



Your Approach to GSA Contracting

When Opportunity Knocks

STEP 1: Consider Your Approach

How do you want to sell to GSA?

Maybe you'd like to get on one of GSA's **Multiple Award Schedules** or look into upcoming **Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)**. Another option could be to partner with one or more other businesses through **subcontracting**, a **Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA)** or a **joint venture**. For more information on each option, see the definitions of these terms below.

Tip: Need more basics on GSA? Check out the earlier paths in Ascent's General Services Administration Contracts and the [first steps for small businesses interested in GSA](#) page for more information.

- **Multiple Award Schedules:** long-term governmentwide contracts that give federal, state, and local buyers or agencies access to products and services at discount pricing¹
- **Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs):** pre-competed, multiple-award, IDIQ contracts primarily for information technology (IT) products and services²
- **Subcontracting:** a contractor hiring another individual or business to complete a project for the government
- **Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA):** a contract in which two or more contractors work together to meet the needs of a customer
- **Joint venture:** a type of general partnership that lasts for a limited period of time or until the partners file as an ongoing partnership. Through the SBA's [Mentor-Protege Program](#), small businesses can create joint ventures with SBA approved mentor protégé agreements (MPAs) to pursue federal government contracts.

Each contracting arrangement has its own advantages. Which approach makes the most sense for your company?

Review the description and benefits for each approach and choose the one most suited to your business needs. For some approaches, a link to training is also provided.

Approach to GSA Contracting	Description	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Multiple Award Schedules (also referred to as “GSA Schedules” and “Federal Supply Schedules”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A marketplace connecting vendors (sellers) on Schedules (aka preapproved vendors) with federal customers (buyers). • Most commonly used form of GSA contracting—over 12 million products and services available.³ <p>For training, check out GSA’s Pathway to Success in the Vendor Education Center. This training is mandatory for getting on a GSA Schedule.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your business can get involved in contracting on a rolling basis (versus a certain deadline). • Continuous acceptance allows you to enter the market when you’re ready.⁴ • Getting on a Schedule gives your business exposure to government buyers.⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily for information technology (IT) products and services • Contracts that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-competed: A fixed group of vendors is selected for the length of a contract.⁶ • multiple-award: Contracts are awarded to more than one vendor.⁷ • IDIQ: The precise quantity of a product or service that will be bought by GSA during the contract period is unknown.⁸ <p>For training, check out GSA Small Business GWAC Bootcamp.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You don’t need a certain number of years of experience or annual revenue to qualify.⁹ • Contracts are offered to multiple vendors (meaning there are a pool of contract winners versus just one).¹⁰

Approach to GSA Contracting	Description	Benefits
Partnerships		
<input type="checkbox"/> Subcontracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a subcontractor to a business on the GSA Schedule • Most popular partnership method¹¹ <p>Browse the GSA Subcontracting Directory for opportunities to subcontract with existing GSA prime contractors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This method allows you to try out business with the government with less risk.¹² • As a subcontractor, you don't have to get on a GSA Schedule yourself.¹³
<input type="checkbox"/> Contractor Team Arrangement (CTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more GSA Schedule contractors work together to meet the needs of a customer.¹⁴ • Each CTA member must have a GSA contract or be a GSA Schedule holder. • Vendors are responsible for creating their own agreement.¹⁵ <p>For training, check out GSA Training: Contractor Team Arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors complement one another's resources and strengths.¹⁶ • By joining forces with another business, you can compete for contracts that are otherwise unavailable.¹⁷ • Responsibilities and risks are shared with your partner.¹⁸
<input type="checkbox"/> Joint Venture (JV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more companies join together to form a new legal entity to pool resources.¹⁹ • This generally requires some legal and accounting guidance.²⁰ <p>Tip: You can have a joint venture with one or more other companies and still qualify as a small business (depending on which GSA Schedule you are on).²¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The JV benefits from the past performance (aka information about a contractor's previous work) of both entities. • Costs and resources are shared with your partner.²² • You can make use of your partner's experience and market share.²³

STEP 2: Explore Opportunities

Once you've decided on your approach to selling through GSA, you're ready to seek out contracting opportunities.

Find the approach you have chosen on the checklist below to begin your search for potential contracting opportunities that may be a match for your business.

Multiple Award Schedules	Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs)	Partnerships		
		Contractor Team Arrangement	Joint Venture	Subcontracting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Find the right Schedules solicitations with GSA eLibrary²⁴ (see "View schedule contracts"). <input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself readiness questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your business' products/services fit what is being described in the Schedules solicitation?²⁵ • Can your business compete with existing contractors on GSA Schedules? (Tip: GSA Advantage! has price lists you can use to find this information).²⁶ • Do you have the time, resources and staff to respond to the solicitation and to manage the contract?²⁷ <input type="checkbox"/> Locate opportunities on beta.SAM.gov or Forecast of Contracting Opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Check out requests for quotations (RFQs) on GSA Advantage!'s eBuy. <input type="checkbox"/> Learn more about how to prepare an offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the GWACs homepage to review different contract options. <input type="checkbox"/> See if you qualify for small business GWACs like 8(a) STARS III or VETS 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Locate opportunities on beta.SAM.gov or Forecast of Contracting Opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Check out requests for quotations (RFQs) on GSA Advantage!'s eBuy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the list of approved Schedule contractors on GSA eLibrary²⁸ (see "Contractor Directory"). <input type="checkbox"/> Locate opportunities on Contract Data Reports or Forecast of Contracting Opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Check out requests for quotations (RFQs) on GSA Advantage!'s eBuy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to existing joint ventures that have successfully sold to the government.²⁹ <input type="checkbox"/> Review the contents of a joint venture agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Locate opportunities on the GSA Subcontracting Directory for Small Businesses. <input type="checkbox"/> Research existing Schedules vendors or GWAC vendors you are considering approaching with a subcontracting offer.³⁰

Do you have what you need to get started pursuing GSA contracts?

Remember to:

- ✓ Research the needs of the federal government.
- ✓ Register in the **System for Award Management (SAM)**.
- ✓ Learn your **NAICS code**. (New to NAICS? Start with a keyword search.)
- ✓ Get a **DUNS Number**.
Note: According to GSA, “By April of 2022 the federal government will stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will use a Unique Entity Identifier generated in the **System for Award Management (SAM)**.”
- ✓ Get certified for **small-business set-asides** that your business qualifies for.
- ✓ Decide which method of GSA contracting you will pursue.
- ✓ Complete appropriate training based on the contracting method you chose.
- ✓ Locate contracting opportunities in government databases such as **Contract Data Reports**, **Forecast of Contracting Opportunities** and **Subcontracting Directory for Small Businesses**.

Conclusion:

Different methods of GSA contracting—Multiple Award Schedules, GWACs, subcontracting, CTAs and joint ventures—all have their own benefits. Think about which approach may best suit your business to shed light on how to find and gain access to contracting opportunities.

¹ *GSA Schedules*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules> (accessed July 12, 2019).

² *Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC)*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/governmentwide-acquisition-contract-gwac> (accessed July 1, 2019).

³ *Choose How to Sell to GSA*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa> (accessed July 9, 2019).

⁴ *Schedules*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/schedules> (accessed July 9, 2019).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC)*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/governmentwide-acquisition-contract-gwac> (accessed July 1, 2019).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC)*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/governmentwide-acquisition-contract-gwac> (accessed July 1, 2019).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Contractor Team Arrangements*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-features/contractor-team-arrangements> (accessed July 9, 2019).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *Partnering*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/partnering> (accessed July 9, 2019).

²⁰ *Joint Ventures*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/partnering/joint-ventures> (accessed July 9, 2019).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Schedules*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/schedules> (accessed July 9, 2019).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Contractor Team Arrangements*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-features/contractor-team-arrangements> (accessed July 9, 2019).

²⁹ *Joint Ventures*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/partnering/joint-ventures> (accessed July 9, 2019).

³⁰ *Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC)*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/choose-how-to-sell-to-gsa/governmentwide-acquisition-contract-gwac> (accessed July 1, 2019).

³¹ *Unique Entity Identifier Update*, General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-press-kit/unique-entity-identifier-update> (accessed July 12, 2019).