

Doing Business with the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE): Frequently Asked Questions

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Responses:

1. **I am interested in doing business with the Department of Energy (DOE). Where can I start?**

It is important to first understand how federal contracting works, determine if your business qualifies, and decide if federal contracting is right for your business. The Small Business Administration's (SBA) [Government Contracting webpage](#) is a good place to begin. Once you decide you are ready, start with the following steps:

- i. Obtain a free Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (See [Question 3](#)).
- ii. Register your business with the System of Award Management (SAM) (See [Question 4](#)).
- iii. Find your company's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Codes (See [Question 5](#)).
- iv. Compile a list of capabilities for SAM's SBA Supplemental page to register in the SBA Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS) (See [Question 4](#)).

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2. What items do I need for completing the government contracting registration process?

- i. [NAICS](#) codes
- ii. [DUNS](#) number(s)
- iii. Federal Tax identification Number ([TIN](#) or [EIN](#))
- iv. Standard Industrial Classification ([SIC](#)) codes
- v. [Product Service](#) codes (optional)
- vi. [Federal Supply Classification](#) codes (optional)

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3. What is a DUNS number?

Data Universal Numbering System ([DUNS](#)) numbers are unique nine-digit identification numbers for each physical location of a business. DUNS numbers are assigned and maintained by Dun and Bradstreet, a public company that offers businesses commercial credit information and reports. For more information: http://www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/.

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4. What is SAM?

The System for Award Management ([SAM](#)) is a primary registrant database of the federal government, containing information relevant to federal procurement and financial transactions. Various federal agencies rely on SAM for collecting, validating, storing and disseminating accurate agency and company information.

Upon registering for SAM, you will see a link to the SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search ([DSBS](#)) if you are classified as a small business under SBA's size standards. By following this link, you can register your business in the DSBS, a very popular database for federal agencies and prime contractors specifically looking for viable small businesses to meet their contracting needs. When registering, make sure to list keywords and a narrative that best reflects your business' capabilities. This will help ensure you are more easily found in federal agency searches.

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5. What are NAICS Codes?

The North American Industry Classification System ([NAICS](#)) intends to categorize businesses by industry in order to collect, analyze, and publish statistical data surrounding the American economy. NAICS codes are based on the industry in which a business is primarily engaged. Additionally, NAICS codes are utilized for administrative, contracting, and tax purposes. The SBA determines different business size standards for each NAICS code.

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6. What is a GSA Schedule?

A [General Services Administration \(GSA\) Contract](#) (i.e. GSA Schedule, Federal Supply Schedule, or multiple award schedules), is an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ), pre-negotiated contract between GSA and commercial businesses. These contracts are available for use by all federal agencies, making it easier for the government to purchase high-quality, cutting edge commercial services and products. Schedule contracts may be as long as five years with three five-year option periods. Though getting on a schedule can be an arduous process, it is an advantageous way for securing more business with the federal government.

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7. How can I get on a GSA Schedule?

GSA offers a [Vendor Toolbox](#) comprised of resources that will help you understand and decide whether a GSA Schedule is right for your business. Seven GSA acquisition centers and 50 SBA Government Contracting offices nationwide provide contract assistance for any particular schedule. It may also be beneficial to contact the Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO), Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO), or Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) assigned to the schedule you aim to join. The nongovernmental Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) across the country also offer extensive assistance to businesses at little to no cost. For more information:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/203017>.

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8. Where can I identify current DOE procurement opportunities?

- i. [DOE Forecast of Opportunities](#): DOE's list of projected purchases anticipated for the coming year.
- ii. [FedBizOpps](#): the federal government's official point-of-entry for all public announcements of bidding opportunities expected to exceed \$25,000 across all federal agencies.
- iii. [GSA eBuy](#): GSA's electronic Request for Quote (RFQ)/Request for Proposal (RFP) system for services and products offered through Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and technology contracts.
- iv. [FedBid](#): an online reverse auction marketplace for governments to post requirements and select a winning bid.
- v. [PTAC Bid Match](#): PTAC's online service that searches over 2000 government sites for opportunities, providing match results by using NAICS codes, keywords, and geographical locations you select. Contact your local PTAC to learn how to sign up.

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9. What procurement set-asides/preferences are available to small businesses?

Under the Small Business Act, federal agencies reserve a portion of procurement opportunities exclusively for small businesses. The following federal small business programs qualify businesses for correlating set-asides:

- i. [Small Business](#)
- ii. [Small Disadvantaged Business](#)
- iii. [8\(a\) Business Development](#)
- iv. [HUBZone \(Historically Underutilized Business Zone\)](#)
- v. [Women Owned Small Business/Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Business](#)
- vi. [Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business](#)

For more information on features for each program, please see our [Small Business At-A-Glance](#).

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10. What rules does DOE use to purchase goods and services?

- i. [Federal Acquisition Regulation \(FAR\)](#): the primary source of federal procurement information and regulations. For information specific to small business, see [FAR Part 19](#).
- ii. [Department of Energy Acquisition Regulation \(DEAR\)](#): DOE's supplementary set of regulations to the FAR, providing additional internal agency regulations and best practices. For information specific to small business, see [DEAR Part 919](#).

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11. I hear DOE has a variety of grants available. Where can I learn more about this?

EERE works with business, industry, universities, and others to increase the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. EERE encourages the growth of these technologies by offering financial assistance opportunities for their development and demonstration.

EERE issues solicitations called Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for specific projects in which it has a programmatic interest ([See Question 12](#)). These solicitations are posted from time to time on the EERE Exchange website [Funding Opportunity Exchange](#). You can also search for current opportunities through the [EERE Financial Opportunities](#) website or through [FedConnect](#). DOE also funds Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants through the Office of Science [SBIR](#).

Lastly, although it requires a substantial time commitment by an interested party, all Federal grants must by law have a synopsis posted on grants.gov: <http://www.grants.gov/>. For more funding-specific questions, please see: <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/FAQ.aspx>.

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12. How do I find out more information about a particular DOE Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)?

Each FOA establishes a mailbox for interested applicants to submit questions – we do not identify specific points of contact/personnel. In fact, the FOA specifically states that EERE personnel are prohibited from communicating with applicants (in writing or otherwise) except through the established question and answer process. The federal employee will not make eligibility determinations and that information is clearly stated in the FOA. This process was established to ensure all applicants receive similar information and no one is given an unfair advantage.

The mailbox address is included in the footer so it is displayed on every page of the FOA. All questions must be submitted at least 3 business days prior to the closing date. Similarly, EERE staff will try respond within 3 business days. All questions and answers are published on EERE Exchange so there is no unfair advantage.

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13. Can I get a grant or other financial assistance to help me develop my energy-related innovation?

Inventors may seek DOE funding for energy efficiency or renewable energy technologies through three routes: the [Small Business Innovation Research program and Small Business Technology Transfer program](#), the [Advance Research Projects Agency-Energy](#), or through an [unsolicited proposal](#).

Additionally, make sure to check out DOE's new Small Business Vouchers Pilot Program ([See Question 14](#)). [\[Return to Top\]](#)

14. What is the Small Business Voucher Program? Is it good for inventors?

Through the Small Business Vouchers (SBV) Program, EERE is funding up to \$20 million in vouchers to qualified small businesses, providing them access to leading researchers, facilities, and expertise at national laboratories nationwide. This is a great opportunity for inventors to take that next step in successfully creating and commercializing new and improved processes and products. Vouchers are available for the following nine key advanced energy fields: advanced manufacturing, bioenergy, buildings, fuel cells, geothermal, solar, vehicles, water, and wind. For more information: <https://www.sbv.org/>.

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15. Where can I find assistance or training to prepare bids and proposals?

- i. [SBA](#): an essential resource for small businesses in government contracting, providing free trainings, online resources, mentorship programs, and more in business financing, advocacy, professional development, and technical assistance.
- ii. [PTAC](#): locate the nearest of over 300 local PTAC offices that offer small business a variety of services by procurement professionals, including classes, seminars, individual counseling, procurement history, contraction specification, and more.
- iii. [DOE Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization \(OSDBU\)](#): DOE's one-stop shop for small and disadvantaged businesses, providing information on webinars, upcoming events, blog, and news. [\[Return to Top\]](#)