

Step-by-Step Approach to the DoD Marketplace

- 1. Identify your product or service.** It is essential to know the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for your product or service. Most Federal Government product/service listings and procurements are identified by their NAICS and/or Federal Supply Class (FSC) code. You can find the codes relating to your business at this web-site:

<https://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>

- 2. Register your business.**

- a. Obtain a DUNS Number:** This is a business identification number that is used much like a person uses a social security number. If you do not have a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet to obtain one. There is NO CHARGE for assigning a DUNS number and you must have one to actively participate in Federal Procurement Opportunities. Make sure you register as a US Gov't contractor. Visit Dun & Bradstreet at this web-site:

<http://www.dnb.com/>

- b. Register with the System for Awards Management (SAM):** SAM is a Federal Government owned and operated web site that consolidates the capabilities of many contractor reporting tools into one. You MUST be registered in SAM to do business with the Federal Government. You will need your DUNS number to register in SAM. Registering in SAM is FREE, make sure you go to the correct website. The SAM website offers free training and on-line help if you need assistance in registering your business. Visit the SAM website at:

<https://www.sam.gov>

- c. Visit the Small Business Administration (SBA) Website.** Check with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to determine whether your business falls within the established table of small business size standards matched to NAICS industries. Make sure you register with the SBA to ensure Government Agencies can find you when they search for Small Businesses that may be available to fulfill their opportunities. Visit the SBA at this web-site:

<https://www.sba.gov/>

- d. Also at SBA.GOV:** While you are at the SBA website, determine if your business qualifies for one of many special certifications offered by the SBA. These certifications are detailed in the areas of Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB), Women Owned Small Business (WOSB) and HUBZone. The certifications are for companies that are

owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or small businesses that have their principal office in a historically underutilized business zone. When contracting, the Federal Government will sometimes set-aside procurements for offerors under one of these certifications. Visit the SBA website at:

<https://www.sba.gov/>

- 3. Familiarize yourself with the laws and regulations that govern Federal Contracting.** It is very important that you understand what you may be signing your company up for. Federal Contracting is VERY different from performing business in the private sector. Overall, Federal Agencies are guided by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR). Individual Federal Agencies also have supplemental procurement regulations such as the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) and the Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFARS). Review the handout "Government Contracting: The Basics" located under the Useful Links Section of the Small Business Homepage and visit the following web-site for further information and copies of all Regulations:

<http://farsite.hill.af.mil/>

- 4. Search for business opportunities on the FedBizOpps (FBO) web site.** FBO is the single point of entry for all Federal and Military Opportunities over \$25,000. See the additional handout titled "Opportunity Search Tips" under the Useful Links Section of the Small Business Homepage. Visit the FBO website at:

<https://www.fbo.gov>

- 5. Identify your customers within the DoD.** Attend appropriate outreach events in your community and your business concern. Look on FBO.GOV for opportunities that may be of interest to you and contact the person listed in the announcement, they should be able to tell you if there is a Small Business Professional within their organization. Contact that person and set up a meeting or see if they will be at any outreach events in your area.

- 6. Market your firm well.** To visit every DoD buying activity to market your product or service would be impossible, not to mention very frustrating, due to the fact that we all can have different needs. After you have identified your customers, researched their requirements, and familiarized yourself with DoD procurement regulations and strategies, it is time to market your product or service. Present your capabilities directly to the DoD activities that buy your products or services. Realize that, like you, their time is valuable and if the match is a good one, you can provide them with a cost-effective, quality solution to their requirements.

7. Investigate Federal Supply Schedule Contracts. Federal agencies often use Government-wide Contracts (GWACs) and General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Supply Service (FSS) Schedule Contracts to make purchases. These contracts are used to buy commonly used products and services that we need to fulfill our requirements in day to day operations. These opportunities are usually not announced on FBO.GOV. This might be a better solution for your business rather than marketing to each individual Organization. For more information please visit:

<https://www.gsa.gov>

<https://www.gsaadvantage.gov>

8. Explore Sub-Contracting Opportunities. Regardless of your product or service it is important that you do not neglect our very large secondary market, sub-contracting opportunities. Sub-contracting with our large or small business prime contractors is an excellent way to gain helpful experience in Government contracting. In the Useful Links Section of the Small Business Homepage you will find a list of Prime contractors that have had Sub-Contracts with the Government in the past. Many contractors also have webpages where they will list opportunities or information on how to sub-contract with them. Another way to find sub-contracting opportunities is by searching on FBO.GOV. If you find an opportunity that you are interested in just place your name in the "Interested Parties" list within the opportunity listing. NOTE: You must be a registered user and logged into your account to leave your information. When the prime contractor is collecting their information for their bid or searching for subs to complete the work, they may contact you to see if you are interested in working with them on the contract.

9. Seek additional assistance. There are excellent resources available to assist you in navigating the DoD marketplace:

a. Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs). PTACS are located in most States and are partially funded by DoD to provide small business concerns with information on how to do business with the DoD. They are an excellent source of information. They provide training and counseling on marketing, financial, and contracting at minimal or no cost to you. In 2016 PTAC clients were awarded 87,000 contracts worth \$16.5 Billion Dollars! To find your nearest PTAC Office visit:

<http://www.aptac-us.org/>

b. Attend outreach events. Many SBA, PTAC and Federal Contracting offices will hold outreach events throughout the year. Check with your local PTAC, SBA or Small Business Professionals office to find ones that suit your business. Many of these events are free to attend.