



Tips For Doing Business With Charleston District

Pre-Award, During Award, Post-Award

(As of 25 April 2022)

Pre-Award Tips

- The point of contact (POC) for the Charleston District is Tonya Willis, Chief of our Small Business Programs Office: tonya.d.willis@usace.army.mil, (843) 329-8084.
- Please do not contact others in the District, especially the Contract Division and Program/Project Managers. They will refer you to our Small Business Office.
- However, after a Source Sought or Request For Proposal (RFP) is issued your POC becomes the Contract Specialist listed on the announcement.

- **PROJECTIONS are posted monthly** at <https://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Contracting-Opportunities/> along with other helpful information.

- For **Sub-Contracting Opportunities**: Visit the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Subcontracting Site: https://eweb1.sba.gov/subnet/client/dsp_Landing.cfm Large Businesses that are actively looking for subcontracting opportunities with Small Business are listed. You can search by state or NAICS code.
- Please ensure your Capability (NAICS Codes) align with our Requirements (NAICS Codes) by looking at our Charleston District Outreach Briefing before reaching out to our Small Business Office. The last two Fiscal Years (FYs) of data is provided.
- What we look for in Capability Statements: Short and concise descriptions, two pages, factual, NAICS Codes, CAGE Code, DUNS #s, bonding amounts, facilities engineering, mechanical, electrical, design information and valid and referenced projects with point of contacts in last five years.
- Take advantage of your local Small Business Administration (SBA) and Department of Defense (DoD) Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Representatives found at <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/find?type=Procurement%20Technical%20Assistance%20Center&pageNumber=1> and <https://www.dla.mil/SmallBusiness/PTAP/PTAC/>
- Keep your System for Award Management (SAM) registration up to date and make sure your NAICS codes are correct.
- Find a mentor company that has worked with Charleston District. A list of all Small and Large Companies for the past two FYs are on our Outreach Brief.

During Award Tips

- ALWAYS read the solicitation (RFP), especially the scope and pre-award requirements. Many proposals cannot be technically accepted because required information was not submitted. It should be very clear what your proposal submission should look like. If it's not clear, ask. Each solicitation details a method for asking questions, use that method.
- Don't wait until a day or two before the proposal is due to ask questions.
- Double check your rates (based off base contract/SCA/Etc.)
- Submit backup pricing data with the proposal.
- Acknowledge all amendments.
- Proposal submission is electronic; therefore, Offerors should not wait until the last minute - this will allow for unexpected delays in the transmittal process.
 - FAR electronic submission requirements (5pm previous day)
- If there are any issues preventing the Contractor from adhering to the proposal date, to communicate that with Contracting Officer/Contracting Specialist
- Bring subcontractors to the site visit. We try to give offerors 7-10 days notice before a site visit so they can coordinate subs.
- If it is in the contract, we expect it to be provided. If it is not provided, then we will expect a credit. Ensure this gets resolved before award.

Post Award Tips

- If contractors are not familiar with using RMS, ask for help early and often! Or take some training, or both. YouTube has several instructional videos and Construction Quality Management training for Contractors required for CQCs working on USACE and NAVFAC projects has a session on RMS.
- Send in bonds and initial schedules in early because we want to kick off projects quickly.
- Partnering sessions form an informal are required on most of our projects. Take advantage of those sessions to build communications chains to elevate concerns with USACE and the contractor. Strong relationships with clear, open communication is critical at all times. Getting commitments timely execution and decisions will help us both be successful! Silence leads to failure.
- If the COR or, the ACO or Construction Division is not being responsive and the contractor can't get a hold of people, contact the Contract Specialist or Contracting Officer! Use your issue elevation plan discussed in your Mutual Understanding and Partnering sessions to make sure issues are not stuck.
- Read the contract Division 01 specifications. There are staffing qualification, scheduling requirements and requirements specific to the project.
- Pay attention to access, occupied building requirements and security requirements for the contract.
- Read contract and follow specifications on design phase of design-build projects. We will be looking for Design Quality Control to have been completed on your

designs and revisions. All submittals are required to be reviewed by the Contractor Quality Control Manager, not just signed and forwarded.

- On design-build, don't burn up your schedule in design due to poor design planning and resourcing.
- Provide contract/site specific QC, Safety and Environmental Plans, not generic.
- Have weekly Production Meetings and use them to identify risks, outstanding actions and upcoming phases of work.
- Understand the three Phases of Inspection in our Construction Quality Management requirements. Make sure your subcontractors understand that their participation is required in those meetings. Incomplete preparation for those efforts will cause you delay. Review RFIs, Submittals, features of work, quality expectations, Safety mitigation, etc.
- Review Subcontractor Submittals/Cost Proposals/RFI's thoroughly before submitting to the Government
- Period of Performance: Don't burn up your construction schedule preparing Pre-Construction Submittals or preparing Designs (under DesignBuild contracts). Push to get these submittals in early and get to work.
- Use RMS to its fullest; Dairies, Submittals, AHA's, 3 phase Inspections/meetings, weekly meetings, Contract Modifications, Certified Pay Apps, Closeouts, etc. Have some technologists assigned.
- After award but before kick-off, call ahead; learn the site, learn the customer, understand expectations; establish trust.
- ALWAYS look at period of performance and request additional days if needed (with justification).
- Never underestimate the government's ability to cause delay. DOCUMENT everything. Address any contract impacts proactively. Never assume a government delay will result in additional time without documenting the delay and the schedule impact.
- The Contracting Officer / Administrative Contracting Officer is the ONLY person that can change the terms of the contract.
- Know what your Liquidated Damages are and understand that they will be assessed if you do not complete on time.
- Prepare for very heavy administrative workload from submittals to payroll to safety.
- Your subcontractors are going to be routinely attending meetings they would not normally attend. Make sure your subs understand how to work for USACE.
- Scheduling. Make sure you understand how to submit and keep current your cost-loaded schedule in order to get paid in a timely manner.
- The government doesn't pay any percentage up front per the RFP. We can pay up to 90% of the material cost for material stored at the project site and verifiable by the field office. We only pay for the cost of the material, not any costs associated with labor or equipment.
- Safety. Have a copy and understand Engineering Manual-385, the USACE Safety Manual. This is the standard.

- Your Superintendent, SSHO, and/or QC must be on the job site when work is happening.
- Make sure your work force is legal, especially if working on a military installation.
- Only work with prior approval will be paid.



Celebrating 150 years

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS |
CHARLESTON DISTRICT