



Winning Small Business Contracts and Grants

I want a federal contract. What do I need to know?

- There are major bodies of rules and regulations that govern the [federal contracting process](#). Both the government and contractors comply with the existing law—the **Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)** or **Defense Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS)** in addition to agency specific rules.
- There are different contract types that all businesses can bid for:
 - Fixed-Price contracts as sealed bidding or negotiated
 - Cost-reimbursement contracts
 - [Small Business Subcontracting](#)
- More [steps](#) you need to take before you can bid on a contract.
 - Obtain a Dun & Bradstreet ([DUNS](#)) Number to identify the physical location of your business.
 - Register your business with the System of Award Management ([SAM](#)).
 - Find the NAICS Codes for Your Company [NAICS Code](#).
 - Obtain your Federal Tax Identification Number ([EIN](#)) and Standard Industrial Classification ([SIN](#)).
 - Obtain [Past Performance](#) Evaluations to include in your bid material and know which contracts you qualify for as an offeror.
- Contract opportunities are listed at the **Federal Business Opportunities** website ([FedBizOpps](#)) and in the **Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS)**. There are government-wide contracts, like the [GSA Schedules](#), available to contractors, allowing Federal agencies to choose from approved suppliers directly for products and some services.
- Contracting [resources](#) help businesses prepare proposals once they are all registered.
 - The SBA has prepared a [workbook](#) that walks through each step of preparing a proposal.
 - The SBA has **Procurement Center Representatives (PCR)** to assist small businesses in obtaining federal contracts through six Area Offices across the U.S. and its territories.
 - There are also **Commercial Market Representatives (CMR)** who are government contracting staff at the SBA stationed in area offices as well.
 - Many federal agencies have an **Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)** or an **Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP)** to identify opportunities to incorporate small businesses as vendors to their agencies.

I'm certified to bid on government contracts, but are there any specific programs I should know about?

- The government-wide goal is at least 23% of federal contract dollars go to small businesses; at least 5% to women-owned small businesses and small disadvantaged businesses; and 3% to Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.
- There are also [Small Business Set-Asides](#) that limit competition for contracts to only eligible small businesses, depending on the category.
 - [Small Disadvantaged Business \(SDB\)](#)

- [Women-Owned Small Business](#) (WOSB)
- Small Disadvantaged Business [8\(A\)](#) Certified
- [Veteran-Owned Small Business](#) (VOSB)
- [Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business](#) (SDVOSB)
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone ([HUBZONE](#))

I'm a small business but contracts don't fit my practice, can I still grow through government funding?

- In late 2013, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released new guidance on *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, which has been dubbed the "[Super Circular](#)" to simplify the grant process.
 - **Grants:** Used primarily when substantial involvement is not expected between the agency and the recipient when carrying out the contemplated activity. Search the [Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance](#).
 - **Cooperative Agreements:** Used primarily when substantial involvement is expected between the agency and the recipient when carrying out the contemplated activity.
- If your small business is engaged in scientific research and development ([R&D](#)), you may qualify for federal grants under the Small Business Innovation Research ([SBIR](#)) and the Small Business Technology Transfer ([STTR](#)) programs.

I still have questions. What resources are available to help me?

The SBA has several tools to assist in the many stages of bidding for government contracts and grants.

- **[Surety Bonds](#)** - By law, contractors are required to procure surety bonds for any construction contract exceeding \$150,000. Thus, in order to help small businesses receive bonding, the SBA has a Surety Bond Guarantee Program in which the agency guarantees 70 to 90 percent of the bond in order to help small businesses obtain surety bonds.
- **[Mentor-Protégé Programs](#)** - This new program was established to develop strong protégé firms through mentor-provided business development assistance, and to help protégés successfully compete for government contracts.
- **Joint Ventures & Teaming** - Teaming allows small businesses to form a joint venture or partnership for a limited amount of time for the purpose of winning a contract. The limited scope of joint ventures has been important as it ensures that the businesses do not become affiliated.
- The **SBA's Non-Manufacturer Rule ([NMR](#))** allows a firm to qualify as a small business concern under a solicitation for the provision of manufactured products or other supplies as a "non-manufacturer" under certain conditions. SBA's regulations allow agencies and small businesses to avoid the constraints of the NMR when the procurement is for both supplies and services as the NMR only applies to procurements that have been assigned a manufacturing or supply NAICS code.
- **[Interagency Task Force](#)** on Federal Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses to ensure there is a diversification of opportunities available to small businesses.
- General Contracting **[Resources](#)** from the SBA such as reporting fraud, waste, and abuse.