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*Wayne T. Gilchrest*  
PRSRT STD M.C.

# Business Opportunities with the Federal Government

## SPECIAL REPORT: Doing Business with the Federal Government

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Please visit the First District website at:

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### Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Dear Business Leader:

I get phone calls all the time from business owners anxious to learn how to break through the complicated government contracting process. I am hopeful that this newsletter will help answer those questions and open up some new opportunities for businesses that may not have considered selling to the federal government before.

I also wanted to invite you to two forums on this topic I will be hosting in June. Speakers will include experts from the General Services Administration (GSA), the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Department of Defense Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC). We will also hear from a small businesswoman who will share her tips and real life experiences in growing her business through federal contracting. Forum dates and times are as follows:

#### Monday, June 12th

9:30 to noon  
Harford Community College  
401 Thomas Run Road  
Edgewood Hall  
Bel Air, MD 21015

\*Special Update on BRAC

#### Monday, June 19th

9:30 to noon  
The Fountains  
The Sweetbay Room  
1800 Sweetbay Drive  
Salisbury, MD 21804

The forums are free and open to the public. No RSVP is required, however, seating is limited. For more information, please contact my Salisbury office at (410) 749-3184.

Sincerely,

*Wayne T. Gilchrest*

Wayne T. Gilchrest  
Member of Congress



## Congressman Wayne T. Gilchrest

# The Key to Getting Federal Government Contracts

## Getting Started

Learning how to sell successfully to the U.S. government, the world's largest buyer of goods and services, can be a daunting task. Most of the process is conducted online; using a computer is essential. Here are suggested approaches:

- **Update your company's business plan**, highlighting special skills and expertise that would be of interest to government agencies.
- **Review your company's marketing strategy and goals.**
- **Learn federal procurement processes and terms.** The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides a step-by-step guide for selling to the government, with tips on bidding, marketing, and competing for government contracts, and links to free online courses. Go to [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for more information.

The General Services Administration (GSA) is the government's chief acquisitions agency. The GSA spends billions of dollars annually on products and services offered to all federal agencies. Go to [www.gsa.gov/smallbusiness](http://www.gsa.gov/smallbusiness) for more information.

- **Contact offices in your state or region.** Speak with procurement specialists or contracting officers about federal government buying procedures. Ask questions about application procedures, technical requirements, and marketing suggestions. Attend procurement programs, opportunities for business people to meet directly with government officials and to learn from other companies involved in federal contracting.

Small Business Development Centers are located in every state. These centers advise and train businesses in financial matters, including certification procedures for small and minority businesses. An excellent first stop for any business, especially those with little or no previous experience in dealing with federal procurement. Visit [www.mdsbdc.umd.edu](http://www.mdsbdc.umd.edu) for more information.

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers can also be of assistance. Although the main focus is providing

technical assistance on selling to the military, the centers cover marketing to all government agencies through counseling, training, and procurement programs. For more information, visit [www.mdptap.umd.edu](http://www.mdptap.umd.edu).

GSA Regional Small Business Centers are the front doors to contracting opportunities with GSA and should be your first point of contact. Each center is staffed with specialists who can provide you with individual counseling on GSA contracting opportunities as well as information on the overall Government contracting program. To program, visit [www.gsa.gov/r3](http://www.gsa.gov/r3)

- **Register your business online** with Central Contractor Registration (CCR) at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). A company must have a CCR number to get government contracts.
- **Review your business classification.** Review the Criteria for Classification of Small Business. If your business is classified as small or disadvantaged, this certification may lead to more business opportunities.

- **Additional statistical information** for business registrations, required for many government forms:

North American Industrial Classification Code. The NAICS numeric codes identify products or services for more than 1,000 industries and is used by the government for statistical purposes. Visit their website at [www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html) for more information.

Federal Supply Classification Groups and Classes. Commodity codes used to classify products and services purchased by the military and many civilian agencies. Visit [www.scrantonrtg.com/secrc/fsc-codes/fschz-2002.pdf](http://www.scrantonrtg.com/secrc/fsc-codes/fschz-2002.pdf)

- **Check federal department and agency websites** for specialized services or products that may be needed: to locate, use the [FirstGov.gov](http://FirstGov.gov) A-Z Index.



## Federal Business Opportunities

Finding contract opportunities once you are prepared is easier than you might think. FedBizOpps maintains a website that is the single point of entry for announcements of federal contract opportunities over \$25,000—both civilian and military. Visit [www.FedBizOpps.gov](http://www.FedBizOpps.gov) for more information, or to search available contracts.



### For vendors:

- Search FedBizOpps for agency announcements, awards of contracts, and requests for proposals.
- Review the Vendors Guide for tips on searching by agency, classification codes, or award categories.
- Sign up for e-mail notification of announcements from particular agencies or for particular products or services.

### For continuing business:

- Apply to become a GSA Schedules contractor. Under the GSA Schedules program, also referred to as Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) and Federal Supply Schedules (FSS), GSA establishes long-term government-wide contracts with commercial firms.

The GSA application and approval process may take considerable time but may be worth it for future business with government agencies.

### GSA Training Programs

- FSS Center for Acquisitions Excellence offers online training and classroom instruction on the GSA Schedules Program. Check for GSA course listings on how to sell to the government and get contract awards, including the course How to be a Contractor.

### Subcontracting Opportunities

- A federal contract may be so large that a single company might have difficulty in providing the products or services required to meet the terms of the contract. A prime contractor may need to use subcontractors to complete contractual obligations. Visit [www.sba.gov/GC/contacts.html](http://www.sba.gov/GC/contacts.html) for more information.

## Selling to the Military & Department of Defense

Many of the Department of Defense (DoD) contract announcements and registration requirements for businesses have been incorporated into FedBizOpps, with registration at Central Contractor Registration (CCR).

However, there are often special requirements for selling to the military. The vast majority of DoD contracts are awarded by DoD field organizations, or specific mission-oriented agencies within an organization.

- Office of Small Business Programs offers DoD information, publications, and programs to assist small businesses to compete for DoD contracts, including Guide to DoD Contracting Opportunities. For more information, visit [www.acq.osd.mil/osbp](http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp).
- The Defense Logistics Agency provides links to government websites with information for small businesses wanting to sell to the military. Visit [www.dla.mil/db/](http://www.dla.mil/db/) for more information.

