

# Business Opportunities with the Federal Government

## Business Opportunities with the Federal Government

Information gateway, prepared by the Congressional Research Service for Members of Congress, provides guidance and online procurement procedures for doing business with the federal government. [March 2007]

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Information and Training

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### Learning

how to sell successfully to the U.S. government, the world's largest buyer of goods and services, can be daunting. Most of the process is conducted online: using a computer is essential. Here are suggested approaches:

- Update your company's business plan, highlighting special

products, skills and expertise that might be of interest to government agencies.

- Review your company's marketing strategy and goals.

- Learn federal procurement processes and terms.

- Government Contracting (SBA)

Resources to help you sell your products and services to the Federal government.

- Small Business Administration (SBA)

Provides a step-by-step guide for selling to the government, with tips on bidding, marketing, and competing for government contracts, and links to free online courses.

- General Services Administration (GSA)

As the government's chief acquisitions agency, GSA spends billions of dollars annually on products and services offered to all federal agencies.

- Doing Business with GSA

Covers government procedures, marketing strategies, and bidding procedures for contracts. Also lists important contacts, such as the 11 GSA regional centers and technical advisors for small businesses.

- Office of Small Business Utilization

Through outreach activities in regional offices, promotes increased access to GSA's nationwide procurement opportunities for small, minority, veteran, HUBZone, and women business owners.

- How to Sell to the Government

Describes how GSA buys from small and large businesses, including an explanation of how GSA advertises business opportunities locally and nationally, and lists a calendar of local workshops for businesses wanting to sell to the government.

- GSA Training Programs

Online and onsite courses, including How to Be a Contractor; Using GSA Schedule.

- Contact offices in your state or region

- Speak with procurement specialists or contracting officers about federal government buying procedures.

- Ask questions about application procedures, technical requirements, and marketing suggestions.

- Attend procurement programs, which provide opportunities for business people to meet directly with government officials and to learn from other companies involved in federal contracting.

- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)

Located in every state, these centers advise and train businesses in financial matters, including certification procedures for small and minority businesses. They are an excellent first stop for any business, especially those with little or no previous experience in dealing with federal procurement.

- Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC)

Although the main focus is providing technical assistance on selling to the military, the centers cover marketing to all government agencies through counseling, training, and procurement programs.

- GSA Regional offices

The contracting officers are familiar with the procurement needs of the federal facilities located in their region.

## Registration Requirements

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Registration is required to compete for federal government procurement and contracts. The federal government's Business Partner Network (BPN) is the single source for vendor data for the Federal Government.

- Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, a unique 9-digit identification number for each physical location of a business.

- Register with the government's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. For help, use Central Contractor Registration Handbook.

- Complete an Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA).

#### Review Small

Disadvantaged Business Certification and Eligibility (SDB) If your business is classified as small or disadvantaged, this certification may lead to more federal procurement opportunities.

Additional statistical codes,  
required for many government forms:

- North American Industrial Classification Code (NAICS) Identify products or services for more than 1,000 industries.

- Federal Supply Classification Groups and Classes (FSC) Classify products and services purchased by the military and many civilian agencies.

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## FedBizOpps (Federal Business Opportunities)

Single point of entry for announcements of federal contract opportunities over \$25,000, both civilian and military agencies.

- Serves both federal agencies as buyers and businesses as vendors.
- For help navigating the website, call toll-free (877) 472-3779; or email [fbo.support@gsa.gov](mailto:fbo.support@gsa.gov).
- Review the Vendors Guide to learn how to search for agency announcements, requests for proposals, classification codes, award categories.
- Vendor Notification Service: sign up for e-mail notification of announcements of particular agencies or for particular products or services.

For continuing business, apply to be a GSA Schedule contractor.

Under the GSA Schedules Program, GSA establishes long-term governmentwide contracts that allow customers to acquire a vast array of supplies and services directly from commercial suppliers. Gives many businesses, small and large, further opportunities for multiple awards.

- Also called Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) and Federal Supply Schedules (FSS).

### - Getting on Schedule

Application and approval process "to get on the Schedule" can take considerable time but may be worth it for future business with government agencies.

### - GSA Schedules Training

Online training and classroom instruction on the GSA Schedules Program, and how to sell to the government and get contract awards.

## Subcontracting Opportunities

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A federal contract may be so large that a single company might have difficulty in providing the products or services required to meet the terms of the contract. A prime contractor may need to use subcontractors to complete contractual obligations.

- SUB-Net (SBA Subcontracting Network)

Identify subcontract opportunities by reviewing the postings of prime contractors.

- Subcontracting Opportunities Directory (SBA)

Identify prime contractors through a listing of contractors, with addresses and phone numbers, by state.

- Subcontracting Directory (GSA)

GSA contractors with subcontracting plans and goals. Companies are listed within each of the eleven GSA regions. For each, gives products and services offered, and the small business contact within the company.

Selling to the Military and Department of Defense

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## Specialized Information on Selling to the Military

Many of the DOD contract announcements and registration requirements for businesses have been incorporated into FedBizOpps (Federal Business Opportunities), with registration at Central Contractor Registration (CCR). However, there are often special requirements for selling to the military. The vast majority of DOD contracts are awarded by DOD field organizations, or specific mission-oriented agencies within an organization.

### - Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP)

DOD provides information, publications, and programs to assist small, disadvantaged, or minority businesses to compete for DOD contracts. This site offers a succinct, practical Guide to DOD Contracting Opportunities.

### - Defense Logistics Agency

Provides links to government websites with information for small businesses wanting to sell to the military. Also there is a link to the listings of local Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, which provide information and counseling to business wanting to sell to the government.