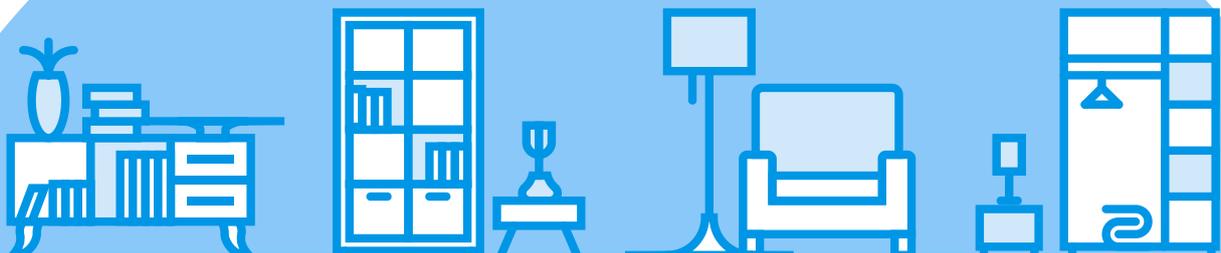




The Expert's Guide to Landing Government Contracts



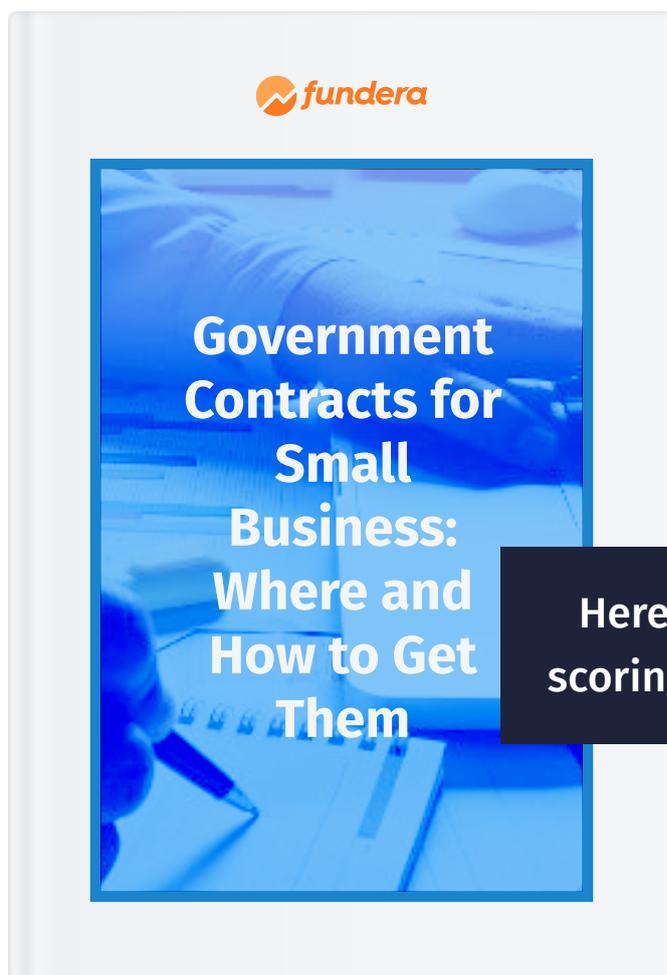
Did you ever think that your best business partner and best source of revenue could be the U.S. government?

The federal government is a huge entity—one with a massive organizational structure. And just like any private organization, the many branches and agencies of the U.S. government need products and services to operate.

Who provides those necessary products and services that keep the government and its functions up and running?

Small- and medium-sized businesses just like yours.

So, how can you get a slice of this massive revenue pie and land a government contract of your own?



Here's your expert guide to scoring government contracts.

Read more

The Low-Down on Landing Government Contracts

From military equipment, marketing advice, janitorial supplies to policy consulting, the U.S. government and its many agencies purchase a lot of products and services from contracted small businesses.

And luckily for small businesses, **23% of the \$500 billion** in yearly government contracts is required to go towards small business contracts—amounting to about **\$100 billion in sales** to small businesses each year.

And if you run business that operates under a B2B model, or offer a product that could easily be used in a niche

government agency, you could have a real shot at scoring a government contract.

However, for one reason or another—mostly the perceived difficulties of working with the government—small business owners don't actively seek out government contracts. Whether you don't think a government contract is worth your time—or you don't know how to get one—we're here to push you in the right direction.

Here's the nitty-gritty on what you need to do to land a government contract—plus tips and tricks that can make you an expert at storing one.

4 Steps to Landing a Government Contract

Before we get into the steps you can take to secure a government contract like an expert, there are some logistics you need to cover to make sure you are qualified and

registered for a government contract.

Here's what you need to think through before you try and close the deal.



Are You Technically Considered a Small Business?

In your eyes, you might consider yourself as a small business owner.



But did you know that the government—namely the Small Business Administration—has a technical definition of what a small business really is?

It's important that you take the time to determine whether or not you're technically a small business before you go out for government contracts.

Why?

Because you legally can't secure a government contract if you aren't legally a small business.

So, before you put in the effort to pursue a government contract, make sure that you adhere to your industry's size standards based on the SBA's established guidelines. For most industries, your ability to meet the small business size standards depends on your average number of employees (in the past 12 months) or average annual receipts (over the past 3 years).



After that, you'll need to be organized as a for-profit business, do most of your business in the U.S., have a place of business in the U.S., be independently owned and operated (*not a daughter company of Coca-Cola, for instance*),

and not be a dominant player in your field to be considered a small business.

Check with the SBA to make sure you're technically a small business before you go up for a government contract.

2

Do You Have a D-U-N-S Number?

Your next nitty-gritty to take care of before you contract with the government is to register for a D-U-N-S number.



A D-U-N-S number is your Dun & Bradstreet Number, which you'll need for each physical business location you have before you can legally do business with the government. It just takes one day to apply for one, and registering is free.

3

Do You Have a Relevant NAICS Code?

You'll also need to North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code to do business with the government (in almost all cases).



Your NAICS code classifies your business's industry, country, and economic sector for the purposes of government contracting.

The SBA will be able to tell you your industry code. And keep in mind that you might need multiple NAICS codes if you operate across multiple industries.

4

Are You Registered to Contract With the Government?

Lastly, you'll have to register your business in order to land a contract with the government.



First off, you'll need to register your business with the federal government's SAM—System for Award Management. This is sometimes called “self-certifying” your business. It's a required step before you're awarded a contract, basic agreement, basic order agreement, or blanket purchase agreement from a government entity.

(Registering with SAM is also a way for government agencies and contractors to actually find your business, as government bodies can search for your company within the SAM database by ability, industry, location, experience, and more.)



Another way to make sure that your on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Schedule for contracts is to obtain an Open Ratings, Inc. Past Performance Evaluation. This is a company (owned by Dun & Bradstreet) that conducts an independent audit of customer references and calculates a rating based on that statistical analysis of your part performance.

In order to fully register your business for government contracts, the SBA recommends that you have these documents in order:

- ✓ NAICS codes
- ✓ Your D-U-N-S number
- ✓ Your Federal Tax Identification Number (*TIN or EIN*)
- ✓ Your Standard Industrial Classification (*SIC*) codes
- ✓ Your Product Service codes (*optional*)
- ✓ Your Federal Supply Classification (*optional*)

Landing the Deal: Tips for Scoring a Government Contract

Now that you're registered for securing a government contract, how do you actually get one? Great question.

Not all small businesses can land such a deal.

But there are steps you can take and tips you can use to get ahead when it comes to landing government contracts.



1. Know Where to Look

Government contracts won't necessarily just come to you because you're a small

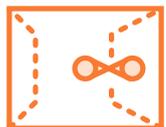
business—you'll have to work to find the best opportunities.

There are a few different places you go look for government contracting opportunities.

One is the Federal Business Operations site, FedBizOps. This website will show all currently open opportunities for contracts with the federal government. Contracts on FedBizOps will be valued at \$25,000 or more. You can also use this site to get a sense of what past federal contracts looked like—so you can align your pitch or product offering with what's worked in the past.

You can also use eOffer/eMod to submit a web-based application as a vendor. This service is an easy-to-use way to submit your proposal.

Or, if you're a technology based company, you can use GWACS (Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts). This is a database that the government uses to buy cost-effective, innovative products and solutions for information technology.



2. Familiarize Yourself With the Process

Before you dive right into the process of contracting with the government, make sure you know what you're getting into before you do so.

Familiarize yourself with what's involved with the specific contract—any obligations you'll

need to meet or rules you'll have to abide by.

In general, contracting with the government is much different than operating within the private sector, so there's a learning curve you'll want to get over before you sign on the dotted line with the government.

The SBA offers a great, 3-course guide to government contracting to help small business owners through this process.



3. Seek Mentoring & Partnerships

There are many resources out there to help you land a government contract.

For one, the SBA offers the 8(a) program—a business

development and mentor program that provides training and resources to help small, minority-owned, or disadvantaged businesses land government contracts.

There are many different ways to find a mentor to help you through the government contracting process.

The best way to find a helpful mentor is to attend networking events and information sessions for contractors that government agencies hold in your area. There, you might be able to meet someone who knows which government agencies are contracting with certain small businesses.

Another way to get an in with a government agency is to be set up with one of the relevant agency's small business specialist—every government agency or department has one. Use a meeting with a small business specialist as a way to

get an inside look into what each agency needs.



4. Look Into What the Government is Buying

Along those same lines, it's important to know what government agencies are buying and what kinds of products.

After all, you wouldn't want to waste any time wading through information and processes that aren't relevant to the industry you work in or the products you sell.

Knowing what the government is buying is a strategic play. Every agency has unique goals and different demands. Identifying these can help you zero in on the right government contracts for your small business.

There's some good news here: Researching this particular market (the government) isn't as hard as doing so in the private sector. That's because the government gives small businesses (and anyone who wants to know) insight into their budgetary priorities.

You can actively seek out what the government needs and intends to buy and how much it has to spend on products and services. This could be a good opportunity to tailor your offering to what a specific agency needs. Each federal agency or department budget is listed on the Office of Management and Budget website.

Knowing what the government is buying (and if you have potential to land a contract) really comes down to the research and homework you do beforehand. Look into previous contracts landed with the government, and see where

your business can fit in. Once you have a list of previous contracts and currently available contracts that could be relevant for your business, really zero in on how you can navigate your way into the realm of contracting with that specific department



5. Look for Agencies That Aren't Hitting Goals

As we mentioned above, government agencies and departments are required to give out a portion of their contracts to small business owners.

Each year, the SBA negotiates formal goals that the individual agencies have to meet to ensure that small businesses are getting their fair share of government contracts.

And when government agencies fall short on meeting their small business contracting goals (and many do year after year), it's public information. You can see who hit their goals and who didn't with the Federal Procurement Data System scorecards.

If there's an agency or a department that's relevant to your industry and frequently doesn't hit their small business contracting goals, that could be the perfect agency to target your pitches to.

That's why—if you want your best shot at landing a government contract—you have to put a little effort into making your business known. Make a point of attending agency- or industry-specific government events.

These might be hosted by players in the private sector, but are actively attended by the procurement community, influencers, and industry experts in the government. GovWin is a useful site that you can use to explore upcoming events.

And once you get your business in front of a government agency's eyes, you should be prepared to sell—aggressively. Remember, you're competing against other small businesses that are very similar to your own. Make yourself stand out by offering a demo or free trial to win the sale.



6. Make Yourself Known

Again, government contracts aren't just going to find you.

You have to actively search for them.

**There you have it—6
tips and tricks to
make landing a
government contract
a little more in reach
for your small
business.**

Remember, just as any big partner and client for your business, landing a government contract takes work.

If you manage to score one, you'll be happy you put the time and effort into landing a government contract!

Good luck!

