



Arkansas Procurement Assistance Center Frequently Asked Questions

What does it cost to be a client?

How do I get my Daily Bids?

Why do you make me submit Monthly Activity Reports?

How do I submit my activity report?

How do I change my company's information in your database, such as if we move, or if we add or drop a line of products or services?

How do I get a DUNS Number?

How do I get a TIN / EIN?

How do I get on the on the Federal Supply Schedule?

I want to bid on a solicitation but it requires drawings and specifications that I can't get. Can you help me?

What is a capabilities narrative and why do I need one?

What does it cost to be a client?

There is no cost to you. All of the workshops, including our training classes, counseling/consulting, bid opportunity listings, technical assistance, library, and other resources, are free and open to the public.

How do I get my Daily Bids?

When you register as a client, and keep your registration active by submitting monthly activity reports, the bid-match system matches the filters in your client profile to over a thousand sources to identify the bid opportunities that fit your interests. The system posts the results on your individual site, and sends you a reminder e-mail that contains the link to that site. The link might be a big blue button that says "View Bids" or it might be a hyperlink, depending on how your e-mail system displays it. When you connect to that link, you will see a chart on which each date for the past month or so appears, with a row of numbers under headings that identify the sources of your bids. The first time you view this page, you should save it into your internet browser "Favorites" or "Bookmark" it so you can look at it any time, day or night, whether you see the e-mail reminder or not. At the right end of each row is a "View" link, which reveals every bid opportunity the system found for you on that date, listed in plain text format. You can scan quickly through this list to find ones that might be interesting. You will see another "View" link beside each one, which reveals the original document in its original format, which might be easier to read. Sometimes, the document is merely an announcement and contains yet another link to the full solicitation which you can download if you like. Thus, you don't have to download and read every single complete document only to find that many are not interesting; it saves your time by giving you the quick text list to select from. If you are not satisfied with the collection of bid opportunities the system found for you, or if it didn't find anything at all, you should contact our office to have the search filters revised.

Why am I required to submit Monthly Activity Reports?

Because our funding comes from Congress through the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and they require evidence that the money is producing results. Our mission is to help Arkansas companies generate revenues and create or retain jobs, and we need your report of sales in order to provide statistical results to DLA. Without this proof, they will not continue funding our Center, and we will not be able to provide you with the bid opportunities, counseling, technical assistance, and other services that you rely on. You can submit your report online any time that is convenient, not just monthly. Some clients enter each sale as it occurs throughout the month; others compile all their data and submit it on a certain date each month that is convenient for them. Clients that fail to report their sales have their services suspended because we can't prove the results of providing the services. Clients that just fill in "No Sales to Report" are questioned to determine whether it is true that they are not making any sales at all because you can't stay in business for long that way, and we need to know if our service is not helping you in any way so we can correct our deficiency. Some clients don't realize they are to report **all** sales that in any way resulted from our assistance. However, if we never taught you anything at all that helped you become capable of making the sale, you don't have to report it. If you sell to a company that in turn sells to a government agency, that is reportable as a subcontract. If you sell to a school district, economic development district, public utility, hospital, or any local operation that is supported by tax money, that is reportable. When in doubt, report it, and use the text box on the data entry screen to express your doubts. We actually read these reports. And we post the statistical summaries on our Web site, where you can see how your data contributes to the results we report to the government.

How do I submit my activity report?

On your "Daily Bids" site, in the menu across the top of the red banner, you will find an item called "Awards," which has a link to the reporting screen. You will see the list of awards you have reported previously, and you can select one of two buttons, "Report Award" or "No Awards to Report." Make sure the correct date is filled in, especially if you are reporting retroactively for

a previous month. Fill in the other fields, and select the appropriate choices from the pull-down pick-lists for the type of agency and for prime contract or subcontract. When you push the "Submit" button, it will automatically imprint a certification statement that this is true and valid information. Within a few days, your new report will be added to the list. You should report every sale separately unless you have a high volume of small orders with one customer, such as credit card sales, which you can batch at the end of the month into one report and identify in the text block how many sales are batched. The word "award" means any purchase order, contract, subcontract, credit card sale, cash sale, or other transaction. It includes delivery orders or task orders under IDIQ contracts such as blanket orders or Schedules. Some people would prefer to submit the report on paper by fax or postal mail. We can no longer do that. We need them submitted directly into the system from which we compile our statistical report to the DLA.

How do I change my company's information in your database, such as if we move, or if we add or drop a line of products or services?

Just send us an e-mail and tell us what has changed. Also, you can view the "Company Profile" from your "View Bids" site, and print it out, mark it up, and fax it to us. Your company profile document also shows the bid-match search terms that we are using and you can have us change that too. We don't make arbitrary changes, so we need your authorization in writing, which can be by e-mail, fax or mail. If you prefer to come by our office, we can show you your record and you can tell us what information to correct. We also want you to tell us of any socio-economic categories that should be checked, such as veteran-owned or woman-owned, for example.

How do I get a DUNS Number?

We would be happy to help you with these registrations, which are interrelated and are very complex. We recommend you fill out our online **Client Application** and register with us as a client, so we will have the confidentiality agreement and the necessary data that you will need. First, you must get or have a Tax ID or an Employer Identification Number from Internal Revenue Service. (Do not use your Social Security number in documents that can be viewed by the public, as government contracts and registrations can.) Second, go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>, which is entirely separate from the traditional credit reporting service at Dun & Bradstreet and register with them as a government contractor. Third, you enter your company data into Registration. Finally, you enter the rest of your company data into the Dynamic Small Business Search that is SBA's extension on SAM. These four steps must be done in sequence, and you must wait about two days after each one before the next one will be ready for you. You must keep your SAM Registration current at least yearly, and you can update it anytime, which will extend its validity for another year.

How do I get a TIN/EIN?

To learn more about Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) and how to obtain one, click this **IRS** link. You may apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) online at www.irs.gov.

How do I get on the Federal Supply Schedule?

To get on the Federal Supply Schedule you must go to GSA.gov. Look up the stock class you wish to work in and complete the solicitation requirements, if available.

The Federal Supply Schedule is a complex, difficult, indefinite-delivery-indefinite-

quantity (IDIQ) type of contract that will take months for you to apply for. You may go to GSA.gov and see "becoming a vendor". Then, take the course. We recommend that newcomers to the federal marketplace should not even consider this contracting vehicle until they have a year or more experience in federal contracting transactions, because the time and effort necessary to prepare the GSA proposal would be wasted if you decide not to pursue the federal market after all, and because GSA requires a "past performance" record in order to pre-qualify a company for this type of contract. We recommend that you tell these customers that you will apply for the Schedule if there is enough business to warrant the effort, and ask for their estimate of future orders they would place with you, so you can decide if it's worthwhile for you. Remember that the GSA Schedule is a contract for future sales and it does not guarantee that anyone will order from you. Meanwhile, offer to sell to them via "purchase card" or "Visa card" and ask what their authorized limit is (usually \$3,000 but sometimes more per order). Then focus on customers that do not require the GSA Schedule until you can devote several months of intense effort to compile the proposal. We will help you with it, but we recommend you take the Course first.

I want to bid on a solicitation but it requires drawings and specifications that I can't get. Can you help me?

In some instances, we can. Sometimes there is a fee, which you would pay to the owner of the documents, but at least we can find out where you can buy them. Sometimes the documents are free but there is a special type of software required to download them; we can help you find and use that software, which is usually free. Sometimes, there is a confidentiality document that must be signed before these documents can be downloaded or a "Rights Guard" application procedure if the documents are restricted by their owner. We can help you identify what it takes to gain access to the documents.

What is a capabilities narrative and why do I need it?

You need a one-page handout that potential customers can keep on file to see at a glance what your company is capable of selling. The typical format or layout of a capabilities narrative has the company name and logo at the top, followed by complete address and contact information. Below that is a brief paragraph stating the company's capabilities, 3-5 lines. The body of the page contains a list of the products or services offered. If it's a long list, group them into categories to save space. Near the bottom will be special characteristics of the company, such as socio-economic categories, quality standards, certifications, etc. The page is usually laid out in "portrait" orientation, and is to be read flat, not folded like a brochure. It is suitable for sending as an e-mail attachment as well as for printing in bulk to hand out at trade fairs and opportunity conferences.

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.