



Laying the Groundwork: Introduction to Government Contracting

Last Updated: September 2023

Intended Audience



Any small business curious about selling to local, state or federal government agencies.

This high level overview is an essential first step to understanding how the process works, how to determine if government contracting is a fit for their company and possible next steps.

Level: Beginner

About APEX Accelerators

APEX Accelerators are part of a nationwide program dedicated to providing technical assistance to small businesses who wish to sell to federal, state or local governments.

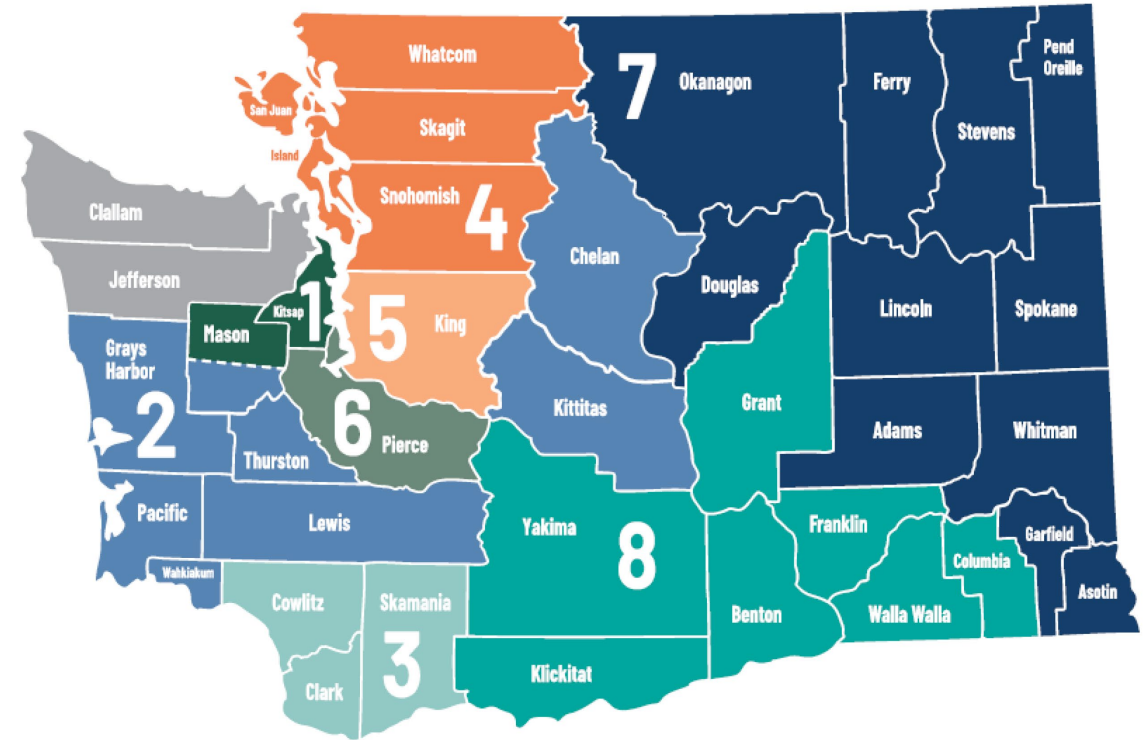
- Marketing to government buyers
- Certifications & registrations
- Finding opportunities to bid
- Interpreting solicitations and regulations
- Locating R & D funding and [much more](#)

*APEX Accelerators are funded in part through
a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense*



About the Washington APEX Accelerator

- Regionally based advisors
- No cost 1:1 advising and workshops
- Specialists including cyber security, GSA Schedule, SBIR program and others
- Client learning portal
- Bid Match Service (fee based)



<https://washingtonapex.org/>



Presentation Goals

- Introduce government contracting basics
- Help you decide if government contracting is a fit
- Next Steps and Resources



Government Contracting Basics



4 R's of Government Contracting

1. Research
2. Register on appropriate procurement portals & sites
3. Respond to solicitations
4. Receive a contract



The First “R” : Research

1. WHO are you selling to?
2. WHAT are they buying?
3. HOW do they buy it?



Who are you selling to:

Over 2000 Federal Agencies

Federal Departments of:

- Defense
- Transportation
- Veteran Affairs
- Corrections
- Agriculture

Other Examples:

- Military Bases
- Border Patrol
- National Endowment of the Arts
- US Post Office
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Courthouses

BUT WAIT!
THERE'S MORE....



Who are you selling to:

190 State Agencies

State Departments

- Transportation
- Education
- Corrections
- Enterprise Services

Other State Entities

- Convention & Trade Center
- Wine Commission
- Office of Tourism
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

**BUT WAIT!
THERE'S MORE....**



Who are you selling to:

39 Counties

- Transportation
- Construction
- Rural Health
- Sheriffs Department
- Public Works

**BUT WAIT!
THERE'S MORE....**



Who are you selling to:

281 Municipalities

- Law Enforcement
- Fire Services
- Libraries
- Parks and Recreation

BUT WAIT!
THERE'S MORE....



Who are you selling to:

Quasi Agencies

- Tribal Entities
- Ports
- Universities
- Transit Authorities
- Schools K - 12

.....AND 49 OTHER STATES



What are they buying?

Specially Funded Projects

- Consultants
- Technology Expansion
- Research
- Wellness Programs
- On Line Training
- Website Design/Enhancement
- Wildlife Programs
- Educational Videos

Day to Day Services

- Janitorial
- Pest Control
- Vehicles and Vehicle Maintenance
- Staffing
- Food Services
- Printer/Copier Repair
- Electrical/Building Repair



What else are they buying?

Construction

- Engineering
- Architecture Design
- Surveying and Assessments
- General Contractors
- Project Management
- Environmental Testing

Products

- Repair and Maintenance Parts
- Office Supplies
- Promotional Items
- Uniforms and Badges
- Furniture
- Computers and Hardware



How do they buy it?

Solicitations

- Are posted publicly
- In a competitive bid there needs to be at least 2 qualified bidders
- The process to register and bid on government contracts is **FREE**



How do they buy it?

Prime Contractors

- Primes are large private companies
- Have their own on-boarding and bidding processes
- May have subcontracting goals with federal or state contracts



How are they buying?

Multiple Award Contracts

- GSA Schedules (Federal)
- MATOCS (Federal Construction)
- Statewide Contracts (State)
- Rosters or On Call List (Local)
- Cooperative Purchasing Agreements (Regional)



Small Business Certifications

Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprise (OMWBE)

[WA State Office of Minority and Womens Business Enterprises](#)

State Certifications

Small Business Administration (SBA)

[SBA.gov](#)

Federal Certification Programs



Is Government Contracting a Fit?



Basic Considerations

1. Are you ready to compete?
2. Do you have the time and resources to commit?
3. Are you financially stable?



Steps to Government Contracting Success

- Create a solid business plan
- Establish at least 2 years experience in the commercial or private market
- Create a government target plan
 - Who are you selling to?
 - What do they buy?
 - How do they buy it?



Finding Opportunities

System for Award Management (SAM)

[SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)

Federal opportunities and federal registration

Washington Electronic Business Solutions (WEBS)

<https://pr-webs-vendor.des.wa.gov/>

State opportunities and state registration

Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE)

[WA State Office of Minority and Womens Business Enterprises Opportunity Page](#)

Comprehensive listing of opportunities (Local, State and Primes)



Next Steps and Resources



If you are.....

In the conceptual stages of your business

OR have less than one year in business

OR are not financially secure

you may want to

Meet with a resource partner to secure more commercial work

SBDC – Small Business Development Center

SCORE – Service Corp of Retired Executives

WCWB – Washington Center for Women in Business

Business Impact NW



Small Business Resources

[Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC)

SBA funded general business development support

[Service Corp of Retired Executives](#) (SCORE)

SBA funded general business support services

[Womens Business Center](#) (WCWB)

SBA funded resources for women-owned firms

[Business Impact NW](#)

Coaching and access to capital for underbanked entrepreneurs



If you are.....

Experienced in your current business

AND ready to explore government contracting further
you may want to

Meet with an APEX Accelerator Advisor to learn about your
opportunities in government contracting.



Meeting with an APEX Advisor

Washington State firms can register with the Washington APEX Accelerator for no cost assistance. APEX offers 1:1 assistance as well as access to a client learning portal and other specialized assistance.

Learn more here: <https://washingtonapex.ecenterdirect.com/>

*Outside of Washington State?
Find your regional APEX Accelerator [here](#)*

