

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

Office of Small and Disadvantaged
Business Utilization

Procurement Readiness

Preparing To Do Business With **VA**

This comprehensive reference guide is a resource tool to help small and Veteran business owners become procurement-ready and prepared to do business with VA.

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Introduction

Small businesses fuel the United States' economic growth by providing jobs, innovation, and an increase in federal market competition. Billions of dollars in federal contracting opportunities are awarded to small businesses each year. The *Procurement Readiness* reference guide is intended to provide small and Veteran businesses with guidance and resources to become *procurement-ready* to do business with the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and other federal agencies.

Procurement readiness refers to the demonstrated ability of a small business to effectively participate in the federal government contracting marketplace and successfully perform contract work. Procurement readiness involves understanding how to navigate the various procurements set aside for small businesses and respond to these opportunities. Small and Veteran businesses wanting to gain access to procurement opportunities are encouraged to work with [Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) and [Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers](#) (APTAC) for federal contracting support – including eligibility to participate in small business programs.

With the right *registrations, capabilities, performance history, and competitive advantage* to meet the needs of the customer, a procurement-ready small business could become a viable government contractor.

While serving our Nation's Veterans, VA also offers opportunities for small businesses to increase their presence in the federal, state, and commercial marketplaces through the work of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Utilization (OSDBU). VA OSDBU provides guidance, information, and resources to help SDVOSBs, VOSBs, and other small businesses grow. Its mission is to enable Veterans to gain access to economic opportunity by leveraging the federal procurement system and expanding the participation of procurement-ready small businesses. These businesses are able to meet the requirements necessary to compete for VA and other federal contracting opportunities.

Part I: Procurement Readiness Basics

Obtaining registrations is one of the first steps toward procurement readiness for small businesses. The following registrations are **required** to participate in government contracting.

Small Business Registration

All businesses must be registered as a legal entity — such as a sole proprietorship, limited liability company (or LLC), or corporation among others — with the corporation commission in the appropriate state.

- Businesses must be in compliance with local, state, and federal laws; this includes obtaining licenses and other requirements. [Size standards](#) vary depending on the industry and the state where the contracting opportunity is located. Businesses should be in compliance with regulatory bodies, industry standards, and certifications, if applicable to the markets where they want to do business. To help small businesses navigate these compliance processes, OSDDBU recommends using [SBA's Business Licenses and Permits](#) listing.
- Each entity (company) **must** have a corresponding *taxpayer identification number (TIN) or employer identification number (EIN)*. A TIN is an identification number used by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the administration of tax laws. An EIN is also known as a federal tax identification number and is used to identify a business entity. Visit the [IRS Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center](#) to learn more about these numbers.

System for Award Management Registration

Established small businesses wanting to do business in the federal marketplace must register with the federally mandated [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). SAM is the official U.S. Government system that consolidates the capabilities of the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system, Federal Contractor Registry (FedReg), the Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS).

Small and Veteran businesses need a **Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) Number** to register in SAM. Similar to a Social Security number, the [D-U-N-S Number](#) is a 9-digit number used to verify the existence of a business entity globally. Dun & Bradstreet assigns D-U-N-S Numbers for each physical location of a business.

SAM registration involves creating an account and providing information that defines and identifies the small business concern. The following SAM registration identifiers are required:

- Business legal name (as registered with the state corporation commission)
- Business start date (company registration date)
- Business contact information (legal name, address, and phone number)
- TIN or EIN
- D-U-N-S Number
- [North American Industrial Classification System \(NAICS\) Codes](#) (replaces Standard Industrial Classification Codes, used to classify businesses to determine their eligibility to bid on certain contracts)
- Business bank account (account number and routing number for electronic funds transfer)
- Automated Clearing House (ACH) account (GSA SmartPay for credit cards)
- Small business certifications (as categorized by SBA)

The following identifiers are optional:

- **Product Service Codes (PSCs) or Federal Supply Codes (FSCs)** are used interchangeably. Learn more about PSCs/FSCs at <http://www.fpds-ng.com> or https://www.acquisition.gov/?q=Acquisition_Systems.
- **SBA Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)** is used by the Government to search for procurement information. Businesses can be searched by location, ownership data, federal certifications, NAICS, and business type, among other criteria.

Once small businesses complete the SAM registration application and submit it for processing, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) receives this information automatically. DLA then issues each business a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code, a 5-character identification number used for each small business. The code may be used for a facility clearance or pre-award survey and will be automatically entered into the SAM account.

Small businesses can update their SAM registration at any time to include new information, such as SBA small business certification. Once certification selection is submitted, you will receive a link to register.

Important elements small businesses should know:

- Ensure that SAM registration is fully completed and approved for public viewing.
- Ensure that performance history is up-to-date.
- Keep SAM account information updated, especially business contact information.
- Register in DSBS through SAM, only if the small business certification portion has been completed.

Part II: Procurement Readiness Recommendations

These recommendations are marketing actions small businesses can take that may increase their *probability* of successfully participating in the government marketplace. These actions include registering with federal websites and ensuring that the company website and capabilities statement are current and inviting to procurement decision makers (PDMs).

Capability Statement

A [capability statement](#) is a business resume that identifies the business' capabilities. This statement is the PDM's first impression of a small or Veteran business and allows the PDM to differentiate the business from its competition. The capability statement is usually no more than two pages and reflects the company's succinct and persuasive sales pitch. Capability statements should include the following:

- Company overview
- CAGE Code (identifies SAM registration)
- Vets First Verification Program logo (if applicable)
- Contact information
- Core capabilities
- NAICS Codes and list of product/service offerings
- Past performance project descriptions
- Certifications/credentials
- Current and previous business partners/clients
- Company web address
- Socioeconomic information
- Testimonials (optional)
- National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) Codes (used for state and local government contracting opportunities)
- Awards and recognition (optional)
- Performance history evaluations (optional)
- Contract vehicles (such as Federal Supply Schedule, Blanket Purchase Agreement, and Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity.)

Local PTACs offer courses on how to create effective capability statements.

Company Website

A company website is another key component to increasing the small or Veteran business' visibility. A website allows PDMs to learn more about the small business, its capabilities, and its performance history.

Update the website frequently so that the content reflects accurate capabilities and past performance relating to procurement opportunities the business is seeking. Make it easy for PDMs to find, navigate, and understand the business information. Business-related Emails should be sent and received from company Email addresses that include employee names and the company website domain, such as your.name@businessname.com. (Refrain from using free, web-based Email accounts like Gmail or Hotmail).

Key Elements of a Website

There are many online tutorials and tips that can help in developing the company website. Consider the following key elements (which may differ slightly depending on the *function* of the website):

- 1. Plan the website goal.** Know what the website should do. Should it market one or more products directly or indirectly to customers? Will it sell one or more services to customers directly or indirectly? Should it advertise the company's product(s) and/or service(s)? The goal should be to get the visitor to do something, that is, to learn more about the company and make contact to discuss a need.
- 2. Register the domain name.** Choose a domain name that resembles the company name to help build the company's credibility. This domain name will also be referenced in the company Email addresses, creating a professional means to communicate electronically with potential customers. For example, the use of *john.doe@businessname.com* eliminates the need for third-party Email addresses often created and used through a free web-based service, such as Gmail.
- 3. Choose a reputable hosting company.** After choosing and registering a domain name, secure a reputable hosting company that can host the domain once the website is built. With proper hosting, the company can create, access, and use professional Email addresses that reference the company domain (even without a website).
- 4. Build a visually appealing website.** A website should be visually appealing clearly define the small business' capabilities and past performance. Each section should be easy to read. Important information relevant to PDMs should be easy to remember. Use meaningful visual imagery to emphasize important information. Create a distinctive and aesthetically pleasing. Choose fonts that are easy to read across various browsers and mobile devices.
- 5. Choose relevant website content.** Content is probably the single most important element of a website. Content should be short, well-organized, and current. Relevant information should be easy to find and read. For example, when a PDM wants to learn about a small business wanting to do business within the federal government, the PDM would most likely visit the website to access the small business' capabilities and other information in a timely manner.
- 6. Ensure that content is relevant and credible.** Make sure that the content presented to visitors – especially PDMs – is credible and can be defended. Misspelled words and inflated capabilities can affect how potential customers perceive the business. Present relevant, objective, and accurate information.
- 7. Test the website functionality.** Functionality can refer to the purpose of the website. Ensure that the website accomplishes the goal predetermined during the planning phase. Functionality can also refer to the ease of navigating the website. Ensure that menu bars, links to pages, and interactive widgets function properly.
- 8. Test Browser/Mobile Device Adaptability.** With a variety of browsers (including Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari) and the increased use of mobile devices (such as smartphones, phablets, and tablets), potential customers can search for businesses and preview website at any time. Test the website and ensure that it is responsive, adapting to the user's platform.
- 9. Test the website navigation.** Keep it simple. A website visitor should be able to move through content – from one section to another or from one page to another – as easily and as quickly as possible. Hyperlinks accessed through vertical or horizontal menu bars (or menu bars embedded in content) should be easy to see and use. Test these menus to ensure that they lead potential customers to relevant information.

10. Review, refresh, and revise. Once your website is live for public viewing, check it regularly to ensure that content is up-to-date. Ensure that the website is optimized for search engines and that social media options are available. Social media functionality provides readers with options to share your content with others and fosters two-way communication between potential customers and your company.

Resources Related to Performance History

[Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System \(CPARS\)](#) is the federal reporting system contracting officers use to track small business performance on awarded contracts. Contracting officers see the information entered, positive or negative, when viewing a small business' entity record in SAM. Objective facts and supported program and contract management data is reviewed when determining a small business' ability to perform work, based on – but not limited to – the following factors:

- Cost performance reports
- Customer comments
- Quality reviews
- Technical interchange meeting assessments
- Financial solvency assessments
- Construction/production management reviews
- Contractor operations reviews
- Functional performance evaluations
- Earned contract incentives

Information that federal contracting officers enter into CPARS automatically posts to the small business' entity record in SAM.

Part III: Not Procurement Ready?

Some businesses may still need more assistance to become ready to do business with the federal government. This section covers additional resources and contracting avenues that can help small businesses become procurement ready.

How to Get Started

APTAC can help small businesses that are new to the federal marketplace gain valuable guidance and support. ATPAC comprises 98 local Procurement Technical Acquisition Centers (PTACs) consisting of 300 local offices nationwide. Each PTAC is staffed with dedicated procurement professionals available to guide small and Veteran businesses seeking to compete for opportunities.

The SBA [Boots to Business](#) training program is designed to help active duty military members (and their partners or spouses) who are separating from service start businesses that eventually can compete successfully within the federal marketplace. Servicemembers and partners or spouses taking advantage of this training program will gain valuable assistance when transitioning from active service to small business ownership or other self-employment opportunities. Step-by-step, Servicemembers learn how to evaluate business concepts (determining which are the best fit) and learn how to develop a business plan.

Increase Competitiveness

The experience small businesses gain through the following contracting arrangements may help them increase their competitiveness within the government marketplace:

- **Subcontracting:** As a subcontractor, a small business is contracted to work on a specified federal opportunity through the prime contract awardee. Through great performance on a subcontract, small businesses can build on their past performance and increase their experience, which is critical during the small business evaluation required to become a prime for future contracting opportunities. Use SBA [SUB-Net](#) to find subcontracting solicitations and opportunities posted by prime contractors that have been awarded a contract. When bidding for contracts exceeding \$650,000 (\$1.5 million for construction projects), potential prime contractors must include a subcontracting plan as part of their bid proposals. Subcontracting plans include all socioeconomic small business categories.
- **Partner with other business:** [FAR Subpart 9.6: Contractor Team Arrangements](#) explains arrangements in which “two or more companies form a partnership or joint venture to act as a potential prime contractor; or a potential prime contractor agrees with one or more other companies to have them act as its subcontractors under a specified Government contract or acquisition program.” Types of partnering options include the following:
 - Teaming agreements are composed of a prime contractor (that completes 51 percent of the contracts) and one or more subcontractors that will propose to meet the government’s need.
 - Prime contractors could be either large or small businesses.
 - Though subcontracting agreements are an option for small businesses, specifications vary by industry.

- **Contractor Team Arrangements (CTAs)** are formal agreements provided by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). GSA awards contracts to multiple companies supplying comparable products or services. Learn more about [GSA schedule solicitations](#). By forming a CTA, GSA Schedule contractors can do the following:
 - Compete for schedule orders for which they would not otherwise qualify.
 - Take advantage of streamlined acquisition procedures.
 - Increase market share and become more competitive.
 - Reduce risk by sharing responsibilities with other team members.
 - Focus on the supplies (products) and services that best match the company’s resources and strengths.

- The [Federal Supply Service Center for Acquisition Excellence](#) offers an online, self-paced training course called ‘How to Become a Contractor.’

- **Joint Ventures** allow two or more small businesses the option to combine their expertise in an effort to successfully respond to federal contracting opportunities. When creating a joint venture, small businesses are creating a new legal entity, either temporary or permanent. The new entity requires its own D-U-N-S number and tax identification number, among other items newly formed companies’ require. The value in a joint venture is that both prime companies receive the benefit of past performance history. Small businesses should understand that when forming a joint venture, product and/or service expertise is combined in addition to assets, liabilities, financials, and [size standards](#) – among other variables. A joint venture is not necessarily a permanent option, but it can be if the small businesses agree to use the joint venture on an as-needed basis.

Small and Veteran businesses should remain poised to take advantage of procurement options that may better position them for supporting more complex contracting opportunities in the future. Stay prepared by doing the following:

- **Gain knowledge through education.** Stay up-to-date with government contracting rules and regulations. Attending procurement events and workshops (such as ‘How to do Business with the Federal Government’), small business summits, and national procurement conferences will provide small businesses with opportunities to connect with PDMs.

- **Validate your experience.** Be able to provide documentation that supports the business’ capabilities and accomplishments. A current capabilities statement and past performance references will assist in validating the company’s experience. For small businesses new to federal contracting, non-government past performance may illustrate experience relevant to government contracts.

Some small businesses share the common objective of receiving federal procurement opportunities. Attend federal procurement events to network and learn about the federal contracting process.

Part IV: Procurement Readiness Differentiators

With competition increasing daily, small businesses strive to differentiate themselves. They should be different in areas that matter to the PDM to be considered viable candidates for specific contracting opportunities. When looking to participate in the government marketplace, there are key ways for small businesses to *differentiate* themselves from competitors.

Differentiator

Small business owners should aim to differentiate their businesses from the competition. Performance history specifics — like *past performance*, *small business certifications*, and *Certificate of Competency* — are definitely relevant to PDMs.

- **Past performance** outlines the company’s professional qualifications and experiences. Performance history is relevant information for future source selection purposes, detailing what the business did in the past that makes the PDM want to learn more about it, how it performed, and the quality of the work. Types of performance history that procurement decision makers look for include the following:
 - Documentable and recent performance history as a prime or subcontractor.
 - Performance history in the following:
 - A similar line of work as the solicitation.
 - The government department or agency posting the solicitation.
 - Similar-sized projects.
 - Performance history that meets the solicitation’s other requirements.
- **Small business certifications**, like professional certifications, document a special capability or status that helps small businesses compete in the marketplace. Certifications may sway some preference to the business when pursuing government contracts, but certifications alone will not make the business qualified for a specific contract. SBA offers small businesses the opportunity to certify if they meet certain requirements and size standards. SBA programs include the following small business concerns:
 - Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
 - Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)
 - 8(a) Business Development
 - Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone)
 - Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Programs.

Learn more about [SBA small business certification programs](#).

To be eligible for SDVOSB and VOSB set-aside and sole source contracts with VA specifically, SDVOSBs and VOSBs must be verified through the [Vets First Verification Program](#).

The Vets First Verification Program does not guarantee small business contract awards. Rather, the Vets First program makes these businesses eligible to compete for SDVOSB and VOSB set-aside opportunities. The VA OSDBU Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) oversees the verification process.

SBA [Certificate of Competency](#) (COC) program provides small businesses the opportunity to appeal a contracting officer's determination that the small business is not 'responsible' – unable to fulfill the requirements of the contracting opportunity for which the small business may have otherwise been awarded. SBA COC program allows the small business the opportunity to demonstrate that it, in fact, does possess the capability to perform on the specified contract. Once SBA completes its detailed review of the small business and finds it capable to perform on the specific contract, SBA issues a COC to the contracting officer, requiring the contracting officer to reverse the negative decision and award the specified contract to the small business. For additional COC information, review [FAR Subpart 19.6: Certificates of Competency and Determinations of Responsibility](#).

Additional Differentiators

- **Business references:** Current or past customers can verify how the business performed on awarded contracts. Include the company name and identify a point of contact along with other information, such as the facility or agency with which the company worked, a project description, and dollar amount of the contract (optional).
- **[ISO 9000/9001 Certifications](#):** The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has developed and published a set of standards that define, establish, and maintain an effective quality assurance system for manufacturing and service industries. Small businesses are recognized for the field in which they are certified.
- **Industry Awards/Recognition:** This type of recognition includes industry awards for quality performance and positive write-ups in professional trade publications, newspapers, and magazines (print and/or web).
- **[Capability Maturity Model Integration® \(CMMI®\)](#):** Through the CMMI Institute, a small business can gain access to a broad model that describes the elements required to develop outstanding products and services. Small businesses achieving a maturity level rating earn the right to showcase a certification that demonstrates its culture of excellence to potential customers. CMMI offers appraisals, team partnerships, trainings, and certifications for development, acquisition, and services. Each component within the three maturity practices carries a rating.

Part V: Procurement Readiness Eligibility

In addition to standing out from the competition, small businesses must consider size, bonding capacity, and the potential of being audited on the road to becoming procurement ready. This section provides more resources that may help small businesses become one step closer to procurement readiness.

Small Business Eligibility for Set-Asides

Eligibility for small business set-asides varies depending on the industry in which the small business wants to do business, which is identified by the NAICS Code. [Size standards](#) determine eligibility for set-asides and stipulate how large a small business can be, including its subsidiaries and affiliates, to remain eligible for a small business set-aside contract. In addition to the NAICS, SBA requests documentation to identify the business' employee count and/or average revenue during its previous three years, as documented in the business tax returns. Each request for quotation or request for proposal is assigned a NAICS Code. Companies must be considered 'small' for the NAICS Code in which they want to do business. The company must list its NAICS Code in its SAM entity record.

Small Business Bonding Capacity

Bonding capacity can influence a small business' eligibility to bid on contracts. A [surety bond](#) might be required when bidding on large contracts, especially construction projects. The bond is a document – signed by the contractor and the surety company – guaranteeing to the project owner that a contract will be completed. Many service contracts, and occasionally supply contracts, also require surety bonds. Surety bonds are also required when bidding on or as a condition of federal construction contracts valued at \$150,000 or more. SBA guarantees bid, performance, and payment bonds are issued by surety companies.

Small Business Auditing Guidelines

The [Defense Contract Audit Agency \(DCAA\)](#) primarily oversees contracting audits of proposals and claims submitted by any businesses working with the Department of Defense (DoD). DCAA also offers auditing services to other federal agencies to help minimize risk for all parties involved in the procurement process. Independent DoD contractors perform audits to eliminate bias. Government acquisition officials can request DCAA audit services based on contracting needs. DoD audit services include, but are not limited to, pre-award contracts, post-award contracts, business systems, and negotiation assistance.

DoD requires companies performing work on contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold — larger than \$150,000, as outlined in [FAR Part 13: Simplified Acquisition Procedures](#) — and some first-time contractors to ensure that their accounting systems are compliant with generally accepted accounting principles. Because audits can be detailed and time consuming, review contractor's proposals, claims, and/or submissions thoroughly before submitting this documentation for audit purposes. Learn about [requesting an audit](#).

Part VI: Procurement Readiness and Department of Veterans Affairs

The following section provides small businesses with a brief overview of doing business with VA and being procurement ready for socioeconomic set-asides, including VA's VOSB and SDVOSB programs.

VA Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

OSDBU provides guidance, information, and resources to help small businesses learn how to take advantage of VA contracting opportunities. Its mission is to enable Veterans to gain access to economic opportunities by leveraging the federal procurement system and expanding participation of procurement-ready small businesses.

OSDBU initiates programs that focus on bridging the gap between procurement-ready small businesses and contracting opportunities, ultimately helping small and Veteran-owned businesses contribute most effectively to the mission of VA. VA small business programs include SDVOSB, VOSB, 8(a) Business Development, HUBZone, Small Disadvantaged Business, WOSB, and Subcontracting.

Learn more about [VA Small Business Programs](#).

[Public Law 109-461](#) provides VA the unique authority to award set-aside and sole source contracting opportunities to procurement-ready, VA-verified SDVOSBs and VOSBs through its Veterans First Contracting Program. This procurement authority, and its subsequent implementation, is a logical extension of VA's mission to care for our nation's Veterans. VA refers to this program as the Veterans First Contracting Program.

Obtaining verification allows SDVOSBs and VOSBs eligibility to bid on VA set-aside and sole source procurement opportunities. [VA-verified](#) SDVOSBs and VOSBs are also listed in the [VetBiz.gov Vendor Information Pages](#).

Networking and Procurement Readiness Events

Procurement events are held to help small businesses learn how to do business in the federal marketplace. VA encourages small businesses to attend and take advantage of as many events as possible to assure procurement readiness:

- [VA OSDBU events](#)
- [PTAC events](#)
- [SBA events](#)

Learn more about doing business with VA and download the *Doing Business with VA Reference Guide* at <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/library/dbwva.asp>.

Part VII: Procurement-Ready Contracting Strategies

By taking advantage of small contracting opportunities, small businesses can better position themselves to compete for more complex opportunities in the future.

- **Seek micro-purchases** or federal procurement opportunities below \$3,000. Authorized federal staff can make these purchases using credit cards. Small businesses accepting credit card payments are already eligible to accept government-wide micro-purchase payments. Learn more about the [GSA SmartPay program](#), the world's largest government charge card and commercial payment solutions program.
- **Compete for simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) contracts**, which include procurement opportunities between \$3,000 and \$150,000 – the threshold or ceiling for this contract type. In some instances, contracting officers are required to use small business services for SAT contracts. Learn more about [Simplified Acquisition Procedures](#).
- **Search the [VA Forecast of Contracting Opportunities](#)**, VA's estimate of procurement opportunities during the current and future fiscal years. *This information is published for planning purposes only and is not an invitation for bids, a request for proposals, or a commitment by VA to purchase products or services.* Each acquisition is based on the best information available at the time of publication and may be revised or canceled.

Part VIII: Procurement Readiness Checklist

The following small business procurement readiness checklist is intended to help small businesses determine the readiness level to compete in the federal contracting marketplace. Small businesses should research each point to understand what it refers to and how it relates to their current status.

- Performance history
- Capability statement
- SAM registration
- D-U-N-S Number
- FPDS account
- Apply for a GSA Schedule, if eligible
- NAICS Codes and size
- DSBS
- Corporate Website
- Certifications for small business
- Credit card acceptance
- Contact information including telephone number and Email address
- Licenses
- Bonding capacity
- Industry/procurement specific certifications
- Products must meet [19 U.S.C 2501: Trade Agreements Act](#)
- Knowledge about the customer within the federal marketplace

Part IX: Glossary/Acronyms

- **Agency Procurement Readiness:** small business eligibility for agency-specific set-aside opportunities.
- **Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) Number:** a unique, non-indicative 9-digit identifier (number) issued and maintained by **Dun & Bradstreet (D&B)** that verifies the existence of a business entity globally. Get a D-U-N-S Number at <https://iupdate.dnb.com/iUpdate/viewiUpdateHome.htm>.
- **Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS):** used by the government to search for small business procurement information. Businesses can be searched by different criteria, such as location, ownership data, federal certifications, NAICS, and business type, among others. Learn more at <http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs>.
- **NAICS Codes:** 6-digit codes used to classify businesses for the purpose of determining their eligibility to bid on certain contracts. Learn more at <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>.
- **Performance History:** professional qualifications, experience, and acceptable and related performance history specific to each solicitation. It may include:
 - Record of conforming to contract requirements and to standards of good workmanship
 - Record of forecasting and controlling costs
 - Adherence to contract schedules, including the administrative aspects of performance
 - History of reasonable and cooperative behavior and commitment to customer satisfaction
 - Record of integrity and business ethics, and generally, the contractor's business-like concern for the interest of the customer. ([FAR Subpart 42.15](#); [FAR Subpart 42.1501](#))
 - For specific policy on how to prepare performance history, see [FAR Subpart 42.1502](#).
 - Demonstrate the capability to fulfill requirements or similar requirements for similar dollar value.
 - References
- **Procurement Readiness:** capable of participating effectively in the government marketplace.
- **System for Award Management (SAM):** the Official U.S. Government system that consolidates the capabilities of CCR/FedReg, ORCA, and EPLS. Learn more at <http://www.SAM.gov>.
- **VA Forecast of Contracting Opportunities (FCO):** VAs best estimate of procurement opportunities during current and future fiscal years. *The information is published for planning purposes only.* Each acquisition is based on the best information available at the time of publication and may be revised or canceled. Learn more about VA FCO at <https://www.vendorportal.ecms.va.gov/eVP/fco/FCO.aspx>.
- **VetBiz Vendor Information Pages (VIP):** a VA online database that lists businesses that have been verified as 51 percent or more owned and controlled by Veterans or Service-Disabled Veterans. Registered VOSBs and SDVOSBs are able to compete for sole source procurement opportunities with VA. Learn more about VA's verification program at <http://www.VetBiz.gov>.

Part X: Resources and Tools

This section provides contracting and acquisition resources and tools that are integral along the path to procurement readiness.

Support Resources and Contracting Tools

- **BusinessUSA**, in collaboration with agencies throughout the federal marketplace, makes it easier for small businesses to access federal services, regardless of its source. Learn more about BusinessUSA at <http://www.BusinessUSA.gov>.
- **Federal Procurement Data System** may help small businesses target small business opportunities by reporting contracts whose estimated value is \$3,000 or more in addition to modifications to contracts, regardless of the dollar amount. Run a report on your NAICS to find out which agencies buy what you sell. Learn more about FPDS at <http://www.fpds.gov>.
- **Federal Business Opportunities** is the single most visited procurement portal for learning about federal government procurement opportunities over \$25,000. Federal buyers publicize agency specific business opportunities by posting information directly to FedBizOpps via the Internet. Small businesses can search for, monitor, and retrieve opportunities. Learn more about FedBizOpps at <http://www.FBO.gov>.
- **Application for Verification and Resources for Assistance:** Application Resources are available to assist you with the verification process. Learn more about VA Verification Assistance and Counseling Programs at <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/vip/step1.asp>.
- **SBA** is the federal agency that determines size qualification based on each industry identified by its NAICS Code. Learn more at <http://www.sba.gov/tools/size-standards-tool?ms=nid4070>

Acquisition Tools

FAR invokes federally mandated guidelines used by all federal agencies procuring products and/or services within the federal marketplace. The most important acquisition regulations that small businesses must adhere to are Parts 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19. FAR Part 13 defines **simple acquisition procedures** — the easiest path to federal contracts for small businesses. The following sections of the FAR may be of particular interest:

[FAR Subpart 2.1: Definitions](#) (for federal contracting terminology)

[FAR Part 19: Small Business Programs](#)

[Subchapter C: Contracting Methods and Contract Types](#) (Part 513)

In addition to FAR, the **Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)** is a public record of all permanent rules and regulations published by executive departments and federal agencies of the U.S. government. Like FAR, CFR includes small business regulations relevant for doing business within the federal marketplace; whereas CFR 124, 125, and 126 are especially important:

- [13 CFR Part 124: 8\(A\) Business Development/Small Disadvantaged Business Status Determinations](#)
- [13 CFR Part 125: Government Contracting Programs](#)
- [13 CFR Part 126: HUBZone Program](#)
- [48 CFR Part 52.219-8 - Utilization of Small Business Concerns](#)
- [48 CFR Part 52.219-9 - Small Business Subcontracting Plan](#)