



Marketing to Federal Customers: What Every Small Business Should Know

You'll need a solid Federal marketing plan to compete as a small business in the Federal marketplace. Start your path in Government procurement with knowledge of the market's demand for your products and services.

This will allow you to:

- Distinguish your products and services from competitors
- Develop a data-driven plan to find opportunities with the resources listed below
- Harness the data available, assess your upcoming opportunities, and follow your strategic plan to market your small business and compete

Follow these steps to start the Federal Contracting Process!

Step 1: Get Registered and Certified

- First, **register** your business in the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://go.usa.gov/xFNkS>.
- Learn more about required vendor registrations: <https://go.usa.gov/xFR4S>.

You must register in SAM before you can be awarded a Federal contract. You'll need the following to register:

- **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code:** Federal agencies use NAICS codes to conduct market research, locate viable small businesses for contract opportunities, and determine size standards. Search for your company's NAICS code at <https://go.usa.gov/xHsUz>.

- **Small Business Size Standards:** Make sure your organization qualifies as a small business for Government contracting purposes. Use the Small Business Administration (SBA) Size Standards Tool to learn more: <https://go.usa.gov/xFR2U>.
- **Small Business Certifications:** Learn if your business qualifies for set-aside contracts in any of the below categories:
 - Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB)
 - Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB)
 - Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB)
 - Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Small Businesses

Find more information about small set-asides and business certifications: <https://www.gsa.gov/setasides>.

Step 2: Identify Potential Contracting Opportunities

- **Use SAM** to find active contract opportunities greater than \$25,000, which include: summaries of proposed contract actions; solicitations; and associated information. <https://go.usa.gov/xFNkS>.

- **Explore Agency Forecast Data:** Federal agencies must forecast upcoming contract opportunities, including those for small business.
 - Use your NAICS code to search the **Forecast of Contracting Opportunities Tool** to identify future procurements with GSA and other Federal agencies. Search the tool at <https://www.fbf.gov>.
 - Review **Agency Recurring Procurement Forecasts** to locate future contracting opportunities with all Federal agencies. Visit <https://go.usa.gov/xFRbn> for a list of agency forecasts.

Step 3: Conduct Research

- **Explore the Federal Market:** Use data tools such as **SAM.gov's Databank** and **USA Spending.gov**, to research:
 - Which Federal agencies and departments are buying your product or services?
 - How much are they buying?
 - Have they awarded any set-asides?
 - What is your competition doing?

Access the SAM Databank at <https://go.usa.gov/xFRT5> and USA Spending at <https://go.usa.gov/xFRTR>.

Learn more about free small business data and trends at SBA's Business Guide that will assist you with your market research and competitive analysis. <https://go.usa.gov/xFRTQ>

Analyze and use the data to create an effective strategy for achieving success.

Step 4: Develop Your Federal Marketing Plan

- **Know** your competitive position and what distinguishes your product or service from your competition. Clearly outline what makes your small business stand out. Effectively communicate these factors to Federal agencies.
- **Assess** the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of your small business in the Federal procurement market. Capitalize on your strengths, know your weaknesses and overcome them, develop a plan to address market needs, and seize available opportunities.
- **Identify** the Federal agencies and departments that you want to target. Focus on those agencies where you have the most opportunity based on your market research.
- **Create and Develop** a Federal marketing and sales plan to outline the activities that you will conduct to meet your goals. Ensure you use data to run your marketing and promotions. Learn more about marketing and sales plans from SBA: <https://go.usa.gov/xFRT6>.

- **Be proactive** in marketing your business. Once you are a Government contractor, you must continue your marketing efforts and revise your business strategy to compete in the Federal marketplace.

Additional Resources:

Get help developing your Federal marketing plan, crafting an effective 30-second elevator speech, and creating a strong capabilities statement to outline your core competencies.

- Sign up for GSA OSDBU's free marketing webinar at <https://go.usa.gov/xFRQB> or view recorded training events at <https://go.usa.gov/xFRQ9>.
- Contact your local:
 - **Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC):** <https://www.aptac-us.org/>
 - **SBA:** <https://go.usa.gov/xFE4x>
 - **SCORE:** <https://www.score.org/> and
 - **Small Business Development Center:** <https://americassbdc.org/>.



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Contact your local Small Business Specialist: <https://www.gsa.gov/smallbizsupport>

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Access more resources at: <https://interact.gsa.gov/groups/small-business-solutions>