

Common Issues & Questions in the System for Award Management (SAM)

Registering in SAM

- **What do I need to register in SAM?**
 1. An active e-mail address (see **Other Issues**) below if you do not have an e-mail account)
 2. A DUNS number (available at no cost at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>)
 3. Banking information (checking or savings account # and routing #, contact information of your bank)
 4. Point of contact information for the business
 5. General business demographic information
 - Business start date
 - Number of employees
 - 3 years average revenue
 - NAICs Code(s) (You can research your NAICs code(s) prior to registering here: <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/> or by using the search feature imbedded into the SAM site).
- **Does it cost money to register in SAM? NO!** Registering in SAM is absolutely free. Entering “System for Award Management” into a search engine will link to private businesses who charge a fee to register in SAM. While it is a business decision as to whether or not the entity wants to pay a fee to have a 3rd party register them in SAM, there is no cost to register directly on SAM and it generally can be done in less than hour. The official SAM site is available here: www.sam.gov
- **Should an entity opt out of SAM’s Public Search Option?** Often times an entity will be hesitant to allow their information to be displayed in SAM’s public search option. However, no sensitive information is available via SAM’s public search. It is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that entities allow their information to show up in SAM’s public search. This allows the entity to be found easily by contracting officers or prime contract representatives that may be looking for teaming partners. If an entity is unsure as to whether or not they were once registered in CCR or SAM and they are not found in the SAM public search, the Defense Logistics Agency has a CAGE Code search function called BINCS that is able to retrieve this information:
https://www.logisticsinformationservice.dla.mil/BINCS/begin_search.aspx

Registration Problems

- **DUNS Number is associated with an old address or company name:** Often times, a company will have a DUNS number and then change locations or its business name. Since SAM imports DUNS information,

the company must first contact D&B to make this change. Next, the company must wait at least 24 hours before returning to SAM. If they are registering a new entity they can proceed with their entity registration. However, if the business is updating an existing SAM account, they must click the *refresh D&B Data* button located on the *Details Returned by D&B* screen.

- **Updating a SAM profile after an update has already been initiated:** Businesses cannot update their SAM account once an update has already been initiated. They must wait until the update processes before logging back into their account and making the update. SAM will notify the business via e-mail when this occurs.
- **Why did the entity fail IRS TIN Match Validation?** Upon submitting their SAM registration, the entity will go through two validations; IRS TIN Match validation as well as DLA CAGE Code validation. If an entity fails their TIN match validation, they will be notified via e-mail. The business must call the IRS at 1-866-255-0654 and verify that what they have entered into SAM matches **EXACTLY** with what the IRS has on file. The business will have to initiate an update to their registration and update their TAX ID information. Entering the wrong taxpayer name will also cause the IRS validation to fail. The term taxpayer can be associated with an individual rather than the entity. Also, IRS will generally only speak to the individual who is listed as the creator of the EIN. If a surrogate calls IRS will provide general information only.
- **Why did the entity fail CAGE Code validation?** Upon submitting their SAM registration, the entity will go through two validations; IRS TIN Match validation as well as DLA CAGE Code validation. Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) codes are five character unique identifiers assigned to businesses by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Often times, businesses will refer to their CAGE Code as their SAM number. When registering in SAM, DLA will perform a CAGE Code validation to ensure that there are not duplicate addresses in their system. If an entity fails the CAGE Code validation, they will be notified via email. The entity must call the DLA CAGE Code office for additional information on how to rectify the issue. The DLA CAGE Code office can be reached at: 1-877-352-2255.
- **I am a sole proprietorship or an independent contractor. What is my Tax Identification Number (TIN)?** In this case, the business' TIN is their Social Security Number.
- **Transferring MPIN from the business information screen to IRS consent screen:** If an entity is having issues with transferring their MPIN from the business information screen, sometimes copying and pasting the MPIN into the IRS consent screen works. Otherwise, the entity must log out of SAM and then log back in and try again.
- **Why does the entity name not match what D&B has on file?** SAM registration requires companies to enter the business name and for that name to match the business name exactly as it appears on D&B's file. Many entities do not remember the legal business name that D&B has on file and often times the searchable D&B database has the incorrect name. Searching Hoover's (www.hoovers.com) and comparing this information with the State of Wisconsin's Department of Financial Institutions listing (<http://www.wdfi.org/corporations/>) can be helpful.
- **I do not see LLC listed as a business type from the IRS?** From the IRS: "Depending on elections made by the LLC and the number of members, the IRS will treat an LLC as either a corporation, partnership, or as part of the LLC's owner's tax return (a "disregarded entity"). Specifically, a domestic LLC with at least two members is classified as a partnership for federal income tax purposes unless it files Form

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8832 and affirmatively elects to be treated as a corporation. And an LLC with only one member is treated as an entity disregarded as separate from its owner for income tax purposes (but as a separate entity for purposes of employment tax and certain excise taxes), unless it files Form 8832 and affirmatively elects to be treated as a corporation.” Additional information is available here:

<http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/Limited-Liability-Company-LLC>

Other Issues

- **The administrator of the SAM account has left the company:** In order to assign a new administrator, a service ticket needs to be created with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) www.fsd.gov. SAM requires a notarized letter to assign a new entity administrator. Once the notarized letter is complete, it must be uploaded to the service ticket at FSD. FSD will then assign administrator rights to the individual to which the company wants them assigned. See the Appendix section of this document for the template that FSD required to be uploaded.
- **The business does not have an e-mail account:** SAM requires users to register with an e-mail for an individual account. Google provides free e-mail at www.google.com as does Hotmail at www.hotmail.com. It is entirely up to the business as to what e-mail entity they would like to use.
- **I am a sole proprietorship or an independent contractor. What is my Tax Identification Number (TIN)?** In this case, the business' TIN is their Social Security Number.
- **The e-mail in the user account has changed or is invalid:** If the email address identified on the SAM account is incorrect, the entity will have the option to change the email address by either logging in with their username and password, or clicking "Forgot Password." Just enter the username and old email address, click the "Update Email" button, and correctly answer a security question to make the correction.
- **Why can't an entity edit their IRS TIN Match Screen?** Often times, an entity will have incorrect information under their IRS TIN Match and will not be able to edit this information (TIN, Address, MPIN, Individual Executing Consent). If this is the case, the entity should put an exclamation point (!) at the end of their taxpayer name and then select *Save and Next*. Often times, forcing this error will *pop* open the un-editable fields. If the entity is still unable to edit these fields, they should log out and try logging in under a different browser (firefox or chrome preferred).
- **Company is DBE Certified and has listed themselves as such in the Dynamic Small Business Search (DSBS), but DSBS is not showing them as such:** The DBE field in DSBS is now a *dead* field. Entities are no longer able to edit this field and there is no solution.

A Note on who Qualifies as a Small Business

SBA defines a U.S. small business as a concern that:

- Is organized for profit
- Has a place of business in the US
- Operates primarily within the U.S. or makes a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor
- Is independently owned and operated

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- Is not dominant in its field on a national basis

Non-Profit organizations such as AbilityOne and others do not qualify as Small Businesses for the purposes of their SAM registration.