10 Steps to Winning Your First DoD Contract

You’re a small business owner interested in working with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), but how do you get from where you are now to winning a coveted contract?

1. CONNECT WITH YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Give yourself the best chance of success by first enlisting the help of local experts. These FREE resources exist specifically to assist you in navigating the process of becoming procurement ready.

- **APEX Accelerators**
  - Education and training ensures businesses are capable of participating in federal, state, and local government contracts in the defense-supply chain
  - [APEX Accelerators](https://apexaccelerators.us)

- **SBA**
  - Small Business Development Center
  - Individualized business advising and technical assistance to existing small businesses and pre-venture entrepreneurs
  - [SBA](https://sba.gov/local-assistance)

- **SCORE**
  - SCORE Business Mentoring
  - Training, webinars, online workshops, courses on demand and a library of online resources
  - [SCORE](https://score.org)

- **ChallengeHer**
  - Workshops, mentoring and direct access to government buyers for women-owned small businesses
  - [ChallengeHer](https://www.wipp.org/page/challengeher)

- **Veterans Business Outreach Centers**
  - Resources for transitioning service members, veterans, National Guard and Reserve members and military spouses
  - [Veterans Business Outreach Centers](https://sba.gov/local-assistance/resource-partners/veterans-business-outreach-center/vboc-program)
KNOW THE RULES

Working in national security requires robust safeguards. Review and understand the complex rules that govern all DoD acquisitions.

FAR
FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION

DFARS
DEFENSE FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION SUPPLEMENT

REGISTER IN SAM

GET FOUND!

You have an incredible product or service to offer - now it needs to be discoverable. The System for Award Management (SAM) is the marketplace for DoD goods and services. Your local APEX Accelerators representative can help you get registered.
REQUEST / UPDATE YOUR CAGE CODE

Now that Contracting Officers and Small Business Professionals can find you in the marketplace, they’ll need to know where you’re located. Request or update your Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code that identifies your facility’s specific location.

TARGET YOUR MARKET

$154B in prime DoD contracts were awarded to small businesses in 2021

Marketing yourself to the over 30,000 DoD acquisition staff will be key to successfully winning one of those contracts. Don’t overlook these essential marketing tips:

- find your niche
- don’t try to be everything to everybody
- only market to potential customers that buy what you sell
CREATE YOUR CAPABILITIES STATEMENT

- summarize your experience and offerings on one-page
- include your CAGE code
- avoid typos
- tailor it to your target customer
- demonstrate how you address their specific challenges
- explain how your service or product positively impacts their cost, schedule, and performance

IDENTIFY PRIME OPPORTUNITIES

BE PROACTIVE

Don’t just sit around waiting to be discovered! Use SAM to seek out and identify contracting and subcontracting opportunities with potential buyers that fit your target market.
Once you’ve identified an opportunity, request a meeting with a Small Business Professional (SBP) who will serve as your point-of-contact. You can find them through the originating agency’s Small Business Office.

You can also connect to the Small Business Administration’s Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs).

Put together a top-notch technical proposal. Dot your i’s and cross your t’s, making sure you’ve met all of the agency’s proposal requirements. Enlist the professionals in your support network to review your bid before you submit.
Winning your first contract is just the beginning. Have a plan for executing the contract to the DoD’s high standards.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
Contact an expert at your local APEX Accelerators.