CEO SAHM • SMALL BUSINESS HELP • FREE CHECKLIST

CONTRACT-READY CHECKLIST

Put your business in position to win government contracts - **one step at a time, in order.** You do not have to have it all figured out. You have to be ready when the opportunity shows up.

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET Print it. Work top to bottom - each step builds on the one before it. Check the box when done, and write your dates and codes on the lines. Keep the finished sheet in your business folder: it becomes your record of what is done and what renews when.

1 SET UP RIGHT

Be a real business on paper

- ☐ **Form your business.** Register your LLC (or other entity) with your state, so you are a real business on paper - not just an idea.
  State filed: _____ Date: _____
- ☐ **Get your EIN.** Your business tax ID from the IRS. It is free at irs.gov - never pay anyone for one.
  Date received: _____ Filed under: _____
- ☐ **Open a business bank account.** Keep business money separate from personal money from day one. Bring your LLC papers and EIN.
  Bank: _____ Date opened: _____
- ☐ **Look reachable.** Set up a business email and a real mailing address, and use them on everything. Buyers check this.
  Business email: _____

2 GET REGISTERED

So the government can find - and pay - you

- ☐ **Pick your NAICS codes.** Choose the codes that match the work you actually do and sell. These codes tell buyers what you offer.
  My codes: _____ _____ _____
- ☐ **Register in SAM.gov.** Registration is free at sam.gov, and you get your Unique Entity ID (UEI) there. No active registration, no federal payment.
  Date registered: _____
- ☐ **Keep it active.** SAM.gov registration must be renewed every year. Put the renewal date on your calendar the day you register.
  My renewal date: _____ On my calendar: ☐

3 GET YOUR PROOF READY

Proof beats promises

- ☐ **Check your certifications.** See what you qualify for - for example women-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, HUBZone, or 8(a). Only claim what you can prove.
  I qualify for: _____
- ☐ **Make a one-page capability statement.** Your business resume: what you do, who you serve, your NAICS codes, and how to reach you. One page, kept current.
  Date finished: _____ Last updated: _____
- ☐ **Collect past performance.** Save photos, invoices, reviews, and references from every job - even small and subcontracted work.
  Where I keep my proof: _____

4 FIND IT & BID IT

Now go get it

- ☐ **Search every week.** Look for opportunities on SAM.gov and your state and local bid portals. Set a weekly time and stick to it.
  My search day & time: _____
- ☐ **Read the whole posting.** Deadline, requirements, and how to submit - read all of it before you start. Most bids are lost on a missed detail.
- ☐ **Start small, then build.** Bid work you can actually deliver, do it well, and save the proof. That record is how the bigger contracts come.
  My first bid target date: _____

WATCH OUT - KEEP YOUR MONEY An EIN from the IRS and registration on SAM.gov are **always free**. Be careful of any site that charges you for either one, and of look-alike sites with similar names. Go straight to **irs.gov** and **sam.gov** yourself, and type the address in - do not follow a paid ad to get there.

WORDS TO KNOW

EIN	Your business tax ID from the IRS. Free at irs.gov.
NAICS codes	The codes that tell buyers what work you do and sell.
SAM.gov	The federal site where your business registers so it can be paid. Free, renewed every year.
UEI	Your Unique Entity ID, given to you when you register in SAM.gov.
Capability statement	Your one-page business resume: what you do, who you serve, your codes, your contact.
Past performance	Proof of jobs you have done - photos, invoices, reviews, and references.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Follow **@ceo_sahm** on TikTok for the walk-through of each step, and find everything in one place at **linktr.ee/ceo_sahm** - including the Subcontractor Application if you want to work with us.

CEO MOM
Jay • @ceo_sahm

Free to download, print, and share. Registration on SAM.gov and an EIN from the IRS are always free - be careful of any site that charges you for either one.