

Frequently Asked Questions About the Global Address List (GAL) Project

How many Commonwealth employees will be included in the expanded global address list (GAL)? When will expansion of the GAL be complete?

Ultimately, the global address list (GAL) will include approximately 67,000 employees from 50+ executive branch agencies across the state. The expansion is scheduled to be complete by mid 2007. Until then, the global address list available to you will continue to grow as individual agencies are added.

Will the expansion of the global address list change the way I send e-mail to others within my agency?

The expansion of the global address list will not change the way you send e-mail to others within your agency. The steps you perform to create, address, and send an e-mail message will remain exactly the same as they are today. What will change, is the number of names available to you in addressing an e-mail message. The expanded GAL will include many more names than the list you use today. This expansion will not change the way you search for or select names when addressing an e-mail message, though it will offer you many more names to choose from and improve your capability to reach employees across the Commonwealth.

When I select names from the GAL now, I can see each person's phone number, office location, and agency name. Will I be able to see this information for all new employees added to the GAL?

At minimum, you will see each person's name, their agency name in parentheses, and their e-mail address. People's names will display in the same format they do today—that is, if you currently see last name then first name (e.g., "Smith John") you will continue to see names in this format. For some people, you will see additional information, such as phone number and office location. The variation in information displayed for each person is due to differing standards across agencies—in creating the expanded GAL, we take each agency's existing address list, synchronize it with those of other agencies, and display the composite information. If an agency includes fields such as phone number and office location in its existing address list, you will see that information in the GAL; if an agency does not include these fields in its address list today, you will not see the information in the GAL. Eventually, there will be a standard set of information displayed for each person, but the initial GAL will have some variation.

How will duplicate names be handled? In other words, if there are two people named John Smith on the GAL, how will I distinguish between them?

When you view or search for names on the GAL, you will see each person's name and their agency name in parentheses. So to distinguish two people with the same name from different agencies, you can use the agency name. For two people with the same name within an agency, the information used to distinguish one from the other will be consistent with that used today. For example, if an agency has two people named John Smith, and the agency currently uses a middle initial to distinguish one John Smith from the other, the middle initial will appear on the expanded GAL.

How will distribution lists be handled?

Distribution lists will not be affected by the GAL expansion. You will continue to see your agency's distribution lists on the GAL, but you will not see those for other agencies. For employees who use or maintain distribution lists, you can continue to follow your agency's existing procedures. Agencies will continue to create, view, modify and update distribution lists in the same way they do today. The same is true for calendars, contact lists, and task lists—these tools will not be affected by the GAL expansion.

Will people who serve the Commonwealth in an undercover capacity be included on the GAL? What about those who are exempt from the state directory other reasons?

Employees who are not included on their agency's global address list today, will not be included on the expanded GAL. Other exemptions from the GAL will be handled on an agency-by-agency basis. VITA will work with your Agency IT Resources (AITRs) or their delegates to ensure that special needs to safeguard employee identity are addressed.

Will other address lists be available, in addition to the global address list? In other words, will I be able to select names from an agency-specific list, as opposed to using the expanded GAL?

In addition to using the expanded GAL to search for and select names when addressing an e-mail message, you will have the option to use a local agency view, provided that your e-mail system supports this capability (see note below). The local agency view of the address list includes only the people within a particular agency. To use this view on a regular basis, as opposed to using the expanded GAL, you can set the local view as your default. Instructions on how to set the local view as your default will be provided in follow-up communications, as they are specific to each agency's e-mail system.

Note: If you currently use the Microsoft Exchange system, you will have the capability to use a local agency view of the address list. If you use another e-mail system, you may or may not have this capability immediately depending on your specific system configuration. If you do not have this capability immediately, you will have when your e-mail environment is transformed to meet the Exchange standard.

