

# CITY CONTRACTING 101: A SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP

September 10, 2025





# Unlocking Opportunities: How Small Businesses Can Contract with the City

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Government Operations Team | Office of the City Administrator

**CITY CONTRACTING 101: A SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP**  
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# Welcome to the Small Business Workshop!

- We know it can be difficult for businesses and nonprofits to work with the City and County of San Francisco.
- Our goals for today are to:
  - Talk about how to get your foot in the door as a “supplier” for the City
  - Demystify the City’s contracting and purchasing processes so you know what you need to do if you want to complete for City work
  - Provide hands-on support
- Today’s overview is also available in your printed program.


**Program**

Curious about City contracting? Connect with agencies to learn how to start!

8:30 am – 9:00 am		Registration and Light Refreshments <i>Location: Lobby</i>
ROOM 192+194	ROOM 196	
<b>Hands-on Supplier Support:</b> <b>9:00 am – 12:00 pm</b>  <i>Interact with City agencies involved with supplier registration, contracting, and compliance to get your questions answered!</i>	<b>Session 1:</b> <b>9:15 am – 10:00 am</b>  Main Presentation: Unlocking Opportunities: How Small Businesses Can Contract with the City	
	<b>Session 2:</b> <b>10:30 am – 11:15 am</b>  Main Presentation: Unlocking Opportunities: How Small Businesses Can Contract with the City	

*\*Information is the same in both sessions. Choose the one that works best for you!*

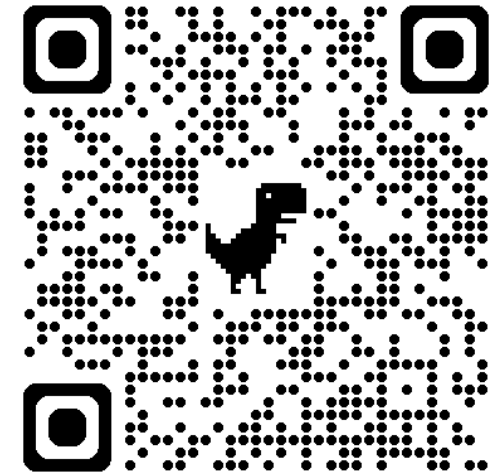
We are here!



# The next 45 minutes

- Context on the City's contracting process
- How to work with the City
  - Supplier registration
  - Looking for opportunities
  - Bidding on work
  - Entering into a contract
- What to look for when competing for City work
- Agency support room overview

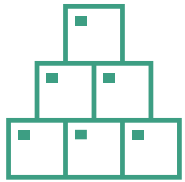
Visit our brand new  
“Contracting Basics  
for Suppliers” page  
on SF.gov



**CONTEXT: CITY CONTRACTING PROCESS**

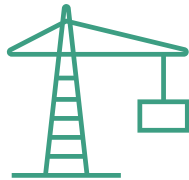
# What does the City buy externally?

The City spends billions annually through contracts for products and services such as:



## Commodities

- Cleaning supplies
- Office supplies
- Painting supplies
- Plumbing equipment
- Food & catering



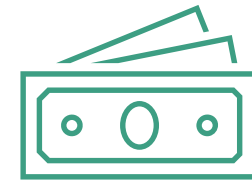
## Construction

- Architecture
- Engineering
- General contractors
- HVAC
- Trucking & hauling



## Services

- Consulting (e.g. IT, health)
- Graphic design
- Janitorial services
- Security guards
- Specialized training
- Translation & Interpretation



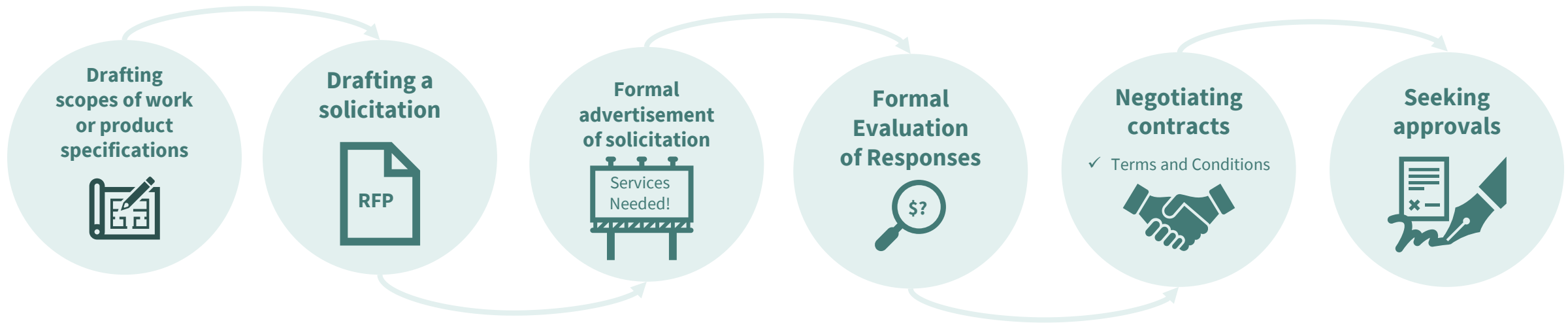
## Grants & Assistance

- Community-based projects
- Food assistance
- Outreach services
- Performing & fine arts

# How does the City buy what it needs?

## Option 1: Long-term contracts for goods, services, grants, construction (often called "formal" contracts)

- Follows complex process that takes several months to over a year, depending on the City's need



# How does the City buy what it needs?

## Option 2: One-time purchases (sometimes called "informal" purchases)

- Conducted by individual City departments or the Office of Contract Administration depending on the purchase amount
- Process is generally much faster than above
- For one-time purchases of **low-risk** goods and services valued up to \$20,000, departments can use **Prop Q** for a simplified purchase order process

Under Prop Q, City departments can....

1

Identify goods and services needed, determine selection criteria.

2

Request quotes from businesses.\*

3

Select supplier(s) and issue purchase order(s), pursuant to any applicable City laws and ethics requirements.

\*Requesting quotes is optional under justifiable conditions.



# What kinds of entities does the City buy from?

- Businesses, nonprofit organizations, individuals, other governments, and more!
- In general, you can work with us if your organization is:
  - Registered to do business in San Francisco
  - Able to submit a completed W9 to the City
  - Not prohibited from working with the City (i.e., not suspended or debarred)
  - [nonprofits only] active in status with the IRS and State Registry of Charitable Trusts

# Considerations when deciding if you want to compete for work with the City

**Ask yourself:** Does my business provide goods or services that could be relevant to maintaining government operations or public services?

## Sample scenarios

My business provides luxury wellness retreats targeted towards tech executives. *Maybe not worth it...*

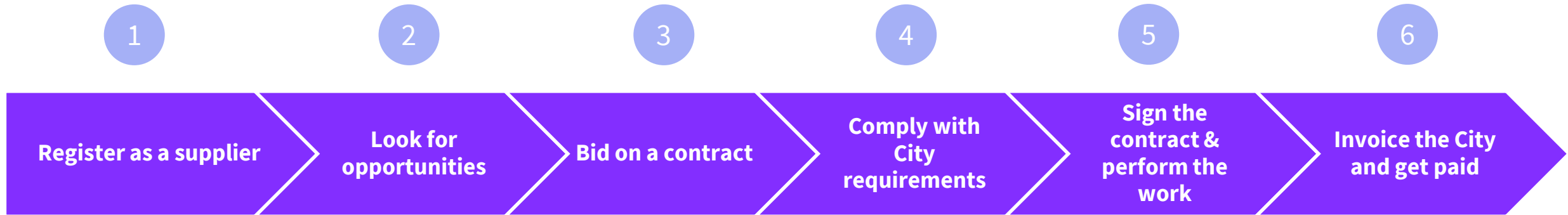
My business offers custodial services for large office spaces. *Could be worth it!*

My business provides catering for different sized events and is committed to sustainable food handling practices. *Could be worth it!*

**INTERESTED? HERE'S HOW TO WORK WITH US**



# How can your business work with the City?



If you are awarded the contract, you will also need to complete these steps!

# Register as a City supplier – bidder process

- To **bid** on City opportunities through the SF City Partner site, you must be a registered **bidder**:
  - Complete a form W9 for your organization
  - Register as a bidder on the San Francisco City Partner Portal
- When you register, check off **ALL the categories** that your business can provide goods or services for. But also: only select things that are *relevant* to your business – otherwise, you might get a lot of notifications that are irrelevant and miss important opportunities.
- **Keep your business information up-to-date!** Make it easy for the City to know what you sell and contact you!

## What you will see in SF City Partner registration portal

**BIDDER REGISTRATION**

**Step 5 - Set up Notifications**

Please select the product/service categories that your organization provides to be notified of potential City business opportunities.

**Find Category** [Download the full category listing](#)

Search:

**Results** : Showing 15 of 15

- 05000 **Art Equipment And Supplies**
  - Block Printing Supplies
  - Casters, Drying Racks
  - Coatings, Protective (For Artwork)
  - Cloth (For Application Of Designs And Transfers) Burlap, Linen, Etc.
  - Drawing And Painting Supplies: Brushes, Canvases, Chalk, Colors (Acrylic, Oil, Water, Etc.), Crayons, Palettes, Paper And Pads, Staples, Etc.
  - Glue, Paste, Etc., Art
  - Letter Cutting Machine
  - Engraving, Etching, And Lithography Equipment And Supplies (Burnins, Etc.)
  - Paper, Art, Various Types
  - Picture Frames And Framing Supplies: Map Cutters, Mats, Molding, Stretcher Strips, Etc.
  - Racks, Drying (Portable And Stationary)
  - Recycled Art Equipment And Supplies
  - Sculpturing Equipment And Supplies: Carving Boards, Casting Materials, Modeling Clay, Sculptor's Tools, Etc.
  - Shapes, Strings, Tapes, Twists, Etc. (Decorative Art Items)
  - Silk Screen Process Supplies
  - Stained Glass Supplies
- 20800 **Computer Software For Microcomputers (Preprogrammed)**
- 20900 **Computer Software For Mini And Mainframe Computers (Preprogrammed)**

**Selected Categories**

Use the search to find and add categories.

Register as a supplier

Look for  
opportunities

Bid on a contract

Comply with City  
requirements

Sign the contract &  
perform the work

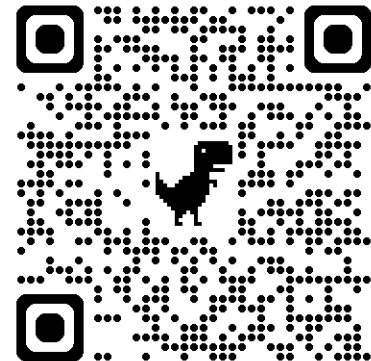
Invoice the City and  
get paid

# Register as a City supplier – supplier process

- To do work with the City (contract or purchase order) you must be a compliant City **supplier**.
- To become a fully compliant City **supplier**, you need to complete some additional steps:
  1. Register as a business with Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTX)
    - Receive a Business Account Number (BAN)
  2. Show your business complies with the City's Equal Benefits program and submit required supporting documents
- The Controller's Office will convert your **bidder** number to a **supplier ID** and send you the ID via email
- This whole process takes several days, so plan accordingly.

**Note:** You do NOT need to be a fully compliant City supplier to bid on work, but you will need to before you can enter into a contract.

Detailed, step-by-step instructions



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# Register as a City supplier – Recap

## 1 Register as a Bidder

- Requires W-9
- Sign up for category alerts
- Receive a **Bidder Number**
- **Allows you to bid on opportunities**

## 2 Become a Supplier

- Complete your Business Tax Registration
- Complete Equal Benefits Declaration
- Receive a **Supplier ID**
- **Allows you to enter into contract**

**!!! Please note!** Just because you become a fully compliant supplier **does not automatically guarantee you will get a contract**; you must find and bid on opportunities.

Register as a supplier

Look for opportunities

Bid on a contract

Comply with City requirements

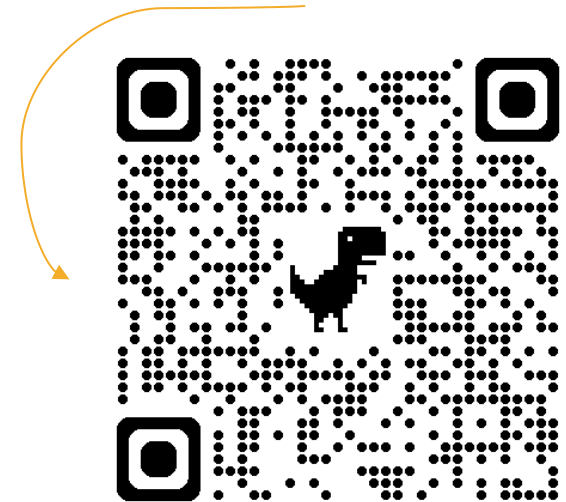
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# Register as a City supplier – LBE program

- The **Local Business Enterprise (LBE)** Program, run by the **Contract Monitoring Division (CMD)** helps small businesses compete for City contracts. Benefits of becoming an LBE include:
  - Bid Discounts and Rating Bonuses
  - LBE Subcontractor Requirements
  - City Contracts which are only open to Certified Firms
- Requirements:
  - Have a **fixed location in San Francisco** or the PUC Water System Service area as your primary place of business
  - Have a current business license issued at least 6 months before certification
  - **Gross receipts fall under the threshold limit**
  - Invoices or signed contracts to show experience

Learn more about the  
LBE program



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# Types of solicitations

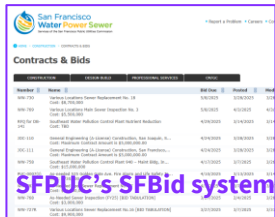
Type of solicitation	What it means	Result
Invitation for Bid (IFB/ITB)	Used by the City to solicit a <b>low-bid</b> multi-year contract.	Contract
Request for Proposals (RFP)	Used by the City to solicit a multi-year contract based on <b>factors other than just price.</b>	Contract
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	Used by the City to create a <b>pool of qualified contractors.</b>	Pool of suppliers
Request for Information (RFI)	Used by the City to <b>learn about the market</b> for a particular product, service, technology, etc.; does not result in a contract	Informational purposes to inform future contract decisions



# Look for opportunities to work with the City



The [SF City Partner portal](#) is used by multiple City departments, including the Office of Contract Administration, to advertise for and collect bid responses. In addition, other City departments post links to their own bidding systems here.



SFPUC's SFBid system

Some City departments have their own [departmental contracting portal](#) that you can access through their [individual websites](#).



OCA's forecast

**Looking to the future!** Many City departments also publish [forecasts](#) of the bid opportunities they will be opening in the near future. Prepare your organization for future work!

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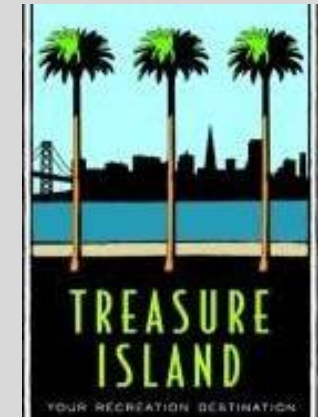
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# Looking to bid on Construction?

Chapter 6 Departments



Opportunities through  
Developers / Project  
Sponsors



Mayor's Office of  
Housing and Community  
Development

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# Looking to bid on Technology?

Option	What it is	How does it work?
Direct Contract	Procurement of a specific service/commodity for a specific project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find a solicitation</li> <li>2. Compete in the solicitation</li> <li>3. Receive contract award</li> <li>4. Complete the project</li> </ol>
Win an Enterprise Agreement	Citywide Agreement for tech product lines Examples: Adobe, Aruba, Cisco, Docusign, HPE, Juniper, Microsoft, Oracle, Salesforce, Vmware	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find a solicitation</li> <li>2. Compete in the solicitation</li> <li>3. Receive contract award</li> <li>4. Sell the product on an as-needed basis</li> </ol>
Join City's Technology Marketplace	Citywide pool of contracts used on as-needed basis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compete to join the pool</li> <li>2. Once in the pool compete on purchases as they arise</li> </ol>





# Looking to bid on Grants?

- Adult Probation Department
- Arts Commission
- Department of Early Childhood
- Department of Children, Youth & Their Families
- Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
- Department of Public Health
- Human Rights Commission
- Human Services Agency
- Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development
- Office of Economic and Workforce Development
- San Francisco Public Works
- Sheriff
- Community Challenge Grants
- Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs
- Grants for the Arts



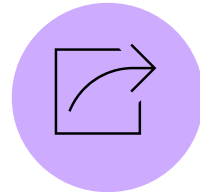
# Bid on an opportunity



Review requirements and scope of work in solicitation document, such as RFP, or the request for quotes



Attend the pre-bid conference & submit questions!



Submit your bid, proposal, or quote plus **all required documentation**



Check your email for follow up communication!

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**Bid on a contract**

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**Congratulations, your proposal or bid  
has been awarded the work!**

**... what happens next?**

# Comply with City requirements

At this stage in the process, you will need to prove compliance with City requirements

- **Supplier registration:** If you are not yet a fully-compliant City supplier, you will need to complete that process at this time.
- **Terms and Conditions:** The City will send you a contract to review and sign. These will include the scope of work, cost/payment schedule, terms & conditions, and more. Read it carefully!
- **Insurance Requirements:** Provide the required insurance listed in the Terms & Conditions: general liability, auto, workers' compensation, technology errors & omissions, or other policy requirements.
- **Payment.** Sign up for electronic payments through the City's [Paymode-X](#) system.



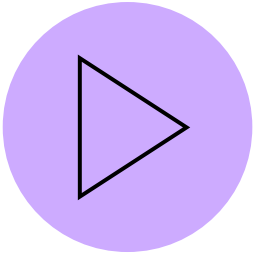
# Comply with City requirements

- **Policy Requirements:** The City has an array of policies that contractors must comply with. These include:
  - Healthcare Accountability Ordinance (HCAO)
  - Minimum Compensation Ordinance (MCO)
  - First Source Hiring Program (FSHP)
  - Equal Benefits
  - Subcontracting to Local Business Enterprises (LBE)
- **Other City programs and requirements.**
  - Cybersecurity Risk Assessment (CRA) (only for technology contracts or contracts where you will access City data)
  - Green purchasing rules
  - Project Labor Agreement (PLA)

You will be asked to sign forms attesting you comply with these programs.



# Sign the contract & perform the scope of work



The City will provide you with a Notice to Proceed (NTP) or Purchase Order (PO), which indicates you are **authorized to start work** on the contract.



**Execute the scope of work** in the contract.



Keep proper **records and documentation** as outlined in the contract.

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# Invoice the City and get paid

- **Prepare an invoice** for the work completed and in line with the payment schedule outlined in the contract.
- Make sure your invoice aligns with the **format required by the City**.
- Submit the invoice to the **appropriate point of contact** in the City department – this could be a Project Manager, Accounting, or someone else.
- The City will **process the invoice and issue payment**.



You may want to **confirm these details with the Department ahead of time**, so your invoice is not delayed!



# **MAKING THE MOST OF TODAY'S OFFERINGS**



# Hands-on support

To make your experience today meaningful, the support room is here to make sure all firms can:

- 1 Receive **hands-on support** with any specific issues, questions, or concerns you have
- 2 Get **step-by-step guidance** for Bidder and Supplier registration
- 3 Learn how to **access financial resources** for small businesses
- 4 Ask the **right questions** so you walk away from today with what you need to move forward in your firm's process of competing for City work

# Hands-on support in Rooms 192-194

We have many City agencies that work with suppliers in our hands-on support room (Room 192-194) all day today! This includes:

## Onboarding

- SF City Partner Support Team
- Controller's Office Supplier Management Team (CON SMT)
- Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office: Tax Payer Assistance Unit (TTX)

## Compliance

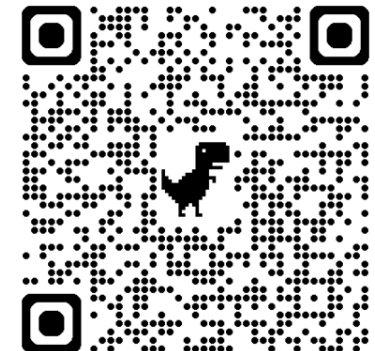
- Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE)
- Contract Monitoring Division (CMD)
- Department of Technology (DT)
- Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

## Additional Resources – Financial, Small Business, LBE, etc.

- Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office: SF Lends (TTX)
- Office of Small Business (OSB)
- Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)
- Contract Monitoring Division (CMD)
- Office of Contract Administration (OCA)

## We are here to help!

Each agency is ready to provide you with **live, hands-on assistance** with any questions you may have. Check your program booklet for a description of each agency and what they can help with.



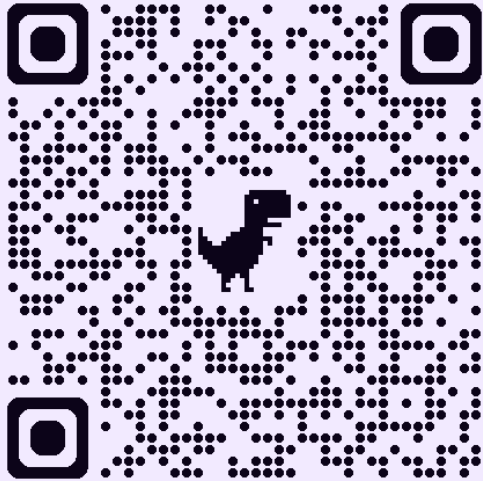
# Don't know where to start?



If you need help finding the right City agency, visit the **Help Desk** in Rooms 192-194!

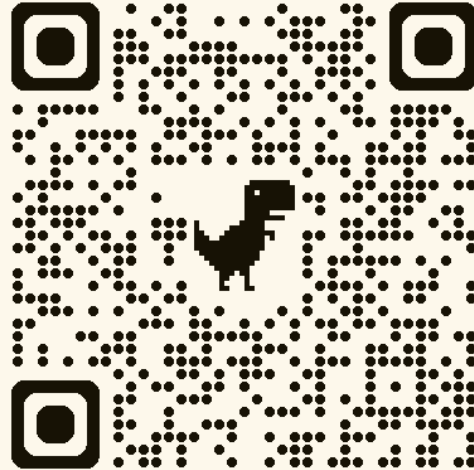
# Thank you!

## Today's Program



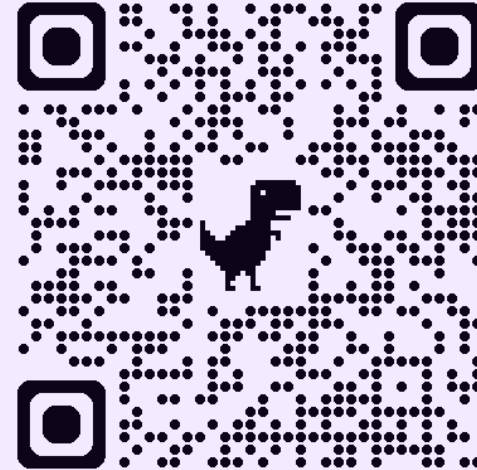
View program & agency  
descriptions

## SF City Partner



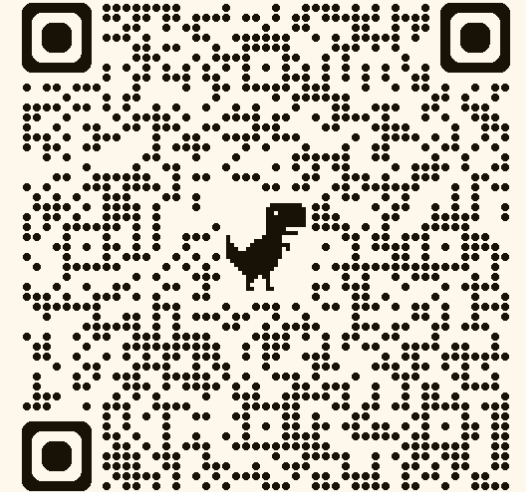
Begin registering as a  
Supplier or Bidder and  
view contracting  
opportunities

## Contracting Basics for Suppliers



Overview of City  
contracting & additional  
resources

## Post-Workshop Survey



Let us know what you  
think of this event!