



## **Government Contracting: A New Path to Increased Revenue?**

*By Elaine Palin, Procurement Advisor, Procurement Technical Assistance Program at Santa Fe Community College*

In times of economic upheaval when private sector output slows, government contracts may mean the difference between running a company at profit rather than loss. The Procurement Technical Assistance Program, set up by the New Mexico Small Business Development Network in 2009, is a non-profit organization that helps small businesses obtain government contracts.

PTAP counselors provide seminars and help clients identify government contract opportunities. Most PTAP services are provided free of charge. The federal- and state-funded organization has helped more than 600 New Mexico clients obtain over \$70 million in government contracts.

PTAP also prepares businesses to become certified. Certifications can make it easier for businesses to win government contracts and prepare owners for the managerial and technical capabilities needed to compete for and fulfill contracts.

The many types of government certifications include 8(a) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise; Economically Disadvantaged Women-owned Small Business enterprise; HUBZone Small Business, for economically disadvantaged locations; Small Business and Small Disadvantaged Business, through the U.S. Small Business Administration; and Veteran and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business, through the New Mexico Department of Veteran's Services.

New Mexico PTAP also offers certification to help every type of business compete for government contracts at any level of government procurement. This state-recognized certificate requires completion of five workshops in addition to at least four hours of counseling.

Pursuing certification only makes sense if it attracts more business, offers an advantage when bidding on a project, or offers access to otherwise unavailable government opportunities.

To become certified, the business must be a small business owned and operated by a U.S. citizen meeting the requirements of the desired certification. A veteran-owned small business, for example, must be owned and operated by a bona fide veteran. The applicant must be involved in the daily operation of the business and responsible for all decisions made on behalf of the business.

The ownership must be real, substantial and continuing — going beyond what might be reflected in a business’s ownership documents. The applicant must share in all risks and profits commensurate with his ownership interest. He must unconditionally own at least 51 percent of the business or — if it’s a publicly owned business – at least 51 percent of the stock.

Business owners interested in learning more about PTAP services and certification programs can obtain information from the seven Procurement Technical Assistance Centers in New Mexico. Counselors are available, and workshops are held in conjunction with New Mexico’s Small Business Development Centers. For additional information or to locate the nearest PTAP office, visit [www.nmsbdc.org/ptap-government.html](http://www.nmsbdc.org/ptap-government.html).

*Finance New Mexico is an initiative of the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation (NMSBIC) and its partners to assist individuals and businesses in obtaining skills and funding-resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to [www.FinanceNewMexico.org](http://www.FinanceNewMexico.org).*

