

Introduction to Federal Government Contracting

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New Hampshire Department of
**BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

New Hampshire Procurement Technical Assistance Center
www.nheconomy.com/sell-to-the-government

Introduction and Participant Guide

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

What is NH PTAC?

- 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

Big companies have specialized staff for these things, small companies don't.

Readiness: Regulations

Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)

- <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.

Step 3 - Is it for you?

- Sure, the government buys what you sell, but:
 - Can you compete?
 - Market research:
 - USASpending.gov &
 - SAM.gov
 - ❑ Can you make money?
 - ❑ Is it consistent with your other business goals?

Step 4 – the **Red Tape**

ALL FEDERAL REGISTRATIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE

Beware of illegitimate emails and phone calls!!

- ▶ TIN IRS **FREE**
 - ▶ DUNS Dun & Bradstreet **FREE – Going Away 4/4**
 - ▶ 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

- ▶ 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**
- ▶ **Current topic – vaccine mandate**

Step 5 – Finding Opportunities

- 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.

Links to Finding the Opportunities

- [SAM.gov](#) (FedBizOpps/FBO, beta.sam)
- [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!
- 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?

- 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.

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 & Ombudsman
- Congressional assistance

Using SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS)

- 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***

SB Subcategories

- 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

- 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

- ▶ 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))

- 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

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“**Historically Underutilized Business **Zone”****

- 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!

- ▶ We offer FREE assistance with all of 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:

- **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](#).