

# **How to Land Millions in Government Contracts Without Special Connections**

A practical guide for veteran-owned & SDVOSB businesses

GovCon Giants · Version 2 (Bootcamp Format)

War Room · Saturday, February 7 · 9:00 a.m.

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# What we'll discuss today

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A quick overview so you know what's coming:

- ✓ **The opportunity** — Federal spend, SDVOSB set-asides, and why it matters for you
- ✓ **How it works** — No special connections: SAM.gov, certifications, and where opportunities are public
- ✓ **Free resources** — SAM, USAspending, SBA, VA OSDBU, APEX, SUBNet, and VR&E
- ✓ **AI prompts** — Ready-to-use prompts to speed up research and outreach
- ✓ **Best agencies & what's new** — Who to target and NDAA thresholds for 2026
- ✓ **Your next steps** — One action at a time

## Goal

You leave with a clear path to land government contracts—without special connections.

# Federal agencies spend \$700B+ yearly—23% set aside for small business

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**\$700B+**

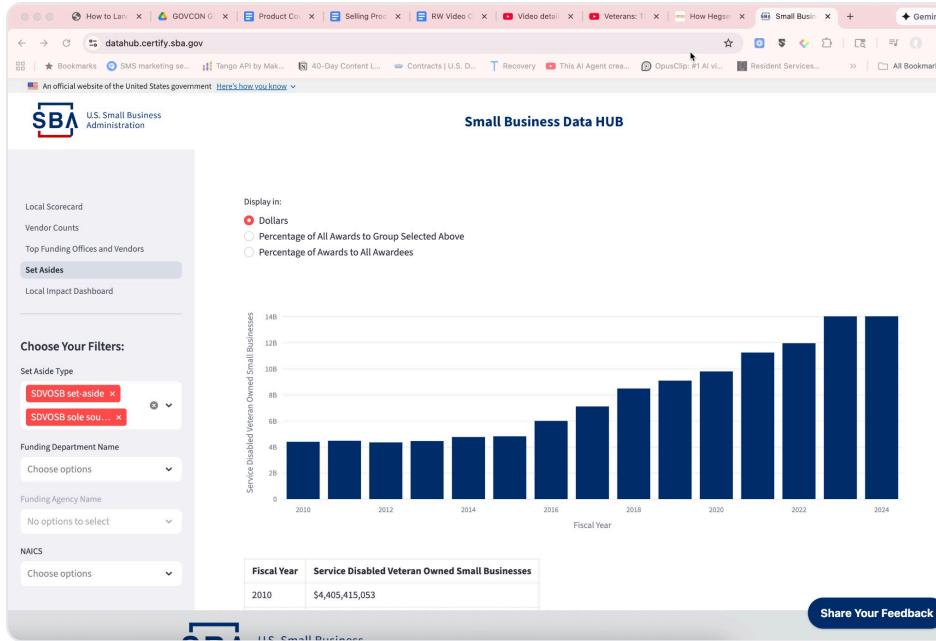
Federal contract spend

**23%**

Set aside for small business

No lobbyists or insiders required.

# SDVOSB contract awards: \$4.4B (2010) → \$14B+ (2024)



Source: [SBA Small Business Data HUB](https://datahub.certify.sba.gov) ([datahub.certify.sba.gov](https://datahub.certify.sba.gov)) · Set-aside type: SDVOSB set-aside, SDVOSB sole source.

# SDVOSB contracting is a growing market

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the "Small Business Data HUB" at [datahub.certify.sba.gov](http://datahub.certify.sba.gov). The page features a sidebar with links like "Local Scorecard", "Vendor Counts", "Top Funding Offices and Vendors", "Set Asides" (which is selected), and "Local Impact Dashboard". Below this is a section titled "Choose Your Filters:" with dropdown menus for "Set Aside Type" (selected "SDVOSB set-aside"), "Funding Department Name", "Funding Agency Name", and "NAICS". The main content area is a table showing annual spending from 2010 to 2024:

Year	Spending (\$)
2010	\$4,405,415,053
2011	\$4,483,580,218
2012	\$4,358,026,347
2013	\$4,457,385,685
2014	\$4,772,110,087
2015	\$4,818,526,244
2016	\$6,007,459,687
2017	\$7,123,060,722
2018	\$8,494,476,797
2019	\$9,100,512,709
2020	\$9,806,715,038
2021	\$11,253,667,423
2022	\$11,966,938,617
2023	\$14,036,905,050
2024	\$14,038,800,068

Source: SBA Small Business Goalin Reports. Dollars are scorecard-eligible dollars after applying the exclusions on the [SBA.gov Small Business Goalin Report Appendix](#) (login required). This does not reflect adjustments used solely for the SBA scorecard, such as double-credit and Department of Energy subcontracting.

[Share Your Feedback](#)

Filter by set-aside type, agency, and NAICS at [datahub.certify.sba.gov](http://datahub.certify.sba.gov). Use this to see where the money is going.

# Every opportunity over \$25K is public on SAM.gov

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- ✓ Same list for everyone—you find them, you bid, you can win
- ✓ Search by keywords and NAICS; filter by set-aside (e.g., SDVOSB)

## One public site

SAM.gov → Contract Opportunities. All federal opportunities over \$25K are there.

# VOSB vs SDVOSB: Why it matters

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## VOSB (Veteran-Owned Small Business)

- 51% veteran-owned; veteran controls business
- State and federal preferences

## SDVOSB (Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned)

- Same + service-connected disability (VA rating or DoD docs)
- VA Veterans First, DoD 3% goal; federal set-asides

Your veteran status unlocks a smaller pool of bidders. No backdoor needed.

# Where to get SDVOSB certified

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- ✓ **SBA.gov** — Veteran Small Business Certification (moved from VA to SBA)
- ✓ Plan for 4–8 weeks; have military, disability, and business ownership documents ready

## One place, free

SBA runs the program. One place. Free.

# Why your veteran status matters

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- ✓ VA Veterans First Contracting Program—priority for SDVOSB/VOSB
- ✓ DoD 3% SDVOSB goal—agencies are graded on this
- ✓ Set-asides = smaller pool of bidders

Find the opportunity, respond, compete.

# Where to start: Registration

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- ✓ **SAM.gov** — free, required. Create an account, complete entity registration, renew annually
- ✓ Then search Contract Opportunities there

## Flow

Register → NAICS → Search → Filter set-aside → Save alerts

# What is a NAICS code?

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- ✓ A **6-digit code** that identifies your type of business
- ✓ Government uses it to classify contracts and decide if you're "small"
- ✓ Solicitations list NAICS; you search by NAICS to find matches

## How to find yours

Census Bureau: [census.gov/naics](http://census.gov/naics). Or Google "NAICS code" + what you do. Most businesses use 3-10 codes.

# Where are the opportunities?

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- ✓ **SAM.gov → Contract Opportunities** — all federal opportunities over \$25K
- ✓ Search by keywords and NAICS; filter by set-aside (e.g., SDVOSB or VOSB)
- ✓ Save your search and turn on email alerts

Also check **Sources Sought** and **RFIs**—responding gets you on their radar.

# Free resource: SAM.gov

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**What it is:** The official federal system where every business must register to do business with the government. It's free and required before you can get paid on a federal contract.

- ✓ Register your entity and get your UEI (Unique Entity ID)
- ✓ Search **Contract Opportunities** — all federal opportunities over \$25K
- ✓ Save searches and turn on email alerts so new opportunities in your NAICS and set-aside come to you

## Bottom line

Free. Required. Renew annually. This is your first stop.

# Free resource: USAspending.gov

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**What it is:** A public database of federal spending. It shows which agencies awarded contracts, to which companies, for how much, and under what NAICS codes.

- ✓ See who's buying in your industry and which agencies spend the most in your NAICS
- ✓ Find who won recent contracts so you can target agencies or find teaming partners

## Bottom line

Use it to see who's buying and who to team with. Filter by agency and NAICS.

# Free resource: SBA.gov

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**What it is:** The Small Business Administration's website. SBA runs small business programs, sets size standards by industry, and offers free learning and counseling.

- ✓ **Veteran Small Business Certification (SDVOSB)** — one place, free; plan for 4–8 weeks
- ✓ Look up size standards for your NAICS codes
- ✓ Access free courses and guides on government contracting

## Bottom line

Get certified here. Size standards and free learning are here too.

# Free resource: VA OSDBU

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**What it is:** The VA's Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization. It runs the Veterans First Contracting Program and supports small businesses doing business with the VA.

- ✓ Learn about VA opportunities set aside for SDVOSB/VOSB
- ✓ Find prime contractor directories and outreach events
- ✓ Connect with VA small business staff

## Bottom line

Go to [va.gov/osdbu](http://va.gov/osdbu). Veterans First, primes, and events—all here.

# Free resource: APEX Accelerators

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**What it is:** Federally funded programs in every state (formerly called PTACs) that provide free one-on-one counseling on government contracting. No cost to you.

- ✓ Get help with SAM registration, certifications, NAICS, and size standards
- ✓ Help with capability statements and strategy

## Bottom line

Find yours: [sba.gov](http://sba.gov) or search "APEX Accelerator" + your state. Free counseling in every state.

# Free resource: SBA SUBNet

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**What it is:** The SBA's subcontracting opportunity database. Prime contractors with subcontracting plans are required to post opportunities here.

- ✓ Find subcontracting opportunities from primes—filter by state, NAICS, and contract type
- ✓ Good way to get your foot in the door and build past performance

## Bottom line

Primes post needs here. Filter by state and NAICS. Build past performance.

# Free resource: VR&E (Veterans Readiness and Employment)

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**What it is:** Formerly Vocational Rehabilitation. VA program that helps veterans reintegrate into the workforce through five tracks: reemployment, rapid access to employment, **self-employment**, employment through long-term services (including OJT), and independent living.

- ✓ **Self-employment track** — can reimburse LLC, website, certifications, GovCon training, mentor/coach; Track 1 up to \$100K, Track 2 up to \$25K for business-specific needs (preliminary costs like incorporation are separate)
- ✓ Do your homework (e.g., M28R Chapter 8); go in with a clear plan and sell your outcome, not just "I want to go to school"

## Bottom line

Contact VA VR&E. If you're eligible and have an employment barrier, they can help fund your startup—including training to win government contracts.

# AI prompts to speed up research

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Use ChatGPT, Claude, or any AI. Copy the prompt, paste it in, and replace the bracketed parts with your info.

## Copy, paste, customize

Replace [your industry], [Agency], [Prime], etc. with your real data. One prompt at a time.

# AI Prompt: Find SDVOSB opportunities

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"List SDVOSB set-aside opportunities in [your industry] in the last 90 days."

Use this to get a quick list of recent opportunities in your space. Then search SAM.gov for the full solicitation.

# AI Prompt: Get your NAICS codes

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"What NAICS codes for [your service] on SAM.gov?"

AI will suggest codes that match your services. Use them in SAM.gov Contract Opportunities and USAspending.gov.

# AI Prompt: Find agency pain points

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"Research [AGENCY NAME] and identify their top pain points and priorities for FY2026. Look at:

1. Their strategic plan and stated goals
2. Recent IG or GAO audit findings
3. Budget justification documents
4. Any FY2026 NDAA requirements affecting them

List their top 5 pain points with a brief explanation of why each is urgent."

From January Bootcamp. Use before outreach so you can speak to what they care about.

# AI Prompt: Analyze spending data

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"Using USAspending.gov data, analyze [AGENCY NAME] spending patterns:

1. Top NAICS codes they spend on
2. Average contract sizes in my NAICS [CODE]
3. Which contracting offices award the most
4. Set-aside trends (8(a), SDVOSB, HUBZone, etc.)
5. Q4/September spending surge patterns

Format as a market intelligence brief."

From January Bootcamp. Use to see where SDVOSB fits and who's buying.

# AI Prompt: FY2026 NDAA opportunities

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"What FY2026 NDAA requirements create contracting opportunities in [YOUR SERVICE AREA]?

Look for:

1. New mandates with compliance deadlines
2. Required studies or assessments
3. Technology modernization requirements
4. Small business provisions

Tell me which agencies must act and by when."

From January Bootcamp. NDAA drives new requirements—and new contracts.

# AI Prompt: Research any agency

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"I'm researching [AGENCY NAME] for government contracting opportunities in [YOUR SERVICE]. Give me:

1. Their mission and organizational structure
2. Top 3-5 pain points they're facing in 2026
3. Their small business contracting goals
4. Key contracting offices and contacts
5. What they're buying in NAICS [CODE]

Include links to their strategic plan and forecast."

From January Bootcamp. Use for any agency you're targeting.

# AI Prompt: Agency research brief

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"I'm an SDVOSB that provides [YOUR SERVICE]. Research [AGENCY NAME] and tell me:

1. Their top 3 spending priorities this fiscal year
2. Recent contracts awarded in my NAICS [CODE]
3. Key program offices that might need my services
4. Any small business goals they're struggling to meet

Format as a brief I can use to prepare for outreach."

From January Bootcamp. One-page intel before you call or email.

# AI Prompt: Introduction email to an SBLO

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"Write a brief introduction email to a Small Business Liaison Officer at [AGENCY]. I'm an SDVOSB that provides [SERVICE]. I want to introduce my company and request an informational meeting. Keep it under 150 words. Professional but not stiff. Include a clear ask."

From January Bootcamp. SBLOs are your entry point at many agencies.

# AI Prompt: Capability statement (1-page)

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"Create a capability statement for my company:
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- Company: [NAME] | Services: [LIST] | Certifications: [LIST]
- NAICS: [CODES] | Past Performance: [BRIEF SUMMARY]

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Format with clear sections: Core Competencies, Differentiators, Past Performance, Company Data.
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Keep it to 1 page worth of content."
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From January Bootcamp. Use this structure; then customize and attach to outreach.

# Best agencies to target as a veteran-owned business

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Agency	Why target them
VA	Veterans First—priority for SDVOSB/VOSB
DoD	3% SDVOSB goal; Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force
DHS	Strong small business program
GSA	Federal supply schedules; good entry point

Match your NAICS to agencies with goals and spending in your space.

# What is the NDAA?

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- ✓ The **National Defense Authorization Act** — annual law that sets the Pentagon's budget and policy
- ✓ Congress often adds small business provisions that apply **government-wide**—not just DoD

When the NDAA raises sole-source thresholds for SDVOSB, it affects VA, DHS, and other agencies too.

# What do the new thresholds mean?

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- ✓ **Sole-source** = agency can award a contract to one qualified business without full competition
- ✓ For 2026: up to **\$8M for services, \$10M for manufacturing** (for qualified SDVOSB)

## Bottom line

More and larger contracts can be set aside for you.

# Your next steps

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- ✓ Register in SAM.gov; complete your entity profile; add SDVOSB/VOSB if certified
- ✓ Search Contract Opportunities; filter by SDVOSB/VOSB and your NAICS; save alerts
- ✓ Contact VA OSDBU and your state's APEX Accelerator
- ✓ Respond to one Sources Sought or RFI in your NAICS

**One at a time.** The path to millions isn't who you know—it's taking action.

# Thank You

You can land millions in government contracts—without special connections.

Use your certifications, free resources, and the tools we covered.

## Connect with us

GovconGiants.org

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