

# **A Step-by-Step Guide to Locating Federal Contractors on the Federal Procurement Data System**

## **The Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation**

The Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS-NG) is the most thorough, complete and up-to-date public source for locating and learning about Federal contractors. The specifics of almost all Federal contracts are matters of public record. Some military and other security contracts are excluded.

The FPDS-NG contains a wealth of detailed information on current and former Federal contractors and subcontractors, including the specific contracting activities of more than 60 Federal agencies. The System provides searchable information on the approximately 200,000 current contractor companies and on former contractor companies for the past 30 or so years. It is a highly detailed and sensitive system so it is important to review the HELP menu and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) link before trying to search the system.

The following is a step-by-step guide to locating Federal contractor companies using a variety of search techniques on the FPDS-NG, including type of work, geographic location of work, company location, size of contract and year awarded, to name just a few.

### **Step One – The Home Page**

Click on the link or cut and paste the web address below into your browser. This will take you to the FPDS-NG Home page.

[https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng\\_cms/index.php/en/](https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng_cms/index.php/en/)

### **Step Two – Familiarize Yourself with the Content**

On the Home page, click on the HELP tab (located on the bar menu at the top of the Home page). This will take you to a left side HELP menu which includes a tab for Helpful Hints near the top of the menu. If you scroll down to the bottom of the menu, you will find General Functions including a link to a detailed set of FAQs. The FAQs are very helpful in understanding how to use the System. The FAQs tab also appears on the left side menu on the Home page.


<https://www.fpds.gov/help/index.jsp>

### **Step Three – Learn About Search Techniques and On-Line Search Tools**

After you familiarize yourself with the system by reviewing the Helpful Hints and the FAQs, you will next want to learn more about how to search the system. There are multiple tabs on the Home page, and on the HELP and FAQs tabs, that lead you to search instructions at ezSearch, and to Successful Search Techniques. This includes links to training materials and a Help Desk e-mail inserted below:

#### **Successful Search Techniques**

*The FPDS-NG system offers three features that can assist you in your search.*

- 1) *Wildcard: A wildcard is a character that can be used in a search to represent one or more characters. In FPDS-NG, “%” is the wildcard character. For instance, entering “COM%” in the search field will return anything starting with COM, such as COMpany, COMplete, COMmunication, and COMmunications. Entering “COMM%” will eliminate COMpany and COMplete from the search returns. Entering “%COM%” will return anything with COM contained within the word, such as dataCOMmunication.*
  
- 2) *Ellipsis: When more choices or search options are available, you will see the ellipsis look-up feature . Simply click on that button to open a new screen with additional information/options. You can also combine the Wildcard and Ellipsis features to narrow your search by typing partial information in the field and then selecting the ellipsis feature.*
  
- 3) *Preview and Appendix: In the “Add Reports” tab, you will see a magnifying glass icon next to each report name. This is the preview feature. Click on that icon to see a preview of the report. At the bottom of each preview is an Appendix which provides detailed information about the contents of the report.*

*. . . To manage your user profile, use the Change Info section on the main menu page. If you have other questions, contact us at the GCE FPDS-NG Help Desk at [FPDSSUPPORT@GCE2000.com](mailto:FPDSSUPPORT@GCE2000.com) or 703-390-5360.*

#### **Step Four – Narrow Your Search**

As you can see, the search criteria are very sensitive. You must be careful to narrow your search with key words and other criteria as much as possible.

For instance, if you are looking for food service positions in Baltimore, MD, you must put quotes around the words “food service” before you list Baltimore, MD. Otherwise, every job that involves food and/or services in Baltimore will be listed.

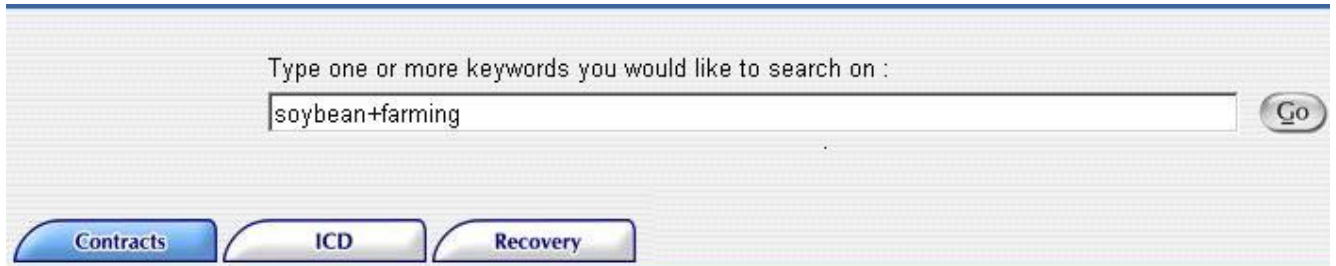
Next you want to narrow the search by looking to the right side further by clicking on “Date Signed” to have the newer contracts listed first. You can further refine your search by clicking on “Action Obligation” to see the amount of the contracts so you can identify which would fall under the new Section 503 rules. This section allows the user to sort the existing list of contracts by various fields within the contract. For example you can sort the existing list of contracts by Date Signed or Contract Type. Click on the appropriate field to Sort By. Only one Sort can be conducted at a time. The website provides numerous tutorials on using the FPDS search engine, **ezSearch**.

**Example:**


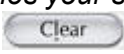
**ezSearch Help**

ezSearch provides the ability to search for contracts based on free text. All contracts searched are in Final status. Any Department of Defense contract that is less than 90 days old will not be included in the search.

1. To begin your ezSearch type in one or more keywords that will be searched for in the contracts that you would like to find.



The screenshot shows a search interface with a text input field containing "soybean+farming" and a "Go" button to its right. Below the input field are three buttons labeled "Contracts", "ICD", and "Recovery". Above the input field is the text "Type one or more keywords you would like to search on :".

2. Click on the  button. A list of contracts will be displayed that matches your search criteria in the Results page section. To remove your search criteria text, click the  button.

3. You can refine your search by using the four filter boxes on the left side of the screen. You can drill down by Department, Agency, Vendor and Vendor State. The information in each filter box is displayed in descending order. Only the top 10 results will be displayed. The user can further drill down on a Department or Vendor State.

## A Few Relevant FAQs on FPDS-NG for SSA Employment Service Providers

### **1. What's reported to FPDS-NG?**

Contracts with an estimated value of \$3,000 or more or that may be \$3,000 or more. Every modification to that contract, regardless of dollar value must be reported to FPDS-NG.

### **2. Are grants and cooperative agreements reported to FPDS-NG?**

No.

### **3. What can be reported to FPDS-NG?**

Agencies will report on all contract actions using appropriated funds as specified in FAR 4.6. AbilityOne (formerly JWOD Nonprofit Agency or Sheltered Workshop awards) and UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries) awards are reportable as they are not interagency agreements. Below is a partial list of types of awards reportable to FPDS-NG. See FAR 4.606 for the full list. Agencies will report unclassified information on all contract actions using appropriated funds including, but not limited to, those made:

- With replenishable stock and revolving funds
- With appropriated funds transferred from one executive agency to another where the servicing agency contracts for the supplies or services
- With appropriated funds obligated pursuant to the provisions of PL 85-804
- By one agency to another
- For supplies and equipment
- For construction, alteration or maintenance of real property
- For services, including research and development and Utilities
- AbilityOne (formerly JWOD Nonprofit Agency or Sheltered Workshop awards)
- Telecommunications from regulated carriers; and
- Federal Prison Industries, i.e. UNICOR awards (orders from GSA stock for UNICOR products are not reportable)

Agencies will report all contract actions made with funds held in trust accounts for foreign governments or procurements for foreign governments regardless of the nature of the funds. (The term "foreign governments" include international organizations.)

### **4. What is a funding agency\funding office?**

The funding agency\funding office is the agency\office that has the requirement and provided the funding for that requirement which has now resulted in a contract award.

### **5. What if the vendor information is not correct in FPDS-NG?**

Vendor information in FPDS-NG reflects the vendor as it was at the time of the contract award. A contract awarded to a company ten years ago will reflect the company socio-economic status as of 10 years ago unless a modification was executed to update this information.

### **6. What does Place of Performance really mean?**

The information in this field should reflect where the items will be produced, manufactured, mined, or grown or where the service will be performed. This field refers to the contractor's final manufacturing assembly point, processing plant, construction site, place where a service is performed, location of mines, or where the product is grown.