

GUIDE TO ENROLLING IN SAM

As an individual/sole proprietor

ABOUT THIS PROCESS

This document describes how to register to do business with the federal government, which includes contracting with the Smithsonian Institution. There are a number of layers to registration, and it takes a bit of time. Be precise when entering your information and ensure that **addresses, spellings, and names always match** among the systems. Don't rush, and don't worry!

The process of registration takes at least two weeks, and likely longer. You are not eligible to do business with the Federal government – or to begin a contract with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage – until the process is complete.

The overall sequence will go:

1. Register in SAM (can take 4 weeks or even longer to process)
2. When registration is complete and your entity is “active” in SAM, complete Smithsonian Institution paperwork (can take several more weeks to process)
3. Begin your contract!

The System for Awards Management (SAM) is the government's procurement database. Registration as an “entity” in SAM is what allows you to do business with the Federal government, including the Smithsonian.

Registration in SAM is **completely free of charge**. If you get emails about SAM that ask for money to register or renew (and you will!), they are not genuine. *You never have to pay money to register or update your information in SAM.*

For registration as an individual or sole proprietor, all your business information is exactly the same as your personal information. Your “company” is named *YourLastName, YourFirstName OptionalMiddle*, and you are the CEO, congrats. This guide assumes that you have had no previous business contracts with the Federal government, and that you are not using an LLC. If you are using an LLC, use its name and address.

INFO YOU WILL NEED

What you will need:

- Your business/personal information including: mailing and physical addresses, points of contact, size and metrics (income), date of incorporation (can be today)
- Your business tax-identification TIN, EIN, or as the sole proprietor, you can use your SSN.
- Your bank account information for Electronic Funds Transfer
- Your applicable NAICS code (see page 3)
- Proofs of address and identity, such as a bill or bank statement

- For registrants outside the US, your NCAGE number (see page 5) and a business identifier number from the country government

See also the [“Entity Checklist” from SAM](#). If you have all this ready to go, the data entry should take about an hour. 😊

VALIDATE AND GET A UNIQUE ENTITY ID

1. Login in to SAM.gov
 - a. Click the “sign in” button in the upper right corner
 - b. It takes you to Login.gov to sign in. If you do not have a Login.gov account, you need to create one here, including setting up 2-factor authentication.
 - c. Once signed in, you should see the SAM “Workspace.”
2. Click the green “Get Started” button.
 - a. Read the “Before you get started” overview box
 - b. Click the green “Get Started” button (again)
 - c. On the welcome page, download the guide if desired, and click “Create New Entity.”
3. Fill the registration questionnaire as follows:
 - a. What is your goal? Choose **Directly with the Federal Government** and **Bid on a federal procurement opportunity or Just browsing**.
 - b. Who required your entity to be in SAM.GOV? Choose **Federal government**.
 - c. Choose an option. Choose **All Awards** (should be marked “recommended”) and click Select.
 - d. Are you registering a government entity? **No. Select your location (inside or outside the U.S.)**
 - e. Do you already have a CAGE code? **No** (you will get one along the way)
 - f. Confirm you will be registering a Business or Organization for All Awards.
 - g. Click through the confirmation screens and reach Enter Entity Information
 - i. Fill out your name (legal personal name or LLC name) and physical address; dates of incorporation (pick the year you started working in this field) and state.
 - h. Start Validation. Check the box for official documentation. At this stage the Feds will “validate” your name and address and issue your **Unique Entity ID**. Validation can be instant or can take some time and require follow up with additional documentation. See [“How long does entity validation take?”](#)
 - i. Possible matches may be displayed. If none of these are you, select “I don’t recognize my entity in this list”
 - i. Enter the incorporation year and state – just **choose a year** when you started doing this kind of work or freelancing.
 - j. Confirm the information.
 - k. **Attach documents that prove your name and address.**

- i. Once you submit your documents, you will get a reference ID number and you will have to wait for SAM to update your validation data before you can proceed. Then you will have to return to SAM.gov to complete validation.
- l. When validation is completed, you select whether you want your entity to be visible in public searches. I suggest deselecting the checkbox – the Federal government will still be able to look you up, and it could help cut down on spam.
- m. Confirm that you are authorized to do things on behalf of your “entity” and select **Receive Unique Entity ID**.
- n. Make note of your shiny new UEID and proceed to click **“Continue Registration”**

CONTINUE REGISTRATION

If you need to take a break during this section of data entry, you can get back to the form later from the SAM.gov Workspace by choosing “Update” from the 3 vertical dots menu.

4. Fill in Core Data. In these sections, enter general information about the structure of your entity.
 - a. Enter the incorporation date (as above), an arbitrary fiscal year end date, and an MPIN. The MPIN is an infrequently-used password in this system, make a note of it.
 - b. Provide taxpayer information. If you are a sole proprietor, this is your personal information.
 - c. CAGE Code. Select **No**.
 - d. Ownership details. Select **No**.
 - e. Predecessor details. Select **No**.
 - f. General information. Not mandatory. You can skip all the socio-economic categories (woman-owned, etc.) unless they apply to you and you plan to seek other federal contracting in future.
 - g. Financial information. Credit cards: **No**. Enter **banking data** for Electronic Funds Transfer. (foreign entities do not need to provide this.)
 - h. Executive Compensation. Select **No**.
 - i. Proceedings. Select **No**.
 - j. **Review and click Save and Continue.**
5. Assertions -- this section includes information the government uses to sort businesses.
 - a. Goods and Services: **Add one or more NAICS codes** (see below). You must mark one as primary.
 - b. Size Metrics. Enter your gross **income** from this work (or an estimate or arbitrary number like \$1) and number of **employees** (1)
 - c. EDI Information. Select **No**.
 - d. Disaster response. Select **No**.
 - e. **Review and click Save and Continue.**

6. Representations and Certifications -- this section relates to various federal regulations.
 - a. Most of them won't apply to you at all and you can select **No or Not applicable** and keep clicking through.
 - b. Check the box that you have reviewed the regulations and are submitting accurate information.
 - c. Points of contact. Fill **your contact details**. Note: the CAGE program will contact you using the government POC here, so if you choose to use an alternate email due to spam, make sure to check it for the CAGE verification!
 - d. Small Business Certification. You can **skip**. This is optional, if you are going to be looking for contracts with government agencies in the future.
 - e. **Review all information and Submit!**
 - f. **Next steps and processing time.**
 - i. To check on the status of your entity registration, go to SAM.gov, sign in, and look at the little colored ovals in the Workspace area to see Work in Progress, Submitted, or Active registrations.
 - ii. Your registration will go through external validation with the IRS and the DLA CAGE system. There may be some correspondence with CAGE, so respond right away to emails from a dla.mil address. **These verifications take a few business days to a few weeks, and your registration will not be complete until they are done.**
 - iii. Once they come through, your registration will show as "Active" in SAM!
 - iv. If your registration has been submitted for more than 15 days and not activated, go to the SAM.gov home page, click "Check Entity Status" on the right side, and enter your Unique Entity ID. Follow the guidance on that page under "What if my entity fails..." or go to the [Federal Service desk](#) for help (see below)
 - v. You may be asked to send in a notarized letter within 60 days (this is a fraud prevention measure). But, your registration will proceed without it! SAM provides a [template](#). For international registrants, the US Embassy in your country may be able to help.

NAICS CODES

The [North American Industry Classification System](#) (NAICS) is used to classify businesses for statistical analysis of economic activity. A similar, older system is SIC.

Some commonly-used NAICS codes for CFCH contractors include

- 711510 – Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers (includes photography and videography on contract)
- 541720 – Research and Development in the Social Sciences and Humanities
- 238130 – Framing Contractors
- 238350 – Finish Carpentry Contractors

339999 – Other Miscellaneous Manufacturing (theatrical)

For international registrants only, GET AN NCAGE CODE

1. Go to <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/CageTool/home>
2. Click the “request new” button on the right side of the page.
3. Fill in the questionnaire. Note that many of the questions are not required to be filled.
4. Fill in your contact details as the “initiator.” When submitted, you should receive an email to this contact, and you have to confirm your request through a link in that email. When complete, the NCAGE code will be sent to that email.
5. Different countries have different processes and timelines for issuing your code. There may be some correspondence with the agency responsible for codification.

HELP

SAM.gov Help

[Quick Start Guide](#)

For questions, see the knowledge Base – choose “Entity Registrations”

<https://sam.gov/content/help>

From that page you can also choose to live chat with the Federal Service Desk M-F 8 AM-8PM Eastern. You can also submit a help ticket with the [Federal Service Desk](#) -- scroll down and click the green “create an incident” button.

Call 1-866-606-8220

CAGE Help

FAQ <https://cage.dla.mil/Info/about>

NCAGE help

Screen-by-screen [walkthrough of registration](#) (pdf)

For help, from outside the US call 1-269-961-7766. From within the US call 1-888-227-2423.

Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil.

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/Codification/Support/en/Products/NCAGE/>

If you run into problems, please reach out to your main point of contact at CFCH!