

Office of Business & Economic Development (Aug. 22, 2016)

Checklist for unlocking public contracts for small businesses, disadvantaged business enterprises and minority business enterprises

Why should I pay attention to public contracts?

The U.S. federal government is the world's largest, with global consumer spending reaching over \$500 billion per year. To level the playing field between large and small businesses, and to spur economic development, the federal government mandates that 23 percent of this be spent on small businesses, as "set-asides." This enables small businesses to access a potential public procurement market of \$115 billion, some of which is channeled through the state and county procurement offices. The main sources of spending are on facilities and construction, professional services, and information and communication technology. The price for admission to this market is attained through compliance with a series of systems, which are detailed below.

What types of businesses are targeted?

The public procurement system has "set-asides" to promote small businesses, minority businesses and disadvantaged businesses, as follows:

- ***Small Businesses:*** Size standards have been established for types of economic activity, or industries, generally under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS);
www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/
www.sba.gov/contracting/getting-started-contractor/make-sure-you-meet-sba-size-standards/guide-size-standards
- ***Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE):*** DBEs are for-profit small business concerns that socially and economically disadvantaged persons own, with at least a 51 percent interest, while also controlling management and daily business operations. African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific and Subcontinent Asian Americans and women are presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Other individuals also can qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis. The DBE program applies only to the FDOT, and is limited to highway and bridge construction, maintenance, and consultants involved in planning, design, right-of-way and construction inspection, and other federally funded contracts.
www.transportation.gov/osdbu/disadvantaged-business-enterprise/definition-disadvantaged-business-enterprise
- ***The Minority Business Enterprise (MBE):*** The MBE program applies to all state agencies and is administered by the state Department of Management Service's Office of Supplier Diversity (OSD). The MBE program certifies small businesses domiciled in Florida. The business must be at least 51 percent owned by a minority person who is a Florida resident and whose management

and daily operations are controlled by a minority person(s). The firm must employ 200 or fewer employees and have a business net worth of not more than \$5 million.

www.dms.myflorida.com/agency_administration/office_of_supplier_diversity_osd/get_certified

These “set asides” create preferences for small businesses when public contracts are awarded.

10 Tips to help you benefit from public contracts:

If you can be classified as a small business, disadvantaged business or minority business, consider these 10 tips to help unlock public contract opportunities:

1. Know your NAICS code: www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/
2. Obtain a Dunn and Bradstreet number
www.sba.gov/contracting/getting-started-contractor/get-d-u-n-s-number?interiorpage2015
Register for System for Award Management (SAMS)
www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1
3. Register with www.myfloridamarketplace.com
4. Register with the Collier County online bidding system: www.bid.colliergov.net
5. Develop a Capabilities Statement (how to and sample)
www.hhs.gov/grants/contracts/get-ready-to-do-business/write-a-capability-statement/index.html
www.hhs.gov/grants/contracts/get-ready-to-do-business/sample-capability-statement/index.html
6. Have proof of ownership of at least 51 percent of your enterprise
7. Obtain all professional licenses/accreditations to operate in the industry
8. Get verified by the Center for Veterans Enterprise CVE (for military veterans)
www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/assistance/
www.va.gov/osdbu/verification/index.asp
9. To get CVE verified, you must obtain your report of separation (DD Form 214)
www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/
10. DBEs and MBEs should get certified by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
www.dot.state.fl.us/equalopportunityoffice/DBEProgram.shtm

It’s also strongly recommended that your business accept Government Services Administration (GSA) SmartPay cards. Why? In 2015, there were over 89 million (GSA) SmartPay card transactions valued at \$28 billion.

<https://smartpay.gsa.gov/>

All these public contracts requirements are free and will put you and your business on the radar for public contracts, either directly or through subcontracting opportunities. This list may seem daunting, but not all requirements apply to each business.

Where else can I go for help in accessing public contracts?

To assist with this process, other useful resources include:

- The Government Contracting Classroom
<https://www.sba.gov/contracting/resources-small-businesses/government-contracting-classroom>
- System for Award Management
www.sam.gov
- Small Business Administration 8(a) Business Development Program
www.sba.gov/contracting/government-contracting-programs/8a-business-development-program
- Florida Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development Program
www.dot.state.fl.us/equalopportunityoffice/DBEProgram.shtm
- Federal Procurement Data System
www.fpds.gov
- Federal business opportunities
www.fbo.gov
- Federal register
www.federalregister.gov/

These programs are opportunities to leverage your enterprise, whether it's woman-owned, established in a historically underutilized business (HUB) zone, or owned by a service-disabled veteran — all of which will help your business gain preference in the public procurement market. Carefully research each program to determine if each is current. For example, the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program is a one-time program that cannot be renewed, so applicants should be prepared to immediately use this program on their grants.