

At this time, you are either in the process of registering with [SAM](#) or have just completed your System for Award Management registration. You have been jumping through hoops to attain a [DUNS number](#), [login.gov account](#), and have been dealing with time sensitive passwords, PIN codes and certified letters. As you went through the 15 pages of forms you made sure everything was perfectly aligned for the DLA and IRS, and now you have received your [CAGE](#), or are patiently waiting to attain that entity code.

Whether you're actively bidding or waiting for buyers to find you, it is very important to have your keywords, [NAICS codes](#) and capabilities narrative right and tight.

If your NAICS or [PSC](#) are not right, or your keywords don't line up properly, you'll be completely overlooked. When you bid on a contract, all of these will be checked prior to making an award decision. Any confusion, omissions or errors will put you completely out of the game. If submitted properly, your SAM registration is accurate and complete; and your profile clearly and professionally depicts your business, making you ready for the next step.

And even though SAM is tough for some to complete, I'm sorry to say, this is one of the easiest steps you'll take to conduct business with the government.

But I'm sure that you took this step because nobody on the planet spends money like Uncle Sam. Last year spending topped \$4.7 Trillion dollars. Federal contracting line items totaled \$450 Billion for goods and services of every conceivable stripe. If it is available in the commercial market, someone in the federal sector is purchasing it also.

Federal Contracting

Thirty-Nine percent of federal contracting dollars are set-aside specifically for small businesses like yours. That means that more than \$175 Billion, at a minimum, was available for small business last year.

However, as much as the government wants to do business with you, just being registered in SAM is not enough – that's actually the A of the alphabet in Government contracting. Attracting and keeping government clients can be a nightmare scenario for business owner's unfamiliar with the terrain. Consider these facts, there are approximately 30 million small businesses registered in this country. Around one million are registered in SAM. And, only about one-third of those have ever been awarded a contract from the government.

The government has 2,000 websites and tens of thousands of pages to help you get setup and ready to do business with the more than 430 departments, agencies and sub-agencies that make up the federal government. Plus, there are thousands of state, county and local purchasing authorities to pursue as well.

Our staff has invested over 100 years combined in figuring this stuff out. While you could tackle this on your own, we have already made the mistakes that you undoubtedly will. We have already invested our money in learning the lessons that only time and experience can teach. Let me share a few of them with you now.

So, grab a pen or keyboard and follow along. We have got a lot to unpack. It all starts with your decision to take on additional revenue in the form of government awards.

If you are SAM registered, you can be paid by the government “IF” you attain a contract or grant. But how do you attain a contract or grant? Do Government CO’s or Primes just come to you now that you’re registered?

Can you just sit, wait, and hope to be chosen for upcoming contract opportunities?

ABSOLUTLEY NOT!!!

That is why it’s key to know all options and understand how to position your business and how to market to the Federal Government.

We will start by going deeper into positioning your business. What we mean by that is, registering, certifying and being on a Government schedule. By taking these steps, or adding these badges of honor, your business will become viable, eligible and/or vetted as an option for CO’s and Primes to work with.

SAM

When mentioning registrations, we will stick with the basics and refer to SAM, [city, county and state registrations](#). SAM is ultimately the payment mechanism for the Government, and if you attain a contract or grant, you will be paid through SAM – so this is obviously an important registration. City, county, and state registrations vary per state, but are definitely steps you should take if you plan on working locally. These registrations are normally easy to complete, and only a few of them charge to complete the application. Since they’re easy and normally free, we highly recommend you look into these options as they put your business in a place to be seen by those that are looking.

Set-Asides

Now let’s quickly talk about [set-asides](#) since they are one of the most important factors when working with the Government “if you qualify”.

You need to acquaint yourself with the wide array of special certifications available to small businesses. These include Women, [Veteran and service-disabled](#) owned companies. There are also several socio-economic certifications with names like 8a minority owned business, [Minority Business Enterprise](#), [Woman Business Enterprise](#) and there’s much more. Each gets special consideration from contracting officers and some even have exclusive opportunities for award.

HUBZone

We know that 23% of government spending must be set-aside and used for all small businesses. For Woman, Vets, Minorities and [HUBZone certifications](#) there’s an extra 16% to spread around. And by law Government contracting officers are under mandate to meet their annual spending mix, which totaled over 175 Billion last year for these audiences. The Government needs more registered small and certified businesses to award these contracts to. Because right now, less than 1% of woman, veteran and minority owned businesses in this country are registered to do business with the government, so the doors are wide open for those audiences to take advantage of these tremendous opportunities.

HUBZone’s are a seriously overlooked set-aside. These are geographic areas designated as Historically Underutilized Business Zones. Far too many times contracting officers must award Billions in set-aside contracts to companies outside those zones because they couldn’t locate a qualified business within that zone. Check the [HUBZone map](#) carefully and see if you meet the requirements. I am betting a large

percentage of you reading this would be quite surprised to learn that you are operating within a HUBZone and how easy it would be to qualify for these set aside opportunities.

Prime Contractor

Now any company that receives a Government award is then called a prime contractor. Because contracting officers struggle to hit their set-aside quotas every year, large prime contractors are often required to share that burden. For awards of a certain value or higher, starting at \$700K, the prime is required to [sub-contract](#) a minimum of 23% to small business.

If those sub-contractors also happen to be woman, veteran, minority or HUBZone, then the prime earns brownie points with the contracting officers. That makes everyone's job easier and in return creates more opportunities for certified businesses. Therefore, it is so very important to determine the top [prime contractors](#) within your industry and register with them as a sub to establish a relationship. It's a great way to get contracts, earn high value performance history and power your growth curve.

GSA Schedule

Now the thing most of you probably already know or have heard something about is a [GSA Schedule](#). It's what every government contractor aspires to achieve – it is the master's degree of government contracting. Schedule holders are first in line for virtually every contract opportunity over \$25,000. Sometimes they don't even have to compete for the contract, which is a [sole source contract](#). It's all perfectly legal and has the government's blessing.

The GSA Schedule is a 5-year contract between you and the General Services Administration. The process of getting your company on a GSA Schedule is neither quick nor easy. The application consists of several hundred pages of [forms, exhibits and attachments](#). The government vets you every way imaginable and pre-negotiates your terms and pricing. But you go through that once and you are good for five years. And the contract can be renewed 3 more times for a total of 20 years.

When handed a contract to fulfill, the very first place the contracting officer searches is their file of Capabilities statements. They're looking for a couple of suitable primes to invite to the party. Failing that, it's on to the [GSA Advantage website](#), which is the Government's Amazon for purchasing. Only GSA schedule holders are listed on this site, and if a suitable schedule holder is not found there, only then is it pushed to the open market for the world to see on SAM.gov.

Unfortunately, our cadre of overworked contracting officers were only able to source about 10% of last year's contract spending or roughly \$50 Billion to schedule holders. The government wants more companies to get on schedule because it shortens the buying cycle by at least 50% over the open market and requires far fewer workhours.

The difference for a contractor is obvious. Instead of YOU competing against a hundred bidders and having a minimal chance of getting a contract, when having a GSA, you only compete against a few, increasing your chances from less than 1% to a 33 to 50% chance to attain a contract. Clients often tell us that contracting officers they work with on SAM have urged them to get on a GSA Schedule. And some have even made written requests that their GSA application be given priority service.

That my friends, is the power of knowing how to make a contracting officer's life a little bit easier.

Not every industry or business activity is eligible for a GSA Schedule. But if yours is, then it is like getting one of Willie Wonka's golden tickets.

Applying for a GSA schedule can take several months and often longer, contingent upon contract experience, and how quickly you complete the forms and assemble the needed exhibits. Accuracy and thoroughness are vitally important. Mess up the application process and you could face a mandatory waiting period before you can apply again. Complete the application properly, receive an award, then you're ready to make the big bucks.

Positioning Your Business

We ultimately compare positioning your business the same as you would yourself when attempting to attain a top paying job. If a group of applicants are sitting in a lobby for the same position and one has a GED, and the other a college master's degree – who might be getting that job? The same applies for business, especially prior to having [award history](#). So, when you attempt to enter this space environment of Government contracting, we recommend you come prepared as a viable and vetted option. Meaning, don't just come with a SAM registration, because your competition might be certified or on a GSA schedule. If that's the case, you may not be the one that is chosen for that opportunity.

So now your business is positioned, and you're ready to attain contracts and/or grants. You look at public records and you see there are [millions, or billions being awarded](#) in your industry. This is where things get tricky. The sad thing is, there is no step by step manual on how to attain these contracts. This is the huge gap between getting registered, and ultimately succeeding in the Federal sector.

In reference to our previous statement - While you could tackle this on your own, we've already made the mistakes that you undoubtedly will. We've already invested our money in learning the lessons that only time and experience can teach.

Over the last few of years our business has shifted from processing these applications, to helping our clients attain over \$500 million in government contracts, grants, loans and other financial assistance. So not only can we help position your business, we can help you take the proper steps to succeed in Government contracting.

Business Resume

Now for your company to be in the running for these fast track opportunities, the contracting officer must first know who you are. That's where a formal [Capabilities Statement](#) comes in. You must get this in front of your potential buyers.

Your CAPE statement is your Government resume. It tells the procurement and contracting officers exactly who you are, what you do, and why they should do business with you.

So, this needs to be a one-page document that is concise, professionally constructed, and differentiates you from your competitors. If the contracting officer can't get the info they need at a glance, they'll just thumb right past you. Our content writers and graphic designers often argue whether an effective CAPE is a matter of art or science. Believe me friends, it's both. So, you want to get it right.

Federal Market

Now the sad fact is that most SAM registrants plow through 10's of thousands of dollars, some even more than \$100,000 according to the SBA, trying to do business with the government and largely failing. They developed their proof of concept in the private sector and had hopes of scaling their business in the federal marketplace. They lacked specific knowledge and couldn't justify the cost and workhours for their return. They learned the hard way that just being registered in SAM does not bring them contracts.

But how in the world are so many other companies, including your competitors, just knocking it out of the park and getting their piece of that 500 Billion dollars?

To answer that question, let me first ask this. What if, while working in the private sector, you had access to every person interested in buying your product or service? You would know their name, telephone number, and email address. You would know from whom they bought and how often. Would you like to know how much they paid and when they plan on buying again? Or perhaps that you could most likely get them on the phone between 11 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Tuesday thru Thursday? Would that type of information be helpful?

Ever wonder what your competitors were up to? Who they're doing business with? What are they really charging? Maybe it would be helpful to have a massive library of technical drawings to peek at once in a while. Can you imagine the damage you could do with that level of market intelligence at your fingertips?

Well folks, that's exactly how *you're* going to start working the federal market, because all that information is available if you know where to look.

The sad thing is that most will have to go through those 2,000 government websites and try to find this information for those [430 departments, agencies and sub-agencies](#) that make up the federal government.

Market Research

Our staff and clients are privy to other concepts and tools that are available, so that's why it's key to research and communicate with professionals to learn about the tips, tricks and shortcuts that are available to expedite your knowledge and success.

Since everything is public record, we have created a way to search and connect to all of that information and bring it back to your fingertips via an aggregate database called [Select GCR Pro](#).

This database/program connects to all city, county, state and Federal websites and databases. By filling out a simple search form or setting up a profile, all that information becomes one click away, and is provided in one unique platform. So, this tool is where you find all that data I just described.

And by having access to such a powerful tool all contracts and contact information is quickly accessible. With this information you can research the past, present and future of every contract. And with that information you can search, research, and use that information to your benefit.

Remember earlier when we said - What if, you had access to every person interested in buying your product or service? You would know their name, telephone number and email address. You would know from whom they bought and how often. Would you like to know how much they paid and when they plan on buying again?

Well again, this information is available if you know where to look, so keep that in mind in the future as you attempt to take on additional revenue in the form of government awards.

Doing Business with the Government

The reality is our government has the greatest buying power on the planet. There exists a spider web of federal contracting opportunities of every size and shape. Also, being that it is the government, it's purchasing methods are equally vast and complex. Keep in mind, there is literally something there for everyone. And don't worry. If you sell it, they are buying it.

There are [micro purchases programs, split pay plans, and blanket purchase orders](#). For companies interested in credit card orders under \$10,000, there is a \$20 Billion slice of the pie that is never advertised, the so called 'hidden market.' For veterans, check out the [VA's veteran first contracting program](#), or the 'rule of two' for the VIP database. And those are just a few of the many ways to approach and overcome the federal market. Not to mention all the state and local opportunities.

To succeed in government contracting you must position your business, implement market intelligence, and have a sound plan of attack that matches your growth objective. Here is where the caution comes in. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Getting government awards may take a little time and effort, but it can gain momentum quickly. Do not let these opportunities out pace your ability to deliver.

Repairing a relationship with a contracting officer after having been burnt is not a task you want to undertake. You *want* your CAPE statement to stay on top of their file. They'll understand your occasional 'No' to new work. But they will never forget a 'Yes' they came to regret.

So, learn your angles and make yourself a go-to resource that buyers can depend on. Remember, they serve the agencies that tasked them to fill a needed contracting obligation. Be the firm that they can return to time and time again without getting blowback. It's just like in the private sector, only with better vision and proven strategies.

When downloading this manual, you had a few options to choose from. Since we have only scratched the surface regarding the big picture and the specifics to your business, we recommend that you schedule a 30-minute "ready assessment" with one of our [Government Procurement Advisers](#). Your assigned GPA will help you understand the options that are available for your business, and how you can proceed in taking advantage of those options. At the end of that conversation, you will know a lot more than you do now, and will then be able to make an informed decision if Government contracting is for you, if you will attempt to move forward on your own, or if you would like help to expedite your knowledge and success.

So, the ball is in your court. We would love to speak with you about the opportunities that await, and even provide you free access to the Select GCR Pro program that I briefly mentioned.

Thank you for taking the time to read this manual and learning about Select GCR, Government contracting simplified