

# Business Guide

This Business Guide is intended to be a tool to help you do business with the Army and with the USACE Humphries Engineer Center Support Activity HECSA. I encourage you to read it carefully and to follow the steps outlined below. Take the time to prepare properly; it will produce positive results.

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## Target your Product or Service

To be a successful government contractor, you must treat the Government as a valued customer. As a business owner, you should think through and prepare in the same way that you would if you were preparing a presentation to sell to a private company or to an individual client.

Here are some basic questions that you must be able to answer:

- Do you have a product or service that few other companies sell?

Know the Federal Supply Classification (FSC) Code and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code for your product or service. Many government product/service listings and future procurements are identified by FSC (<http://www.dlis.dla.mil/h2/>) or NAICS Code (<http://www.census.gov/naics>).

You should be able to quickly explain what makes your product or service better than that offered by your competitors. (An fun exercise that may help with this is to develop your own 30-second radio advertisement. Make sure you try it out on friends and family to prefect.)

- Do your homework to find out which agency needs your product or service.

The Government spends over \$200 billion every year for goods and services. In 1999, contracts for services were the largest acquisition category at \$78 billion. The Government also spends money on supplies and equipment (35%); agriculture, transportation, communications, utilities, and finance (19%); construction (7%); and wholesale/retail (3%).

Determining which segment of the Government you should market to is essential. When you are target marketing to the Federal Government, keep these important issues in mind:

- Assess your competitive edge.
- Familiarize yourself with the agency's mission.
- Know what the agency you are targeting purchases.
- Know how the agency contracts.
- Focus on opportunities in your niche and prioritize.
- Make appointments and attend contracting sessions. Network.
- Be persistent and do a follow-up on each activity.

HECSA specifically buys:

### **Services**

- Custodial Services
- Grounds Maintenance
- Security Contract
- Elevator Maintenance
- Shuttle Bus Service
- Health Units
- Building Maintenance/Janitorial contract
- Radiological Surveillance

### **Research and Development for:**

- **Strategic Environmental Research Development Program**

HECSA supports the contracting need of Strategic Environmental Research Development Program (SERPD) <http://serdp.org/>, through Partners in Environmental Technology a conglomerate of DoD, DOE, and EPA conducts programs in:

- Environmental Restoration
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Munitions Management
- Weapons Systems and Platforms

Details:

<http://www.serdp-estcp.org/Media/upload/SERDP%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet%2011-06.pdf>

- **Institute for Water Resources**

You can find a list of the Army's Major Commands and contacts for each at

<http://www.sellingtoarmy.info/User/ShowPage.aspx?PageID=172>

- Can your business financially support the execution of a government contract? The Federal Government normally only pays after completion of all required work, or delivery and acceptance of any required products or goods. Even then, payment approval procedures and payment cycles may delay payment by a month or more.

# Register your business with Federal Government contractor databases

The main government registries are:

## Central Contractor Registration (CCR)

You must be registered in the CCR to be awarded a contract from the Department of Defense (DOD) (<http://www.ccr.gov/>). The CCR is a database designed to hold information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. When you register with the CCR you will need a DUNS number and will be assigned a CAGE Code and Marketing Partner ID.

- Dun and Bradstreet maintain the Data Universal Numbering System (*DUNS*) company identifier system utilized by both government and corporate officials searching for background information on companies. Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do;jsessionid=26D12566420B62AF4C25E20C8A50B3DB> to obtain your DUNS number.
- A *Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code* is a five-position code that identifies contractors doing business with the Federal Government, NATO member nations, and other foreign governments. The CAGE Code is used to support a variety of systems throughout the Government and provides a standardized method of identifying a given facility at a specific location. The code may be used for a Facility Clearance, a Pre-award survey, automated Bidders Lists, identification of Debarred Bidders, fast pay processes, etc. A CAGE Code will be assigned automatically when you register in the CCR.
- The CCR will automatically assign a Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) to access other government applications (e.g., Past Performance Information System).

PRO-Net was the primary contractor registry for small businesses until December 2002. The integration of PRO-Net and DOD's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) buyer can search the CCR for all businesses

<https://www.bpn.gov/CCRSearch/Search.aspx> or click on the link Dynamic Small Business Search databases for locating small businesses  
[http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp\\_dsbs.cfm](http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dsp_dsbs.cfm).

Procuring agencies and contracting officers now rely on the CCR to conduct market research and confirm eligibility for SBA's procurement preference programs, users can now go to the CCR Web site at <http://www.ccr.gov/> and click on the "Dynamic Small Business Search" button to see what information the Contracting Officer sees when doing market research. This system is also used by large businesses looking for subcontractors or teaming partners.

Some suggestions for improving the effectiveness of your CCR registration:

- Be sure to list your company's legal name and any DBA you use. When submitting proposals, use either your legal name or DBA as you listed it in the CCR.
- When identifying your business type, select all that apply to your company. Do not assume that selecting Small Disadvantaged Business also identifies you as a Small Business.
- Minority Institutions and Hispanic Serving Institutions are Institutions of Higher Education that are listed as such by the Department of Education. Don't check these blocks unless you are on the current Department of Education list.
- Select all NAICS Codes and SIC Codes that apply to your business. We usually do our searches by NAICS or SIC Code and key words. If you do not have these listed in your registration, your company will not be identified during our search.
- Points of contact are people within your company who can provide information on the topic.
- Keep your registration up to date!
- This is your business profile! Be sure it is correct and complete.
- It is very important that you keep both of the pages updated
- Make sure that it is grammatically correct and free of spelling errors.
- When updating complete capabilities narrative try not to use filler word since it is limit on space.
- When selecting Key words try not to duplicate words from your capabilities narrative or words listed other place in your profile.

## **Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)**

Beginning January 1, 2005, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires the use of the Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) in Federal solicitations as a part of the proposal submission process. ORCA is a web-based system that centralizes and standardizes the collection, storage and viewing of many of the FAR required representations and certifications previously found in solicitations. With ORCA, you now have the ability to enter and maintain your representation and certification information, at your convenience, via the Internet at <http://orca.bpn.gov>. In addition, rather than receiving and reviewing paper submissions, government contracting officials can access ORCA and review your information online as a part of the proposal evaluation process. You will no longer have to submit representations and certifications completed in ORCA with each offer. Instead, a solicitation will contain a single provision that will

allow you to either certify that all of your representations and certifications in ORCA are current, complete and accurate as of the date of your signature, or list any changes.

Although architect-engineer firms can voluntarily submit the Standard Form (SF) 330 Part II through ORCA, they still must submit this form to each agency for which it wants to be considered for projects that are not publicly announced.

To prepare for this requirement and to register in ORCA, you will need to have two items: an active Central Contractor Registration (CCR) record and a Marketing Partner Identification Number (MPIN) identified in that CCR record. Your DUNS number and MPIN act as your company's ID and password into ORCA. (Visit [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) for more information on creating and entering your MPIN). The basic information provided in your CCR record is used to pre-populate a number of fields in ORCA. Vendors are reminded to protect their MPIN from unauthorized use.

Once in ORCA you will be asked to review pertinent information pre-populated from CCR, provide a point of contact, and answer a questionnaire that contains up to 26 questions. The questionnaire is to help you gather information you need for the clauses. The questionnaire is not the official version. Be sure to read the provisions carefully.

The answers you provide are then automatically entered into the actual FAR provisions. You are required to review your information, as inserted, in context of the full-text provisions for accuracy; acknowledge three additional read-only provisions; and click a time/date stamp before final submission. You will need to review and/or update your ORCA record when necessary, but at least annually in order to maintain its active status.

Detailed information regarding ORCA, how to submit your record, and whom to call for assistance can be found on ORCA's homepage at <http://orca.bpn.gov> under Help.

## **FedBizOpps**

FedBizOpps (<http://www.fedbizoppes.gov/>) has been designated as the single source for Federal Government procurement opportunities that exceed \$25,000. Government buyers are able to publicize their business opportunities by posting information to FedBizOpps via the Internet. Through this one portal commercial vendors seeking federal markets for their products and services can search,

monitor and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire federal contracting community.

Would you like to receive procurement announcements directly to your e-mail address? Then register for the free multi-agency electronic posting service for solicitations, requirements, awards and other acquisition-related documents.

*CAUTION: When registering for this service, please keep in mind that if you elect to receive all procurement notices, it could result in receiving over 600 e-mail messages per month.*

# Familiarize yourself with Federal, DOD, and Army procurement procedures

There has been a lot of discussion about the Federal procurement process becoming more like the commercial procurement model. However, there are many laws and regulations governing the federal process that do not apply to the commercial model. These laws and regulations are necessary to protect public funds, to implement Federal socio-economic programs, and to maintain the industrial base needed for Federal procurement.

## *Selling to the Military*

<http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps57820/www.acq.osd.mil/sadbu/publications/selling/part1.htm> is an introduction to the broad subject of contracting with agencies within DOD. The handbook provides an introduction to DOD contracting principles and practices, and provides lists of products and services keyed to particular major buying offices. **BAD LINK**

The Federal procurement process is very complex. The following steps are intended to give you a very generalized overview of the process. You can find out more about the actual process by reviewing the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) (<http://www.arnet.gov/far>), the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) (<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/>), and the Army Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (AFARS) <http://farsite.hill.af.mil/vfafara.htm>

## The Procurement Process Overview

- **Requirement is Identified**  
The requiring office will develop a purchase request package for the required item. This usually includes the following:
  - Requirements document
  - Performance work statements, which may include
  - Technical data package
  - Specifications
  - Cost estimate

This documentation is sent to a resource management office.

- **Money is Allocated**  
A resource management office will ensure that there are funds available for the item required. They will then allocate money to this purchase request and notify the contracting office.
- **Synopsis and solicitation are released/published**  
The contracting office is responsible for creating the official notification of the opportunity. The contracting officer will usually work with the requiring office to ensure the details are correct.

For proposed contracts over \$25,000, the contracting officer will publish a “synopsis.” This is a notification of the upcoming opportunity, and is usually released a minimum of 10 days before the solicitation.

Synopses are posted online at: <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/>

The next step is the actual solicitation. The term solicitation covers several types of documents, including Requests for Quotes, Requests for Bids, and Requests for Proposals.

Solicitations are posted online at: <http://www.fedbizopps.gov/>

- **Contractor researches and bids on opportunities**

There are many ways to identify opportunities of interest. These include browsing through the posted solicitations, conducting automated searches for solicitations using certain NAICS codes or keywords, and subscribing to commercial search services.

Once an appropriate opportunity is identified, a bid or proposal must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the instructions in the solicitation. Be sure to follow the instructions very carefully. Deviations from the instructions for preparation or submittal could result in a bid or proposal being excluded from consideration.

- **Bids are evaluated**

A Source Selection Board may be convened, which may include representatives from the requiring office, buyers, specialists, and contracting officers. The Board evaluates the bids on three major types of criteria:

- Technical merits (where applicable)
- Cost
- Past Performance (for larger dollar-value contracts)
- The specific criteria used for the solicitation will be published in the solicitation.

If a Source Selection Board is not convened, the evaluation will be done by a Contracting Officer or Contract Specialist.

- **Selection is made, contract is awarded**

Once the selection has been made, the contract will be awarded to the winning contractor. The contract will also be sent to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).

Contractors must be registered with the [CCR](#) before they can receive awards.

- **Performance of contract**

The contractor performs the work or provides the items as stipulated by the

contract. The contractor would then submit an invoice for work performed.

- **Payment and Closeout**

Once the invoice is received and certified as correct and ready for payment, it is sent to DFAS. DFAS will usually pay it during the next payment cycle.

Some contracts may require audits before the final payment can be made and the records closed.

# Investigate Opportunities

## Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) contracts

Many supplies and services are purchased utilizing FSS contracts and the SmartPay Government Purchase Card (GPC). Contact the General Services Administration (GSA) for information on how to obtain a FSS contract (<http://www.fss.gsa.gov/>) and why you should accept the GPC (<http://www.almc.army.mil/ALOG/issues/JanFeb99/MS382.htm>) when doing business with the Federal Government.

## Small Business Programs

There are several small business programs that may be of interest to you, including the Indian Incentive Program, Mentor-Protégé, Small Business Innovation Research, Women-Owned Small Business, Veteran Owned Small Business, and the Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Institutions Program. Information on these programs and much more is available for downloading from the Army Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (<http://www.sellingtoarmy.info/>).

## Subcontracting opportunities

Regardless of your product or service, it is important not to neglect the very large secondary subcontracting market. The publication *Subcontracting Opportunities with DOD Prime Contractors* (<http://www.defenselink.mil/Contracts/>) lists all major DOD prime contractors by state and provides a point of contact (Small Business Liaison Officer) within each firm. We encourage you to investigate potential opportunities with these firms. Many also have websites that may be useful and we encourage you and them to team with each other.

*SUB-Net* (<http://web.sba.gov/subnet/>) is the SBA's Subcontracting Network. Prime contractors use SUB-Net to post subcontracting opportunities. These opportunities may or may not be reserved for small business, and they may include either solicitations or other notices -- for example, notices of sources sought for teaming partners and subcontractors on future contracts. Small businesses can review this web site to identify opportunities in their areas of expertise. While the web site is designed primarily as a place for large businesses to post solicitations and notices, federal agencies, state and local governments, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities, and even foreign governments also use it for the same opportunities.

The link below represents companies' participation in DoD Subcontracting program report.  
[http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/procurement/historical\\_reports/statistics/procstat.html](http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/procurement/historical_reports/statistics/procstat.html)

## Department of Defense EMall

If you are interested in selling commercial, off-the-shelf items to DoD check the Department of Defense Email <http://www.dlis.dla.mil/emall.asp>. This is a site where DOD buyers can find and acquire off-the-shelf, finished goods from the commercial marketplace. Vendors wishing to market their products to the DOD create an online “store” in this electronic mall for government buyers to browse. In addition to providing one-stop visibility for ordering from DoD electronic catalogs, the DoD EMALL offers cross-store shopping, allowing for comparison pricing and best value decision making. The EMALL also provides one-stop visibility of order status. The EMALL provides the benefits of reduced logistics response time and improved visibility of both government and commercial sources of supply, as well as facilitating the use of the government purchase card.

## Seek additional assistance as needed in the Army and DOD marketplace

### Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)

(<http://www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm>) are located in most states and partially funded by DOD to provide small business concerns with comprehensive information on how to do business with the Department of Defense. They provide training and counseling on marketing strategies, business development, small business programs, financial and contracting issues, and procurement regulations at minimal or no cost.

### Exchange System

If your company is engaged in retail activities, visit the <http://www.aafes.com/dversty/07/supply/index.html>. The exchanges are retail operations that provide quality products and a variety of services to the men and women of the Armed Forces, retirees, reservists, and their families.

### Defense Procurement & Acquisition Policy Office (DPAP)

(<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/pdi/eb/index.html>) can provide assistance to firms getting started in the electronic marketplace.

**Online Procurement Assistance** can be found at the Procurement Reference Library at <http://ec.msfc.nasa.gov/msfc/procref.html> and the Acquisition Reform Net Virtual Library at <http://www.acqnet.gov/>.

## Do your research and market your firm well

After you have identified your customers, researched their requirements, and familiarized yourself with the procurement regulations and strategies, it is time to market your product or service. *The first presentation of your company's capabilities should be directly to the Small Business Specialists at the activities that buy your products or services.* The *Small Business Specialist* will provide you additional points of contact for marketing the customer and pertinent information regarding long-range acquisition forecasts. Remember, the Department of the Army seeks quality solutions for its requirements in a timely and cost effective manner.

The United States Army Corps Engineers small business contacts are listed at: [http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/hqsb/poc/ACE\\_SADBU.xls](http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/hqsb/poc/ACE_SADBU.xls)

Good Luck