

Term Glossary

Term	Plain-English Definition
Certification	Official recognition by a government or private agency that your business qualifies for certain programs, like being woman-owned, minority-owned, or veteran-owned.
Procurement	The process of government or large organizations use to buy goods and services. Certification helps you get access to this process.
Set-Aside Contract	A government contract that is “set aside” specifically for certified small or disadvantaged businesses.
Prime Contractor	A business or company that wins a contract directly from a government agency or private buyer.
Subcontractor	A smaller business is hired by a prime contractor to do part of the work on a larger project. Many new certified firms start here.
NAICS Code	A six-digit number that classifies your business by industry.
SBA (Small Business Administration)	A federal agency that supports small businesses, manages certifications like WOSB, HUBZone, and 8(a), and helps you get access to government contracts.
E-Verify Number	It confirms that the business is enrolled in E-Verify, a system used to verify that newly hired employees are legally authorized to work in the United States.
SAM.gov	The federal system you must register in to do business with the government. Think of it as a central vendor database.
Capability Statement	A one-page marketing document that summarizes what your company does, your certifications, and why you’re qualified to work on contracts. It’s like a resume for your business.
Commercially Useful Function (CUF)	A rule that certified businesses must actually perform meaningful work on a project, not just be pass-through.
Bid	A proposal you submit when you want to win a contract. Bids usually include pricing, experience, and how you’ll do the work.
Bid Platform	An online system where government agencies and large buyers post contract opportunities and where vendors (you) can register, search, and submit bids. Examples: SAM.gov, Team Georgia Marketplace, BidNet, DemandStar.
Vendor	A business registered to sell to a government agency. You can’t win contracts until you’re registered as a vendor.
Vendor Registration	Signing up in a government or corporate system so your business can be found, receive notices, and be eligible for contracts.
Vendor Portal	The online dashboards you use to register, upload documents, view bids, and submit proposals. Each agency usually has its own.
Directory (Certified Vendor List)	A searchable list of certified businesses that agencies and primes use to find qualified vendors. You <i>want to be on this list</i> .
UEI (Unique Entity Identifier)	A 12-character number you get when you register on SAM.gov. It replaces the old DUNS number and is required for all federal certification and contracting.
CAGE Code	A unique ID that’s automatically assigned when you register in SAM.gov. It tells the government your business is eligible to receive federal contracts.

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