

## Responding to a Sources Sought Notice (SSN) & Request for Information (RFI)

VA OSDBU

Strategic Outreach and Communications

Education and Training

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# VA OSDBU Mission and Vision

Centered around our support for Veteran small business success

## Mission:

**Support Secretary's priorities by enabling Veterans to gain access to economic opportunities by translating customer feedback into policies and programs that improve market research, increase direct access, and promote the participation of Veteran-Owned Small Business in Federal Contracting.**

## Vision:

*Within the next five years, OSDBU will transform how small businesses achieve economic success by leveraging improved technology and business processes to enable procurement-ready small businesses to address relevant procurement requirements in both the federal and commercial markets.*



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# Objectives

By the end of this session you will be able to explain:

- A Sources Sought Notice (SSN), a Request for Information (RFI) as well as the difference between the two
- The advantages of responding to Requests for Information and Sources Sought notices
- How to navigate the FedBizOpps platform





# Sources Sought Notice And Request for Information





# Sources Sought Notice

**Sources Sought** notice is a form of market research conducted by agency PDMs to determine small business capabilities and interests.



# Sources Sought According To the FAR

FAR 5.201(c): “the primary purposes of the notices are to improve small business access to acquisition information and enhance competition by identifying contracting and subcontracting opportunities.”



<https://www.acquisition.gov/content/5201-general>



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# Request for Information

**Request for Information** is a government market research tool used for a potentially new requirement that has no acquisition history.



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# RFI According To the FAR

FAR Part 15.201(e) "RFIs may be used when the Government does not presently intend to award a contract, but wants to obtain price, delivery, other market information, or capabilities for planning purposes."

RFIs are also mentioned at FAR 10.002(b)(2)(iii) as a technique of conducting market research.



<https://www.acquisition.gov/content/part-15-contracting-negotiation#i1108766>

<https://www.acquisition.gov/content/part-10-market-research#>



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# Difference Between SSN and RFI

A Sources Sought notice helps identify potentially capable small businesses to perform the requirements of a planned contract.

Strategic Market Research

VS

An RFI gathers information about whether or not there is a solution to a problem.

Tactical Market Research



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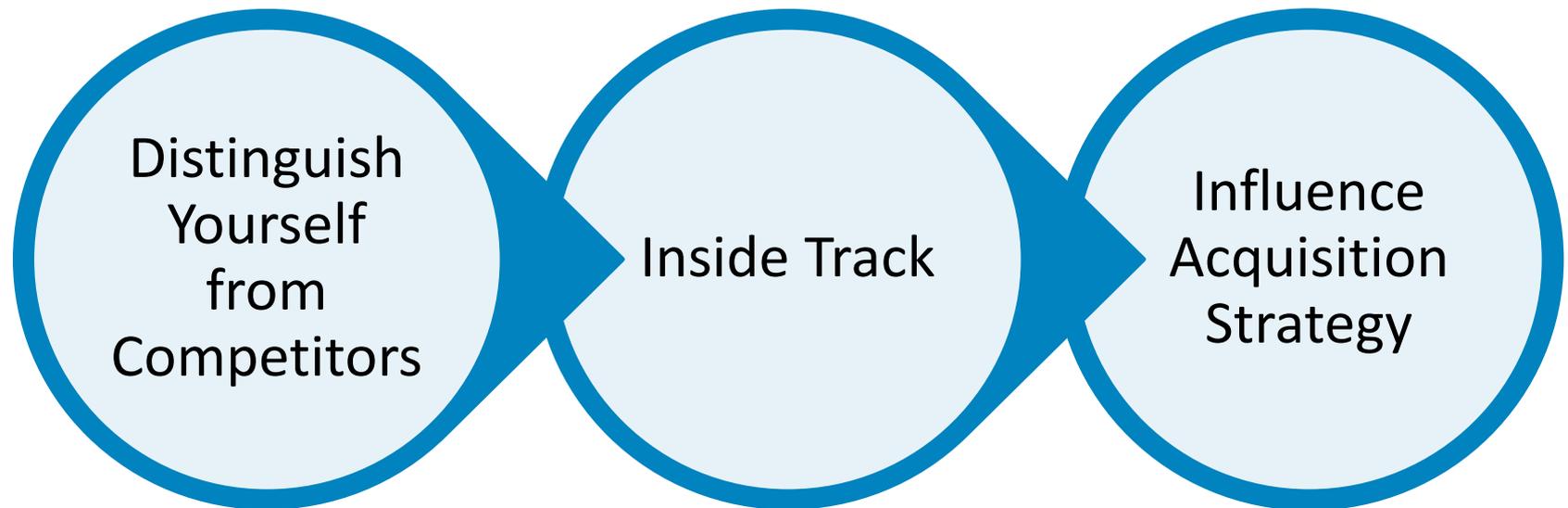
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# Why Should I Respond?

When you respond to a Sources Sought Notice and a Request for Information, you...





# Sources Sought Notices & RFI's In FedBizOpps



# Sources Sought Notices/RFI's in FedBizOpps

The screenshot shows the FedBizOpps.gov homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Getting Started, General Info, Opportunities, Agencies, and Privacy. Below this is a search bar with the text "Search more than 21,800\* active federal opportunities." and a search button. To the right of the search bar is a "RECOVERY" section with a search button for "RECOVERY OPPORTUNITIES". Below the search bar are several filters: Posted Date (set to "Last 90 Days"), Set-Aside Code (set to "Any"), Place of Performance (set to "Any State or Territory"), Type (set to "Any"), Keyword / Solicitation #, and Agency. There is also a "Search" button and a note that "Additional criteria and multiple selections are available on the advanced search form." Below the search filters are three warning icons with text: "SAM.gov REGISTRATION IS FREE", "ATTENTION: Agency users are responsible for properly uploading controlled, unclassified materials to FBO", and "Important Password Update". At the bottom left, there are two registration sections: "Buyers / Engineers" and "Vendors / Citizens", each with a login form and links for "View Opportunities", "Register Now", "Password Reminder", and "Recovery FAQs". On the right side, there are several sections: "FBO RECOVERY REPORTS", "SMALL BUSINESS EVENT", "VENDOR COLLABORATION", "USER GUIDE", and "DEMONSTRATION VIDEO".

Sources Sought Notices and RFI's are posted and searched for in FedBizOpps. If not already registered, create an account.

- Use advanced functionality
- Save advanced searches
- Get 'search' notifications
- Stay up-to-date



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# Advanced Search Form

**With an account, you can save the search and set alerts. Note the search criteria used for this example:**

- **Posted Date:** Last 7 Days
- **Set-Aside Code:** SDVSOB/VOSB
- **Opportunity/Procurement Type,** select Sources Sought
- **Agency:** Veterans Affairs

The screenshot shows the 'Search For Opportunities' form with the following search criteria highlighted in red:

- Posted Date:** Last 7 Days
- Place of Performance State:** Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, Arkansas
- Documents To Search:** Active Documents
- Set-Aside Code:** Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, Veteran-Owned Small Business
- Opportunity/Procurement Type:** Sources Sought
- Agency/Office/Location(s):** Specific Agency/Office/Locations
- Specific Agencies / Offices\*:** Department of Veterans Affairs



# Association Of Criteria With Search Results

	Agency/Office/Location ▼	Type ▼ / Set-aside ▼	Posted On ▲
<a href="#">(FY18) Rental Equipment Contract for SDVOSB/VOSB National Cemetery</a>	Department of Veterans Affairs VA National Cemetery Administration Centralized Contracting Division Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration	Sources Sought / Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 21, 2018
ery equipment & supplies	Department of Veterans Affairs New Orleans VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018
<a href="#">ce, Oversight and Technical</a>	Department of Veterans Affairs New Orleans VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018
ices, including	Department of Veterans Affairs VA Technology Acquisition Center VA Technology Acquisition Center	Sources Sought / Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018

- As you can see, the criteria that we used to search for VA sources sought notices is noted in the search results:
  - Agency = VA and Specific Office
  - Type/Set-aside = SS/VOSB
  - Posted On = Feb 21
    - Within 7 Days



# Association Of Criteria With Search Results

	Agency/Office/Location ▼	Type ▼ / Set-aside ▼	Posted On ▲
<a href="#">(FY18) Rental Equipment Contract for SDVOSB/VOSB National Cemetery</a> Contract National Cemetery	Department of Veterans Affairs VA National Cemetery Administration Centralized Contracting Division Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration	Sources Sought / Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 21, 2018
Primary equipment & supplies	Department of Veterans Affairs New Orleans VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018
<a href="#">Procurement, Oversight and Technical Support</a> Procurement, and management support	Department of Veterans Affairs New Orleans VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018
<a href="#">Contract # 18-49581</a> Services, including	Department of Veterans Affairs VA Technology Acquisition Center VA Technology Acquisition Center	Sources Sought / Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018



# Search Result Used For Example

- This is a snapshot of the VA sources sought notices search created for this example.
- Note: The 2-way red-arrow references a close-up of the result we are speaking of.

<a href="#">W--Sources Sought Request (FY18) Rental Equipment Services for Memorial Day Event for SDVOSB/VOSB Companies Puerto Rico National Cemetery</a> 36C78618Q0190 W -- Lease or Rental of equipment	Department of Veterans Affairs VA National Cemetery Administration Centralized Contracting Division Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration	Sources Sought / Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 21, 2018
<a href="#">65--ABP Monitoring System</a> 36C25618Q9188 65 -- Medical, dental & veterinary equipment & supplies	Department of Veterans Affairs New Orleans VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018
<a href="#">R--Lease Program Compliance, Oversight and Technical Support</a> 36C25618Q0314 R -- Professional, a services	Department of Veterans Affairs	Sources Sought / Service-	
<div style="text-align: center;">  <b><a href="#">65--ABP Monitoring System</a></b>            36C25618Q9188            65 -- Medical, dental &amp; veterinary equipment &amp; supplies         </div>			
<a href="#">D--eCPIA FY18 Su</a> 36C10B18Q2746 D -- Information tec telecommunications			
<a href="#">R--Cincinnati Courier Services with Four Option periods Seeking Sources for set aside requirements Please respond via email to Adoniss.Gibson@va.gov by 2pm today, 2/20/2018 for consideration.</a> 36C25018Q0407 R -- Professional, administrative, and management support services	Department of Veterans Affairs Dayton VAMC Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center	Sources Sought / Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	Feb 20, 2018



# Review Attached Documentation

The screenshot displays the VA ABP Monitoring System interface. At the top left is the VA logo. The main header reads "65--ABP Monitoring System" with the following details: Solicitation Number: 36C25618Q9188, Agency: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office: New Orleans VAMC, and Location: Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Below the header are tabs for "Notice Details", "Packages", and "Interested Vendors List", along with "Print" and "Link" icons. The "Original Synopsis" section shows the notice was posted on Feb 20, 2018 at 5:01 pm. It includes buttons for "Return To Opportunities List", "Watch This Opportunity", and "Add Me To Interested Vendors". The "Solicitation Number" is 36C25618Q9188 and the "Notice Type" is "Sources Sought". The "Synopsis" states it was added on Feb 20, 2018 at 5:01 pm. The "Statement of Work" is "ABP Monitoring Systems". On the right side, there is a section titled "ALL FILES" which contains an "Attachment" icon, the date "Feb 20, 2018", and a file name "36C25618Q9188 36C256...". This entire "ALL FILES" section is enclosed in a red rectangular box. Below this is a "GENERAL INFORMATION" section with fields for "Notice Type" (Sources Sought), "Posted Date" (February 20, 2018), "Response Date" (blank), "Archiving Policy" (Automatic, on specified date), "Archive Date" (May 21, 2018), and "Original Set Aside" (N/A).

This is a snapshot of the VA sources sought notices once you click on the search result – to view the notice documents.

Note:

- The red box is used to emphasize documents attached to the notice
- Click on attachments to view





**QUESTIONS?**



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# Useful Links

- **VA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization**
  - <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/>
- **Doing Business with VA Resources**
  - <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/library/dbwva.asp>
- **Education and Training**
  - <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/outreach/soc/training.asp>
- **Direct Access Program Events**
  - <https://dapevents.mbmapp.com/>
- **National Veterans Small Business Engagement**
  - <http://www.nvsbe.com/>
- **VA Verification**
  - <https://www.vip.vetbiz.va.gov>
- **Veteran Entrepreneur Portal**
  - <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/entrepreneur/>
- **Procurement Technical Assistance Centers**
  - <http://www.aptac-us.org>



# On-Demand Training

- **Building an Effective Capabilities Statement Training**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/6431184633580824579>
- **Procurement Readiness Part 1:**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/8442508058978943234>
- **Procurement Readiness Part 2:**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/9035570337350321922>
- **Procurement Readiness Part 3:**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/549272412849655810>
- **Navigating FedBizOpps**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/2174344003382782472>
- **Navigating VA Forecast of Contracting Opportunities (VA FCO)**
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/6359860412645722114>
- **Post-Kingdomware Training Webinar**
  - <https://youtu.be/DHTDZacANdE>



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## OSDBU Help Desk:

Phone: 1-866-584-2344

Email: [osdbustratcomm@va.gov](mailto:osdbustratcomm@va.gov)

Website: <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/>

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/VAOSDBU>



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