Preparing for a New Client

Information Check before register with PTAC

1) ALWAYS remember to assess a company's potential for success in the government marketplace and focus on appropriate guidance.
Some guidelines for determining if a business is Procurement Ready:

Already successful in the commercial world
Has a Business Plan
Comfortable with all business processes (accounting, personnel, shipping, etc.)
If new they must have a strong performance in that field with a previous employer
Prepared to successfully contract with the government
Has a government friendly website that contains pertinent info (NAICS, CAGE, DUNS, link to printable version of capability statement)

Companies not "procurement ready" should be referred to the CT SBDC or SCORE.

2) Determine if company is registered with the Secretary of State's Office.

www.concord-sots.ct.gov/CONCORD/online?sn=InquiryServlet&eid=99

Select Search by Name and enter the company name followed by an asterisk then click Search. If the search fails to match on what you have input, remove a word or two from the end and add an * (asterisk or wild card). Partial company names may not work. Double click the company name to view more Business Details.

If a company is a Sole Proprietorship, Partnership or Trade Name Cert., they do not need to register with the Secretary of State, but do need to register with the town the business is located in.

All other types of companies, LLCs, Non-profit, Corp, Sub S, LL Partnership and Trade Service Marks must be registered with the Secretary of State's office.

If you are unable to find the company, please confirm that they are a Connecticut business. If they are an LLC, Non-profit, Corp, Sub S, LL Partnership or Trade Service Mark Company, please inform them that they must be registered.

If multiple companies are found, determine which one you are interested in. If they have been registered for almost or more than two years they are eligible to become a client. If much less than two years, an exception may be made if past experience with a former employer is involved. If not counsel the company on whatever opportunities you believe they should take advantage of and enter as an Inactive Client and take an Initial Session.

Note: If a company is not registered with the Secretary of State (or for sole proprietorships, partnerships, or Trade Name Cert. with the town) advise them to register before we will accept them as a client.

- Note Commence Business Date

- Note Business Status
- Note Citizenship/State Inc -- Foreign corporations are companies legally operating in Connecticut but their articles of incorporation are established in another state. This is often done for tax purposes.

3) **Search the Web** for a potential client's web site – to gain insight into their product or service and ascertain if their site is government friendly.

   http://www.google.com

   If it is hard coming up with keywords even after going to their website, go to SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search and search on their NAICS code(s) to determine what other companies are in the same business. Then review the keywords to see if there are any that would be appropriate for the profile. You can also search similar companies' web sites. When you are viewing web sites you can click View and Source to view the META keywords the company has supplied for search engines such as Google.

4) **Check Neoserra** to determine if the company has been a client in the past. If the referral comes in thru the website, the system automatically checks this.

   https://ctptap.neoserra.com/

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New Client Register

Use the Counselor Resources web page or this document for easy linking to the following websites and forms.

https://ctptac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CH_NC_-eCenter_-new-client-register.pdf

1) **Search SAM for the company**, if found review information for accuracy. Remember some companies choose to “opt-out” from public viewing yet may still be registered.

   https://www.sam.gov/SAM/

   For further research for a CAGE Code visit:
   https://cage.dla.mil/

   Determine the DLA 1806 Reporting Status by noting if a company is a Minority-Owned (MO), Women-Owned (WO), Women-Owned (WOSB) Certified, Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned (EDWOSB) Certified, Small Disadvantaged (SDB), 8(a) Certified, Certified HUBZone (HZ) business, Veteran Owned (VOSB) or Service Disabled Veteran Owned (SDVOSB) business. Be especially careful of Women Owned Businesses that think they are considered a Minority Business (they may be at the state level but our statistics require we determine the federal status) and those that self-certify themselves as a Small Disadvantaged Business and are not in the proper SDB socio-economic categories.

   If you can’t find the company by their name, a helpful trick is to search by their city or zip code. Since this shows you all of the companies in the area it also works when you are not entirely certain of their correct company name.

   Search for company in the Dynamic Small Business Search, if found review information for accuracy and completeness. If client is not registered in one or both, counsel them regarding the importance and remind them about the annual renewal.

   A company must be a “Small Business” in SAM to be able to insert information into their SBA Profile (DSBS). It is important to have good information in this database because this is where Primes and Government Contracting Officers go to locate a company that meets certain criteria, i.e. sells ABC and Certified HUBZone, etc. The key areas are Keywords, Capabilities Narrative and References.

   If the company is registered in SAM and has a CAGE Code:

   A) **If appropriate type of product, search the DLA Internet Bid Board System (DIBBS)** to determine if they have been awarded any contracts. These awards may indicate a NSN (National Stock Number) and Manufacturer’s numbers that can be added to the Profile.

https://www.dibbs.bsm.dla.mil

B) **If appropriate type of product, search Proxity** to determine if any NSN (National Stock Numbers)/Manufacturer's numbers are assigned to the CAGE Code. This information can be added to the profile.

http://www.proxity-ec.com/Index.aspx

1) **Search Beta.sam** to see if government work is available for their primary NAICS Code.

https://beta.sam.gov/

2) **GSA -** If the company's product or service is something that might be sold on a GSA Schedule, check the companies listed and determine what they are selling.

http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome

4) **Determine if a company is located in a HUBZone**. If so, determine if they are a Certified HUBZone or just located in HUBZone and mark their client record correctly.

https://maps.certify.sba.gov/hubzone/map#center=39.828200,-98.579500&zoom=5

Note: HUBZone Certification is an approval granted by SBA. Always remind clients of the 35% HUBZone residency requirement, the new part-time employee rules and to not opt-out of public viewing in SAM as it may affect certification.

5) **Review sample profiles** for different categories supplied by OutreachSystems and use appropriate keywords.

http://www.outreachsystems.com/cats/bidmatch/profiles

6) **Search Neoserra or ask the Program Director to search for similar companies and review their profiles for keywords and codes.**

https://ctptap.neoserra.com/

Note: When reviewing a client's bid matches (after a few days) the Profile Test on the Profiles Tab in Neoserra is an especially valuable tool, as it tells you just how the matches are occurring and where to tweak a client's profile.

7) **Review NAICS Codes and select appropriate codes.**

http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics

8) **Determine State Commodity Code and search for bids on the state portal.** Additional keywords can be found in these bids.

http://das.ct.gov/Purchase/Commodity.htm

Encourage company to register to receive bids on the DAS Bid Portal.

https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Procurement/Contracting/DAS-Procurement-BizNet-Accounts

9) Determine if company is certified in or is eligible for one of the State of Connecticut's Set-Aside Programs.

Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Procurement/Supplier-Diversity/SBE-MBE-Program-Certification-Application-Small-or-Minority-Business-Enterprise

or

Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DOT DBE)

http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=2288&q=307380

While registration in these programs is time consuming it is beneficial. Under the Supplier Diversity Program 25% of the state's bids are supposed to be awarded to certified firms. The state often issues bids exclusively for certified firms; *therefore, the competition is more favorable for a small company.* Remind clients that the DAS Set-Aside program is different than the DOT DBE program. Both programs have separate requirements. The DAS program uses State monies and the DOT DBE is federally funded but companies are certified by the state DOT. Generally, the DOT DBE Program sets aside a portion of a DOT bid for certified companies.

10) If the company is a construction or a consultant engineering company, determine whether they are or can be pre-qualified by the State of CT. Check this using the websites below.

CT Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Construction Contractor Prequalification Program

https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Procurement/PreQual/DAS-Construction-Contractor-Prequalification-Program/Directory-of-Prequalified-Contractors

CT Department of Transportation (CONTRACTOR PREQUALIFICATION INFORMATION)

https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Business/Contractor-Information/CONTRACTOR-PREQUALIFICATION-INFORMATION

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CT Department of Transportation (Consultants)

http://www.dotdata.ct.gov/consultant/consult.aspx

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New Client Procedure

Initial Counseling:

Use the basic information obtained from appropriate research listed above and discuss with client. Update the client record with pertinent information. Per the SCAA – "The PTAC shall collect and maintain current, complete and accurate information from its clients in order to complete and submit the quarterly DLA Form 1806 "Procurement Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement Performance Report".

Please use the Neoserra New Client Fields to Obtain & Verify spreadsheet to accurately reflect the client in Neoserra.

If the client is not registered with either the Secretary of State or with their town clerk they should be told to do so before they can become an active client or contact.

Enter an Initial Counseling Session accurately and completely into Neoserra within three working days. Accuracy and completeness is necessary to ensure accurate statistics can be given to DLA and the State. Be sure to correctly enter the statuses for Women-Owned, Women-Owned (WOSB) Certified, Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned (EDWOSB) Certified, Minority-Owned, Certified Small Disadvantaged, 8(a) Certified, HUBZone, Veteran (VOSB) and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOSB) as this will be helpful for broadcasts regarding those topics.

Neoserra:

Client records track company-specific information such as company name and address, business size, number of employees, goods and services sold, and so on for the clients that CT PTAC works with. If you want to attribute counseling sessions or awards to a client, the client record must exist in the database.

Contact records track individual-specific information such as name, title, email, cell and work phone numbers and so on for the individuals that CT PTAC works with. Contact records are closely linked with the client records in your database so that you may track all the various individuals from a company that CT PTAC comes into contact with. eCenter is tied to the contact record.

Client records are closely tied to their associated contact records. For example, if you were to run an address list report on a group of client records, Neoserra would pull the company address information from the client records and the contact information from the client records' associated primary contact records.

Client records are created by the Application for Assistance process. To update an existing record login to Neoserra using your User ID and password. Please review all fields for accuracy.

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1) *Date Company Established*
determines the value of the *Company Status* field, which is not available for editing**.** The date you input sets Company Status - to Start-up (in bus. < 1 year), In Business (> 1 year), or if no date is input - Pre-venture/Nascent.

2) Enter company-specific information for the new client. <u>If the company name begins with "The", please do not use it at the beginning of the company name. If it is part of the legal name, just place it at the end of the company name. Do not file anything under "The".</u>

   Full-Time and Part-Time Number of Employees are needed for DECD Statistics.

   Company Gender
   Defaults to Undefined. Other options are: Choose not to respond, EDWOSB Certified, Male-Owned, Woman-Owned, Woman-Owned (WOSB) Certified. Most have EDWOSB or WOSB certify if they choose that ownership gender. Important for DLA 1806 & DECD statistics and targeted broadcasts.

   Company Veteran
   Defaults to Undefined. Other options are: Choose not to respond, non Veteran, Service-Disable Veteran, Veteran. Important for DLA 1806 & DECD statistics and targeted broadcasts.

   Business Size
   defaults to Other Small. Other options are: Disadvantaged Small, Large (includes non-profit) and Minority-Owned Small. This field is important for DECD statistics.
   To correctly enter a Minority-Owned client set Business Size to Minority-Owned Small.

   To correctly enter an 8(a) Certified business set Business Size to Disadvantaged Small and the Disadvantaged Status to SBA 8(a) Certified. Include the Certification Date.

   To correctly enter a Large or Non Profit client set Business Size to Large. If the Largebusiness is minority-owned it is not necessary to show that because Large businesses are not broken down by socio-economic categories for reporting.

   Business Type
   defaults to Undefined or Choose not to respond. The Business Type is based on the first two digits of the Primary NAICS code. It is very important to select the proper Primary NAICS code to ensure the client is placed in the proper Business Type because this field is used for sending bid opportunities or event notifications that come in directly to the Director. Using the first two digits of Primary NAICS code and <u>NAICS/Business Type Xref</u> (found on Counselor Handbook webpage under Client Counseling) assign the Business Type. This is important when a prime is looking for a specific type of business. Do not use Retail or Wholesale NAICS for the Primary NAICS Code. Per the FAR pick the appropriate Manufacturing NAICS if applicable. There are some exceptions such as

Auctions and true services. You can set the Business Type to Retail or Wholesale, just be sure the NAICS is correct.

Organization Type
defaults to Corporation. Other options are: Limited Liability Co, Non-profit Organization, Partnership, Sole Proprietor and Sub S Corporation.

CAGE Code and DUNS Number
are needed for Proxity Award automatic checking.

HUBZone
Defaults to Undefined. Other options are: Certified, Location Only and No. Important for DLA 1806 & DECD statistics and targeted broadcasts.

To correctly enter a Certified HUBZone client set HUBZone field to Certified and include Certification Date (available in DSBS). If client is only located in a HUBZone location set HUBZone field to Location Only. Do not include a date.

NAICS Codes & Primary NAICS
are important when a prime is looking for a specific type of business. The Primary NAICS is used to set Business Type except in the case of Retail and Wholesale.

Product/Service Description
is sometimes used when searching for specific types of companies.

Government Contracting Potential defaults to Yes. Discuss implications with Director if setting to No. If the decision is made to set the field to No you must edit the client record and change the Government Contracting Potential field to No.

3) To add the Initial Counseling Session, click New then click Counseling.
4) **Notes:**

- **Place commas between email addresses** – do not use a space or any other character. The Survey will be sent to the email address associated with the client record.

- **On Neoserra web pages, labels shown in blue** can be used to link to helpful web pages or associated Neoserra records.

- **Business Type clarification**: retailers sell to consumers, wholesalers sell to retailers.

- **Address:**

- **Always enter the physical address** as the address in the Neoserra Client Record. DON'T put P.O. Box

- **If Physical Address is different from Mailing Address**, the Physical Address must be entered in the Client Detail Address field so the correct County and Districts can be automatically assigned by Neoserra. To enter the P.O. Box click off the Mailing address is the same as physical address? check box and enter the mailing address in the fields that appear.

- **User Field Explanations:** set all that are appropriate.

AS9100 Certified
Defaults to blank. Set to Certified if company is certified - important for when a prime is looking for a qualified businesses.

Capability Statement
Enter date Counselor completed review and feedback on Capability Statement.

SAM Expiration Date
Enter date SAM is due to expire after counselor completed review and feedback on CS.

Client Profile:

1) To add a profile to your new client record, view the record, in the Bid match section click Setup Profile. Review the email address and make sure the format is Web Mail.

2) Select desired databases, Federal Supply Groups and search states if applicable. Enter keyword and click **Add**. Use the NAICS and FSC/PSC code blocks to add desired codes. Add any special notes in the Comments block. Click **Submit**. An email is automatically sent to OutreachSystems to set up the new profile. You will receive a confirming email when OutreachSystems sets up and activates the profile.

3) If you are unsure about how to set up a particular profile, OutreachSystems is a great resource. Clearly describe comments regarding profile restrictions or ignores or other profile logic for OutreachSystems to consider in the Profile Comments block.

4) A copy of the profile should generally be emailed to each new client. Each counselor should contact new clients within 3 working days to review their bid matches and reinforce the necessity of a partnering relationship. This conversation should be noted as a counseling session.

Paperwork:

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The Application for Assistance will be kept open until an Initial Session is entered Please notify the Program Director if you wish to close out a referral due to non-response or no Government Potential.

Keeping paperwork about a company is discouraged. Information can be posted in the Neoserra Notes field. Important client documents may be scanned and attached to the client record if appropriate. If materials are collected they will not be transferred between counselors when clients are reassigned.