

Doing Business with the Federal Government

EXTENSION / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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 Official U.S. Government Website
100% Free

What is SAM.Gov?

In order to do business with the US Federal government, through grants or other federally funded programs, entities must use the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.Gov, an online system. This is an official U.S. government website and is always 100% free to register and maintain your registration. Submitting a SAM.Gov registration is no cost. Be very cautious of any emails or marketing that attempts to charge you for anything related to SAM.Gov and know it is not a government offer but may be a third-party service option.

What is SAM.Gov Registration?

To “register” an organization in the SAM.Gov database, there is a multi-step process outlined in the system. This does take some time and requires that you carefully monitor the emails provided to the system for verifications. “An entity registration allows an organization the opportunity to receive a contract or assistance directly from the federal government, not from another contractor or awardee. Organizations need to register the entity in SAM.Gov to bid on federal contracts as a prime contractor or seek assistance as a prime awardee” (SAM.Gov).

What is a Unique Entity ID?

As of April 2022, the Unique Entity ID, also known as a UEI, is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.Gov. It replaces the previous governmental use of the Dun & Bradstreet number (DUNS) as an identifier in the system.

To register your entity or to get a Unique Entity ID, start online at SAMS.gov. This system is “assigned, owned and managed by the federal government” (SAM.Gov/content/home). Getting a Unique Entity ID is also free. Entities can also coordinate on grants as a sub-awardee but would be required to set up a UEI in SAM.Gov, not necessarily complete the full registration.



Communities can secure federal grants from a variety of programs. To do business with the federal government through grant funding, an applicant must be registered with the SAM.Gov system. Shown above are the Noble County, Ohio, leaders receiving grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Appalachian Regional Commission for a waterline extension.

What is Grants.gov?

This U.S. federal government tool provides details on the federal funding opportunities for “organizations and entities supporting the development and management of government-funded programs and projects” (grants.gov).

Organizations can search the site, review opportunities, see grant policies, access support and also read the grant writing blog articles for a wide variety of topic-based content.

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What is a TIN?

The SAM.Gov site may require individuals to enter a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), the IRS conducts a validation of the TIN and the taxpayer name. This can take a few days and you receive an email from SAM.Gov when it is complete.

What is an EFT?

An Electronic funds transfer (EFT) identifier.

What is a CAGE Code?

All registrations in SAM.Gov go through a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code validation. The process can take up to 12 days after the submission of an initial registration.

How Long Does a SAMS Registration Take?

Allow plenty of time to complete all of the necessary steps in the SAMS.Gov registration and approval processes. There is a step that also requires a notarized letter to the Federal Service Desk from the entity making registration to SAM.Gov as well. It may take 12-15 days after you submit before the registration is active and another 24 hours for Grants.gov to recognize the entity.

How do you Check Entity Status?

If you are unsure if your organization or entity has been approved in the SAM.Gov site, it has a process for checking entity status. You must sign in and then you can check the status of an application or if an entity has been fully approved.

The SAM.Gov site also provides the key email of the entity administrator a reminder to renew and update the registration annually. This requires a review of the key information and email contacts. Take care to monitor your Sams.gov registration as staffing changes occur to maintain ongoing system registration access, core data and necessary points of contact (POCs).

What is a DUNS Number?

The Donor Universal Number System (DUNS) is a nine-digit number used as an identification designation. Request a DUNS number at <http://fedgovdnb.com/webform>

Businesses may be required to have a DUNS number if they want to apply for grants or become a vendor or supplier with the U.S. government. While it used to be the number in the SAM.Gov, system, now the federal system also requires its own generated UEI, as previously noted.

What is an EIN?

An Employer Identification Number or EIN is a nine-digit number assigned by the IRS to all organizations (for profits and nonprofits) who have paid employees. It may also be an individual Social Security number for a sole practitioner. An EIN is commonly required to provide an EIN on federal applications.

References:

www.grants.gov

www.SAM.Gov

Peer Reviewers: Tom Blaine, PhD – Associate Professor, OSU Extension – Community Development
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