



Week 5, Journey 6: Government Contracting

The Iowa Center Women's Business Center
Iowa Center for Economic Success



Teleza Daniels

Program Director of The Iowa Center WBC

TJDaniels@theiowacenter.org



Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

Contents

Excursions	3
Government As Your Customer	3
Government Contracting Opportunities.....	3
Government Subcontracting Opportunities	5
Set-Aside Certifications.....	6
Federal Solicitations.....	8
General Services Administration Contracts	9



Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

Excursions

Government As Your Customer (3 minutes)

Government Contracting Opportunities (16 minutes)

Government Subcontracting Opportunities (11 minutes)

Set-Aside Certifications (31 minutes)

Federal Solicitations (27 minutes)

General Services Administration Contracts (24 minutes)

Total Time: 112 minutes

Government As Your Customer

As an entrepreneur you're constantly on the lookout for new customers and untapped markets to grow your business. One potential market for your product or service is the government. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to know to understand the government as a customer.

- **Fact, Fiction and Benefits of Government Contracting**
 - Learn about the benefits of government contracting for growing your business.

Conclusion – Government As Your Customer

You've read about the government as a customer and discovered that selling to the government could be a potential area of opportunity for your business.

- Because the government is the world's largest buyer of products and services, it's valuable to understand how federal contracting can help you grow your business.

To continue your exploration:

- [SBA Government Contracting Guide](#)
- [7\(j\) Management and Technical Assistance Program](#)
- [Reforms to Increase Equity and Level the Playing Field for Underserved Small Business Owners](#)

Government Contracting Opportunities

As a small business owner, you might've considered the government as a potential customer to grow your business. To get ready for your first government contract opportunity, you will need to understand the different levels of government, search for contracting opportunities at each level, and decide which type of contractor role is the best fit for you and your business. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to do to evaluate potential contracting opportunities with the government.

- **Finding Government Contracting Opportunities**
 - Search verified government web-based resources for the right government contracting opportunity for your business.

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- **Assess Your Readiness for Contracting**
 - Assess your business' readiness for prime or subcontracting and prepare to register your business as a government contractor.
- **Key Tips for Government Contracting**
 - Read tips on pursuing government contracts from experienced entrepreneurs September Myres of Sundance Consulting Inc. and Rebecca Reeves of Reeves & Associates Consulting and Training Inc.

Conclusion – Government Contracting Opportunities

The U.S. government is the largest customer in the world. So it's no surprise that getting involved with government contracting is an exciting time for a small business. With the right information, tips and resources, small businesses can identify and prepare for the right contracting opportunities.

- Government contracting opportunities are available at the **federal**, **state** and **local** levels. In addition to searching the several government databases (including the ones you see linked here), explore individual government agency websites, such as the Department of Defense or the Department of Education, to review the available contracting opportunities.
- Prime or subcontractor status is based on the type of contract you secure for a particular project. Once you're ready to register your business as a government contractor, you'll need to:
 - Identify your NAICS code.
 - Complete your SAM registration.
 - Acquire a DUNS number.
 - Verify that your small business meets the SBA's size standards.
 - Make sure that your business is in compliance with all laws and regulations.

Note: According to the General Services Administration (GSA), "Starting in December 2020, the D-U-N-S® number will no longer be the official identifier for doing business with the U.S. Government. The new system will be a unique Entity ID generated in the System for Award Management (SAM). For more information, visit gsa.gov/entityid."¹

- *"If I had to start over knowing what I know now, in terms of seeking federal contracts, I would definitely want to find a mentor who has already 'broken into this market' so to speak. In addition, I would have sought out the extensive array of SBA business tools and training much sooner than I did."*—Rebecca Reeves, Founder of Reeves & Associates Consulting and Training Inc.

To continue your exploration:

- [System for Award Management \(SAM\) Contract Opportunities](#)
- [Forecast of Contracting Opportunities Tool](#)
- [The Contracting Opportunity Finder](#)
- [Subcontracting Network \(SubNet\)](#)
- [The National Association of State Procurement Officials](#)
- [State and Territory Business Resources](#)

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- [Local Governments](#)
- [Federal Procurement Data System—Next Generation](#)
- [USASpending.gov](#)
- [Contracting Officer Representative Guide to Statements of Work, Performance Work Statements and Statement of Objectives](#)
- [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#)
- [Unique Entity Identifier Update](#)
- [SBA's Size Standards Tool](#)
- [FAR Subpart 8.4—Federal Supply Schedules](#)
- [FAR Part 13—Simplified Acquisitions](#)
- [FAR Part 14—Sealed Bidding](#)
- [FAR Part 15—Contracting by Negotiation](#)
- [FAR Part 16—Types of Contracts](#)
- [FAR Part 19—Small Business Programs](#)

Government Subcontracting Opportunities

Are you interested in working with the government but also new to the government contracting arena? Becoming a small business subcontractor could be a great starting point for your business to get involved with government projects. Here, you'll explore the necessary information and resources to help you prepare to compete for government subcontracts. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to do to identify how to find subcontracting opportunities.

- **Subcontracting Resource Guide**
 - Determine if your small business meets the requirements to become a subcontractor. Then explore subcontracting terms and resources helpful to pursuing federal contracts as a subcontractor.
- **Securing Subcontracting Opportunities**
 - Find out how entrepreneur September Myre's environmental services business, Sundance Consulting Inc., approaches government subcontracts.

Conclusion – Government Subcontracting Opportunities

Subcontracting is an excellent option for government contracting. As a subcontractor, you'll work for a prime contractor instead of dealing directly with the government. This will give you the opportunity to gain valuable insights from the prime contractor's expertise.

- A checklist of basic requirements to become a small business subcontractor can be your starting point in exploring this opportunity. For example, you'll answer the questions "Have you registered your business in the System for Award Management (SAM)?" and "Does your business qualify as small based on SBA's size requirements?" Once you've determined that you meet the requirements for pursuing subcontracts, find the right subcontracting opportunity for your business by using resources such as the Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) and the SBA's Subcontracting Network (SubNet).
- According to September Myres, founder of Sundance Consulting Inc., the highlights of Sundance's subcontracting process are as follows:
 - approaching large firms

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- maintaining a stellar reputation
- prospecting in advance
- encouraging prospecting by partners
- delivering an experienced team

To continue your exploration:

- [SBA's Size Standards Tool](#)
- [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- [FAR Subpart 19.7—Small Business Programs](#)
- [FAR 52.219-8—Utilization of Small Business Concerns](#)
- [FAR 52.219-9—Small Business Subcontracting Plan](#)
- [Procurement Classification Codes](#)
- [Subcontracting Network \(SubNet\)](#)
- [Dynamic Small Business Search](#)
- [Contract Opportunities](#)
- [Directory of Federal Government Prime Contractors with Subcontracting Plans](#)
- [Procurement Technical Assistance Centers \(PTACs\)](#)
- [Federal Procurement Data System—Next Generation](#)
- [SBA's Mentor Protégé Program](#)
- [SBA's 8\(a\) Business Development Program](#)

Set-Aside Certifications

Did you know every government agency sets aside a percentage of their contracting dollars for small businesses like yours? When you're considering government contracting for your business, it's essential to know what types of government contracting programs are available and what you need to do to get involved in government contracting. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to do to plan for federal government contracting certifications.

- **Getting Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM)**
 - Find out what SAM is and why and how you should create your SAM account.
- **The Four Main Federal Government Contracting Certification Programs**
 - Explore the main government contracting programs available to small businesses, their benefits, and the information you'll need to gather to start the certification process for these programs.
- **Small Business Contracting Certifications**
 - Read how entrepreneur Rebecca Reeves leveraged multiple government certifications to her business' advantage and what the certification process was like at her business, Reeves & Associates Consulting and Training Inc.

Conclusion – Set-Aside Certifications

Now that you're familiar with SAM and have knowledge about the main government contracting programs that are set aside for small businesses, you're better positioned to evaluate the programs that are right for your business and get on the government's radar for prospective opportunities.

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- The System for Award Management (SAM) is a U.S. government database of potential and existing federal contractors. To get involved in government contracting, you will have to create your SAM account/profile, which is essentially your business' resume. Before creating your SAM profile, you'll need to do some preparatory steps such as having your DUNS number and TIN (taxpayer identification number) ready and registering with login.gov.

Note: According to GSA, "Starting in April 2022, the DUNS number will no longer be the official identifier for doing business with the U.S. Government." The new system will be a Unique Entity ID generated in the System for Award Management (SAM). For more information, visit gsa.gov/entityid.

- The main government contracting programs include: 8(a) Business Development, HUBZone, Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB), Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and other programs, such as the SBA Mentor-Protégé Program (SBA MPP). The WOSB program, for example, provides a level playing field for women business owners to win federal contracts. These contracts are for industries where women-owned small businesses are underrepresented.
- "At the federal level, I focused primarily on the woman-owned small business (WOSB) and 8(a) certifications. (We're now graduated from the 8(a) program.) I was clueless about how important and valuable it was to have a variety of certifications that allowed the company to compete in the federal sector. After finding that there were federal 'set-asides' that we could pursue if we had certain certifications, I began to understand that certifications were critical to our success as a small business."—Rebecca Reeves, founder of Reeves & Associates Consulting and Training Inc. Reeves continues to mentor other women entrepreneurs in the community through the SBA Mentor-Protégé program.

To continue your exploration:

- [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- [Unique Entity Identifier Update](#)
- [Login.gov](#)
- [Login.gov FAQs](#)
- [certify.SBA.gov](#)
- [USASpending.gov](#)
- [SBA's Size Standards Tool](#)
- [SBA Form 1010—Business](#)
- [SBA's Local Assistance Search Tool](#)
- [8\(a\) Business Development Program](#)
- [HUBZone Program](#)
- [HUBZone Map](#)
- [HUBZone Supporting Document Request](#)
- [Register Your Business](#)
- [Vets First Verification Program](#)
- [Joint Venture Agreement](#)
- [Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses \(SDVOSB\) Program](#)
- [ChallengeHER—Opportunities for Women in Federal Contracting](#)
- [Online SAM Registration](#)
- [IRS Form 4506-T—Request for Transcript of Tax Return](#)
- [Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program](#)

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- [Frequently Asked Questions about WOSB or EDWOSB](#)
- [Size Appeals](#)
- [SBA Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Procurement Technical Assistance Center \(PTACs\)](#)
- [7\(j\) Management and Technical Assistance Program](#)
- [Reforms to Increase Equity and level the Playing Field for Underserved Small Business Owners](#)

Federal Solicitations

Entering the arena of government solicitations can bring about exciting growth opportunities for your small business. To successfully navigate and respond to solicitations, you'll need a solid understanding of the terms and requirements included in them. You'll explore how to find and assess the solicitations that are right for your business and review the three-phase proposal process for key practices when responding to solicitations. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to do to analyze the components of the federal solicitation process.

- **What Are Federal Solicitations?**
 - Review the common types of solicitations, their specific sections and the contracting forms that the government uses to provide equal opportunities to the vendor community to bid for contracts.
- **Responding to Government Solicitations**
 - Find out how to prepare and submit a proposal by reviewing the three-phase proposal process: proposal planning, developing a proposal, and submitting the proposal and following up.
- **Find and Evaluate Government Solicitations**
 - Locate a government solicitation using the resources provided, assess if it's right for your business and make a "go" or a "no go" decision.

Conclusion – Federal Solicitations

When engaging with government solicitations, you'll want to spend the time and resources to thoroughly understand and implement the government's requirements that are clearly documented in the solicitations they release to the vendor community.

- The most common types of solicitations include: invitation for bids (IFB), request for proposal (RFP), request for information (RFI) and sources sought. Most solicitations have a uniform contract format, containing multiple sections that clearly communicate the product or service requirement and how vendors must prepare, format and deliver their responses/proposals.
- *"Success in government contracting is all about preparation and being selective about the acquisitions you choose to pursue. Proposals can be labor intensive and costly to put together. When you are ready to go for it, align yourself with businesses that complement your service offerings and put together a plan. If something changes and you need to reassess, it's totally fine to step back and change your mind. Your time is valuable so put it toward the efforts that you know you can knock out of the park!"*—Kristen Parks, CEO, Eleven Peppers Studios
- Determining if a solicitation is right for your business primarily involves assessing these factors: the opportunity's fit, your business needs and your competitors. After your assessment, if you

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

decide not to respond to the solicitation, consider sharing feedback with the government about why you made this decision; this will help mature your relationship with the government.

To continue your exploration:

- [How to Prepare Government Contract Proposals](#)
- [Sources Sought Notices—An Opportunity](#)
- [Understanding the Government Solicitation Bid Package](#)
- [Common Federal Contracting Terms](#)
- [Contract Opportunities](#)
- [SubContracting Network\(SubNet\)—Public Search](#)
- [Contracting Assistance—Find a Procurement Technical Assistance Center](#)

General Services Administration Contracts

The General Services Administration (GSA) is a federal agency whose primary goal is to make it easier for businesses to sell to the government. Ever heard of the term “Multiple Award Schedules”? GSA uses Schedules to connect federal buyers with vendors offering the products and services they need. Here, we’ll walk through why you may want to consider contracting with GSA. This excursion within the Government Contracting journey will guide you through what you need to know to analyze opportunities for General Services Administration (GSA) contracts

- **Understanding General Services Administration Contracts**
 - Read all about GSA and their buying process—particularly how GSA’s Multiple Award Schedules work.
- **Preparing for GSA Contracting**
 - Walk through the first steps to get ready to contract with GSA: government needs research, registration and GSA-specific training.
- **Your Approach to GSA Contracting**
 - Choose the method of GSA contracting that best suits your business, and start looking for contract opportunities that align with your approach.

Conclusion – General Services Administration Contracts

If your business offers the products and services the General Services Administration is looking to buy, contracting with GSA may be an advantageous route for your company to take. As you set about contracting with GSA, you’ll also want to look into set-aside certifications and assess whether prime contracting or subcontracting is right for your business.

- “One way to think of the MAS [Multiple Award Schedule] contract is like being granted a ‘fishing license.’ GSA provides the ‘license’ (or contract) while you provide the boat, the rod and reel, the expertise, the bait, etc. There are plenty of fish out there, but you need to catch them. We don’t drop them in the boat for you.” —General Services Administration¹
- GSA is like the office manager for the government, helping federal agencies get their hands on the things they need, from staplers to consultants. There are a number of resources that can help you find out about federal market needs.

Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

- Keep in mind a range of possible GSA contracting methods available to your business, each with their own advantages: Multiple Award Schedules (MAS), Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) and partnerships (Contractor Team Arrangements, joint ventures or subcontracting).

To continue your exploration:

- [Products & Services](#)
- [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#)
- [One Acquisition Solution for Integrated Services \(OASIS\)](#)
- [GSA Advantage!](#)
- [eBuy](#)
- [GSA Global Supply](#)
- [8\(a\) STARS III Governmentwide Acquisition Contract \(GWAC\)](#)
- [Alliant 2 Small Business](#)
- [VETS 2 Governmentwide Acquisition Contract \(GWAC\)](#)
- [GSA Small Business GWAC Bootcamp](#)
- [Contract Opportunities](#)
- [Opportunities for Small Businesses](#)
- [Women-Owned Small Business \(WOSB\)](#)
- [List of GSA Schedules](#)
- [Subcontracting Directory for Small Businesses](#)
- [GSA Schedules](#)
- [Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts \(GWACs\)](#)
- [Forecast of Contracting Opportunities](#)
- [Federal Procurement Data System](#)
- [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#)
- [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
- [Small Business Size Standards](#)
- [8\(a\) Small Business Development Program](#)
- [HUBZone Program](#)
- [Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses Program](#)
- [Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program](#)
- [Vendor Education Center](#)
- [Vendor Toolbox](#)
- [SBA Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Subcontracting](#)
- [Contractor Team Arrangements](#)
- [Joint Ventures](#)
- [GSA eLibrary](#)
- [Guide to Preparing a Schedule Offer](#)
- [Set-Asides and Special Interest Groups](#)



Ascent: Journey 6 – Government Contracting

The Iowa Center Women's Business Center
Iowa Center for Economic Success
2210 Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50312
515.283.0940
Info@theiowacenter.org

