

## **Registering Your Business For Government Contracting**

### **DUNS number and NAICS codes**

Businesses interested in doing business with the United States Federal Government in any or all of its forms, including the branches of the military and the various departments and government agencies, will first need to receive a DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet. Dun & Bradstreet can be contacted at phone #800-333-0505 or #610-882-7000 or through their website at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com). They are a business and may initiate their own sales process but please take note you need not purchase anything or agree to anything to receive your DUNS number. The DUNS number is required in order to register in the Central Contractors Registration. It takes about three business days to receive the number. Also required is the NAICS code (North American Industry Classification System) that applies to your business. You can research this at [www.naics.com](http://www.naics.com) and click on the search. You will need to write down the six code digit to any and all services that apply to your business and the various services you may offer.

### **Central Contractors Registration Database**

Registration can then be done online at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). The online process takes almost two hours depending on the speed of your computer and your innate knowledge of your business. Make sure to have as much information about your business, the services you offer, past performances, and contracts you have fulfilled. Even new businesses are encouraged to register. When you receive the message, "You have successfully completed registration" read the information after that and continue on. What follows is the section where you list your contact information and a brief business description that will help market your business. The CCR database *does* allow for updates and you can log back onto their website as your business and contact information change.

Once your business is successfully entered it can be viewed by anyone logging into the website. Many Government agencies and departments log into this database and search by state, region, or NAICS code for the various services they require. Some state and local municipalities use this database for services they need as well. Other businesses also use this website for business matching to combine services or expertise with other registered businesses to help win contracts.

### **Past Performance Review Score**

Some contracts require a Past Performance Review score and the U.S. General Services Administration recommends the private contractor Open Ratings, Inc. They will survey your customers and assign a score to your company according to the replies they receive. This score will be used to compare your past performance with others. Open Ratings, Inc. charges about \$175.00 but check with them for an exact cost. Visit [www.openratings.com](http://www.openratings.com) or call #727-329-1184 or email [reports@openratings.com](mailto:reports@openratings.com) for additional guidance. If you have already registered with the GSA you can request a copy be sent to GSA via email address [it.center@gsa.gov](mailto:it.center@gsa.gov).

### **ORCA: Online Representations & Certifications Application**

Some federal solicitations may require you to have an active ORCA status. ORCA is an online, streamlined process to providing Reqs and Certs (Representations and Certifications.) To get started with this process visit [www.bpn.gov/orca](http://www.bpn.gov/orca).

## **Federal Supply Codes and Product Service Codes**

The General Services Administration and other Federal bidding opportunities will require a Federal supply code or a product service code. You can search online for the required category code at <http://www.outreachsystems.com/resources/tables/pscs/>.

## **Getting Started with General Services Administration (GSA)**

The majority of small businesses who contract with the government contract with the GSA. The GSA constructs, manages, and preserves government buildings. GSA's acquisition solutions offer private sector professional services, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology to government organizations and the military. GSA does allow for online submission of bids but users must obtain an Access Certificate from [www.gsa.gov/eoffer/emod](http://www.gsa.gov/eoffer/emod) and an Electronic Authorization Certificate in order to use the online bid system from [www.gsa.gov/aces](http://www.gsa.gov/aces).

## **Federal Business Opportunities**

To search all open contracts for all government agencies, including the GSA, visit [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov). The "FedBizOpps" website allows commercial vendors (you) to search and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire government. You will need to download the job you are interested in bidding on and then call the contact number for that job to determine if an online submission is available. If not you will need to print and mail the document manually.

You will need to visit the website of every agency you would like to provide your services to and register with them if they allow online submissions. Each agency has their own procurement office and different forms and requirements.

Note: Be familiar with **regulations** before you bid! Find out what the regulations are at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

## **Getting Security Clearance**

Different types of work or services may require a security clearance. There are varying levels of security clearance and as you progress in government contracting you may need to increase your security clearance. Some businesses have complained that in order to be awarded a contract they needed a certain level of security. They were told in order to get that security clearance they would need to be awarded a contract first. A helpful hint to get around this is to first register with the Department of Defense at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/> and specifically ask for a security clearance from them. That way you avoid the backlog waiting list of a procurement officer in another agency. It still may take some time to receive a security rating.

## **Subcontracting**

Numerous opportunities exist for subcontracting. Many larger companies will search the CCR database for companies they would like to subcontract for a specific bid for certain services and this action is called "business matching." Minority-owned and woman-owned businesses are often sought to fulfill certain requirements. Some helpful websites to visit when considering business matching are [http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/basics/GC\\_SUBCONTRACTING.html](http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/basics/GC_SUBCONTRACTING.html) and [http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/doing\\_business/index.htm](http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/doing_business/index.htm).

## **Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)**

A Procurement Specialist can help you navigate your solicitation package (bid) including pricing and requirements, making sure you are registered with the correct databases and agencies, developing a cost accounting system, bonding, interim financing, planning, and preparing for the post-contract audit. To learn more about PTAC or locate a local Procurement Specialist visit <http://www.aptac-us.org/new/>. You can also try the National Institute of Government Purchasing, Inc. at <http://www.nigp.org/eweb/>

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Getting started takes a lot of time and a lot of patience. Learning the rules and regulations for each job and each agency can be a lot. Only you can determine the amount of time you can afford to pursue a Government contract. To find out if contracting with the Government is right for your company visit [http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/basics/GC\\_SELLING\\_TO\\_GOVT.html](http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/owners/basics/GC_SELLING_TO_GOVT.html).

## **More helpful hints**

- If you are interested in doing business with a particular agency or office take the time to visit them and get to know them. Procurement Specialists are under a heavy workload and a lot of pressure. Small Business Procurement Specialists are inundated with calls and contacts from thousands of businesses. Respect their time, set appointments, be on time, and keep those appointments. If you call regarding a contract make your questions very clear and precise. They will respect you and will be more interested in doing business with your company. As your relationship with them grows you may be alerted to their future needs or procurement forecast. (Lingo alert: the government calls upcoming opportunities “procurement forecast.”)
- Your business card should be a mini-resume for your company and should include your name, your personal certifications, your company name, phone, fax, email address, website, your company’s certifications (WBE, etc.) and the back of the card should list all of the NAICS codes for your company. Procurement Specialists can see at a glance what you have to offer and that you are serious about doing business with the Government.
- Be prepared to spend a lot of your time doing this whole process. Some companies spend months registering with the various agencies and working on their bid.
- After you find an opportunity on fedbizopps ([www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)) read up on the regulations before you submit your bid. Fully understanding the regulations beforehand can help you tailor your bid to their needs. [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).
- Consider also tailoring your company description and/or the services you offer to match the bid. Your company may have the capacity to provide many services but too much can actually be a red flag. Choose the most important services you want to *market* and specialize in those. If a need arises for other services you still have the option to say, “We can do that too.”

## **Website Links**

A great website with links to many others is the Acquisition.gov site at [http://acquisition.gov/comp/procurement\\_forecasts/index.html](http://acquisition.gov/comp/procurement_forecasts/index.html) This site enables you to search by agency or opportunity.

### **Looking for military contracts? Check out these websites.**

Defense Procurement & Acquisition <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/>

Army Intelligence and Security Command

<http://www.inscom.army.mil/SmallBiz/DefaultSmBusiness.aspx?text=off&size=12pt>

U.S. Army [www.sellingtoarmy.info](http://www.sellingtoarmy.info)

U.S. Navy contracting links:

[http://www.ih.navy.mil/working\\_with\\_us/procurement/navy\\_contracting\\_links/navy\\_contracting\\_links.asp](http://www.ih.navy.mil/working_with_us/procurement/navy_contracting_links/navy_contracting_links.asp)

U.S. Air force <http://www.selltoairforce.org/>

### **Other Government agencies**

U.S. Department of Justice: <http://www.usdoj.gov/jmd/osdbu/prmdir00.htm>

U.S. Post Office:

<http://www.usps.com/communications/organization/doingbusinesswithus.htm>

Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR): [http://www.unicor.gov/fpi\\_contracting/](http://www.unicor.gov/fpi_contracting/)

U.S. Government Printing Office Contractor Connection: <http://contractorconnect.gpo.gov>

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: <http://www.va.gov/partners/buspart/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.da.usda.gov/procurement/>

USDA Local Forest Procurement:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/contracting/directory/local\\_contacts.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/contracting/directory/local_contacts.htm)

### **State of Wisconsin Bureau of Procurement (Department of Commerce):**

<http://vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/default.asp>

### **Kenosha County and many municipalities within Southeastern Wisconsin:**

<http://www.value4gov.org/>

### **Other helpful websites:**

U.S. Small Business Administration [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers <http://www.aptac-us.org/new/>

National Institute of Government Purchasing <http://www.nigp.org/eweb/>

Institute of Supply Management <http://www.ism.ws/>

U.S. Department of Commerce [http://www.osec.doc.gov/osdbu/Selling\\_to\\_DOC.htm](http://www.osec.doc.gov/osdbu/Selling_to_DOC.htm)

GSA links for businesses

[http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA\\_OVERVIEW&contentId=25437](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentType=GSA_OVERVIEW&contentId=25437)

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (education, workshops, resources, and funding) [www.wwbic.com](http://www.wwbic.com)

**WBE Certification**: The Wisconsin Department of Commerce is now certifying Woman-owned Business Enterprises (WBE) for use in government contracting. Applicants can apply at [www.commerce.wi.gov/BD/BD-WBECertification.html](http://www.commerce.wi.gov/BD/BD-WBECertification.html)