

Doing Business with the Omaha District “13 Points to Success & 10 Tips to Improve your Proposal”

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May 2012



US Army Corps of Engineers
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Point 1

Identify your product or service. It is necessary to know the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code for your product or service. Most federal government product/service listings and procurements are identified by their NAICS code and/or Federal Supply Class (FSC) code. You can find the codes relating to your business at this Web site:

NAICS codes: <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>



Point 2

Check with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to determine whether your business falls within the established table of small business size standards matched to NAICS industries. You may be very surprised just how big a company can be and still be considered "small" in the eyes of the federal government. <http://www.sba.gov/size/>



Point 3

Obtain a DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet. This is a business identification number that is used much like a person uses a social security number. If you do not have a DUNS Number, contact Dun and Bradstreet to obtain one. There is no charge for obtaining a DUNS number, and you must have one to proceed. You may call Dun & Bradstreet at (866) 705-5711 or use its Web site. <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>



Point 4

Register in the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR) System. With very limited exception, you must be registered in CCR to be awarded a contract from any Federal Civilian or Military agency. CCR is a database designed to hold contractor information required for federal procurement and financial transactions. The information in the CCR also facilitates fast electronic payment of contractor invoices. <http://www.ccr.gov>



Point 5

Determine if your business qualifies for Small Business 8(a), SDB (Small Disadvantaged Business) or HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone) certification. These certifications are detailed. They are essentially for companies that are owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or small businesses with a “principal office” in a historically underutilized business zone. When contracting, the federal government sometimes sets aside procurements for or offers preferences to 8(a), SDB, or HUBZone certified business concerns. <http://www.sba.gov/gcbd/>



Point 6

Register in Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA). ORCA is a recent e-Government initiative that was designed to replace the paper based Representations and Certifications process. ORCA is the primary federal government repository for all of your company's required representations and certifications and can be accessed by federal procuring agencies. <http://orca.bpn.gov>



Point 7

Begin to search for current federal government procurement opportunities. Identify current procurement opportunities in your product or service area by visiting the FedBizOpps web site at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov> which is the Federal Civilian and Military Government single point of entry for business opportunities over \$25,000.



Point 8

Familiarize yourself with both the federal civilian and Department of Defense (DoD) contracting legal procedures. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) can be found at <http://farsite.hill.af.mil/vffara.htm>. Individual federal agencies also have supplemental procurement regulations, such as the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) located at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/dars/dfars/index.htm>. These are the legal regulations for federal acquisitions. If you are serious about federal procurements, you need to know and understand the legal requirements and regulations pertaining to federal contracts.



Point 9

Seek additional assistance, as needed, in the federal civilian and/or DoD marketplaces. Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) are federally-funded organizations that offer free help. PTACs can be found at <http://www.aptac-us.org/new/>



Point 10

Familiarize yourself with the procurement forecasts for your targeted agencies. Each federal agency typically produces an Annual Procurement Forecast, as required by the Small Business Act, which is maintained by their Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) or equivalent. You may contact each agency OSDBU for specifics. www.firstgov.gov Use this procurement forecast to determine good prospects for you.



Point 11

Explore subcontracting opportunities. Regardless of your product or service, it is important that you do not neglect a very large secondary market - subcontracting opportunities through prime contractors. Although there is no single point of entry for subcontracting opportunities in the federal or civilian procurement marketplace, SBA's SUB-Net is a valuable resource for obtaining information on subcontracting opportunities. Prime contractors, government, commercial, and educational entities, may post solicitations or notices on that website.

<http://www.web.sba.gov/subnet/>



Point 12

Investigate government programs. There are several SBA programs that may be of interest to you, such as the 8(a) Business Development Mentor-Protege Program, the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR), the Small Business Technology Transfer Research Program (STTR), and the Technology Resources Network. <http://www.sba.gov/gcbd/>



Point 13

Market your firm to the right contacts. Identify your prospective government customers, research their requirements, and familiarize yourself with applicable procurement regulations and strategies. There are many procuring organizations to consider, and educating yourself about their roles and missions will be no small task, but essential nonetheless.



Questions?



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10 Tips to Improve Your Proposal



1. Read the Request for Proposal

- Thoroughly
- Ask questions early to ensure there is sufficient time to respond
- Pay attention to the criteria order and weights – it shows what's important to us



2. Understand the RFP Type

- How will source selection be accomplished?
- Lowest Price Technically Acceptable
- Best Value Trade Off



3. Address All Aspects of the Criteria

- Create a matrix of sections L&M (or Section 00100's if Corps of Engineers) and Scope of Work, by paragraph with each requirement to use as a checklist to ensure your proposal is complete
- Include your checklist with your proposal



4. Be Clear & Concise

- Avoid being too wordy
- Use bullets, underlines, bolding
- If there is a page count – stick to it!



5. Experience Should Relate to the Project

- In terms of scope, size, dollar value, complexity
- Should be recent – within the past 5-10 years or as required by RFP
- Be clear – is it experience of firm or people? Or, is it experience or sub or mentor?



6. Make Sure Qualifications of Staff Match RFP

- Ensure each team member's qualifications address EACH ASPECT of the criteria
- List relevant experience of team members
- Make sure team members are available (not on a job that just started or is only half way completed)



7. Who's In Charge?

- Identify one person to be in charge of entire team
- Person should be from YOUR company, not a sub or your mentor
- Clear lines of communication
- Identify person and company (with location) for each role



8. Address Quality

- Include the quality team on Organization Chart – even if it's not asked for
- Quality is important to us – this shows it's important to you
- Show/describe how the quality control team interacts with the execution team



9. Address Performance Problem

- Get copies of your evaluations
- Explain any marginal or unsat. items within the evaluation as well as overall ratings
- Check out the past performance of your proposed subs



10. QC Your Proposal

- Have an outside reviewer ensure everything is covered (someone not involved in putting the proposal together)
- If you copy another proposal, make sure you only refer to the current project
- Use spell check



Questions?



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