

# Guide to Doing Business with the Federal Government

SBA Boise District Office <http://www.sba.gov/id> | Idaho APEX Accelerator <https://www.idahoapexaccelerator.com/>

*Working with the Federal Government can, at times, seem like a difficult task. However, with a little patience, persistence and perseverance your efforts will be rewarded in the long run. To assist you, this step-by-step process will enhance your potential for success.*

## 1 Identify Your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code.

Identify the applicable codes for your primary and secondary product(s) and/or service(s).

- North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code

Federal procurement opportunities (bids & RFPs) contain at least one NAICS code. For bidding or submitting proposals and to be eligible for award, you must have an active SAM registration which lists your applicable NAICS code(s). SAM registration requires you to identify a minimum of one primary NAICS code representing your primary revenue source and you may also select secondary codes you have the capability to perform work in. You may search for your applicable NAICS code(s) at the Census Bureau's site: <https://www.census.gov/naics/>

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## 2 Register in System for Award Management (SAM) Database

Idaho APEX Accelerator can provide detailed assistance with SAM. <https://idahoapexaccelerator.com>

**You must be registered in SAM:**

- Bid on a federal solicitation
- to be awarded a federal contract
- receive payment by the Government.

System for Award Management (SAM) <http://sam.gov>; this process is **FREE**.

- Download the "Entity Registration Checklist" and view the "Video: Entity Registration" to assist you.
- Select "Get Started" (Contact Idaho APEX Accelerator for detailed instructions and guidance)
- Approach and maintain your SAM profile as you would a resume, revising and updating it regularly to ensure that it describes your firm and its capabilities professionally and accurately.
- A yearly update of your SAM registration, before the expiration date, is required to remain active.

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## 3 Small Business Search (SBS) Database & your SBA Profile.

To determine if your business is small in accordance with SBA size standards, which is identified during the SAM registration process, an SBA profile will be created for your business automatically once your SAM registration is in an active status.

In your SBA profile you will list items such as your Construction and Service Bonding Levels, Quality Assurance Standards, Capabilities Narrative, Special Equipment/Material, Past Performance, Keywords, etc.

- Your profile information will be accessible by federal contracting officers and other buyers seeking small businesses to fulfill their needs. Contracting officers/buyers search for small business via the SBA-Small Business Search (SBS). Buyers use SBS as part of their market research efforts to identify small business sources for contracting opportunities, making an SBS profile an important aspect of your success. Keywords are an optional field which you must complete and are critical to buyers finding your profile.
- Only SBA can enter information to a firm's federal certification as an 8(a), HUBZone, WOSB/EDWOB or SDVOSB program participant.

- The SBA will populate fields indicating a firm as small based on your number of employees and/or revenue averaged over five years.

**Important:** Supplemental/optional fields in your profile **must be completed by you**. These fields include keywords, past performance, capabilities narrative, and linking your Capability Statement to your profile. More details give you a stronger marketing presence.

- Your **SBS/SBA Supplemental Pages Profile** can be updated and accessed through [SBA Small Business Search](#). Your Idaho APEX Accelerator Business Consultant can assist with this process as needed.
- Step 1: Sign in – Log in as a business owner.
- Step 2: Enter your email address. A) If you have a MySBA Loan Portal or Veteran Certifications account, use that existing email and password. B) If you are new to MySBA, you must sign up to create a new account. Simply, click the sign-up link.



#### Determine if your firm qualifies for SBA’s Certification Programs.

The SBA has four contract-related certification programs that can be accessed through an on-line application process at [MySBA Certifications](#).

- 8(a) Business Development (<http://www.sba.gov/8abd>)
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) (<http://www.sba.gov/hubzone>)
- Economically Disadvantaged/Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program (WOSB/EDWOSB) (<http://www.sba.gov/wosb>)
- Veteran Small Business Certification Program for Veteran Owned Small Business and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB/SDVOSB) ([VetCert](#))

Formal certifications by small business concerns are **not** required to bid on federal contracts; they do allow you to bid on set-aside contract opportunities that have been identified only for competition amongst small business in the identified certification group as outlined in the solicitation. During SAM registration the SAM system determines if you are a small business under SBA standards by using your NAICS code and your entered number of employees and revenue, averaged over five years.



#### Identify Federal procurement opportunities.

Identify agencies and buying offices that purchase your products and services and contact them directly to learn about upcoming procurements (i.e., agency forecasts) posted on websites or electronic bulletin boards.

- Sam.gov is the official source for public access to notices of federal contracting actions over \$25,000.
- Sign-up for automatic e-mail notifications of open and upcoming contract actions. <https://www.sam.gov>

**Idaho APEX Bid Match:** Subscription service delivers daily emails listing curated bid matches sourced from over 3,200 state, local and federal bid boards worldwide (including SAM), saving you hours of time searching! Plus, with a subscription, you get access to Govology, an online database with hundreds of training topics relevant to finding success in government contracting! (\$600 value). Gain a competitive edge with a single subscription. \*The number of potential bids can vary depending on the search criteria, and results are not guaranteed.

<https://idahoapexaccelerator.com>

- Enroll and pay \$99 annual Fee.
- Work with a consultant to determine Keywords / NAICS Codes/ Location(s) for search criteria.
- Get potential Bid Matches in your email every day (up to 5 email addresses).

**Explore Subcontracting Opportunities:** Subcontracting can be an excellent entry into contracting.

**Accept Credit Cards:** More than 250,000 Federal employees are using GSA SmartPay cards. As a vendor, you can maximize your ability to capture government sales by accepting credit cards (Visa, MasterCard and Voyager). If you already accept these cards, you have no additional work to do. If you do not accept these cards, contact a bank to establish a merchant account. *Your business **must** still be registered in Sam.gov.*

### Investigate other Federal and State Programs.

- SBA Mentor Protégé Program: [SBA Mentor-Protégé program | U.S. Small Business Administration](#)
- Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program. The SBIR and STTR programs fund a diverse portfolio of startups and small businesses across technology areas and markets to stimulate technological innovation, meet Federal research and development (R&D) needs, and increase commercialization to transition R&D into impact. [SBIR.gov](#)
- State and local government procurement opportunities:
  - Idaho State Purchasing (<http://adm.idaho.gov/>)
  - Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) - The Department of Transportation certifies minority and women businesses that have a business that can support transportation related services.
    - Contact Ronnie Winks, DBE Program Coordinator at (208) 334-8567  
Email: [Ronnie.Winks@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:Ronnie.Winks@itd.idaho.gov) or for more information visit [DBE Program](#).

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6

### Investigate Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Contracts.

The General Services Administration (GSA) manages Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) contracts; also known as Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts. Under MAS/FSS, contracts are awarded to multiple companies supplying comparable products and services at pre-negotiated prices, terms and conditions. Once GSA awards the contracts, federal contracting officers and other authorized users can order directly from the contractor. <https://www.gsa.gov/>

- GSA MAS/FSS: **eBuy**, GSA's request-for-quote system has been updated to facilitate set-asides. <https://www.gsa.gov/buy-through-us/purchasing-programs/multiple-award-schedule>
- Acquisition Gateway Forecast Tool: (<https://www.acquisitiongateway.gov/forecast>)

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7

### Seek additional assistance as needed in the Federal Marketplace.

There are several valuable resources available to provide you with assistance in the Federal marketplace.

#### FEDERAL RESOURCES:

**APEX Accelerators** located in most states. APEX Accelerators, funded by the Department of Defense, provide “hands-on” technical contracting and marketing assistance to small businesses wishing to do business with any federal agency. APEX provides training and counseling on marketing, financial and contracting issues at minimal or no cost. (<https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/>) Register with your Idaho APEX Accelerator at (208) 615-2246 or online at <https://idahoapexaccelerator.com>.

- **SBA Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs) and Commercial Marketing Representatives (CMRs).** SBA has a nationwide cadre of procurement professionals who are charged with assisting small businesses and acting as their advocates at both the prime and subcontracting levels. To identify the PCR or CMR located nearest to you, visit: <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/counseling-help>.
  - PCRs work directly with federal agency buying offices.
  - CMRs work with small firms interested in identifying subcontracting opportunities with large businesses that have been awarded a federal contract.

- **Small Business Specialists** are located at each Federal buying office and assist in how to market to their specific agency. A complete listing of Small Business Specialists can be obtained from each agency's website. Links to the homepages of every military activity/agency can be found on the DOD website at <http://www.defnse.gov/>. Links to Agency Procurement Forecasts and other program information are available on their individual websites.
- **Directors of Federal Agency Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)/Directors of the Office of Small Business Programs** are responsible for ensuring that small businesses are afforded an equitable opportunity to compete for prime contracting opportunities.
- **Veterans Business Outreach Center Program (VBOC)** is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and mentoring, and referrals for eligible veterans owning or considering starting a small business. [VBOC Assistance](#)

#### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:**

- **Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** ([www.idahosbdc.org/](http://www.idahosbdc.org/)) (<https://oregonsbdc.org/>) offer low to no cost training and no-cost one-on-one counseling services to small businesses and prospective entrepreneurs. SBDCs offer training programs on a variety of business topics, including marketing, funding, regulatory compliance and international trade.
- **SCORE - Counselors to America's Small Business (SCORE)** <https://www.score.org/treasurevalley> – is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and the formation, growth and success of small businesses. SCORE provides free mentoring to both start-up and existing small businesses as well as educational workshops.

#### **Know the Rules for Government Contracting.**

- SBA Office of Government Contracting: <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-guide>
- Title 13 of the Code of Federal Regulations (Part 125): <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-13/chapter-I/part-125>
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR): <https://acquisition.gov/far/index.html>
- Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS): <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap>
- U.S. Department of Labor: <http://www.wdol.gov/>



#### **Market, Market, Market!**

Three most important words to be successful in the Federal procurement arena are **Market, Market, Market!**

After you have identified your customers, researched their requirements, and familiarized yourself with the government's procurement regulations and strategies, it is time to market your product or service. Good luck and while you are ultimately responsible for your own success – you are not alone!

- **Create a Capabilities Statement:** Present your capabilities directly to those buying offices that purchase your products or services. Your Idaho APEX Accelerator can assist you: <https://www.idahoapexaccelerator.com/>
- **USA Spending:** USAspending is the official open data source of federal spending information, including information about federal awards such as contracts, grants, and loans. <https://www.usaspending.gov/>
- **Federal Agency Forecasts:** Research the buying offices that purchase your products or services directly to learn about upcoming procurements (i.e., forecasts) posted on websites or electronic bulletin boards. Your Idaho APEX Accelerator can assist you: <https://www.idahoapexaccelerator.com/>