Doing Business with the Bureau of Land Management

BLM

The Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). We might best be described as a small agency with a big mission and a lot of ground to cover. As the Nation's largest land manager, the BLM is responsible for over 260 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western States.

The BLM oversees recreational opportunities, commercial activities (livestock grazing, oil and gas development, etc.), wildlife habitat, transportation systems, archaeological sites, wilderness areas, public land survey activities, and numerous other activities.

Goods and Services Needed by the BLM

Goods and services needed include construction projects; land treatments; professional and nonprofessional services; supplies; information technology resources; workspace leases; environmental studies; wild horse and burro roundups; cadastral surveying; fire prevention, suppression, and rehabilitation services/supplies; and hazardous material management. A more complete list of goods and services that are acquired is located at the BLM National Acquisition Website: *http://www.blm.gov/natacq*

Doing Business with the BLM

The BLM's headquarters is in Washington, D.C., but our procurement offices are decentralized for procurements less than $100,000. Procurements over $100,000 are handled through the National Business Center in Denver, Colorado, and in our Portland, Oregon, Office. A complete listing of BLM acquisition organization and office contacts is posted on the BLM's National Acquisition Internet website.

The BLM is committed to increasing contracting opportunities for the small business community. Doing business with the BLM requires that you have a great product or service at a competitive price, and have the necessary people and equipment. It also helps if you develop a viable marketing plan for obtaining contracts and subcontracts, establishing a team approach, or creating joint ventures.

The BLM and the DOI are now acquiring goods and services electronically using the Internet.

To take advantage of future business opportunities with the BLM, you must:

1. Obtain a valid Dun & Bradstreet Number (D&B) from Dun & Bradstreet at *http://www.dnb.com/* or call them at 800-333-0505.

2. Register your firm on the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System at *http://www.ccr.gov*

All federal agencies are required to use the CCR system as a single, governmentwide system for storing contractor procurement and payment information.

The BLM must comply with all provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), which are based on numerous small business regulations and statutes that impact the contracting process. You should have access to the FAR (***http://www.arnet.gov/far***). Ultimately, you must be prepared to use the FAR and comply with all BLM regulations if you want to be successful in doing business with the Bureau.

Some Helpful Hints

- Be "customer friendly."
- Be sure you have Internet and e-mail capabilities.
- Make direct contact with acquisition and program staff.
- Become familiar with what the BLM needs.
- Consider subcontracting as well as prime contracting opportunities.
- Match your capabilities and expertise to specific BLM procurement opportunities.
- Research procurement opportunities and pursue selling opportunities.
- Make sure you can accept credit card payments because many purchases are being made with the Governmentwide charge card. Additional information on the card is available from GSA at: ***http://www.fss.gsa.gov/services/gsasmart-pay***.

Finding Out about Contracting Opportunities

There are a number of sources where you can find out about BLM contracting opportunities:

- ***http://www.fedbizopps.gov*** is a daily public notification of federal agencies' proposed solicitations and contracts for goods and services valued over $25,000. All BLM and other federal agencies' solicitations and contracts for goods and services over $25,000 are required to be posted at this site. If you are unable to access a BLM solicitation electronically, please contact the appropriate BLM contracting office.

- The Advanced Procurement Plan (APP) is the BLM's annual forecast of goods and services needed by contract. The APP is on the BLM National Acquisition Home Page at ***http://www.blm.gov/natacq***. Just click on the APP and then on BLM or any other Interior Bureau to view. The BLM National Acquisition Home Page also provides a list of goods and services we buy as well as the procurement office contacts.

It is very important to properly evaluate and understand the terms and conditions of Invitations for Bids (IFBs), Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and Requests for Quotations (RFQs). Only realistic offers that match your firm's capabilities and intentions should be submitted for consideration.

Certifications

There are two types of certifications-- self and Small Business Administration (SBA). Visit the SBA Office of Size Standards at ***http://www.sba.gov/size*** to see if you qualify as a small business. Based on current size standards, some small businesses can self-certify.

Self-Certification

You may self-certify if you are a woman-owned small business or a service-disabled or veteran-owned small business. Visit ***http://www.sba.gov*** for an explanation of the above categories. For more information about woman-owned small opportunities, go to ***http://www.womenbiz.gov/***.

Service-disabled or veteran-owned businesses can register their business qualifications in a database maintained by the VA Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE). For more information, visit ***http://www.vetbiz.gov/default2.htm*** or ***http://www.veteranscorp.org***.

SBA Certification

To qualify as a Small Disadvantaged Business, an 8(a) participant, or a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone), you must comply with the SBA's official certification process. If you would like to use your status as an 8(a) participant, a small disadvantaged business, or a HUBZone business, you will need to be able to validate to government procurement personnel that you qualify.

Small disadvantaged businesses must be owned by individuals who are "socially *and* economically" disadvantaged as defined by regulations. For more information, please refer to ***http://www.sba.gov/sdb/index.html***.

The 8(a) program assists in the expansion and development of existing, newly organized, or prospective profit-oriented small disadvantaged firms. Small businesses may apply for the Section 8(a) program if they are owned and controlled by one or more persons who can provide evidence of having been deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy because of social *and* economic disadvantages. For more information, visit ***http://www.sba.gov/busniessop/programs/8a.html***.

The Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in urban and rural communities by providing Federal contracting preferences to small businesses. These preferences go to small businesses that obtain this certification by employing staff who live in a HUBZone, and the company must have a "principal office" in one of the specifically designated areas. To determine whether your business qualifies for HUBZone certification by the SBA, please visit ***http://eweb1.sba.gov/hubzone/internet/***.

Obtaining Assistance

There are many organizations that have been established to assist small businesses with the Federal procurement process.

- The website ***http://www.sba.gov/yourgovt/federal.html*** lists Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other associations that can aid small business firms.
- Procurement Technical Assistance Centers are resources that provide assistance to business firms in marketing products and services to the Federal, state, and local governments. Visit their website at ***www.dla.mil/db/procurem.htm***.
- Small Business Development Centers are sponsored by the SBA in partnership with state and local governments and educational communities. These Centers provide business management, technical and research assistance, and training. For a complete listing, visit ***http://sba.gov/sbdc*** to obtain specific geographic information by state.
- The Service Corps Retired Executives (SCORE) is a volunteer program sponsored by the SBA. Retired business executives share their management and technical knowledge with small business owners. Their services are free and they provide one-on-one business counseling. To obtain more information on SCORE, as well as other programs, please visit ***http://www.sba.gov***.

Native American Business Development Centers

The Minority Business Development Agency (under the Department of Commerce) has established a Native American Program to address the special problems of Native American firms and individuals interested in entering business, or in maintaining or expanding their efforts in the competitive marketplace. Although they can provide service to any minority client, Native American Business Development Centers are designed to focus on the unique business needs of Native Americans. For more information, go to: ***http://www.sba.gov/hotlist/minor.html***.

Types of Contracts

Micropurchases

Micropurchases, a category that was created under the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (FASA), consist of purchases that do not exceed $2,500. While micropurchases *are not set aside* for small businesses, they may be awarded noncompetitively if the contracting officer considers the price to be reasonable. Micropurchases are equitably distributed among qualified suppliers to the extent practicable. Micropurchases are usually not handled by procurement staff. Instead, they are made by various government employees who are authorized to use a U.S. Government MasterCard for purchases of goods and services. Please ask for the government employee who has purchase authority using the charge card before you provide any goods or services. If you do not accept MasterCard, then a contracting officer will need to make the commitment and issue you a convenience check.

Small Purchases

Small purchases are those valued at $100,000 or less; this value is referred to as the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT). With the exception of micropurchases of $2,500 or less, procurements valued at $100,000 or under *are reserved* for small businesses and simplified acquisition procedures apply. These purchases must be set aside unless the contracting officer determines that there is little likelihood of obtaining offers from two or more responsible small business firms that are competitive in terms of market prices, quality, and delivery. In this instance, full and open competition from both large and small firms or a partial small business set-aside can be used. Even in full and open competition, small businesses are encouraged to compete.

Blanket Purchase Agreements

Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) are agreements between the Government and suppliers allowing for repeat purchases during a certain period. A contracting officer may write a BPA if a product or service is going to be purchased several times. This process of establishing "charge accounts" with several qualified sources of supply reduces paperwork, so contracting officers usually issue a number of BPAs to several suppliers for the same types of products or services.

Federal Supply Schedules

The Federal Supply Service (FSS) provides products and servies through the General Services Administration (GSA) Schedules Program, the Stock and Special Order Programs, consolidated purchases, and other contracting programs. Information on the Federal Supply Schedule is located in FAR Subpart 8.4 at ***http://www.arnet.gov/far***.

Subcontracting Opportunities

Being a prime contractor to the Federal government is only one strategy for locating contract opportunities. You can also become a subcontractor to a current government contractor. Public Law 95-507 mandates that all prime contracts over $500,000 awarded to large businesses have a subcontracting plan maximizing the use of small businesses as subcontractors. A large company holds the contract, and you would be subcontracted a portion of the work. To take advantage of subcontracting opportunities, you need to market your goods and services to the prime contractor's small business contact.

Conclusion

The BLM requires quality products or services, within the required delivery time, and at a reasonable price. If you believe you can meet these basic requirements and fill a need for the BLM, please contact the appropriate BLM contracting office listed on the National Acquisition Website. We look forward to hearing from you!

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