

## How do I go about getting a grant or government contract?

### Grant Basics

Grants are not typically awarded to for-profit businesses except for during extraordinary times like pandemics, or natural disasters. Federal grants are reserved for other governments (states, cities, and towns), non-profits, education and related activities. [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the central hub for searching and applying for those grants. The only for-profit businesses that receive grants are for agriculture through the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development ([USDA](https://www.usda.gov)). Now, if you need money for your for-profit business you can either get a loan or find an investor.

If you are going after a grant for the first time (and qualify as an eligible recipient), look at hiring a grant writer or at the very least take a grant writing course. Be sure to research companies that provide grants for specific types of work and study their mission and goals. You might also look at companies that have received grants (in your area of expertise) to see if they need subcontractors to complete the work. There are [“Mentor Protégé”](#) opportunities for government contracting. This brings us to the second part of the question, and a way to expand your revenue stream.

### Government Contracting

All governments from your local city to the county, state, and federal government agencies have money for contract services. And, they buy just about everything, especially if you talking about the Department of Defense (DOD). With a federal annual contracting budget just shy of \$1 Billion, think of it as several small cities supporting hundreds of thousands of service members and their families, defending the nation, the DOD buys everything from IT services to construction, and supplies to goat rentals. If you provide a service or product, chances are the DOD purchases it. And, that’s just DOD. Think of all the federal agencies, state governments, school systems, and the list goes on.

Where do you start? Procurement and Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs) are located throughout the United States. [Washington State PTAC](#) is a program offered by the Thurston Economic Development Council, and is a free service to all businesses in the state. The only cost is a small fee, if you choose to use their bid match services. Find your PTAC counselor and set up an appointment. They will provide in depth counselling every step of the way. There are a few steps you can take to get prepared. Make sure that you have the appropriate licenses for your business. In order for contracting officers to find you, the business must be registered in [SAM](#). Your PTAC counselor can assist you with SAM, and all of the certifications that you need and/or want to apply for. For example, if you are a minority owned or disadvantaged business you may want to apply for [8a certification](#). This will allow your business to access set-asides that are not available to the general business community. If your business is in a HUB Zone and/or employees live in a [HUB zone](#) that may also qualify you for set asides, but there is a process of course for this designation. So, all that to say, contact PTAC for assistance. You can attend [live trainings](#), and be sure to attend [Alliance Northwest](#) for connections to primes, key resources, and data.

### Extraordinary Circumstances

At the time of this writing, we are still in the pandemic. Check out the following key resources.

- [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 City of Lakewood Application Page \(deadline 01/15/2022\)](#)
- [Pierce County Economic Development](#)
- [Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board](#)
- [Washington State Small Business Flex Fund](#)
- [Washington Economic Development Association](#) & [WEDA Online](#)
- [Startup Washington](#)

Can’t find what you need, or looking for something specific like access to alternative financing, workforce assistance, succession planning, or how to expand, contact the Lakewood Economic Development Department at 253-983-7738. We provide “wrap-around” services for Lakewood Businesses, meaning we pull together a team to help your business thrive.