

Government Contractor Startup Checklist

Build an evidence-backed starting plan for federal, state, local, education, or defense work. Mark tasks as completed and write owners and next steps in your own working notes.

1. Define the market

- ☐ Describe one specific product or service you can deliver now.
- ☐ Identify potential buyers and research evidence that they buy your offering.
- ☐ Choose a prime-contract, subcontract, or state/local starting route.

2. Prepare business records

- ☐ Confirm legal name, physical address, structure, and authorized contacts.
- ☐ Prepare the records required for official tax, banking, and validation steps securely.
- ☐ Research relevant NAICS codes and applicable size standards.

3. Register appropriately

- ☐ For federal prime work, review SAM registration requirements and exceptions.
- ☐ Distinguish a UEI-only request from a full active SAM registration.
- ☐ For U.S. SAM registrants, confirm CAGE assignment or validation through the official process.
- ☐ For state and local buyers, identify and complete their separate vendor processes.
- ☐ Assign a record owner and track registration status and renewal requirements.

4. Present capability

- ☐ Draft a concise capability statement with relevant, authorized experience.
- ☐ Verify all identifiers, business-status claims, and granted certifications.
- ☐ Keep personal clearance details, banking, tax records, and controlled information out of public material.

5. Search and evaluate

- ☐ Find your local APEX assistance center and prepare specific questions.
- ☐ Create SAM searches and suitable local portal notifications.
- ☐ Track notice type, deadline, scope, eligibility, security requirements, and next steps.
- ☐ Review delivery capacity, cash flow, proposal effort, and clauses before bidding.
- ☐ Research potential primes and follow official supplier-introduction channels.

Official starting points

SAM registration: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

Federal notices: <https://sam.gov/content/opportunities>

SBA contracting: <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting>

APEX: <https://sam.gov/about/external-resources>

General planning guidance, not legal advice, certification, or proof of eligibility. Requirements depend on the buyer, solicitation, contract, and data involved. Check current official instructions. Keep tax, banking, passwords, controlled information, and personal identity records out of this worksheet.

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