

Alaska Procurement Connection

A Monthly Newsletter From Your Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

August 2006

Is Your Business Information Up-To-Date?

Contributed by Robert Brunett (anreb2@uaa.alaska.edu)

Here it is summer already and things are sizzling in the government contracting world. It's almost been a complete year and now we're on the brink of October 1st, when federal budgets will hit their fiscal year release cycles for 2007. Before the flurry of "use or lose" contracting activity begins, it's a good time to remind businesses to update their registrations.

Your registration in the central database for federal contractors, known as Central Contractor Registration (CCR), should be your first priority and can be accessed at <http://www.ccr.gov> using your DUNS number and TPIN. You're responsible for maintaining the data within the system and you should keep it current as often as necessary, but no less than every 12 months. You need to update your profile at least every 12 months to remain "Active" in CCR—failure to do so will cause your profile to go "Inactive." *Note: The default search option in CCR is for a listing of vendors with "Active" profiles. If your profile is inactive it will only be displayed when the search option is manually changed to "List all vendors (active and previously active)."*

Updating your CCR profile should also include reviewing your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to ensure those codes that are listed are current and reflect your updated business profile. *Hint: You can list up to 20 different NAICS codes in your CCR profile.* Expanding your profile to include all industry NAICS codes in which you provide products and/or services will increase your chances that a "match" will be made when a search is being conducted by a contracting agency. NAICS codes can be searched at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>.

Next on your priority list to update should be your Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA). ORCA is a web-based system (<https://orca.bpn.gov/>) that centralizes the collection and distribution of contractor representations and certifications listing business information required for federal government contract awards. ORCA is an e-Government initiative that was developed to replace the paper-based representations and certifications process. The web-based internet application allows you, the user, to access the system 24/7. This site not only benefits you the contractor, by allowing you to maintain an accurate and complete record, but also the Contracting Officer as they can view every record, including archives, with a click of the mouse.

While your updating your CCR, ORCA, and NAICS codes, also remember to update the information listed with PTAC of Alaska—especially

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your Bidmatch profile. As a reminder; the Bidmatch service allows you to establish a business capability profile which is used to search up to 200 government buying office websites. Contract opportunities that match your profile are sent to you direct via e-mail. This service saves you countless hours of searching the Internet. Ensuring your Bidmatch profile is up-to-date (if you are receiving this service) should be a high priority for the new fiscal year as well. In addition, PTAC also provides one-on-one counseling services statewide to support your government contracting pursuits. As such, if you need assistance navigating the process our counselors are here to assist your efforts and ensure your business information is Up-To-Date and ready for contracting!

EPLS Identifies Excluded Parties

Contributed by Wesley Dalton (fswrd1@uaf.edu)

The Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) identifies those parties which are excluded from receiving Federal contracts, subcontracts, and various forms of financial assistance because of improper procurement protocol. This website, at <http://epls.arnet.gov>, is a great tool to use to implement good business habits by consistently looking at the procurement history of all potential business partners and clients.

This website proves to be very simple and direct in its layout. In the left column of the EPLS homepage, one can find business entity information by name(s), DUNS, agency, resident state or country, business action dates and termination dates, social security number, and cause and treatment (CT) code, if known.

Further down the left column of the EPLS homepage, there are links to view the CT codes of excluded business entities. With this information, one can view why the business was suspended or terminated and what the penalties are for each violation.

The right side column of the EPLS homepage has a user's manual for further help with this website and also a section for those interested in researching archived cases. The rest of this column consists of contact information and a section for government personnel.

In our modern day use of technology it is not uncommon to conduct criminal background checks and credit checks to "weed-out" potential risks to your business. This website is a "background check" of business entities and an excellent tool to add to your business research.

EC/EDI Corner

Contributed by Mary Wheeler (fnmaw@uaf.edu)

How to do Business with DLA

The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), provider of supplies and services to American military forces worldwide, manages 95 percent of military services repair-parts, and 100 percent of military services subsistence, fuel, medical, clothing, construction, and barrier material needs—as well as reutilizing it after it is no longer needed. For links on Doing Business with the DLA, including a list of the Top 100 contractors who do business with the agency, go to: <http://www.dla.mil/bussOppsMain.asp>

FirstGov.gov Knowledge Base

Looking for contact information for your government representatives? The FirstGov site at <http://www.firstgov.gov> may provide the information you seek. In the bar of choices on the left of the screen, FirstGov has "Contact Your Government" which includes e-mail, phone number, and mailing address (including driving instructions) for each agency's regional service center along with the usual FAQs.

Alaska Regional Development Organizations

The Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDOR) program is intended to stimulate economic development and produce sustainable and healthy local economies within the state of Alaska. There are currently 11 ARDORs listed. To find out what your local ARDOR is doing, go to: <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/oed/ardor/ardor.htm>

FirstStep Employment Law Advisor

The FirstStep Employment Law Advisor provides information about federal Department of Labor (DOL) requirements. Its purpose is to help employers identify which DOL laws apply to their business. While this is just a first step, this site does help with understanding some of the basic laws employers need to be aware of when hiring employees. This site can be accessed at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/FirstStep>

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council ranked Alaska's congressional delegation number three on voting for legislation important to entrepreneurs and the small-business community.

—<http://www.sbecouncil.org>

Federal Government Surpasses Statutory Goal

Contributed by K. Anderson (anksa@uaa.alaska.edu)

For the first time in history, small businesses received a record-breaking \$79.6 billion in federal prime contracts, \$10 billion more than the year before, Administrator Hector V. Barreto of the U.S. Small Business Administration said in a June 21, 2006 press release.

According to the release, the contracts represented 25.4 percent of federal prime contracting dollars in FY 2005, surpassing the overall government statutory goal of 23 percent for the third consecutive year. The small business contracting data was reported by the government's Federal Procurement Data-Next Generation (FPDS-NG) system, the only official data reporting system for federal procurement data. The data show that the federal government purchased \$314 billion worth of goods and services from businesses large and small. Top spender is the Department of Defense, which awarded \$53.8 billion of its contracts for goods and services, or about 24.6 percent, to small businesses.

Although mandated goals were not met for firms in the Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) program, for women-owned small businesses, or for service-disabled veteran owned small businesses, these groups did see significant increases. HUBZone-certified firms received \$6.1 billion in contracts (1.9 percent overall), a 27 percent increase over the previous year. Contracting dollars awarded to women-owned small businesses increased by \$1.4 billion to a record \$10.5 billion (3.3 percent overall), a 15 percent increase over the previous year. And contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses increased to \$1.9 billion (0.6 percent overall), up from \$1.2 billion in FY 2004 and a 58 percent increase over the previous year.

There has been some criticism of the accuracy of the data presented in the SBA announcement from industry groups such as the American Small Business League, according to the June 20, 2006 edition of the *Set-Aside Alert*. Equally, studies by the Government Accountability Office, the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity, and others have documented numerous examples of large business being counted as small in addition to rampant miscoding of business classifications.

For the full text of the Small Business Goaling Report, visit http://www.sba.gov/GC/goals/SmallBusinessGoalingReport_2005.pdf.

Alaska Companies Receive SBIR Bridge Grant Awards

Contributed by Carolyn Pratt (ancap1@uaa.alaska.edu)

The Technology Research and Development Center (TREND) awarded five Alaska companies Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Bridge Grants. The Bridge Grant supports the overall completion of a SBIR Phase I project and the beginning of Phase II, or similarly, between a Phase II and Phase III. The SBIR program is one of the few sources of federal funding designed to provide qualified U.S. small businesses an opportunity to meet specific research needs for various federal agencies.

The Alaska SBIR Bridge Grant is supported through a unique partnership between TREND and the Alaska Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Recipients will use the funds to improve data collection and analysis, support testing, redesign a working model, expand commercialization plans, and build on Phase I result. The following companies received Alaska SBIR Bridge Grants:

- Airborne Technologies LLC, a Wasilla-based technology development company, received funds for support of a U.S. Navy SBIR Phase I project, "Polarization-Enhanced Sun-Glint Imaging for Measuring Ocean Wave Statistics."
- Mind Matters Research, an Anchorage-based research agency, received funds for support between Phase I and Phase II of a National Institutes of Health SBIR project, "Multi-Media Imagery Program for Breast Cancer Patients."
- Alaska Native Technologies, LLC, an Anchorage-based information technology-engineering firm, received funds to support a U.S. Navy SBIR Phase I project, "Development of Multi-Purpose Antenna."
- Scientific Fishery Systems, Inc., an Anchorage-based advanced technology company, received funds for support of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration SBIR Phase I project, "Containment and Production Systems for Offshore Aquaculture in the EEZ."
- Alaska Green Gold Company, an Anchorage-based marketing research business, received funds for support between Phase II and Phase III of a U.S. Department of Agriculture SBIR project, "Seed Potato Evaluations in Southern China."

For additional information contact TREND at 907-274-7232.



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New DOL Employment Law Guide Now Available

Contributed by Megan Luna (anmcl1@uaa.alaska.edu)

As part of their compliance assistance programs, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has made available a newly revised Employment Law Guide. This guide outlines the statutes and regulations administered by DOL that affect businesses and workers. Information on developing wage, benefit, safety and health, and nondiscrimination policies for businesses can be found in the guide, as well as work authorization for non-U.S. citizens. These regulations affect all businesses, not only those engaged in government contracting. The guide covers regulations specific to certain federal contracts as well.

Both English and Spanish versions of the guide can be printed from, or viewed on, the DOL website at <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/index.htm>. Any additional questions about the U.S. Department of Labor's programs or services can be sent to dolncc@dol.gov for assistance.

PTAC Offers "10 Steps" Workshop

Contributed by Diana Wilson (andmw@uaa.alaska.edu)

One of the workshops PTAC offers each month in Anchorage, and quarterly in Fairbanks, is the "10 Step Approach to Government Contracting." This workshop is a great overview for those new to government contracting. Some of the topics included in this workshop are: Determining your business NAICS code; Obtaining a DUNS Number; Registering in CCR; Establishing an MPIN; Understanding certifications; Marketing your business to the government; and Finding government opportunities.

If you haven't attended this workshop recently, new content has been incorporated to address recent changes such as establishing an MPIN number in the CCR Registry, registration in Online Representations and Certifications (ORCA), and the Tax ID verification page in CCR.

If you are unable to attend this workshop but still would like the information, it can be provided to you electronically or through a one-on-one counseling session. For the next scheduled workshop or for more information contact Diana at 907-274-7232 or access the PTAC Calendar of Events at: <http://www.ptacalaska.org>