DOING BUSINESS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD)
A Step-by-Step Approach to the Department of Defense (DoD) Marketplace

There are several basic steps every company should do to increase their ability to contract in the marketplace. Becoming a government contractor can increase your company's growth in many ways. Follow the links to prepare for doing business with the government.

1. **Identify your Product or Service.**

   It is essential to know the Product and Service Codes (PSCs) and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for your products, services, or industry in which your organization normally does business.

   PSC Manual provides codes to describe products, services, and research and development (R&D) purchased by the Federal Government. Many government product/service listings and future procurements are identified according to the PSC. Note, the PSCs related to products are often also referred to as "Federal Supply Class (FSC) codes".

   The PSC Manual is located at: https://www.acquisition.gov/psc-manual

   NAICS is the standard used by the Federal Government to classify businesses for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the United States' business economy according to the type of economic activity (process of production) in Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America.

   NAICS Codes are located at: https://www.census.gov/naics/

   The NAICS code is used to determine business size for DoD contractors along with factors such as annual revenue and number of employees. Entities registering in the System for Award Management (SAM) (see #2) for 'All Awards' will be required to identify a primary NAICS code for this and to potentially qualify for U.S. Small Business Administration certifications.

2. **Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) and Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and Commercial and Government Entity Code (CAGE) or North Atlantic Treaty Organization Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code.**

   Entities are required to register in the SAM for 'All Awards' at https://sam.gov in order to be eligible for most contract actions by the Federal Government. SAM is the official website of the Federal Government designed to hold information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. Entities may register at no cost directly on the website. User guides and webinars are available under the Help tab. Please be aware that there are businesses that offer assistance registering in SAM for a fee; you are not required to use any of these services – registration in SAM is always free if you go directly to the government website.

   As the first step of registering in SAM, new entities will obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The UEI is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov. As a part of this process,

entities will be asked to provide documentation to assist in the entity validation process. New entities should review the Entity Registration Checklist available at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration prior to starting their registration in order to ensure all documents and information needed is available.

Entities doing business with DoD will also need to have a CAGE code assigned. A CAGE Code is a five-character alphanumerical identifier. The CAGE Code is used to support procurement and acquisition processes through the Federal Government. CAGE Codes are given an expiration date of five years from the last update.

For vendors located in the United States or its territories, a CAGE code will be assigned as part of registering in SAM. Note, in very limited cases, such as for requesting a facility security clearance, a CAGE code may be obtained separately from a SAM registration at: https://cage.dla.mil/Home/UsageAgree.

For vendors located outside the United States and its territories, vendors must obtain their CAGE code (known as a NATO CAGE code or NCAGE code) through their home country's National Codification Bureau (NCB) if a NATO member or sponsored nation (see list at https://www.nato.int/structur/AC/135/index.html#/about/contacts or through the NATO Support Agency (NSPA) for vendors in other countries at https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/CageTool/home.

3. **Explore Federal and DoD Programs with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).**

DoD Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) mission is to "maximize opportunities for small businesses to contribute to national security by providing combat power for our troops and economic power for our nation." See https://business.defense.gov/ for more information.

Additional DoD Small Business Information:
- OSBP Guide to Marketing to DoD
- DoD Small Business Offices

DoD APEX Accelerators

In 1985, DoD created the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP), which is administered by the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), for the specific purpose of helping small businesses learn about doing business with DoD. In 2023, OSBP began to manage/operate PTAP under a new name, APEX Accelerators which focuses on building a strong, sustainable, and resilient U.S. supply chains by assisting a wide range of businesses that pursue and perform under contracts with the DoD, other federal agencies, state, and local governments and with government prime contractors. For details go to: https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/about-us

The SBA also offers assistance and certification in preference programs to small business concerns, go to: https://www.sba.gov/.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) helps small businesses stay competitive in the Federal market. Online and onsite Federal experts offer small businesses the training tools to succeed, visit: https://www.gsa.gov/small-business.

4. **Identify Current Federal and DoD Contract Opportunities at SAM.gov.**

View procurement notices from Federal contracting offices to find opportunities to bid for Federal business. These include pre-solicitation notices, solicitation notices, award notices and sole source notices. Manage your searches and follow notices by creating an account. Start your search at https://sam.gov/content/home DoD-developed guides for using the SAM website are available here: https://dodprocurementtoolbox.com/site-pages/contract-opportunities

5. **Familiarize Yourself with Federal and DoD Contracting Regulations and Procedures.**

Familiarize yourself with the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) https://www.acquisition.gov/ and the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) https://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/dars/dfarspgi/current/index.html.

6. **Look at Business Opportunities at the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).**

As the acquisition arm of the Federal government, GSA plays a vital role in connecting the private sector with Federal agencies fulfilling their business needs. GSA offers professional services, equipment, supplies, telecommunications, and information technology from commercial businesses to government organizations and the military through acquisition solutions from its Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). See https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/new-to-gsa-acquisitions/how-to-sell-to-the-government.

7. **Explore FedMall Contract Opportunities.**

FedMall is an e-commerce ordering system for Department of Defense (DoD), Federal, State, and authorized local Agencies to search for and acquire products from government reserves and commercial sources. Buyers will have access to tens of millions of individual items of supply, from centrally managed DoD and GSA assets to commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products. As a supplier, you will access FedMall primarily via the Supplier Portal—a dedicated website where you will register, manage your catalog items, and view purchase orders. The Supplier Portal is available at https://www.suppliers.fedmall.mil/.

8. **See Links to Other Useful Information.**

- USA Spending.gov - https://www.usaspending.gov/#/
- Defense Pricing and Contracting (DPC) - https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/index.html

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Additional information can be found at the ASD(A)/DPC website and should be visited for the most up-to-date version of this guide:
https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/doing-business-with-dod.html

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As of 07/21/2023