Not Your Uncle ... SAM

Tips for Navigating the System for Award Management
November 15, 2012
Background

• SAM – the System for Award Management – was designed to initially integrate three federal acquisition data systems:
  – Central Contractor Registration (CCR)
  – Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA)
  – Excluded Parties List System (EPLS)

• Several more stand-alone databases are to be integrated into SAM over time.
Challenges Along the Way

- **Oct. 2011** – Full implementation of SAM delayed when GSA cut-off additional development funding.
- **May 2012** – Initial launch scheduled, then postponed.
- **July 2012** – SAM launched, but taken off-line a few days later, then re-launched.
- **Ongoing** – Access issues reported by vendors and contracting offices alike.
- **Aug. 2012** – DoD temporarily exempts vendors from registering in SAM.
The SAM Plan

- A single Federal system that combines multiple legacy databases.
- [https://www.sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov)
- Vendors advised to:
  - Check migration of their records.
  - Record all user ID’s and passwords.
  - Protect and safeguard user name and password.
  - Use Commercial and Gov’t Entity (CAGE) Code after registration.
  - Be aware registration is a key to being considered for awards and contract payments.
SAM’s Importance to Multiple Audiences

- **Dun & Bradstreet, the SBA, and Contracting Officers**
  - Dynamic Small Business Search
    - NAICS
    - PSC/FSC
    - DUNS
    - CAGE CODE
    - Set Asides - SB, 8(a), SDVOSB, WOSB, EDWOSB, HUBZone

- **Banking (National Finance Center)**
  - Payment Information
  - Banking information

- **IRS (Internal Revenue Service)**
  - Valid TIN/EIN
  - Current Tax status

- **State & Local Agencies can use search function**
  - Identify potential vendors
  - Capabilities and references

- **Prime Vendors**
  - Primes searching for subs
  - Search for specific categories of subs to fulfill subcontracting goals
  - Subs searching for Primes
The Big Picture

SAM’s Role in the Procurement Process from a Government Perspective

1. Generate Requirement
2. Solicit Requirement
3. Review Offers
4. Evaluate Offers/Select Vendor
5. Create Contract
6. Administer Contract
7. Contract Close-Out

- Receive bids
- Validate entity status
- Validate entity performance
- Check wage determinations
- Report contract actions
- Report performance
- Includes FedTeDS
- Includes FedBizOpps.gov
- Includes FedReg
- Includes ORCA
- Includes EPLS
- Includes PPRRS
- Includes CPARS and FAPIIS
- Includes FPDS Next Generation
- Includes FSRS
SAM’s Promise

Old Approach

- **Siloed** – Separate systems, each with a separate login
- **Redundant** – Overlapping data creates opportunity for error and complicates changes
- **Separate** – Multiple vendors at many hosting locations, managed separately with varying levels of service

New Approach

- **1 Login** – Functionality accessible at one online location to streamline the process
- **1 Data Source** – Centralized, normalized data to eliminate potential for conflicting values and improves agility to deal with future changes
- **1 Host** – Consolidated hosting by GSA to reduce O&M costs

Existing capabilities, streamlined for efficiency.
A Cartoon Circulating in the Contracting Community

Yep, I think we really got something here...
Frustrations Abound

• System slow to respond.
• Navigation problems.
• Missing data fields.
• User familiarity with CCR not compatible with SAM.
• Help desks overwhelmed.
What Are the Problems?

More importantly, What Are the Work-Arounds?
“SAM’s Rings”

Core Data Issues

Functionality Issues

Bandwidth Issues
“SAM’s Rings”

Core Data Issues

Functionality Issues

Bandwidth Issues
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Quick Start Guide for Entities Interested in Being Eligible for Government Contracts

How to register your entity to be eligible for CONTRACTS in SAM:

Before you register, you need to know the following:

1. What is an Entity?
   In SAM, your company/business/organization is now referred to as "Entity".
   - REGISTERING FOR A SAM IS FREE.
   - If you will be registering your company's information with SAM, you will need a DUNS number. See the SAM information available on our website.

2. Personal Information
   - It takes 1-2 business days to obtain a DUNS number.
   - You can obtain your DUNS number for free by visiting the D&B website.

3. Entity's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)
   - You need your entity's Tax ID Number (TIN) and taxpayer name (which appears on your last tax return).
   - A TIN is a unique number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
   - Sole proprietors may use their Social Security Number (SSN) if it is assigned by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and they do not have a TIN, but please be advised it can not be used for business data in SAM.
   - To obtain an EIN visit the IRS website:
     - www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0, id=102767,00.html
     - Activating a new EIN with the IRS takes 2-5 weeks.

Steps For Registering Your Entity in SAM:

1. Go to www.sam.gov
2. Log in with your Personal information.
3. Select "Register New Entity" and "Manage Entity" on your "My Page".
4. Select your type of Entity
5. Select "Yes" to "Do you wish to bid on contracts?"
6. Complete necessary steps to use DUNS information.
7. Complete "User Information" (TIN, etc.)
8. Enter CAGE code if you have one. If not, one will be assigned to you after your registration is completed. Foreign registrants must enter NCAGE code.
9. Enter General Information (business types, organization structure, etc.)
10. Complete "Representations and Certifications"
11. Complete "Points of Contact"
12. Your entity registration will become active after 3-5 days when the IRS validates your TIN information.

How do I get more information? Take a look at the SAM User Guide.

- Go to Our Website: www.sam.gov
- Contact the SAM Help Desk: www.fsd.gov

3 Main Vendor Uses: New Record, Updates, Migrating
Where to Find Help

Quick Start Guides for Updating/Renewing Registrations

Description: A short reference guide to help you renew or update your registration that was previously in CCR (and in some cases ORCA) and is now in SAM.

Quick Start Guides for Contract Registrations

Description: A short reference guide on what you must know to register your entity for contracts in SAM.

Quick Start Guides for Grant Registrations

Description: A short reference guide on what you must know to register your entity for grants and federal assistance in SAM.
More SAM Website Help

Demonstration Videos

The following videos will help familiarize you with the features and functionalities of SAM. Click on a video to launch the video in a new window. Adobe Flash Player is required.

SAM Overview Video

**Description:** New to SAM? This video will introduce you to SAM and how it fits into GSA IAE suite of systems.

Register a New Entity in SAM to be Eligible for Government Contracts

**Description:** Learn how to create an Entity Management registration so that your entity is eligible for Government contracts.
SAM Data Entry Tips

• Self-formatting
• *Tab* from one field to another
• Attention to detail is paramount
• No abbreviations (or be consistent)
• No punctuations
• No dashes
• No commas
• CAPS or lower case – no difference
SAM Tips for Vendors

• Know all your data (DUNS number, TIN, EFT data, NAICS code, SB size-standard, etc.) before starting.

• Ensure your Internet browser is set-up correctly. *(Tips coming up!)*

• Your registration should become active within 3-8 business days, after IRS validation.
  – Allow at least 3-5 business days to complete SAM if you are using an existing TIN.
  – Allow at least 8 business days to complete your SAM if you have to apply for a TIN with IRS.
  – CAGE code assigned within 3 business days after IRS/TIN Validation.

• You will receive a confirmation e-mail with your CAGE code once your SAM registration is activated.
Remember!

There must be an *exact match* between the data entered in SAM and existing D&B (DUNS) and IRS data.
Creating a SAM Account

WHAT IS SAM?
The System for Award Management (SAM) is a free web-site which consolidates Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Currently, CCR, FedReg, ORCA and EPLS have been migrated into SAM. Over the coming years, additional system migrations will be completed.

REGISTER WITH SAM
Why Register? Registering with SAM will allow you to access the full functionality of the system. Learn more about SAM.
What will you need? You only need your personal information to create an account on SAM.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
SAM is still experiencing some performance issues, which may result in a slowness of page loading or maybe even a web page error. We are working to improve these issues as quickly as possible. We appreciate your patience.
SAM has the most users online from 11 am to 4 pm Eastern Time.

USER GUIDES
SAM Users Guide
Grants Registrations
Federal Administrators
Federal Employees

SEARCH SAM
Even if you do not wish to register at this time, you can still search SAM.
Please enter your search criteria above to view registered vendors.

SERVICE DESK
URL: http://www.FSD.gov
(8am - 8pm Eastern Time)
US Calls: 866-606-8220
International Calls: 334-206-8288
Creating a SAM Account

Choose an Individual Account

- If you need to perform tasks such as register your entity (legacy CCR/FedReg and ORCA functionality).
- If you need to create and manage exclusion records (legacy EFLS functionality).
- If you require CCR Tools type of functionality to view non-public level data for entity management registration records and exclusion records.
- If you are the only person in your entity who needs access to the extract/web service.
- Unless you know you need a system account, you should create an individual account.

Once the account is created, you will have the opportunity to associate yourself with either a federal or a non-federal entity. This can be performed by either registering your non-federal entity, migrating your roles from legacy systems or by requesting roles with an entity.

Click the "Create an Individual Account" button below to begin.

Choose a System Account

- If the account involves system-to-system communication or you are automating your pull of the data.
- If multiple people in your entity need access to the same extracts/web services. You may have up to three POCs on each System account.
- You will not be able to request roles with an entity.

You cannot register an entity or manage exclusion records with a system account. This account is only for system to system communications.

In SAM, access to data is granted by Functional Area and Sensitivity Level. Once you have been granted access, you can access the respective data packages via any protocol and file formats in which they are distributed. It is recommended that a SAM specific email address be established for all communications.

Click the "Create a System Account" button below to begin.
Creating a SAM Account

- A user will receive an email to validate his access to the email address associated with the account.
- Only basic information about the user is required.
Creating a SAM Account

- Users have 1 password for all functionality
  - SAM defines password requirements
  - There are three security questions

- Passwords expire every 180 days
Vendors and award recipients are now called “Entities.” Entity Registration is organized in four steps:

1. **Core Data** – Name, address, etc.
2. **Assertions** – Information used to determine small business status, NAICS codes, etc.
3. **Representations and Certifications** – Federal Acquisition Regulation compliance
4. **Points of Contact** – Contact details for specified roles
Critical Browser Set-Up Tips

- Order of preference: Firefox, Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE)

- Disable pop-up blockers
  - Ensure your browser is up-to-date
  - Affects IE 7 & 8 & 9, Firefox, and Chrome

- Enable TLS 1.0 (transport label security)

- Enable JavaScript & Cookies

- If using IE, click on the icon that looks like a “torn piece of paper” or on the “gear”
  - Adjust compatibility setting
• When selecting an Entity, do not select “non-profit” unless you are a bonafide non-profit. *Reason:* Non-profits are considered large businesses in the eyes of the federal government.

• When you are asked if you want to make your “Core Data” information public, vendors should say *YES!* (Only public information is displayed, not sensitive financial information.)
• Migrating an *expired* record requires FSD (Fed Service Desk) assistance.

• Every page of SAM must get updated; *Save* then *Proceed*.

• POC must open all pages in the review process.

• To select a NAICS, it must be highlighted and moved.

• Don’t start, get stuck, stop, and call help desk. Press on.

• Know the difference between “draft”, “WIP” (core data), and “submitted.”

• Limit NAICS code to primary and use 2012 edition.

• Don’t jump around. Stay the course.

• Pay attention to the details and be patient.

• If your SAM registration can wait, do just that ... *WAIT*. 

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• Be aware that the SAM website uses a font named “Georgia.”

• “Georgia” displays numbers like this: 0123456789 and a small “o” like this: 0123

• This means that you must be very careful when you type (and read) a zero, a small “o”, and a capital “O” – and not confuse them with one another.
• Towards the end of your registration, look for a button labeled “Register or Update SBA Profile.”

• This takes you to SBA’s Dynamic Small Business Search data base. You absolutely want to perform this task (Small Businesses only).

• **DO NOT** miss this step.
SAM’s Interface with the SBA’s DSBS

All small businesses should complete this!
Why Must SAM & DSBS Be Perfect?

• Contracting Officers routinely use SAM to verify vendor eligibility.
• Contracting Officers make judgments about a vendor’s wherewithal to perform – *and attention-to-detail* – based, in part, on the completeness of your SAM file.
• Primes look in SAM/DSBS for potential subs.
• Businesses look for potential teaming partners in SAM/DSBS.
“SAMs Rings”

- Core Data Issues
- Functionality Issues
- Bandwidth Issues
Bandwidth Limits – Tech and Human

- Help desks are swamped.
- Try SAM website during non-peak hours.
- Contact your local PTAC for “power user” assistance.
  - [www.aptac-us.org](http://www.aptac-us.org)
  - Scroll down and select state.
- Don’t pay for what you can do yourself.
  - Don’t delegate the management and control of your records.

Screen shot on next slide ...
This Is *Not* SAM!
([https://www.sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov) takes you to SAM)

Googling "sam.gov" may lead you to a "paid" site like this.
MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE) 
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE) 
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY 
(PROCUREMENT) 
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY 
(ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT) 
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE 
(CONTRACTING) 
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES 
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES 

SUBJECT: Class Deviation – System for Award Management (SAM) 

Effective immediately, until further notice, deviation is granted from the initial registration requirements of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 4.11 and the Defense FAR Supplement (DFARS) 204.1103(2)(i); and the required use of annual representations and certifications per FAR 4.1201 and DFARS 204.1202.
Important Links
(These are hyperlinks)

• SAM
• SAM Quick Start Guide
• SAM User’s Guide
• SAM User Help Regarding Small Business Information
• SAM Registration Tips – 2012
• Dynamic Small Business Search
Recap of Recent SAM News

(These are hyperlinks)

- **10/24/2012** - GSA appoints a new duo to run SAM
- **8/28/2012** - Browser Settings Can Affect SAM's Performance
- **8/24/2012** - DoD Temporarily Alters Vendor Registration Rule Due to SAM’s Launch Shortcomings
- **8/15/2012** - GSA Issues IBM a Letter of Concern for SAM Problems
- **8/1/2012** - It’s a Mistake to Rush into the SAM Vendor Registration Process
- **7/24/2012** - CCR Closed until SAM emerges on July 30th
- **5/21/2012** - SAM Implementation Changed from May 29 to the End of July 2012
- **10/25/2011** - SAM Deployment Likely To Be Delayed, GSA Might Replace DUNS
Visit: [www.ContractingAcademy.gatech.edu](http://www.ContractingAcademy.gatech.edu) for daily government contracting news updates, training opportunities, and more. For an updated version of this presentation, go to: [http://tinyurl.com/bvp58aj](http://tinyurl.com/bvp58aj)