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OST GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

# How to Get More Out of Your 8(a) Designation

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# About Us



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## Fedmine

- Fedmine is a web-based business intelligence platform that helps you to make intelligent decisions through better understanding of market data
- Aggregates 16 federal procurement data sources and makes available via an intuitive user interface
- Allows you to view the level of detail you need to make smart business decisions

## OST Global Solutions, Inc.

- Help businesses grow through:
  - GovCon Incubator
  - Business Development Center of Excellence
  - Bid & Proposal Academy
- Won \$22 Billion+ since 2005
- Supported 18 out of the top 20 federal contractors, and hundreds of small businesses



# Challenge

- It took a lot of work to get into the 8(a) program
- Now you are here, but not seeing much benefit and the clock is ticking
- How do you get the most from the program while you have the 8(a) status?



# Focus Areas



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- Determining the lowest hanging fruit
- Selecting targets for 8(a) set asides
- Securing sole source contracts
- Developing a cohesive 8(a) pipeline strategy

## Federal Agency Contracts to 8(a) program participant

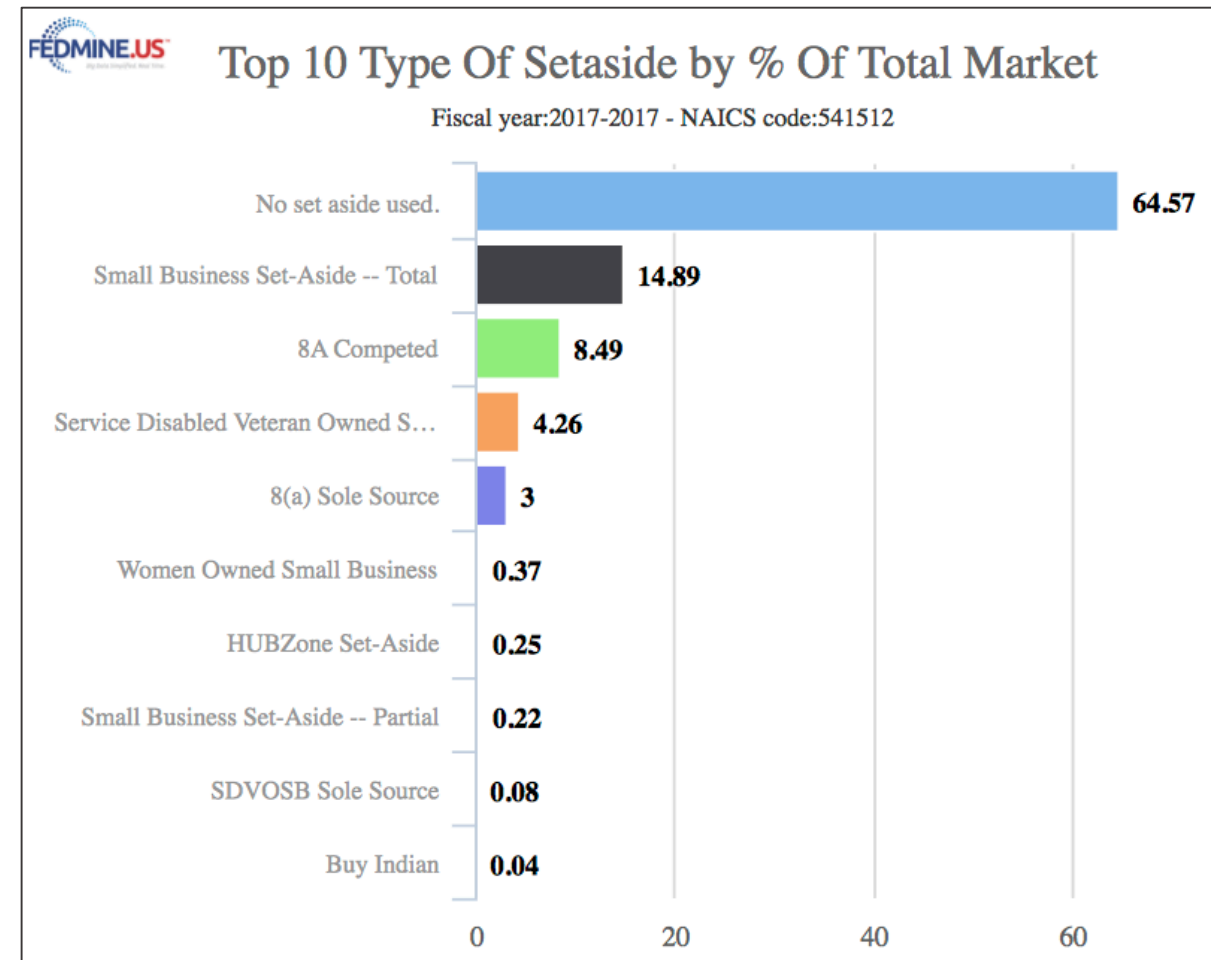
	FY18	FY17	FY16
Civil Agencies	\$58,411,173	\$493,957,681	\$480,544,392
Defense Agencies	\$6,541,656	\$243,793,004	\$255,064,841
Independent Agencies	\$14,942,122	\$85,407,767	\$88,305,076
Legislative Agencies	\$0	\$122,836	\$63,237
GRAND TOTAL	\$79,894,951	\$823,281,288	\$823,977,546

# Select Opportunity Search Criteria



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- Must not be on an IDIQ vehicle the company doesn't have
- Pick a focus NAICS (primary NAICS is good)
- Select focus agencies
- Examine expiring opportunities where the government may need this service again
  - It may be that the agency's purpose was to fill a one-time need
  - The nature of the product or service and the Agency's dependence upon continued services *may* hint at follow on opportunities
  - An agency may not have sufficient workforce to conduct support operations and it deems it is not in the Government's interests to hire employees
  - Unlikely to have a direct follow-on contract to develop same software application as in an expiring contract





# Opportunity Criteria (Cont.)



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- Opportunities generally don't leave the 8(a) program once entered
  - 8a company won't be able to prime it again because it is graduating or has graduated already but didn't have to recertify
  - Incumbent will need to sub to another 8(a) company to keep portion of the work
- Search for 8(a) opportunities in the focus agency/NAICS code that has just expired or will soon expire (next 2 yrs)





# Opportunity Criteria (Cont.)

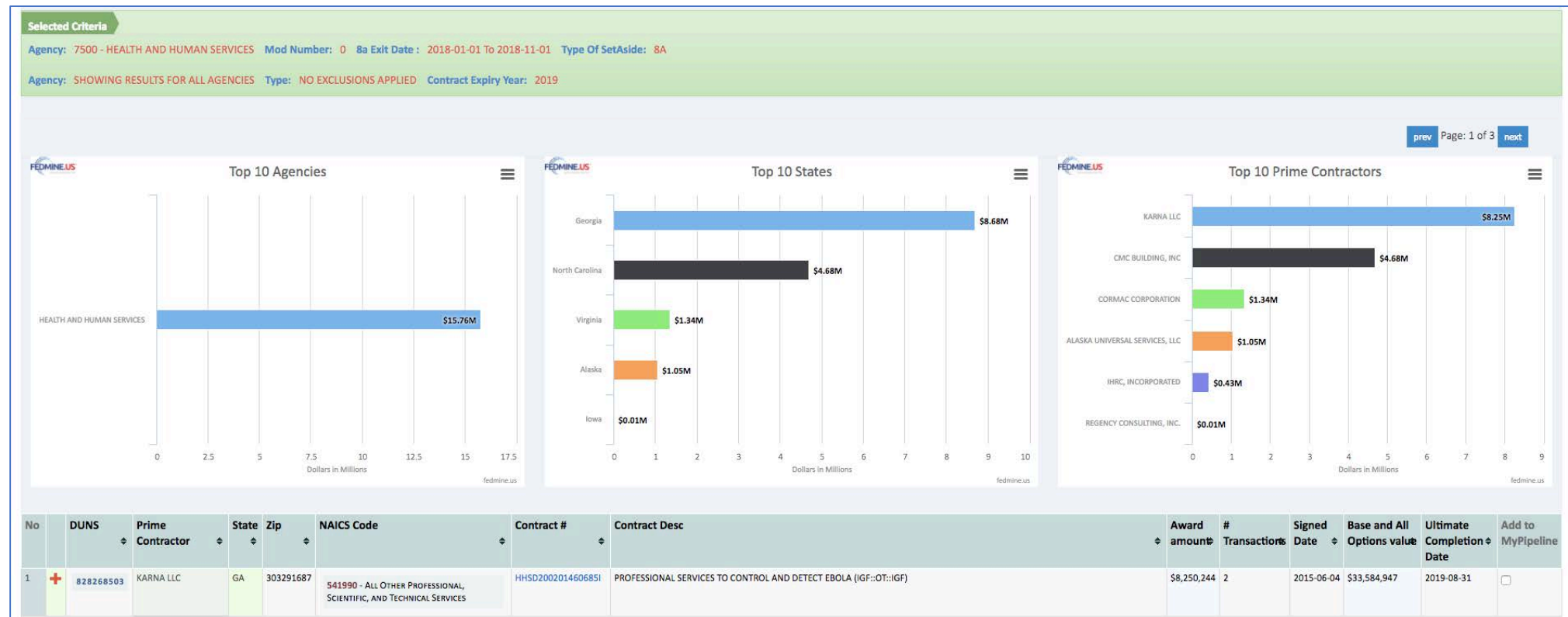
- Exclude super-8(a)s (Indian tribes, ANCs, Native Hawaiian Organizations or CDCs) from the search as they are able to spawn more 8(a)s and tend to keep the work in the “family”
- How much risk does the incumbent want to bear if the two dates (recompete and 8(a) expiration) are close by?
- Look first for set aside/competed contracts first, and not sole source opportunities
  - 8(a) sole source is achieved through contacts
  - Requires finding specific contracting officers and creating a contact plan
  - Sole Source opportunities don’t have any statement of work or other documents posted to further qualify opportunity
  - Some may be hard to reach as contracts are being “flipped over” to a newer 8(a) by the companies with expiring 8(a)

# Opportunity Criteria (Cont.)



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- You could also search by companies with expiring 8(a) at the agency
- If starting with the company, don't discard sole source opportunities
- You can approach the company and agree with them to flip the work over to you
- It may work if you have a great sales person on staff and an attractive quid-pro-quo





# Determine the Timeline

- Must guess at the timeframe for re-compete: the more complex the work, the longer the Procurement Administrative Lead Time (PALT) to develop a follow-on acquisition plan, solicit offers and award the contract
- Government needs sufficient lead-time to solicit and award a follow-on contract to either the incumbent or successor so that there is no interruption in services
  - For complex services, the lead time may be 6-12 months or more
  - For commercial services or products that are not as complex, 6 months or less
  - Can guess at Agency's lead time for a specific follow-on requirement by reviewing previous solicitations to assess the lead time needed by comparing the published solicitation issue dates and award dates for *comparable* opportunities.
  - This information will be also helpful to selecting an appropriate date range for the search for expiring contracts



# Confirm the Opportunity is Real

- **Must call COs and OSDBU to confirm if this is a real opportunity**
- **If the CO is not assigned to this opportunity, need to find out who is; more calling around is needed**
- **Often phone calls aren't answered; so we need to ask CO or OSDBU for the next public event at that agency for access to their staff to verify the pipeline**
  - **Open house**
  - **Match making**
  - **Industry Day, etc.**



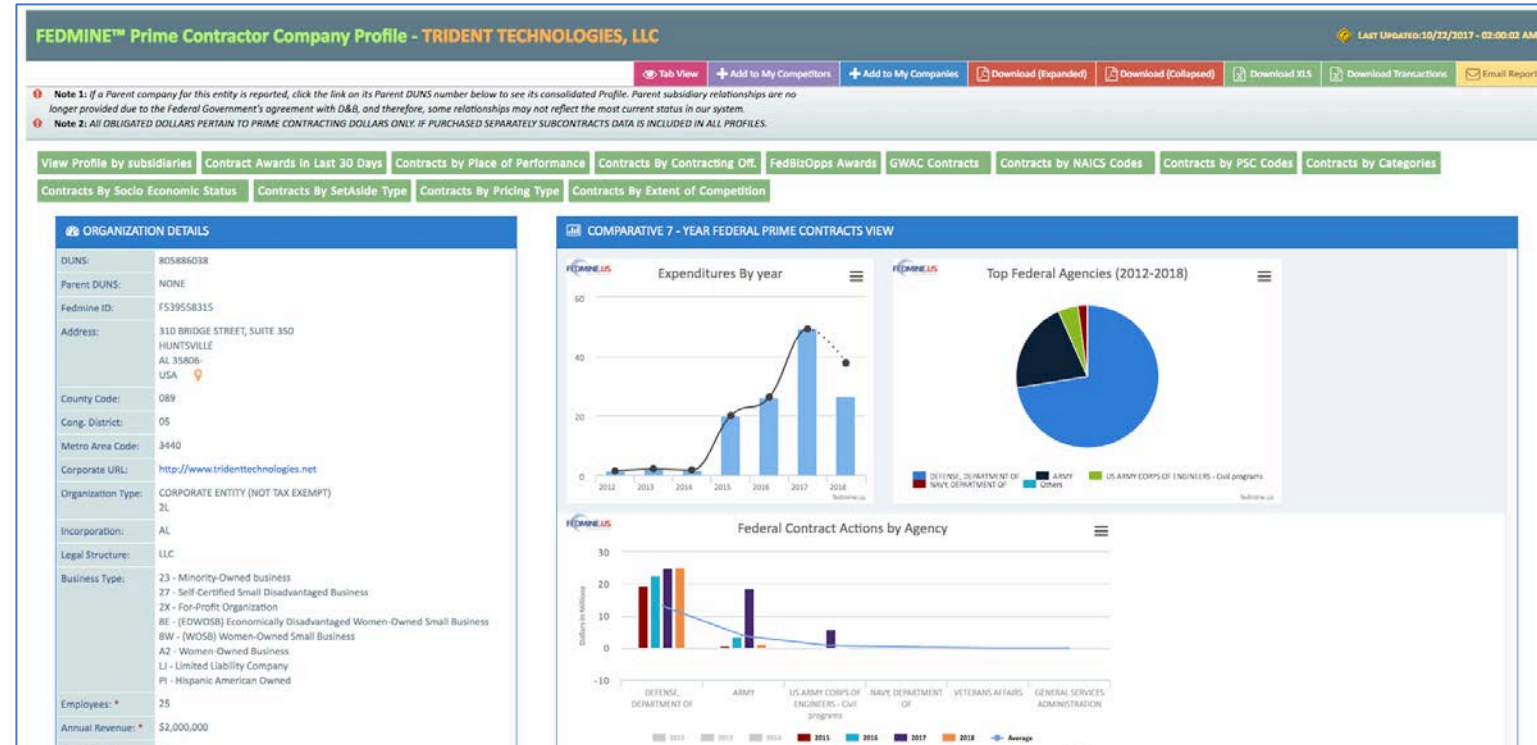
Confirm

# Prioritizing Your Work



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- Whom do we already know?
- What strategy (sole-source, competitive) do we prefer?
- Do you know enough about this work to decide to take all of it, instead of sharing with an incumbent?
- Could you check if the incumbents are favored at the agency?
- It may be harder to chase sole-source opportunities without much associated information
- Who will contact the 8(a) incumbents?
- **Need:** Opportunities description together with target company profiles and contact information





# Strategic Considerations

- Target companies with many 8(a) opportunities that may be shopping for a partner, at least 2 years before their 8(a) expiration
- Cold calling is tough; rejection rate is high
- Think of it as dating first, before getting married
- Find other opportunities to work on together and build a relationship – look at companies just starting their transition period
- It is a long-term proposition, not a quick fix



# Contact Information

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