Federal A-E Contractor Readiness Checklist

For Architecture-Engineering Firms Entering, Competing, or Growing in the Federal Marketplace

Purpose: This checklist helps architecture-engineering (A-E) firms assess whether they are prepared to pursue, win, and successfully perform federal contracts. It is designed for both firms entering the federal marketplace and established federal contractors evaluating their readiness for larger, more complex, or different types of federal work.

Unlike a general government contracting checklist, this assessment focuses on the qualifications-based selection process, SF 330 submissions, professional licensing, technical capacity, project delivery, and the business risks particular to federal A-E contracting.

How to use it: Mark each statement as Ready, Needs Work, or Not Applicable. A firm should be able to support each "Ready" answer with evidence, not simply confidence that it can perform.

Your readiness assessment

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Ready	Needs work	N/A

1. 1. Federal Market Positioning

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We have identified the federal agencies and programs that purchase the types of A-E services we provide.

○ Ready ○ Needs work ○ N/A

We understand which opportunities are procured as Brooks Act A-E services and which may follow other acquisition procedures.

○ Ready ○ Needs work ○ N/A

We have researched prior awards, incumbent firms, contract vehicles, project locations, and typical contract values.

○ Ready ○ Needs work ○ N/A

We understand how our firm’s qualifications compare with firms currently winning the work.

○ Ready ○ Needs work ○ N/A

We have a realistic strategy for competing as a prime, subcontractor, or joint venture participant.

Ready Needs work N/A

2. 2. Registration and Business Eligibility

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Our SAM.gov registration is active, accurate, and reflects our current business information.

Ready Needs work N/A

Our UEI, CAGE code, NAICS codes, and small business representations are accurate.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand how SBA size standards and affiliation rules affect our eligibility.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have verified any small business certifications we intend to use.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand the applicable federal representations, certifications, and basic contract compliance obligations.

Ready Needs work N/A

3. 3. Professional Qualifications and Licensing

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We have verified the professional licenses, registrations, and responsible-charge requirements applicable to our intended work and project locations.

Ready Needs work N/A

Our proposed key personnel possess the required credentials and relevant project experience.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can demonstrate competency in the disciplines required for the projects we intend to pursue.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have a reliable process for verifying subcontractor and consultant qualifications.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have appropriate professional liability coverage and understand project-specific insurance requirements.

Ready Needs work N/A

4. 4. SF 330 and Qualifications-Based Selection

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We maintain current, accurate SF 330 qualifications information, including Parts I and II as applicable.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can select projects and personnel that directly demonstrate experience relevant to the announcement.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand the announced evaluation criteria, including specialized experience, professional qualifications, capacity, past performance, and location or local knowledge when applicable.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can clearly identify each team member’s actual responsibilities, relevant experience, and contribution.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand that Brooks Act A-E selection generally ranks firms on qualifications before negotiating price with the highest-ranked firm.

Ready Needs work N/A

5. 5. Technical and Project Delivery Capacity

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We can demonstrate our ability to perform multiple projects or task orders concurrently.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have documented quality management and independent technical review procedures.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have processes for design coordination, constructability, cost estimating, scheduling, and document control.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can meet applicable federal technical standards, cybersecurity requirements, and project-specific deliverable requirements.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have identified capacity gaps that may require additional employees, specialty consultants, or teaming partners.

Ready Needs work N/A

6. 6. Federal Relationships and Teaming

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We know which federal requiring activities, program managers, and contracting offices influence demand for our services.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can communicate our capabilities in terms of agency mission needs and documented project outcomes.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have identified potential teaming partners with complementary disciplines, geography, or contract experience.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand subcontracting responsibilities, limitations on subcontracting when applicable, and prime contractor accountability.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have a process for assessing teaming agreements, consultant commitments, conflicts of interest, and subcontract terms.

Ready Needs work N/A

7. 7. Past Performance and Competitive Differentiation

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We maintain verifiable project references, including scope, complexity, value, schedule, and outcomes.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can explain how commercial, state, local, and federal experience relates to the work being solicited.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have a process for reviewing past performance feedback and correcting recurring issues.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can demonstrate specific differentiators supported by measurable results, not general marketing claims.

Ready Needs work N/A

We maintain a reusable, regularly updated library of resumes, project descriptions, credentials, and performance evidence.

Ready Needs work N/A

8. 8. Financial and Contract Management Readiness

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We have sufficient working capital to support performance and payment timing.

Ready Needs work N/A

Our accounting and project-cost systems can track labor, consultants, expenses, and contract requirements.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand the pricing and negotiation process that follows selection for Brooks Act A-E contracts.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can manage fixed-price, task-order, and other applicable contract arrangements and monitor profitability.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have procedures for contract changes, additional services, invoicing, recordkeeping, and resolving performance issues.

Ready Needs work N/A

9. 9. Solicitation and Submission Readiness

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We have a process for monitoring SAM.gov, agency forecasts, sources sought notices, and A-E qualifications announcements.

Ready Needs work N/A

We evaluate each opportunity for strategic fit, qualifications, capacity, risk, and likelihood of selection before pursuing it.

Ready Needs work N/A

We can prepare compliant SF 330 submissions within the announced deadlines and page limits.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have a quality review process to verify that submissions answer the actual evaluation criteria.

Ready Needs work N/A

We understand federal discussions, interviews, selection boards, debriefing opportunities, and available protest procedures.

Ready Needs work N/A

10. 10. Growth and Long-Term Sustainability

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We understand which existing contract vehicles and agency relationships can support future opportunities.

Ready Needs work N/A

We periodically evaluate whether our federal business is profitable after accounting for pursuit and compliance costs.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have a succession and staffing plan for key technical and management personnel.

Ready Needs work N/A

We monitor acquisition policy, technical standards, and agency buying trends that may affect our services.

Ready Needs work N/A

We have defined what success in the federal marketplace looks like for our firm over the next one to three years.

Ready Needs work N/A

Interpreting the results

This assessment is intended to identify where a firm needs to strengthen its readiness, not to establish a government-approved score.

For firms **new to federal contracting**, the most important early indicators are market understanding, business eligibility, relevant qualifications, and the ability to prepare a competitive SF 330.

For **established federal A-E contractors**, greater attention should go to competitive differentiation, available capacity, teaming arrangements, financial performance, and whether the firm is positioned for the next level of work.

Five questions from the Contracting Officer's chair

Before pursuing an A-E opportunity, I would encourage a firm to answer these five questions:

1. **Why this agency?** What do you know about its mission, facilities, projects, and buying history?
2. **Why this project?** What makes your experience relevant to the specific work being contemplated?
3. **Why your team?** Can you demonstrate that the people you are proposing have actually performed comparable work?
4. **Why should the Government have confidence in your capacity?** Can you deliver the work on time, within budget, and to the required standard while meeting your other commitments?
5. **What would distinguish your firm during a qualifications-based evaluation?** Are you providing evidence of successful outcomes, or simply describing what your firm is capable of doing?

A firm that cannot answer these questions convincingly may be registered and eligible to compete without being competitively ready.

Regulatory references

The principal regulatory foundation is FAR Subpart 36.6 / RFO 36.102 and 36.202, which addresses A-E qualifications-based selection, evaluation criteria, SF 330 qualifications, and negotiations. Limitations on Subcontracting are covered under FAR Clause 52.219-14.

NOTE: Because the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul is being implemented through agency deviations and rulemaking, firms should also check the applicable agency's current acquisition instructions and solicitation requirements rather than relying solely on the codified FAR.

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