised to bring it more in line with the procurement practice used by GPO for awards which require only one solicitation.

CHAPTER 4

BILLING SYSTEM NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Customer agencies have complained that GPO's billing process takes about 3 months. GPO could speed up this process and reduce costs by eliminating duplicate verifications of contractors' invoices and billings to agencies. Although it is not possible to determine precisely how much could be saved by this elimination, we believe the savings would be substantial.

A chart comparing the present process with that proposed is shown on page 18.

PAYING THE CONTRACTOR

The contractor submits its invoice to the RPPO usually about 20 days after the printed material is delivered. The RPPO checks the invoice for proper preparation, evidence of delivery, return of Government property, compliance with the contract provisions, and mathematical accuracy. On the basis of this review, the RPPO certifies the invoice for payment and sends all the documents to GPO headquarters which pays the contractors.

Although the RPPO has certified the contractor's invoice for payment, GPO headquarters reverifies it. Invoice revisions resulting from these reverifications are insignificant. For example, from July 1972 through March 16, 1973, the Dallas RPPO verified for payment invoices amounting to about \$3 million. Some of the contractors' invoices were increased by \$5,222 as a result of the reverification at GPO headquarters; others were decreased by \$4,407--a net increase of only \$815.

Because RPPOs certify the invoices and because the error rate is insignificant, the headquarters reverifications appear unnecessary.

BILLING THE AGENCY

When GPO pays the contractor, it sends one copy of the certified voucher to the Data Systems Service and one to the Production Cost Review Division. Data Systems Service

personnel estimate the amount to bill the agency. This estimate, referred to as a jacket cost summary, includes the amount paid to the contractor, the 6-percent surcharge, and transportation costs.

The Production Cost Review Division reviews the jacket cost summary, to make sure that the contractor's invoice and other charges are correct. Usually only minor adjustments are made in the cost summaries. For example, a GPO study on a sample drawn at the San Francisco RPPD showed that the Production Cost Review Division rarely adjusted Data Systems Service estimates. This study compared these estimates with the amounts billed to the agencies and found they were equal for all but 1 of 27 procurements. The one difference amounted to \$6 for work done before commercial procurement.

Therefore, we believe that the need for Production Cost Review Division reviews is questionable and that agencies could be billed directly from the Data Systems Service summaries.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

GPO was concerned with speeding up the billing process as early as January 1956, when it requested the Comptroller General's opinion on using an estimated cost as a basis for billing an agency. The Comptroller General did not object to using an estimated cost as long as it was based on a bona fide attempt to determine the actual cost. (B-126562, Mar. 13, 1956).

GPO's Committee for Simplification of Pricing and Billing Procedures, Commercially Procured Printing, examined the billing system in 1959 and determined that it would be more effective if new procedures were established to speed up the processing.

The National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, evaluated and surveyed paperwork practices in GPO. Its April 1972 report stated:

"Reviews. In addition to generating this huge volume of paperwork, the practice of

individual job costing has resulted in inordinate delays in billing agencies and in subsequent collections. After cost summaries have been developed by the computer, they are minutely reviewed by the Production Cost Review Division of Financial Management Service. Customer agencies are not billed until this review has been accomplished, even in cases where agencies have received firm estimates. * * * The need for a 100% review of all jobs is questionable, especially where firm estimates have been previously computed, and in contracted work, where contractors' vouchers have all been previously audited by the Finance and Accounting Division. Greater reliance should be placed upon developing standard cost factors, and of billing agencies on the basis of estimates developed from these cost factors."

Although various studies identified the problems, GPO has not implemented a system which would speed up billing and eliminate unnecessary duplication. However in July 1972, the then Acting Public Printer issued a memorandum in which he stated, "It has been determined that it would be in the best interest of the Government to effect earlier billings to the agencies." Although there is no plan to implement this action, GPO officials said they are considering several alternatives to solve the problem.

CONCLUSIONS

Delays in billing customer agencies and in collecting payments have been caused by recomputing and reverifying contractors' invoices. Once the contractor's invoice is approved for payment, it should be accepted as a basis for immediately billing the agency.

We are not proposing that headquarters' reverifications be totally eliminated; however, reverifying all invoices is not justified and audit-sampling techniques should be used.

RECOMMENDATIONS

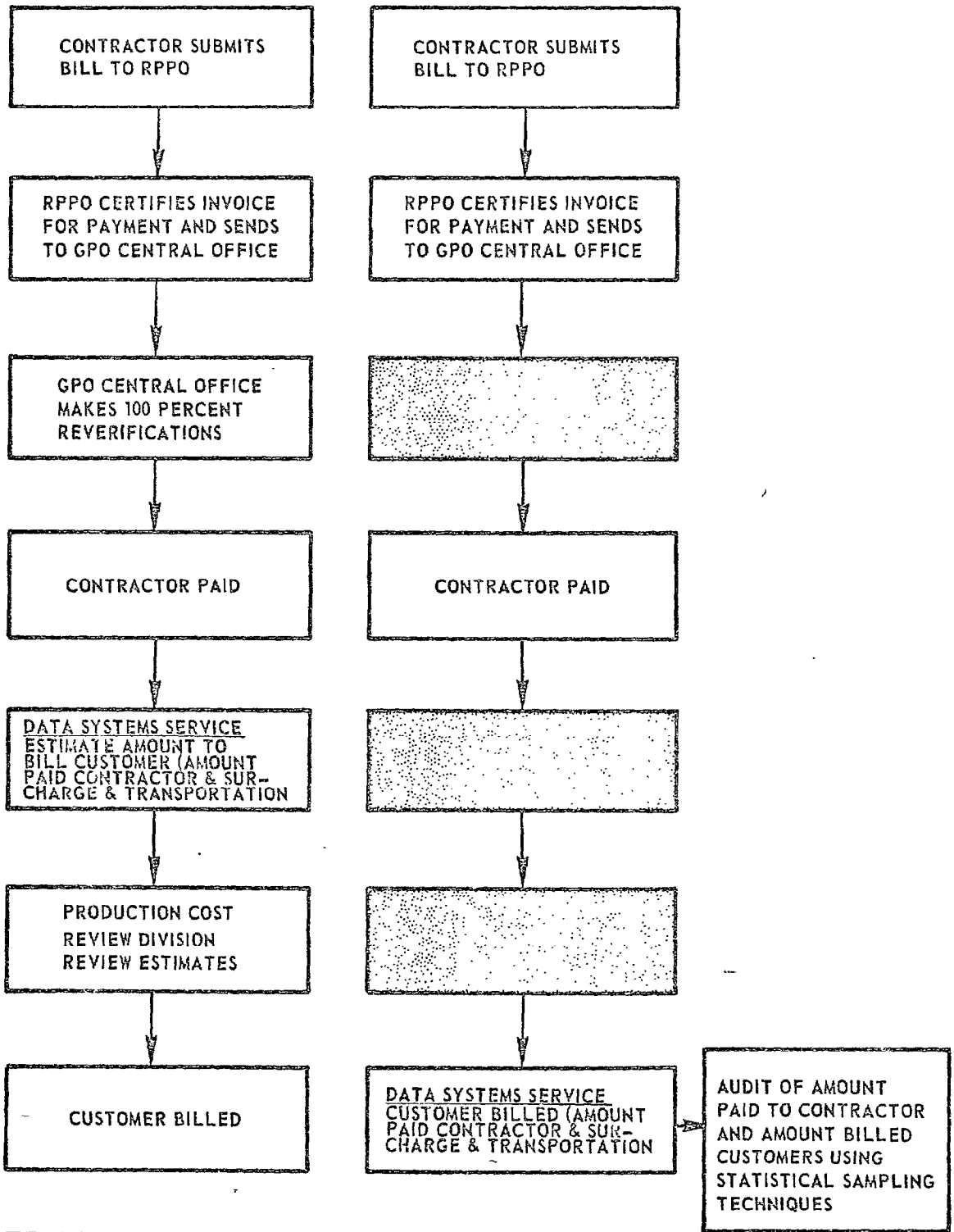
We recommend that the Public Printer reduce reviews of contractor invoices and customer billings and provide for a sample postaudit of both reviews.

- - - -

The Public Printer agreed that the billing process should be improved and has instructed GPO officials to study alternative systems which would speed up the billing procedures.

CURRENT

PROPOSED



 STEP ELIMINATED

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

CHAPTER 5

RPPOs' RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS AND PRINTERS

To adequately provide agencies with technical advice on printing, RPPOs should make commercial printers aware of the Federal Printing Procurement Program and should make themselves aware of the problems printers experience.

RPPOs need to be more aggressive in advising Federal agencies and need to improve their communication with the commercial printing industry.

RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMER AGENCIES

According to the GPO handbook on commercial procurement, RPPOs are supposed to visit agencies to resolve and prevent problems in procuring printing. We found no evidence of such visits. As a result, many agencies were confused about their responsibilities in obtaining printing.

Although agencies are required to obtain printing through RPPOs, many obtain printing elsewhere.

- The Federal Highway Administration obtains printing, such as standard forms, local letterheads, and franked envelopes, through GSA.
- The Department of Labor's Philadelphia regional office contracts directly with a commercial printer for most of its printing. The Department had not obtained a waiver, although the Committee required one. The RPPO manager believed he could award a contract to fill the Department's requirements, including the short-delivery schedules. A review of seven Department orders totaling \$17,000 established that about \$4,000 could have been saved if these orders had been placed through an RPPO.
- The U.S. Armed Forces Institute obtains most of its printing from the U.S. Navy Publications and Printing Services Office at Great Lakes, Illinois, rather than from the RPPO.

U.S. DOCUMENT A...

Better customer relations between RPPOs and the agencies they serve can be developed by guidelines, in coordination with the Joint Committee on Printing, as to which printing is commercially procurable.

RELATIONS WITH COMMERCIAL PRINTERS

The RPPOs we reviewed had not effectively communicated with the commercial printing industry. Some printers were not even aware of the RPPOs or the Federal Printing Procurement Program. Those that were aware of the program were often reluctant to submit bids on RPPO solicitations.

We asked several printers why they did not respond; they gave the following reasons.

- RPPO specifications are vague, complex, and time consuming to read and comply with.
- Printers who were awarded term contracts in the past had not received as much work as expected.
- Some printers believe that the Government still does most of its work in-house or that only union shops can do RPPO work.
- RPPO orders are generally rush orders which upset the normal routine.
- RPPO orders offer too small a profit to make the work worthwhile, and contract terms are too stringent.

Another problem RPPOs have had with commercial printers concerns the wide variances between the high and low bids on general-use contracts. Some printers said they bid defensively; that is, they bid higher than normally on RPPO contracts to protect themselves from incurring losses. Small printers, especially, find the contracts too technical to adequately estimate their costs, and most printers do not have adequate estimating staffs for bidding on contracts with rigid specifications.

To help encourage more participation in the Federal Printing Procurement Program, we suggest that RPPOs study these problems and work with printing associations and agencies in solving them.

WAYNE L. HAYS, REPRESENTATIVE FROM OHIO, CHAIRMAN
 J. EVERETT JORDAN, SENATOR FROM NORTH CAROLINA, VICE CHAIRMAN
 JOHN BRADENAS, REPRESENTATIVE FROM INDIANA
 SAMUEL L. DEVINE, REPRESENTATIVE FROM OHIO
 JAMES B. ALLEN, SENATOR FROM ALABAMA
 ROBERT P. GRIFFIN, SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN
 JOHN F. HALEY, STAFF DIRECTOR

Congress of the United States
 Joint Committee on Printing

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 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510

January 5, 1973

Hon. Elmer B. Staats
 Comptroller General of the United States
 General Accounting Office
 Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir:

A copy of your letter (dated December 14, 1972) to Honorable Harry J. Humphrey, Acting Public Printer, was recently furnished to the Joint Committee on Printing for its information. The letter concerned a survey of printing activities in the Federal Government.


Subsequent to this communication, my Staff Director and his associates met on January 5, 1973 with Messrs. Smarrelli and Grosshans, of your office, to develop an understanding of the purpose of the subject surveys. Due to the clear statutory responsibility of the Joint Committee in regard to Federal printing matters involving procurement and production, we believe that any survey of such activities should be coordinated with this committee.

As a result of that meeting, it was agreed that any survey and detailed review by the General Accounting Office, at this time, should consist only of the 14 regional Government Printing Office Regional Printing Procurement Offices. The primary interest of the Joint Committee in an objective implementation of the Federal Printing Procurement Program, is the GPO achievement of full service to its customer agencies, in accordance with the criteria agreed upon by your representatives at our meeting.

It was further determined that a current survey of the various agency field printing plants would be entirely premature and should not be contemplated until the completion of a detailed review of the total Government printing procurement.

Mr. Haley will schedule necessary arrangements for consultation with GAO representatives when informed of the near completion of this project.

Yours very sincerely,


 WAYNE L. HAYS
 Chairman