

How to do Business with the Government

Federal spending is on the increase and you may have considered pursuing this market to grow your business. However, if you're not prepared, seeking a government contract can be a daunting process. Here are some steps you can take to help you get started in the right direction.

- 1) Register on the following websites required by law **as a minimum**:
 - a. Obtain a Dun & Bradstreet number (DUNS) www.dnb.com.
 - b. Register at Central Contractor Registration (CCR) www.ccr.gov.
 - c. Find the NAICS codes for your business at <http://www.sba.gov/contractingopportunities/officials/size/table/index.html>.
 - d. Register at the Department of Veterans affairs if applicable www.vetbiz.gov/vip/vip.htm.
 - e. Register with the Small Business Administration (SBA) www.sba.gov.
 - f. Register at the Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) <https://orca.bpn.gov>.
 - g. If inclined, visit local SBA and Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) for basic counseling/training.
 - 2) Sign up to receive emails about federal opportunities at the Central Federal Business Opportunities site www.fedbizopps.gov.
 - 3) Visit the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) at <https://www.fpds.gov/> to gauge who is buying what you want to offer.
 - 4) Monitor American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) spending at <http://www.recovery.gov/Pages/home.aspx> to view contracting, grant and loan opportunities.
 - 5) Learn how to write a Request for Proposal (RFP) and bid, although, competition is fierce.
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- 6) **Taking it to the next level:** Implement an aggressive federal sales program/ augment/create a business plan. Know the market space you will compete in. Who should you target-which agencies? What is your marketing plan? How are you differentiating yourself?
 - 7) Work towards becoming a pre approved vendor if applicable through a long-term fixed price contract/GSA Schedule.
 - a. A GSA contract is difficult to get, laden with "government speak," complex and takes an average of 250 hours of work to obtain-if done right. Experienced consultants are often hired because of this.
 - b. Only practical way a small business can realistically compete in the marketplace. Although, any large company doing business with the government is on Schedule as well.

- c. A GSA contract gives you the “right” to sell to federal agencies, as you become a mandatory source of supply for the product/service you offer.
 - d. It minimizes the federal buyer’s risk and oversight needed.
 - e. Streamlines the acquisition process reducing award time from 248 to 14 days on average.
 - f. There is significantly less competition.
 - g. You are deemed a credible vendor with the capacity to perform.
- 8) Once you acquire your GSA, look for opportunities to sell in your own backyard:
- a. www.USA.gov.
 - b. Federal telephone directories/Federal Citizen Information Center.
 - c. Local blue pages.
 - d. Military.com installation guides.
 - e. Federally funded research and development centers.
 - f. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities locator and directory.
 - g. Federal spending contracts database at www.FedSpending.org/fpds.
 - h. Go to trade shows and events; meet people and network.
- 9) Get familiar with regulation at the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) website: www.arnet.gov/far/.
- 10) Market yourself smartly. Positioning yourself is half the battle. Now you must implement your sales plan and pitch to buyers effectively. A simple brochure, government tab on your web site and business card using both sides will carry you far with the right message. Differentiate yourself.
- 11) Finally, be patient! There is a lot of red tape to unravel before doing business with the government, so be willing to make the required investment in time and resources upfront. Arm yourself with the right tools to make it easy for a federal buyer to do business with you. Once you’re on the “inside,” and market yourself smartly, your business can grow at warp speed.

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