

Acquisition Hour:

Understanding the Basics of Federal Contracting – SAM, SBS and Market Research

April 15 | Noon – 1:00 pm

Presented by:

Marc Violante, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

Mark Dennis, Wisconsin Procurement Institute





Assisting Wisconsin businesses compete in the government marketplace.

WPI is Wisconsin's APEX ACCELERATOR

The APEX Accelerators program, under management of the Department of Defense (DOD) Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP), plays a critical role in the Department's efforts to identify and engage with a wide range of businesses entering and participating in the defense supply-chain. The program provides the education and training that all businesses need to participate to become capable of participating in DOD and other government contracts.

WPI provides services and training to all of Wisconsin's 72 counties

- Individual counseling at our offices, client's facility or virtually
- Small group training – webinars and workshops including Acquisition Hours, Cyber Thursdays, Evening FAR sessions, Federal Market Insights and Local Government Sales Opportunities
- Conferences the Governors Marketplace, The Contracting Academy (TCA), WEDCs Small Business Academy, Wisconsin Federal Contractor Forum [DC and in-state], Government Opportunities Business Conference GOBC) with WI military bases, End of Year Federal Contractor Update, Annual DOD Contract Management Update, and more.....

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■ MILWAUKEE

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■ MADISON

- *FEED Kitchens*
- *Dane County Latino Chamber of Commerce*
- *Madison Area Technical College (MATC)*

■ CAMP DOUGLAS

- *Juneau County Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC)*

■ EAU CLAIRE

- *Western Dairyland*

■ FOND DU LAC

- *Envision Greater Fond du Lac*

■ GREEN BAY

- *NWTC Startup Hub*

■ LACROSSE

- *Veterans in Professions*

■ MANITOWOC

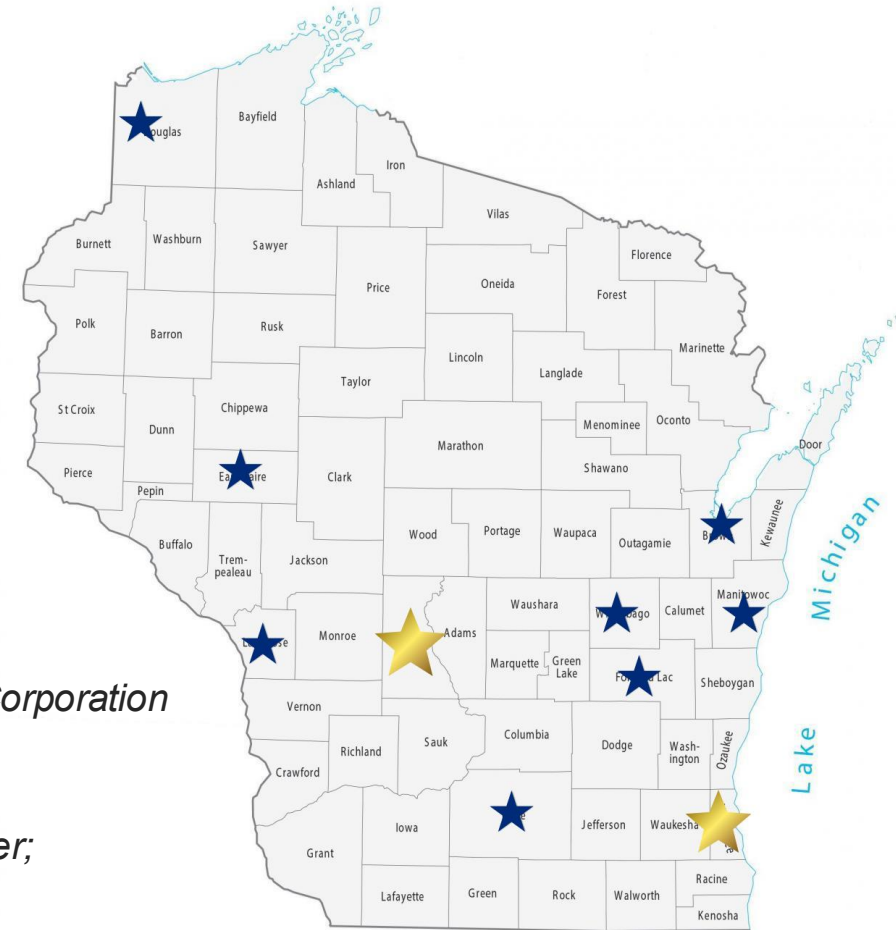
- *Progress Lakeshore*

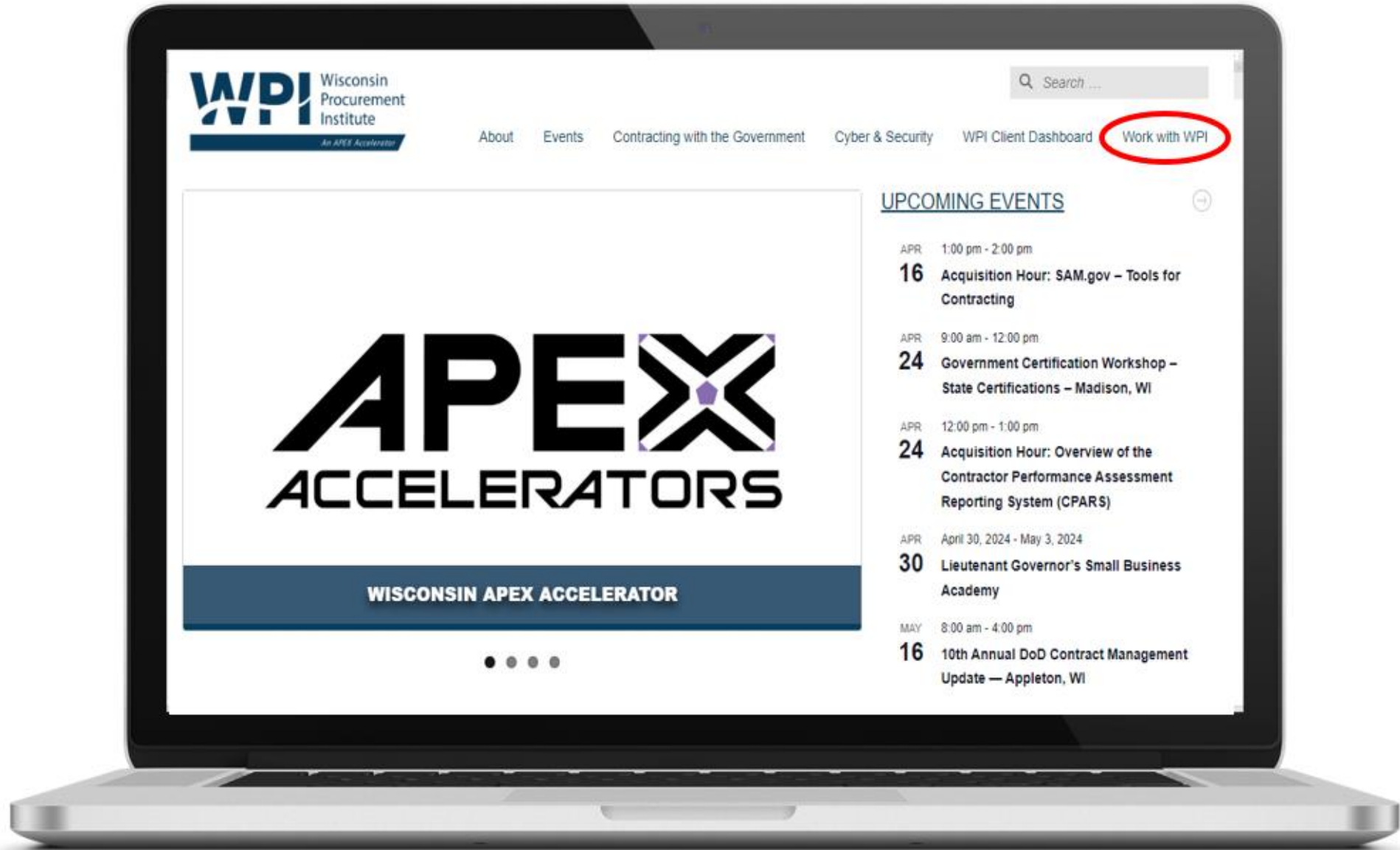
■ OSHKOSH

- *Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation*

■ SUPERIOR

- *Small Business Dev Center; UW Superior*





Understanding the Basics of Federal Contracting: SAM, SBS, and Market Research

Mark Dennis, Marc Violante
Wisconsin Procurement Institute
15 April 2026

Why Federal Contracting Feels Confusing

- “The Government” is not a single customer
- Rules vary by agency and office
- Registration does not mean ready to sell
- Requirements depend on who you sell to

What Does “Selling to the Government” Mean?

- Departments, agencies, and contracting offices
- Each office buys specific products and services
- Success requires alignment—not size

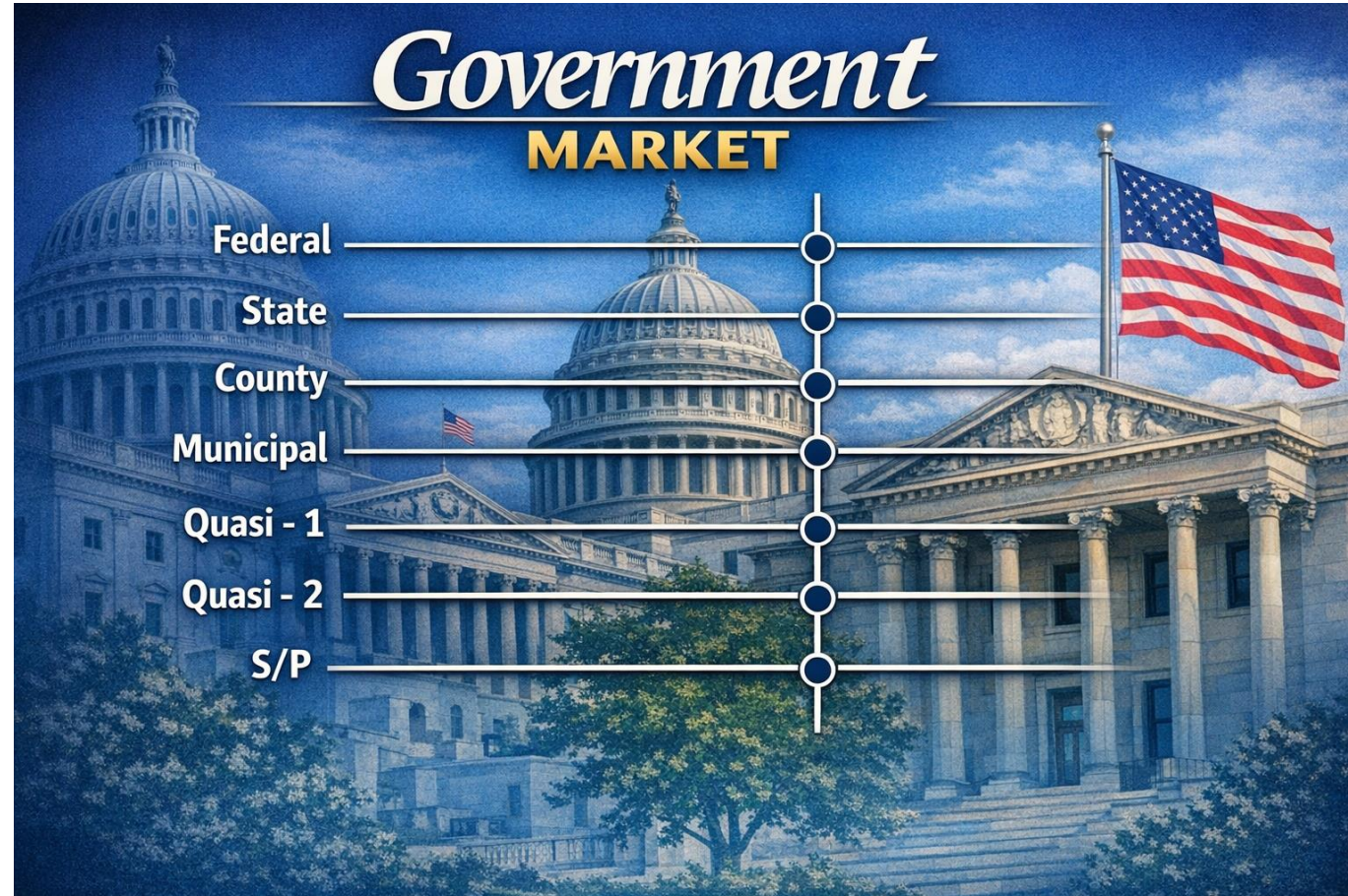
The Federal Market – by the numbers

- “I want to sell to the Government”
- The issue from a Federal Perspective
 - Departments – 71
 - Agencies – 161
 - Contracting Offices – 2,520
- The questions:
 - Who purchases what you sell?
 - How do they purchase?
 - How you going to identify opportunities and market?

Market Research Is More Than Finding Buyers



Define your Government Market



Registrations Are Inevitable

- Multiple registrations are required
- Each serves a different purpose
- Some are mandatory, others are situational
- SAM is the foundation

SAM: The Core Registration

- The official vendor registration system
- Required to do business with the federal government
- Used across civilian and defense agencies
- Feeds multiple downstream systems

SAM Must Stay Current

- Must be renewed every year
- Information must be accurate and complete
- Lapses can stop awards and payments
- Errors flow into other systems

What Information Is in SAM?

- Legal business information
- Banking and payment data
- Representations and Certifications
- Business Size information
 - NAICS codes
 - Annual revenue and employee count

Understanding NAICS Codes

- Identify what your business does
 - Broad, can change with NAICS updates
 - Your selection may not be the best
- Used to define size standards
 - Types of Size Standards
 - Employee
 - Revenue
 - Never either/or
- More than one NAICS code allowed
- Solicitations assign their own NAICS
 - A solicitation's NAICS may differ from your SAM NAICS – what then?

When NAICS Codes Do Not Match

- Solicitation NAICS may differ from SAM
- Size status can change by NAICS
- Businesses may need to update SAM or 52.212-3
 - The *Offeror shall* complete only paragraph (b) of this provision if the *Offeror* has completed the annual representations and certification electronically in the System for Award Management (SAM) accessed through <https://www.sam.gov>
 - Para (b) -- Any changes provided by the *Offeror* in paragraph (b)(2) of this provision do not automatically change the representations and certifications in SAM.
- Always verify eligibility before bidding
 - Eligibility = small under the listed NAICS code
 - Can be both large and small at the same time
 - FAR 52.212-3

SAM Feeds (used by) Other Systems

- Small business profiling (SBS)
- Invoicing and payment systems
- DoD supplier and performance systems
- Technical data access (when required)
- SAM entries/selections can have serious consequences

Small Business Search (SBS)

- Built from SAM data
- Company updates – search terms, capability statement, quality, performance, other
- Used by contracting officers and primes
- Can be used by other small – teaming, subcontracting, supplier
- Supports market research and outreach
- **Visibility depends on data accuracy and company selection**

Why SBS Accuracy Matters

- First impression for buyers
- Affects subcontracting opportunities
- Incomplete profiles reduce visibility
- Blocking visibility has tradeoffs

Cybersecurity Is Part of Doing Business

- Contractors handle government information
- Basic cybersecurity applies to all vendors and the supply chain
- Expectations increase with contract risk – type of information
- Applies to primes and subcontractors – potentially all tiers!
- No “one size” fits all solution
- Compliance is essential
- Cyber incidents and misreporting can have grave repercussions

Cybersecurity: The Baseline

- FAR 52.204-21 applies broadly
- Covers Federal Contract Information (FCI)
- Focuses on basic safeguarding measures
- Minimum requirement, not a best practice
- 15 essential requirements

Cybersecurity for DoD Contractors

- DFARS 252.204-7012
- NIST SP 800-171 r2 requirements
- CMMC expectations over time
 - 4 phases
- Required even for many subcontractors
- Flow-down clauses
- Requirements can extend well into the supply chain
- Eligibility determination required before sharing

Market Research Is More Than Finding Buyers

- Identify customers and buying offices
- Understand entry requirements
- Recognize compliance expectations
- Reduce risk before bidding – supply chain development, sources
- Acquisition vehicles – GSA, FAR 13, FAR 12
- Acquisition particulars – time of year, size,

Government Marketing essential idea

- Four Pillars of Government Contracting
 - Bona fide need
 - Budget
 - Competition
 - Contracting Officer/Authorized Buyer

- Contracting Triangle
 - Responsible
 - Price – fair and reasonable
 - Terms and Conditions

Using Data to Be Strategic

- Award data shows who buys and how often
- Opportunity data shows future demand
- Data helps focus limited resources
- Supports smarter bid decisions

Who Is DLA?

- Defense Logistics Agency
- Major buyer of parts and supply items
- Manages millions of line items
- Heavy focus on MRO purchases
 - Often small in number and associated value
- Works with large and small businesses
- Overarching requirements listed in – Master Solicitation

Understanding DLA RFQs

- RFQs contain extensive requirements
- Key items to review carefully:
 - Delivery dates
 - Inspection and acceptance
 - Rated orders
 - Drawings and materials availability
 - Compliance conditions
 - Procurement History
 - Information Security requirements
 - Compliance – FAR, DFAR, DLAD

Key Takeaways

- Registration is a starting point, not the finish line
- Accuracy and maintenance matter
- Market research reduces wasted effort
- Preparation improves competitiveness
- Cybersecurity is absolutely necessary
- All T&Cs must be understood and followed

Questions



Upcoming Events



Cyber Thursday

Cyber Thursday is a series of one-hour webinars focusing on critical topics for DOD contractors and subcontractors in cyber security, data security, and CMMC. Attendees receive 1 CPE credit for attending.

- **April 30** – CMMC: Control Set Series: 3.3 Audit and Accountability
- **May 28** – CMMC: Control Set Series: 3.4 Configuration Management

...More information and registrations at wispro.org/events

Federal Market Insights

Federal Market Insights [FMI] is an informal podcast designed to provide valuable information about the government marketplace for businesses interested in government contracting.

- ~~April 14~~ – ~~Unlocking DoD Opportunities for Nontraditional Contractors~~
- **April 21** – Is It Possible to Create Your Own Contract? Let's See What FAR 15.6 Says
- **April 28** – Seeking Innovative Research and Development (R&D) Ideas
- **May 5** – SAM Data Bank – Follow the Data to Identify Customers
- **May 12** – Navigating the Federal Laboratory Consortium: A Guide for Small Business Innovators

...More information and registrations at wispro.org/events

Acquisition Hour

The Acquisition Hour webinar series covers a range of topics from market entry, sales growth, small business certifications, compliance, and more. Attendees receive 1 CPE credit for attending.

- **April 22** – Learning about DOD Critical Technology Areas
- **May 13** – CONTRACTING IN DISASTERS: Doing Business with Emergency Agencies

...More information and registrations at wispro.org/events

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**This webinar is eligible for
1 CPE credit**

**To receive a certificate of completion, contact
apexaccelerator@wispro.org**

PRESENTED BY

Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI)

www.wispro.org

Marc Violante

Wisconsin Procurement Institute

MarcV@wispro.org | 920-456-9990

Mark Dennis

Wisconsin Procurement Institute

MarkD@wispro.org | 608-633-3605

10437 Innovation Drive Suite 320

Milwaukee WI 53226

414-270-3600