

2. Judith Bradt, a Commercial Officer in the Canadian Embassy (phone: (202) 682-7746) in Washington, specializes in U.S. government procurement matters and is a good source of information for contacts, policy clarification and procurement statistics.

3. The *Commerce Business Daily* (CBD) lists the active contracts being tendered by the federal government. You can subscribe to it by calling (202) 783-3238. It costs \$260 per year.

4. Federal departments often produce a document entitled *Doing Business With the Department of.....* Each department has an office of Small and Disadvantaged Business, which publishes a list of upcoming procurements and can meet with you to discuss opportunities (phone: (202) 482-1472).

5. You may be most successful by pursuing partnerships with U.S. firms that qualify for preferential bidding but need help delivering the service. Two types of firms that receive preferential bidding are small businesses and minority-owned businesses. The federal government applies "small business set-asides" to certain contracts and directs these contracts to small U.S. businesses. The criteria for "small business" varies by industry. For example, software firms with annual sales less than US\$7 million would qualify. Some contracts are also reserved for small firms controlled by minority-Americans. For example, the Department of Commerce often procures conference management services, data entry services, architectural and engineering services, drafting, technical writing and other services through small business set-asides. You can get more information from the *Commerce*

*Business Daily* or by contacting the Small and Disadvantaged Business offices of the agency in question. All federal government agencies generally have a quota (around 20 per cent of all contracts) that must be awarded to small business, and these can often be awarded sole source with quick processing of the contract.

6. There are 11 business service centers in the U.S. that are part of the federal procurement arm — the General Services Administration (GSA). The centers are staffed by counsellors versed in explaining everything you need to know about selling to the federal government. The GSA publishes *Doing Business with the Federal Government*, which describes how the government buys goods and services. Call (202) 708-5804 in Washington for further information. The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (phone: (703) 533-7300) may also be of assistance.

7. The Public Affairs branch of the particular agency of interest should also be able to point you in the right direction.

## REMEMBER:

1. The U.S. Government fiscal year is 1 October to 30 September, which means they have a different buying cycle.

2. U.S. federal employees are not allowed to return telephone calls to Canada as they are considered international calls. Phone back if you can't reach the U.S. Government official.

State governments can be both a valuable source of contracts and a useful source of information on state industry and trends. For example, officials in the state commerce department can provide information on companies in a particular sector, trends in an industry, potential partners and local information sources.

To identify state government contacts and opportunities you can:

- become acquainted with the Council of State Governments (CSG). The CSG in Lexington, Kentucky is an excellent source of information for all 50 states. Call (606) 231-1906 for a free *Publications Guide*.

Publications include the *State Administrative Officials Classified by Function* directory (\$30). The directory lists senior officials in all 50 state governments in 143 fields.

- contact National Association of State Purchasing Officials (NASPO), which is also located in Lexington, Kentucky, at (606) 231-1906. NASPO is staffed by the CSG. It represents 110 members comprising the purchasing officials of all states (see next section). The NASPO has an annual conference, which includes a workshop for vendors entitled "Marketing to State Governments." It also produces a quarterly publication and the guide *How To Do Business with the States: A Guide for Vendors*. You can obtain vendor guides for each state that describe the registration and bidding process. The *Contract Cookbook for the Purchase of Services* offers practical do's and don'ts. If you are interested in selling to state governments, you should also contact the NASPO.