

THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURER NETWORK

What is the American Manufacturer Network? The American Manufacturer Network (AMN) is a network of small business manufacturers in the intermountain northwest (Idaho, Washington, Montana, and Oregon) that are organized to succeed in the government contracting marketplace. The AMN and its services are a grassroots effort designed “by the north-central Idaho and southeast Washington small business manufacturers of Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association.

How does the AMN meet Manufacturer Needs? The AMN reduces the man-hours needed for small business manufacturers to become bid ready by making “bid and no bid” decisions and developing bid proposals for federal contracting opportunities. It provides technical assistance in writing professional proposals, helping with “sources sought” federal contracting market research, communicating with contracting officers when questions arise, connecting manufacturers to others in the network for teaming opportunities, evaluating and interpreting Federal Acquisition Regulations (FARs), locating vendors, and connecting manufacturers to resources needed for financing, quality control, and lean manufacturing.

How does the AMN meet Federal Agency and Prime Contractor Needs? The AMN service objectives are closely aligned with the highest profile initiatives of U.S. Federal Government executive agencies to strengthen the U.S. manufacturing base, provide the maximum number of appropriate opportunities for federal contracts to U.S. small business concerns, and foster “Made in the U.S.A.” profitability.

Who is providing services? Marketing and bid readiness services are being provided through the American Manufacturer Network, Inc., a trade association with 501(c)(6) exemption. AMN Solutions, LLC (owned by CEDA and AMN, Inc.) provides all other services. The two organizations work together for a complete service package. Currently, there are three dedicated staff members that have federal procurement expertise and manufacturing consulting experience.

Who provides support to the AMN? In addition to Northwest Intermountain Manufacturers Association (NIMA), it is supported by three economic development organizations and two universities with informal partnerships: Clearwater Economic Development Association (CEDA), South East Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA), Valley Vision, the University of Idaho, Washington State University Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Economic Development Districts of Idaho, and the Port of Clarkston.

Financial contributors include: U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S.D.A. Rural Development, CEDA, Valley Vision, Idaho National Lab, and the Economic Development Districts of Idaho.

Purpose & Rationale: The primary objective of the AMN is to reduce small business manufacturer’s man-hours needed to bid on federal contract opportunities. These current conditions make federal contract bidding cumbersome for small business manufacturers:

1. Synopses of federal contract opportunities generally do not contain sufficient detail for manufacturers to make sound bid go/no go decisions. Full review of the technical data package, contractual parameters and past purchase history is necessary.
2. Manufacturing sector coding in federal bid opportunity advertising is limited in ability to effectively target the capabilities of small business manufacturers, even with the best of data mining and matching technologies.
3. Labor expended by manufacturers typically ranges three to five man-hours for a single solicitation and, because of the lack of effective targeting, 65% to 95% of these labor hours are wasted, thereby contributing to higher costs and pricing.
4. Small business manufacturers are typically unable to afford enough investment in experienced, professional business development staff to overcome the above conditions and rapidly increase their participation in federal contracts.

The American Manufacturer Network developed a service model which effectively overcomes these conditions. AMN hired a team of professionals experienced in federal contracting, program requirements, program management, manufacturing methods and small business operations. This team provides technical assistance across a network of small business manufacturers using a methodology that makes the bid go/no go decision efficient and reduces the wasted labor hours (and cost) by as much as 90%.

The AMN's Approach:

1. Gain knowledge about each manufacturer's operations, capabilities and interests to the same level of detail had the manufacturer hired experienced business development professional staff.
2. Harness the most current data mining technologies to target federal contract opportunities viable for the manufacturers in the network.
3. Evaluate each opportunity as seen through the "profile" of each manufacturer in the network.
4. Re-synopsis opportunity in an expanded format designed by the American Manufacturer Network (maintaining integrity of data restrictions).
5. Distribute opportunity only to the most likely manufacturers who can and will bid on the solicitation.

This service has been acclaimed by manufacturers in the network as highly valuable. Statistical data proves it is effective in increasing the participation of U.S. small business manufacturers in the federal contract marketplace. Also, it is removing the cost burden and price impact of wasted labor hours from manufacturers, strengthening them and making them more robust in the U.S.A.

Who to contact for more information?

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