

How To Do Business With The Forest Service (March 10, 2009)

Doing business with the Federal government, including the Forest Service, can be complicated. The following information is intended to provide a brief overview of the steps necessary to position a business concern to do business with the Forest Service and the Federal government. Also contacts are provided regarding additional resources that will assist a business concern in understanding the processes of doing business with the Forest Service and other Federal government agencies.

Step One - Be Formed in a Business-Like Way - To successfully bid and perform Federal government and Forest Service contracts, businesses are expected to follow applicable Federal, state, and local laws. From a business perspective, this includes being appropriately registered as a business under state and local rules; carrying adequate insurance including workers compensation if an employer; and in the case of construction contracts, having the ability to adequately bond projects under the Federal government's surety bonding requirements, which are different than the state license bonding requirements required of some businesses. A computer, or computer access, is also needed and a valid email address, as contracting in the Federal government is dependent in many cases on computer processes through "on-line" databases. When formed in a business-like way, a business is then ready to learn more about winning contracts with the Federal government.

Step Two - Register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) - Any business that wants to bid or provide proposals on Federal government projects must be registered in CCR. Register on-line at <http://www.ccr.gov>. Registration will go much more smoothly if certain information is at hand prior to beginning the registration process. If a person registering does not have the information available, the CCR site will guide a person through obtaining the information which will slow the registration process. 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 doing business with the Federal government.
- **Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN)** - In cases of a sole proprietorship, this may be a Social Security Number; for corporations and other business formations, a TIN is needed and obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Go to <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=96696,00.html>
- **Financial Institution Information** - Business bank information will be required including the American Business Association (ABA) routing number for the account, account number, and other information that will be used by Federal agencies to make payment when the business has won a contract.
- **Other Information** - Also needed is information about the business such as address, number of employees, annual receipts, etc. Additionally information about the goods/services provided identified by NAICS number, Product Service Code (PSC), Federal Supply Classification (FSC), and other needs will be requested, and CCR will help guide a business registering on how to obtain this information.

Step Three - Complete an On-Line Representation and Certification Application

(ORCA) - When successfully registered in CCR, the business will be instructed to go to the ORCA website at <https://orca.bpn.gov/> to complete an annual on-line representation/certification. CCR will assign the business an access code known as a "MPIN" to be utilized in accessing ORCA to complete the representations and certifications.

Step Four - Learn About Available Federal Projects to 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 to assist in using the site.

Step Five, Learn About Doing Business with the Federal Government and Forest

Service - There are many websites and resources to assist businesses in understanding doing business with the Federal government. There are many unique aspects such as the Federal Acquisition Regulations that govern how the Federal government issues solicitations for work and writes the contracts that result from the solicitations. The resources that can help in understanding doing business with the Federal government include -

- Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) - Located in every state, PTAC's assist businesses in understanding how to prepare bids and proposals on Federal government contracts. To locate the appropriate state PTAC, go to <http://www.aptac-us.org/new/> and under "Government Contracting Assistance," use the link to "Find a PTAC." For Oregon, the PTAC is the Government Contracting Assistance Program, and their website is located at <http://www.qcap.org>. In Washington State, there are several PTAC's with stat-wide information available at <http://www.washingtonptac.org>.
- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) - Organized in association with the Small Business Administration, the SBDC's 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/contractingopportunities/index.html>.
- The Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6) of the Forest Service maintains an Advanced Acquisition Plan that lists proposed contracts for the current Fiscal Year. The Plan is available for public viewing on the internet at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/ppm/> and provides -
 - A complete list of projects that are planned for the current fiscal year.
 - What solicitations are currently "on the street."
 - Recently awarded contracts.

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

If interested in contracting with the Forest Service with regard to Incidents (wildland fire and other events such as hurricanes), please visit the following website to learn more:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/>