

Introduction to Federal Government Contracting



Please reach out to NH PTAC at govcontracting@livefree.nh.gov
or visit our website at www.nheconomy.com/ptac

All of our services are free and confidential

Introduction and Participant Guide

- ▶ Muting
- ▶ Chat function
- ▶ Slides will be posted at www.NHEconomy.com/ptac under Training Presentations

What is NH PTAC?

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- ▶ Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- ▶ 96 PTAC Centers Nationally
- ▶ Authorized by Congress in 1985
 - ✓ *To Level the Playing Field, in support of the Small Business Set-Aside Program*
 - ✓ *Purpose is to assist Small Businesses; we will assist large businesses as well.*
- ▶ Funded by DOD
- ▶ Assist with Federal, State, and Local contracting

NH PTAC: Our Services

- ▶ Step-by-step counseling in federal contracting, as well as assistance with state and local.
 - Finding the opportunities
 - Understanding the 'government speak'
 - Bidding and invoicing
- ▶ Training workshops/webinars
- ▶ Small Business Matchmaking events
(registration fee applies)
- ▶ Referrals for business guidance on topics outside of our scope

Step by Step Support

- ▶ Step 1 – Is there a market for you?
- ▶ Step 2 – Do you have a good foundation for government contracting?
- ▶ Step 3 – Does the market make strategic sense for your business?
- ▶ Step 4 – The dreaded “Red Tape”
- ▶ Step 5 – Finding opportunities
- ▶ Step 6 – Preparing bids/proposals
- ▶ Step 7 – Issues in contracting – After the bid

Step 1 –

Is there a market for you?

- ▶ Required government transparency provides windows into procurements:
 - ▶ What they buy
 - ▶ How much?
 - ▶ How often?
 - ▶ Who from?
 - ▶ Pricing
- ▶ We can access this through
 - ▶ www.SAM.gov
 - ▶ www.USASpending.gov
 - ▶ www.FPDS.gov

A Few Words About SAM.gov

- ▶ “System for Awards Management – SAM”
- ▶ A **FREE** place to register for federal contracts
- ▶ You will find bid opportunities there
- ▶ You can research buying history there
- ▶ Plus much more.
- ▶ First step: set up a FREE login.gov account. This will enable you to log in to SAM.gov - <https://www.login.gov/>
- ▶ Later, if you decide to move forward, you will register your entity in SAM

Step 2 - Foundation

What you need before you pursue government contracts/subcontracts:

- ▶ Adequate financial resources
- ▶ Well-developed general business systems
- ▶ **Drive, determination, & patience**
- ▶ A competitive advantage
- ▶ Demand for products/services
- ▶ Competitive pricing and margins
- ▶ And usually:
 - ▶ Effective quality system,
 - ▶ Bonding, insurance
- ▶ And sometimes security clearances

Readiness: How is B2G Different from B2B?

- ▶ Red Tape
 - REGISTRATIONS & REGULATIONS
 - Timing, Invoicing
- ▶ Fairness, Openness & Transparency
 - Finding Opportunities, and Awards
 - Multiple sources
 - Learning about your competition
- ▶ Social and Other Policy Goals
- ▶ Conservative, risk-averse buyer – not agile

Readiness: Regulations

Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)

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▶ <https://www.acquisition.gov/browse/index/far>

~ 2000 pages

- ▶ FAR Chapters contain most of the rules that pertain to procurement
- ▶ FAR clauses insert those rules into your contract
- ▶ You agree to many FAR clauses during SAM registration.
- ▶ Often many additional clauses added to each individual contract.

Fairness, Openness & Transparency

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- ▶ Requirements to publish Opportunities and amendments
- ▶ Requirements to publish Awards
- ▶ Debriefing Rights
- ▶ Access to documents
- ▶ Access to contact people
- ▶ Opportunity to ask questions
- ▶ Opportunity to comment on (proposed) rule changes
- ▶ OSDBU – Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
- ▶ Congressional assistance

Step 3 - Is it for you?

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- ▶ Sure, the government buys what you sell, but:
 - ▶ Can you compete?
 - ▶ Market research:
 - [USASpending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) &
 - [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)
 - ❑ Can you make money?
 - ❑ Is it consistent with your other business goals?

Step 4 – the **Red Tape**

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ALL FEDERAL REGISTRATIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE

Beware of illegitimate emails and phone calls!!

- ▶ TIN IRS **FREE**
- ▶ SAM System for Award Management **FREE**
- ▶ DSBS Dynamic Small Business Search **FREE**
 - ▶ **Tip:** prepare a descriptive narrative and list of keywords before you do your SAM registration. Then you can just cut-and-paste this into place in DSBS.

More Red Tape - Certifications

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- ▶ Small Business Size Standards
 - ▶ Based on [North American Industrial Classification System](#)
 - ▶ Each NAICS code has a size standard
 - ▶ Published [here](#) and updated periodically
- ▶ Self-Certifications
 - ▶ Small business, SDB, WOSB, SDVOSB
- ▶ Formal Certifications
 - ▶ HUBZone, SDVOSB, VOSB, 8(a) SDB
- ▶ Security related
 - ▶ ITAR, EAR, JCP
 - ▶ **CMMC – Cybersecurity**

Step 5 – Finding Opportunities

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- ▶ Direct & Subcontracting Opportunities
 - ▶ Market Research to
 - ▶ Identify targets
 - ▶ Assess competition
- ▶ SAM Contract Opportunities and MyBidmatch for solicitations
- ▶ On any given day, there are ~300,000 public sector bid opportunities in play. The challenge isn't to find them all, it's to **disqualify** the 99.999% (or more) you don't care about.

Using SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)

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- ▶ Linked to your SAM registration
- ▶ Keywords and Capabilities Narrative
- ▶ Federal contracting officers' Market Research (Opportunities might find you!)
- ▶ Public information (Primes might find you!)
- ▶ Includes your socio-economic status and certifications, as applicable
- ▶ ***Small Businesses only***

Links to Finding the Opportunities

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- ▶ [SAM.gov](#) (Contract Opportunities)
- ▶ [DIBBS](#)
- ▶ [iSearch](#)
- ▶ Individual Agency Websites
 - Including social media websites
- ▶ [State of NH Purchase & Property](#)
- ▶ *NH PTAC Bidmatch Service!*
- ▶ List of [NH Town Officials contacts](#) (pro-active “pavement pounding”)
- ▶ Newspapers

Step 6 - Preparing Bids/Proposals

- ▶ There is an art to preparing successful bids
 - ▶ Do your homework
 - ▶ Put yourself in the reader's shoes
 - ▶ FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS!
 - ▶ Ask questions if you have them
- ▶ To get it right, it's important to budget your time
 - ▶ Read carefully enough to make a go/no-go decision quickly
 - ▶ Follow the opportunity
 - ▶ Formulate and submit questions
 - ▶ Be ready to submit well before deadline

You've submitted a bid – now what?

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- ▶ Understanding the mysteries of government timing
- ▶ “Discussions”
- ▶ Award
- ▶ Protests

Step 7 – You've Won! Now What?

- ▶ Re-read your contract
- ▶ Understand your rights & obligations
- ▶ Establish communication with your customer
- ▶ Understand the role of the Contracting Officer
- ▶ Understand the needs of the end user.
- ▶ Monitor schedule & costs carefully
- ▶ Set up in government invoicing system
- ▶ Communicate about questions and problems
- ▶ If you're new to government payment systems, ask us for help.

SB Subcategories

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- ▶ SDB, WOSB, EDWOSB, SDVOSB, HUBZone
 - ▶ Ownership & Control – legal & real
 - ▶ Day to day management
 - ▶ Owner criteria – financial, qualifications, role(s)
 - ▶ Size (including affiliates)
- ▶ *Additionally:*
 - ▶ *Mentor-Protégé*
 - ▶ *Teaming & Joint Ventures*

WOSB/EDWOSB

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- ▶ SBA certified, or third party certified*
- ▶ Must be small in primary NAICS code
- ▶ Must be at least 51% unconditionally owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens
- ▶ Day-to-day operations management and long-term decision-making by women
- ▶ ED must also meet economic disadvantage criteria
- ▶ Set-asides/sole-source only in particular NAICS Codes
- ▶ Must be SBA Certified to receive set-asides

**Although Self-certification in SAM is an option, does not provide opportunity for business to compete for set-asides or sole source contracts.*

Economically Disadvantaged

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- ▶ Female owners must have **personal net worth less than \$750,000** (excluding home equity, retirement accounts and the business value)
- ▶ **\$350,000 or less each** in adjusted gross income (3 year average)
- ▶ **\$6,000,000 or less** in personal assets, excluding qualified retirement accounts
- ▶ Title 13, Part 127, Subpart B of Code of Federal Regulations

Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB/8(a))

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- ▶ Must be at least 51% unconditionally owned and controlled by U.S. citizens who are socially and economically disadvantaged per CFR 124.105
 - **Social disadvantage:** members of certain racial or ethnic groups (Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans and Asian Pacific Americans) are presumed to be socially disadvantaged by SBA
 - **Economic disadvantage:** same as ED criteria discussed already
 - Must be small in primary NAICS and contract NAICS (at time of award)
- ▶ SBA 8(a) certification OR self-certify in SAM
 - ▶ *CAUTION: Self-certification in SAM attests that you meet all SDB qualifications.*

Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business

- ▶ 3% overall goal
- ▶ Self-certify in SAM for most federal agencies
- ▶ Must be at least 51% unconditionally owned and controlled by one or more service-disabled veterans (*valid, service-connected disability required*)
- ▶ Veteran must manage day-to-day operations and make long-term decisions
- ~~▶ **VA ONLY** – Vets First Contracting Program verification required to compete for set-asides or sole-source contracts~~
 - ~~▶ VA also offers VOSB Verification~~
- ▶ **CHANGE IS COMING! SBA** will take over the certification and it will become a requirement government-wide.

HUBZone

“Historically Underutilized Business Zone”

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- ▶ 3% overall goal
- ▶ Designed to help small firms in certain communities gain access to federal contract opportunities
- ▶ Typically areas of low median household incomes or high unemployment, or both
- ▶ HUBZone Map frozen until June 30, 2023; normally this is updated every 5 years
- ▶ SBA certification required
 - ▶ Annual recertification
 - ▶ Certification verified in DSBS

Remember - Step by Step

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NH PTAC is here to help!

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- ▶ We offer FREE assistance with all these registrations, certifications and more:
 - ▶ Strategy development and marketing techniques
 - ▶ Identifying bid opportunities and understanding bid requirements and how to respond
 - ▶ Learning/Knowing the competition
 - ▶ Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) – “the rules of the road.”
 - ▶ Payment processes

Some Other Sources of Help:

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- ▶ **SBA NH District Office**
<https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/nh/concord>
- ▶ **Center for Women and Enterprise (CWE)**
<http://www.cweonline.org/Default.aspx>
- ▶ **Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)**
www.cweonline.org/vboc
- ▶ **SBDC (Small Business Development Center)**
<https://www.nhsbdc.org/>
- ▶ **SCORE** www.score.org
- ▶ **Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)**
www.nhmep.org

How do I get started with NH PTAC?

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- ▶ Go to the website and answer our “Become a Client” questionnaire (www.nheconomy.com/ptac)
- ▶ Email us: govcontracting@livefree.nh.gov
- ▶ Meet with us in Concord (live or via Zoom)
- ▶ Request a site visit – we’ll come to you.
- ▶ Outside NH? Find your PTAC [here](#).