

How You Can Create Opportunities for Small Businesses to Support Your Mission

by Emily Harman, SES, Director, Department of the Navy Office of Small Business Programs

You can support the Department of the Navy's (DON's) Small Business Program even if you only contract with large businesses. Because the DON has small business prime contracting goals, not subcontracting goals, some members of the acquisition workforce may think that only providing prime contracting opportunities for small businesses is important. That is not the case.

This article provides a top level summary of actions (not all inclusive) you can take to increase opportunities for small businesses to support your mission as prime and subcontractors. Your organization's Small Business Professionals can provide in-depth training on these topics.

Pre-Award

1) Communications with Industry

- Early, open, and effective communication results in greater understanding of requirements, efficiently tailored and documented requirements, fewer adversarial relationships, a sense of ownership in the end product, and reduced bid & proposal (B&P) costs.
- Publish and Frequently Update a Long Range Acquisition Forecast
- Hold advance planning briefings for industry
- Attend the DON's Gold Coast Small Business Procurement Event held every August
- Attend Sea Air Space small business events to include the Forum for Small Business Innovation Research Transition
- Submit Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) topics (you can find your Government SYSCOM SBIR Program Manager contact information at www.navysbir.com)

2) Market Research

- Determine if all or a portion of your requirement can be performed by small businesses. Breaking a portion or all of the work out and issue a small business set-aside to eliminate pass through costs.
- Seek assistance/advice from Small Business Professionals
- Provide feedback to industry on Sources Sought/ Requests for Information responses
- Identify SBIR efforts that could satisfy your requirement (www.navysbirsearch.com is an excellent resource)

3) Industry Days/Pre-solicitation/Preproposal Conferences (Contract Specific or Program Specific)

- Provide opportunities for large and small businesses to network or conduct matchmaking meetings
- Communicate expectations on the utilization of small businesses as prime and subcontractors

- Release a draft Request for Proposal and seek input from industry
- Share best practices for submitting competitive proposals and adhering to contract requirements
- Providing potential bidders with simplified proposal requirement checklists

4) Acquisition Strategy/Acquisition Plan and Resulting Solicitation

- Involve your Small Business Professional early in the development of your strategy
- Establish goals for applying SBIR and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) technologies in programs of record and incentivize primes to meet those goals (see DoDI 5000.02 and the DON's SBIR/STTR Phase III Guidebook on www.navysbir.com).
- For contracts with a value at or above \$100 million, establish goals for the transition of Phase III technologies in subcontracting plans and require primes to report the number and dollar amount of Phase III SBIR or STTR contracts
- Consider performance-based, commercial-type payment clauses to accommodate restrained fiscal resources.
- Consider the use of indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity type contracts to enable companies to plan workload over a longer period of time, creating stability

5) Competitive Source Selections

- Ensure Small Business Professionals advise the Source Selection Team
- Evaluate Small Business Participation as a Source Selection Factor or Sub factor
- Assess contractor performance against, and efforts to achieve, the goals identified in the small business subcontracting plan

6) Sole Source Negotiations

- Incentivize the contractor to provide increased opportunities to small businesses as subcontractors
- Encourage the prime contractor to enter into a Mentor Protégé Agreement, especially in a situation where there is a need for additional sources of supply to reduce supply chain risk with the potential to negatively impact to your mission
- Ensure the prime contractor is aware of relevant SBIR topics

How You Can Create Opportunities for Small Businesses to Support Your Mission (Continued)

Post Award

1) Debriefings

- Provide meaningful debriefings - see my article entitled "Myth-busting" Further Improving Industry Communication with Effective Debriefings in the DACM Corner | JUL -SEP 2017

2) Post Award Kick Off Meeting

- Hold a kick off meeting to ensure mutual understanding and establish expectations
- Address questions regarding contract terms and conditions to enable small businesses to more easily navigate the complexity often associated with government contracts

3) Program Reviews

- Address small business participation in program reviews

4) Monitor Subcontracting Performance

- Utilize the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System
- Consider requiring monthly small business subcontracting reporting on larger contracts

5) Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS)

- Accurately evaluate the prime contractor's Small Business Subcontracting in accordance with the CPARS Guide

6) Share Information

- Publish good news stories about how small businesses are contributing to your mission as prime and subcontractors
- Provide feedback on lessons learned, challenges and barriers to doing business with small business

Small businesses provide combat power for our troops and economic power for our nation. What tips do you have for increasing opportunities for small businesses to participate as prime and subcontractors? Contact the DON Office of Small Business Programs at smallbizideas@navy.mil. Send us your good news stories as well as challenges and barriers to doing business with small businesses.

CALENDAR & EVENTS

Oct							Nov							Dec							Jan						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4						1	2	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31			

Acquisition Events

12 Oct	AEA Ceremony	4-8 Dec	PM Workshop
23-27 Oct	Understanding Industry Course	6 Dec	USD (AT&L Ceremony)
		11 Jan	AWS Summit
14 Nov	Joint Acquisition HR Summit	22-26 Jan	PM Workshop

Federal Holidays & Days of Interest

9 Oct	Columbus Day
11 Nov	Veterans Day (observed 10th)
23 Nov	Thanksgiving
25 Dec	Christmas Day
1 Jan	New Years Day

The **DACM Corner** magazine is produced by the **Director, Acquisition Career Management**, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) at 1000 Navy Pentagon, Washington DC 20350-1000. To contact the DACM please go to <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/rda/Workforce> or call (703) 614-3666.

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The deadline for submissions for the JAN-MAR 2018 issue of the DACM Corner is 17 NOV 2018.