



(updated February 2011)

A Guide to Doing Business With The Forest Service

Working with the Federal government, including the Forest Service, can be complicated. The following information provides a brief overview of what's necessary to work through the steps required to do business with the Forest Service and the Federal government. Contacts are provided to help interested business owners understand the processes involved in doing business with the Forest Service and other Federal government agencies.

Step One: Organize In a Business-Like Way

To successfully bid on Federal government and Forest Service contracts and perform the work, businesses need to follow applicable Federal, state and local law. This means your business must 1) be appropriately registered as a business under state and local rules, 2) carry adequate insurance including workers compensation if you are an employer, and 3) be able to adequately bond projects for construction contracts under the Federal government's surety bonding requirements. The Federal government's surety bonding requirements are different than the state license bonding requirements required of some businesses so you'll need to attend to that separately.

A **computer or computer access is needed and a valid email address** because contracting procedures today depend mostly on computer processes and "on-line" databases. With computer technology at hand, you can move to the next step in successfully competing for contracts with the Federal government.

Step Two: Register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR)

Any business choosing to bid or provide proposals on Federal government projects must be registered in the CCR. To register, go to the internet at <https://www.bpn.gov/CCR>

To help speed this registration process, you should have some important information handy before you begin. If you don't have the information needed to complete registration on the CCR site, the site offers you direction on how to obtain this needed information, but it will slow you down in getting through the registration process.

The basic information needed is:

- **DUNS Number** – In the right-hand corner of the CCR website there is an area to click for the "D&B Web Form for DUNS Number Request".
- **Company Name** – As noted in Step One, following state and local requirements for registering a business is important to be eligible to work with the Federal government.
- **Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN)** – For a sole proprietorship (individually owned business), this may be a Social Security Number. For businesses formed as corporations or other organizations, a TIN is required from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Go to <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96696,00.html>

- **Financial Institution Information** – Your businesses banking information is required. This includes the American Business Association (ABA) routing number for the account, account number and other data used by Federal agencies to make payment when a business has won a contract.
- **Other Information** – General information about the business such as address, number of employees, annual receipts, etc. is also required. Additionally information about the goods/services provided identified by NAICS number, Product Service Code (PSC), Federal Supply Classification (FSC) and other needs is requested here. The CCR site will help guide a business on how to obtain this information for registration.

Step Three: Complete an On-Line Representations and Certification Application (ORCA)

When successfully registered in CCR, you will be instructed to go to the ORCA website at <https://orca.bpn.gov/> to complete an annual online representation/certification. Before you leave the site, CCR will provide your business access code known as a "MPIN" for use in accessing ORCA to complete the representations and certifications.

Step Four: What Are The Current Federal Projects Advertised That You Can Submit a Bid or Proposal:

Almost all Federal project solicitations for bids or proposals over \$25,000 are advertised on Federal Business Opportunities, also known as FedBizOpps.gov and found at <https://www.fbo.gov>. A user guide is available for a "Vendor" on the website. Look over the User Guide to help you navigate through FedBizOpps.gov.

Step Five: Spend Some Time Finding Out More About Doing Business With the Federal government and Forest Service

There are many websites and resources to help you and your business understand how contracting processes work with the Federal government. Because contracting involves specific documentation needs and uses taxpayers' dollars, there are a lot of details that help government employees be accountable for the expenditures and get the best value for the money. The Federal Acquisition Regulations (FARs) govern the way the Federal government issues solicitations for work and writes the contracts resulting from the solicitations.

Some resources that explain the Federal government business processes include:

- **Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)** – PTAC's are located in every state and they assist businesses in understanding how to prepare bids and proposals on Federal government contracts. To locate the appropriate state PTAC go <http://www.aptac-us.org/new> and under "Government Contracting Assistance" use the link "Find a PTAC".
 - For Montana the PTAC is the Government Contracting Assistance Program and their website is located at <http://www.bigskyveda.org>
 - In Idaho there are several PTAC's with statewide information available at <http://www.commerce.idaho.gov>

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- **Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** – Organized in association with the Small Business Administration, the SBDCs provide general assistance on business structure, and how to obtain business loans and surety bonding. Some assistance is provided regarding Federal government contracting too. Find the nearest SBDC by visiting <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbdc/index.html>
- **Small Business Administration (SBA)** – The SBA is the Federal Agency tasked with assisting small businesses to be successful. SBA's general website is available as <http://www.sba.gov> There is also an SBA website that deals specifically with Doing Business With the Federal Government found at <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/contracting/working-with-government>
- **HUBZone Certification (SBA)** – The HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program provides federal contracting opportunities for qualified HUBZone Small Business Concerns. All eligible contractors are encouraged to become certified as a HUBZone Small Business Concern. You may register for HUBZone certification on line at <http://www.sba.gov/hubzone> If you have questions about this program, you may contact the SBA district office in your area. For firms located in Idaho, the Idaho SBA district office is located in Boise, Idaho and may be reached at (208) 334-9004. Firms in Northern Idaho may contact the SBA District Office in Spokane WA at 509-353-2810

In addition, each region of the Forest Service provides information about doing business with that specific Forest Service region. To find regional websites go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/contactus/regions.shtml> At each regional website look for links to contracting.

The Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests have local contracting opportunities with an estimated value between \$15,000 and \$25,000 posted at the following site: http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater/Admin/Contracting/CLWNEZ_Contract_Opps.htm

Proposed contract actions expected to exceed \$25,000 are posted on FBO at <https://www.fbo.gov>. Find Clearwater and Nez Perce NF opportunities under Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. The regular program of work is located under R-1 IMAT: Clearwater, Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, and Nez Perce NF's.

Incident contracting with the Forest Service for wildfire, hurricanes or other emergency events has another set of guidelines. You can find out more about these by visiting <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/>

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