



Doing Business with the USDA – REE Mission Area

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This handout provides a background of the mission area, and information to assist in marketing to REE. Personal and written inquiries are welcome.

REE Mission Area

REE consists of four agencies within the USDA, sharing one mission: a dedication to the creation of a sustainable, competitive United States food and fiber system and strong, healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education. The REE mission area consists of:

- **Agricultural Research Service (ARS)** is the USDA's chief scientific research agency, ensures an abundance of high quality and safe foods along with other agricultural products. ARS is the designated contracting activity for REE and procures a variety of supplies, services, equipment, and construction, including buildings, greenhouses, and repair and maintenance.
- **Economic Research Service (ERS)** carries out a program of economic research to benefit farmers and the general public. ERS's findings are available in research reports, economic outlook, and situation reports.
- **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** provides coordinated leadership to statistical reporting, research, and service programs. NASS provides a channel for the orderly flow of statistical intelligence and is responsible for crop and livestock estimates including coordination and improvement in USDA's statistical requirements.
- **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)** is the USDA's major extramural research agency, enables researchers throughout the United States to solve problems critical to farmers, consumers, and communities. NIFA also provides national leadership to address critical national issues affecting food and agricultural systems.

REE agencies procure a wide variety of supplies, equipment, and services. Some examples include:

- Architect-Engineer (A-E) services
- Books and periodicals
- Chemicals
- Construction: buildings and laboratories
- Facilities management services
- Guard services
- Hay, feed, seed, and grain
- Hazardous waste removal
- Information technology equipment and services

- Janitorial services
- Laboratory/scientific equipment and supplies
- Management and professional services
- Office machines and supplies
- Refuse collection
- Repair and maintenance services
- Telecommunications
- Tractors and other farm vehicles/equipment

Requirements up to \$3,000 are filled directly by purchase card holders. These purchase requirements do not go through the regional procurement offices. However, capabilities statements can be forwarded to cardholders throughout the regional procurement office.

For requirements over \$3,000 but less than \$25,000, the regional procurement offices will garner a minimum of three quotes to ensure reasonable competition. Contact the small business coordinator at a regional procurement office to check on current requirements.

Proposed contact actions expected to exceed \$25,000 are synopsized on <http://www.FedBizOpps.gov>.

The automated Procurement Forecast at <http://www.usda.gov/osdbu> provides information regarding possible opportunities exceeding \$25,000 as well as a contact to obtain further information.

To learn more about the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) programs and events, please see visit the following web site: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/OSDBU-programs.htm>

USDA Vendor Communication Plan and OMB Memorandum, “Myth-Busting: Addressing Misconceptions to Improve Communication with Industry during the Acquisition Process”

The USDA Vendor Communication Plan is to provide better direction to the workforce and to clarify the nature and portfolio of engagement of opportunities for industry. This plan discusses how USDA will reduce unnecessary barriers, publicize communication opportunities, and prioritize engagement opportunities. The Vendor Communication Plan is located at http://www.dm.usda.gov/procurement/vendor_communication/index.html.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum, “Myth-Busting: Addressing Misconceptions to Improve Communication with Industry during the Acquisition Process,” dated February 2, 2011, is located at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/Myth-Busting.pdf>.

Capability Statements

Firms or individuals wishing to do business with REE should provide a capability statement identifying their areas of expertise. Capability statements should be sent to the contracting office(s) servicing the geographical area in which you wish to do business. Your firm should provide enough supplemental information to ensure that your firm's products and capabilities can be fully understood.

Subcontracting Opportunities

Recognizing that small firms often do not have the capability to perform as prime contractors on certain large contracts, REE promotes the involvement of small businesses at the subcontracting level. Special contract clauses may be included in a large prime contract that requires the prime contractor to maximize the participation of small businesses through subcontracting opportunities.

Prime contractors are encouraged to advertise subcontracting opportunities in FedBizOpps.gov. Small businesses are encouraged to identify their capabilities to major prime contractors. For more information please visit the following web site: <http://web.sba.gov/subnet>.

Small Entity Compliance Guide

The entire REE Small Entity Compliance Guide is located at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/acquisitions/OSDBU-programs.htm>.

The Office of the National Ombudsman (ONO), an office within the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA), was created by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA). The law's provisions pertain to all small businesses that receive or are subject to any enforcement-related communication or contact by Federal agency personnel, including audits, on-site inspections, and agency compliance assistance.

The National Ombudsman receives comments from small business concerns and acts as a liaison between them and federal agencies. Comments received from small businesses, are forwarded to federal agencies for a high level review and federal agencies are requested to consider the fairness of their enforcement action. A comment or complaint can be filed online at: <http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman>.

The USDA Small Business Non-Retaliation Policy is published and can be accessed by USDA employees and small business entities at: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=SMALL_BUSI&parentnav=LAW_S_REGS&navtype=RT.

Resources

For additional information of conducting business with the Federal Government please visit the following web sites:

Central Contractor Registration (CCR) <http://www.ccr.gov>.

On-line Representations and Certifications application: <https://orca.bpn.gov>.

General Services Administration: www.gsa.gov/sbu.

U.S. Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov.

USDA: www.usda.gov/osdbu.

If you have any questions, please e-mail:

REESmallBusinessCoordinator@ars.usda.gov.

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