



# A BRAVE NEW WORLD IN FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

HERE'S HOW YOUR  
SMALL BUSINESS  
COULD BECOME A  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY CONTRACTOR  
IN 2004.

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IF YOU THINK YOUR BUSINESS IS TOO SMALL TO GET A government contract, think again. Sure, billion-dollar corporations work with the government all the time. But so do countless small businesses just like yours. In fact, 23 percent of all government buys are, by law, supposed to go to small business—and the SBA helps the government reach that goal. The opportunities are out there; you just have to know where to look.



Depending on the type of business you have, the Department of Energy (DOE) is just one viable avenue worth exploring. The DOE purchases between \$18 billion and \$20 billion worth of goods and services annually—several of them from small businesses. Among the services the DOE purchases are facility management, remediation, construction, R&D, management and scientific consulting, plate work manufacturing, administrative services, data processing, security, engineering, waste treatment and disposal and more.

Through its Small Business Program and its commitment to President Bush's Small Business Agenda, the DOE is now working to help small businesses take advantage of both prime and subcontracting opportunities. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham is dedicated not only to ensuring that the DOE's contracts are open to all small businesses that can meet the department's needs,

but also to eliminating the unnecessary bundling of government contracts, which often prevents small businesses from participating. The DOE is working to expand and refine current procurement tools, to increase the flexibility of specific small-business programs, and to make the overall procurement system more user-friendly for the small-business community.

Entrepreneurs are benefiting from these efforts. In early 2003, for example, RS Information Systems (RSIS) Inc. in McLean, Virginia, a minority-owned company that graduated from the 8(a) program in February 2003, was awarded a \$409 million contract to provide the DOE with crucial e-government services, such as cybersecurity, telecommunications and enterprise architecture. To win the contract, RSIS successfully brought together 14 subcontractors, consisting of four large corporations and 10 small businesses.

## HOW YOUR COMPANY CAN GET IN ON CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

How can you boost your chances of becoming a DOE contractor? Successful small-business contractors and the staff and procurement managers of the DOE offer these tips:

**Do your homework.** Get to know what the DOE needs. Refer to the Web sites listed under "For More Information" for details on specific contracting opportunities. Visit these Web sites often to stay abreast of requirement changes.

**Prepare a company profile.** Develop a succinct, one-page summary of your company's capabilities, including relevant expertise and experience, references from other federal agencies, registrations and certifications.

**Register your business.** To bid on a DOE contract, you must first be registered with the DOE's Industry Interactive Procurement System. Register online at <http://doe-iips.pr.doe.gov>.



At its 2003 conference, the Department of Energy (DOE) selected the Bank of Belen (Belen, New Mexico) as a “Trustee,” managing more than \$6.5 million for the DOE’s Bank Deposit Financial Assistance Program, providing a new source of capital for minority-owned financial institutions to support loans for minority-owned businesses. In attendance (from l. to r.): Theresa Alvillar-Speake, Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity; Kyle McSlarrow, Deputy Secretary of Energy; William Giron, Chairman of the Bank of Belen; and Ken Caron, President of the Bank of Belen.

**Find your niche.** Your business is much more likely to succeed when you have a unique niche or focus. Focus your product and service offerings on the DOE’s needs.

**Respond to Sources Sought notices.** The Department issues Sources Sought notices to determine if there are qualified small businesses that can perform on the contract. If two or more small businesses respond, the DOE may set aside the procurement for small business. If small businesses fail to respond, the procurement may be offered for open and free competition.

**Match and bid.** Match your expertise,

capabilities and experience with a specific DOE procurement opportunity, and then bid on that opportunity.

**Be flexible.** Consider both subcontracting and prime contracting opportunities, teaming, joint ventures or mentor protégé programs.

**Make it easy for the DOE to do business with you.** Be accessible; equip yourself with e-mail and Internet capabilities. Get listed on the U.S. General Services

Administration schedule ([www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)) and Government Wide Acquisitions Contracts (GWAC, [www.govsalesnet.com](http://www.govsalesnet.com)). Be sure you can accept payments by credit card. The DOE adheres to the Prompt Payment Act. For simplified purchases up to \$25,000, the DOE uses credit cards. Other forms of payment may be used and are specified in the contract.

**Market your company.** Don’t wait for the DOE to come calling! Direct contact with acquisition and program personnel is a key to marketing and success.

- Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (<http://smallbusiness.doe.gov>)
- Office of Procurement and Assistance Management: list of DOE procurement offices (<http://professionals.pr.doe.gov/ma5/ma-5web.nsf/organization/procurement+directors?open>)
- Office of Procurement and Assistance Management: list of DOE’s M&O contractors (<http://professionals.pr.doe.gov/ma5/ma5web.nsf/business/doe+MO+contractors>)

**Network and participate.** Utilize every opportunity to establish and develop key contacts. One nationwide networking opportunity is the Annual DOE Small Business Conference. For more on the 2004 conference, visit [www.smallbusiness-outreach.doe.gov](http://www.smallbusiness-outreach.doe.gov).

**Don’t give up.** Persevere until you have a contract! ❖❖

**About the Author**

*Theresa Alvillar-Speake, director of the DOE’s Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, has been a Small Business Advocate for over 30 years.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To find out more about Department of Energy (DOE) contracting opportunities, try these sites:

**The DOE’s Forecast of Prime and Subcontracting Opportunities Database** (<http://smallbusiness.doe.gov>): forecasts requirements over \$100,000 for the coming fiscal years

**FedBizOpps.gov:** the single government point of entry for federal government procurement contracts over \$25,000

**The DOE’s point of entry for actual procurements** (<http://doe-iips.pr.doe.gov>)

For more information on the DOE’s Small Business Program, contact the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization at (202) 586-7377, or visit the DOE Web site, [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).