North Carolina Military Business Center:

Introduction to Government Proposals & Source Selection Tips

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CONNECTING MILITARY AND BUSINESS

ncmbc.us

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Agenda

- **Welcome**
- North Carolina Federal Market Overview
- Government Acquisition Process
- Industry Acquisition Lifecycle
- Proposal Process
- Source Selection Tips

About NC Military Business Center (NCMBC)

Who We Are

- The **NCMBC** is a statewide, business development and technology transition entity of the State of North Carolina, embedded in the state's community colleges and headquartered at Fayetteville Technical Community College

- Totally State-funded, the **NCMBC** is the only statewide, military-focused economic development entity in the US, and the only NC entity solely focused on growing the defense economy through existing industry

Mission, Goals and Outcomes

Mission: To leverage military and federal business opportunities to expand the economy, grow jobs and improve quality of life
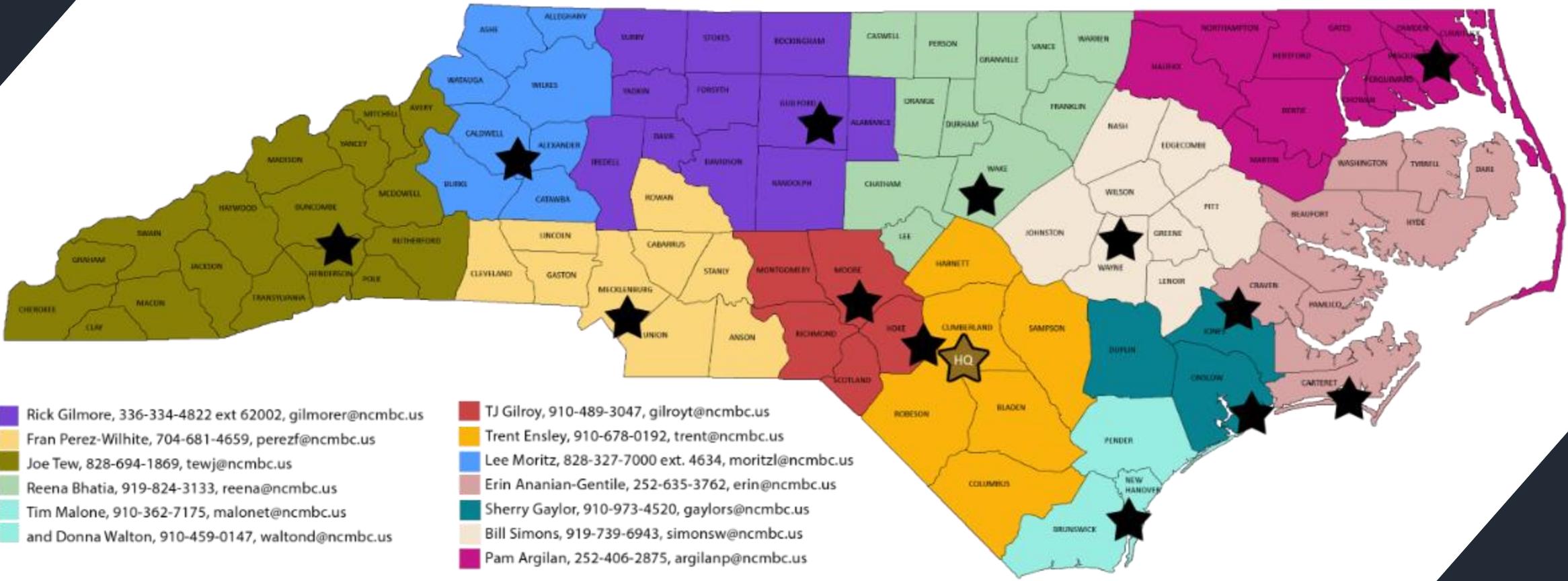
Goals and Operations:

    1 - Increase federal revenues for businesses

    2 - Support integration of military into workforce

    3 - Support defense-related business recruitment

    4 - Support technology transition to federal agencies

Outcomes: Contracts (5,488), revenues ($17.83b), jobs!

Market Value

Each year, the government awards hundreds of billions of dollars in federal contracts to businesses like yours to meet the needs of the military and federal agencies. The government's goal is to award at a minimum **23 percent** of those contracts to small businesses.

To sell your products or services to the federal government, your business must meet specific requirements. Although the contracting process can seem complicated and overwhelming at first, the government provides information and tips to help you learn to compete as a federal contractor in North Carolina.
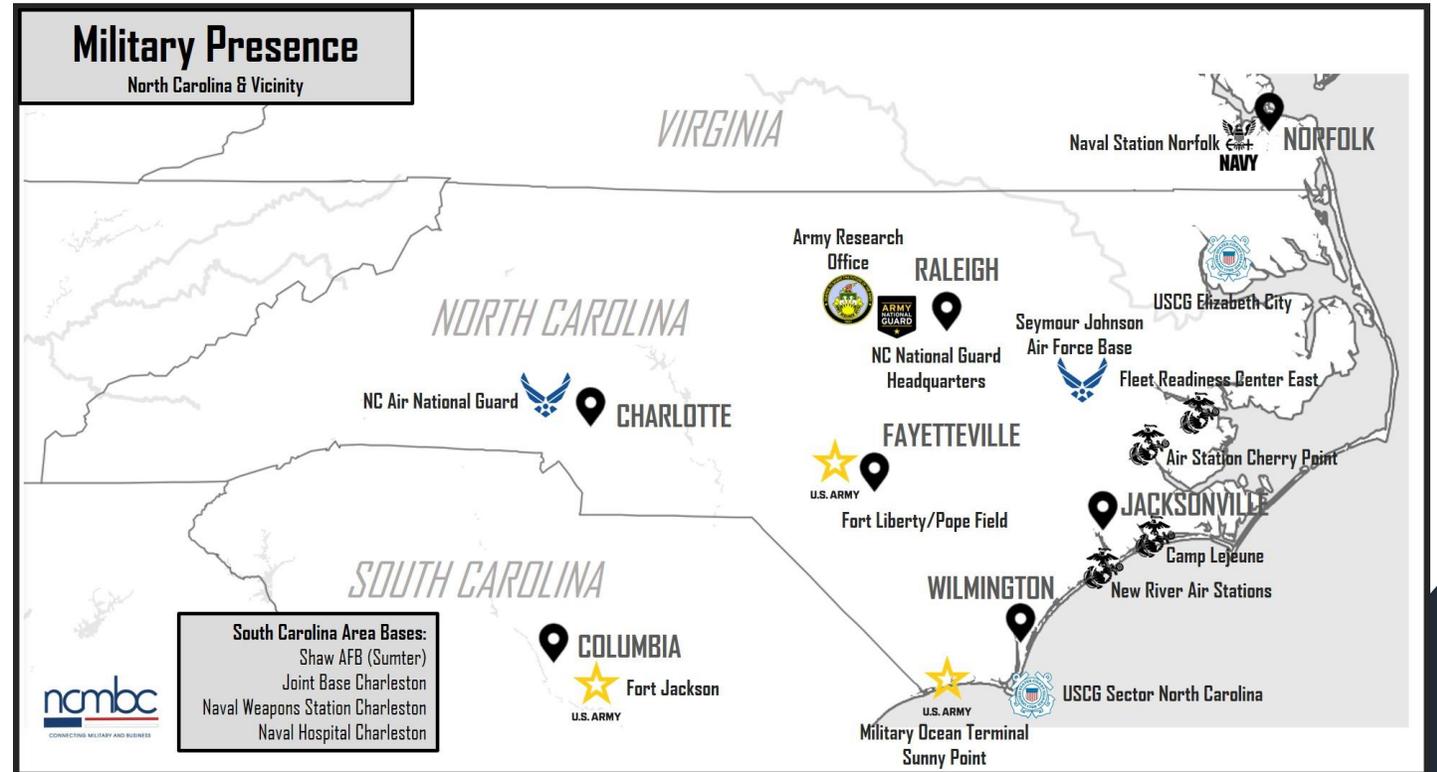
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Situation: Military Presence

- **4th highest active duty military presence in US**
- 6 major installations (5 DoD/1 DHS)
- Over 100 National Guard & Reserve facilities
- 130,000 active, Guard and Reserve personnel
- 18,000 annual transitions

Military Presence
North Carolina & Vicinity

VIRGINIA

Naval Station Norfolk — NORFOLK — NAVY

Army Research Office — RALEIGH

NORTH CAROLINA

NC National Guard Headquarters

USCG Elizabeth City

Seymour Johnson Air Force Base

Fleet Readiness Center East

NC Air National Guard — CHARLOTTE

FAYETTEVILLE

U.S. ARMY — Fort Liberty/Pope Field

Air Station Cherry Point

JACKSONVILLE

Camp Lejeune

New River Air Stations

SOUTH CAROLINA

WILMINGTON

South Carolina Area Bases:
Shaw AFB (Sumter)
Joint Base Charleston
Naval Weapons Station Charleston
Naval Hospital Charleston

COLUMBIA

Fort Jackson
U.S. ARMY

U.S. ARMY
Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point

USCG Sector North Carolina

Situation: Military Impact on NC Economy

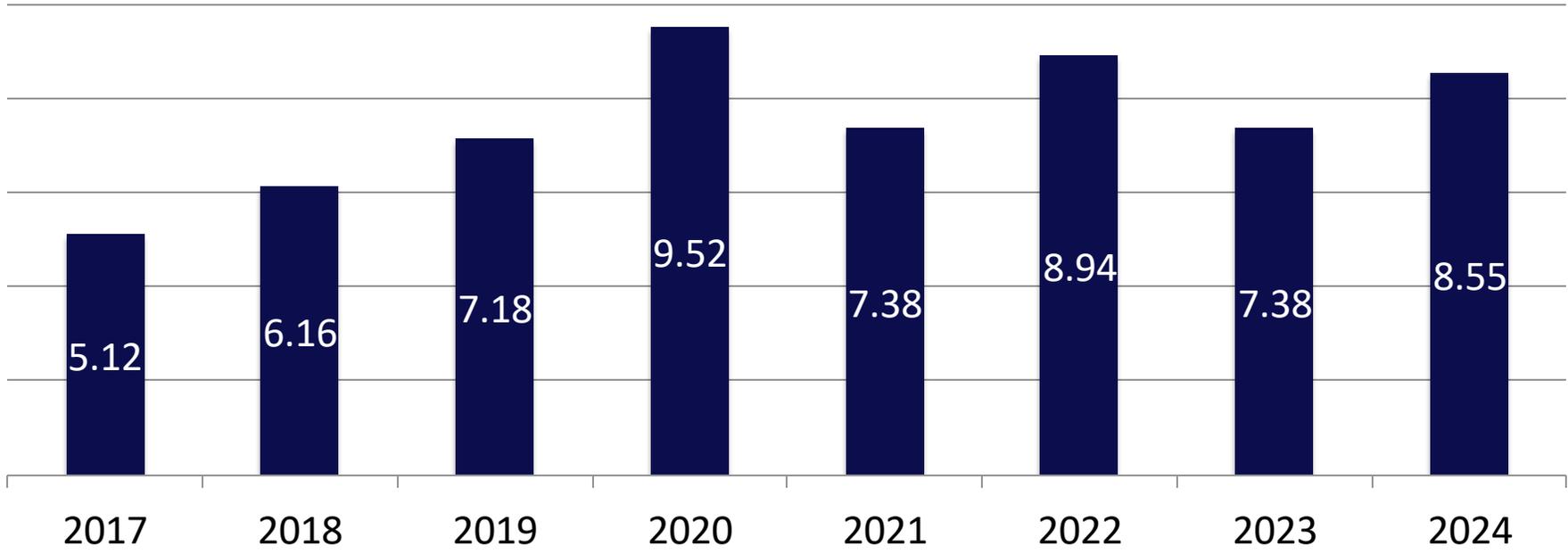| Total Annual Impact: $79.7 billion*	Gross State Product: 12.7%
Military/civilian payroll: $19.2 billion	(Second largest sector of NC economy)
Over 653,000 jobs impacted	Personal income: $49 billion
Federal contracts, FY22: $8.93 billion**	DoD contracts, FY22: $5.51 billion**
Subcontracts: additional billions	

* "The Economic Impact of the Military on North Carolina," NC Department of Commerce, 2022
**Federal Procurement Data System, as of 03 MAR 2023

2024 Federal Prime Contracts in North Carolina

- ■ Greater than $75 million
- ■ $25 million to $75 million
- ■ $5 million to $25 million
- ■ Less than $5 million

* FY24 Data as of March 2025

Detailed data available on request

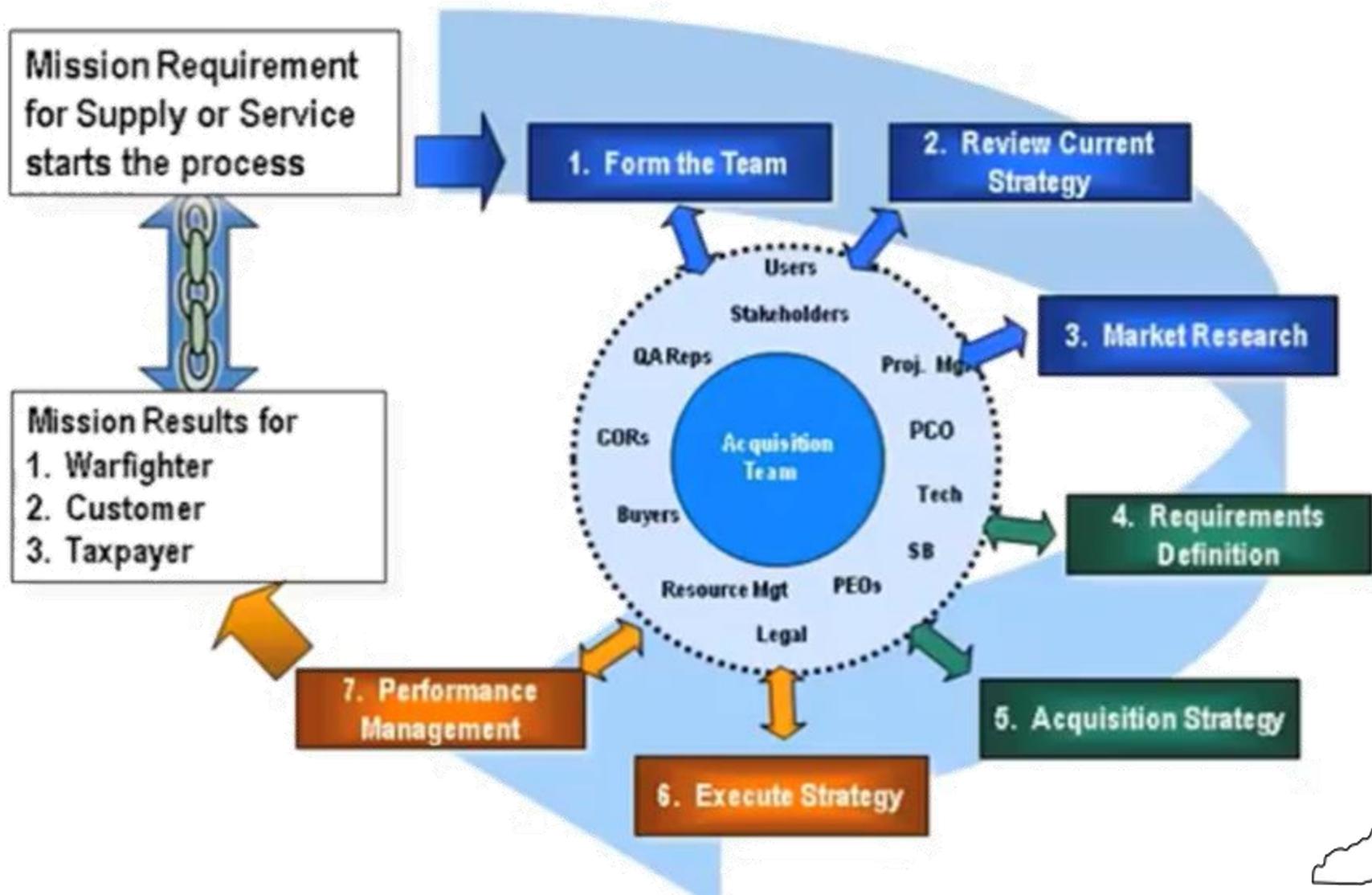CONNECTING MILITARY AND BUSINESS

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Government Acquisition Process

Source: https://content1.dau.edu/DAUMIG_SAM_185/content/steps/process_overview.html
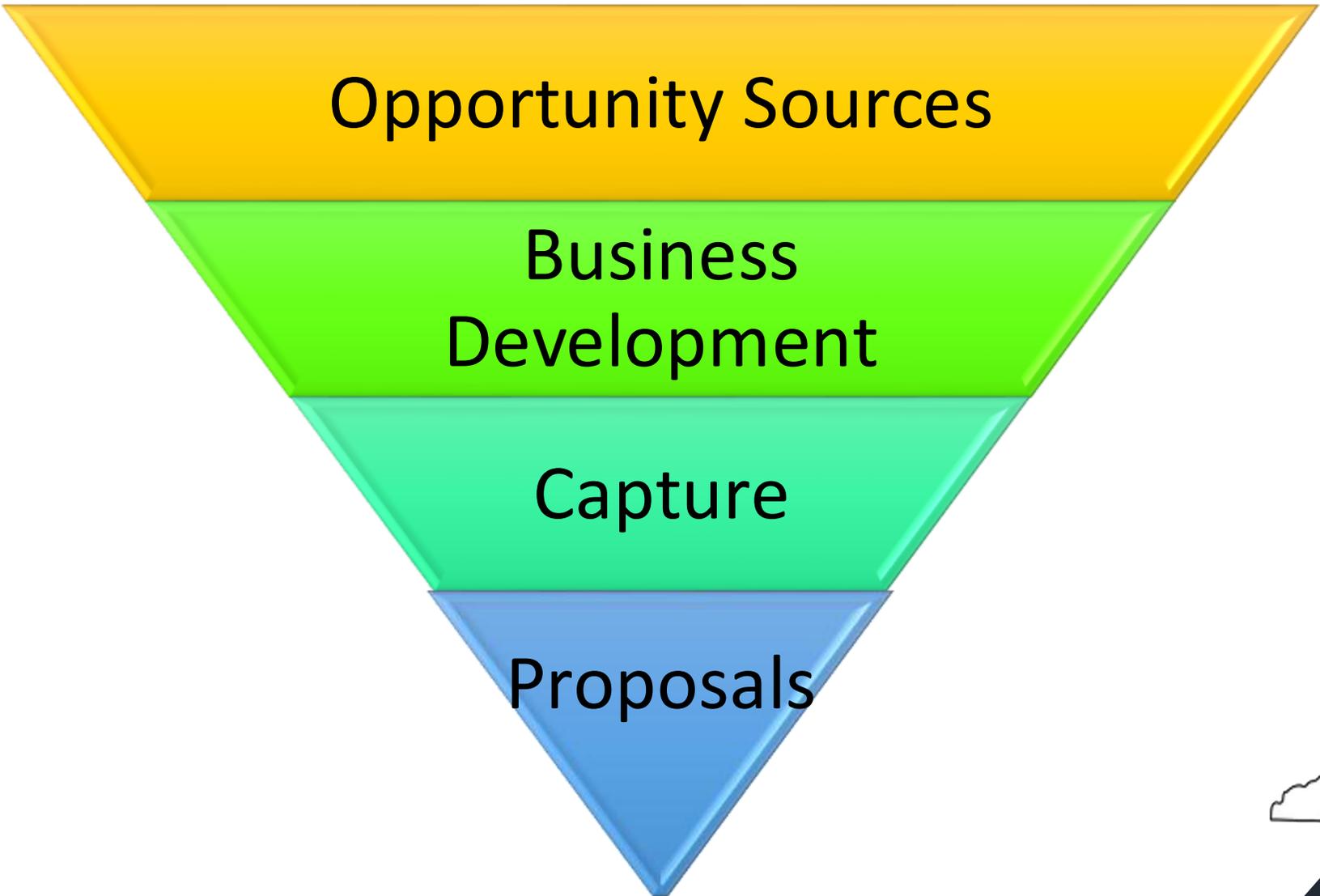
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Business Development and Capture

BD is the **Telescope**, Capture is the **Sniper Scope**

Feature	Business Development (BD)	Capture Management
Goal	Build a **pipeline** of future opportunities. **Macro Focus:** What can we pursue in the market?	Convert a **specific opportunity** into a contract win. **Macro Focus:** How do we win this specific RFP?
Timing	**Early-stage** opportunity identification. **Activity:** Identifies and creates opportunities across **multiple agencies**	**Pre-Proposal** (After identification, before submission). **Activity:** Develops a strategic plan for **one opportunity**
Activities	**Networking,** market research, and lead generation. **Outcome:** A healthy **pipeline** of potential work.	**Win Strategy,** competitive analysis, and teaming. **Outcome:** A well-positioned proposal with a **high win probability**.

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Proposal Team

- Executive Sponsor / Senior Leadership
- Capture Manager
- Proposal Manager
- Technical Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Proposal Writers
- Proposal Coordinator
- Graphic Designer / Visual Communicator
- Pricing Lead / Cost Volume Lead
- Contracts Manager
- Compliance Reviewer
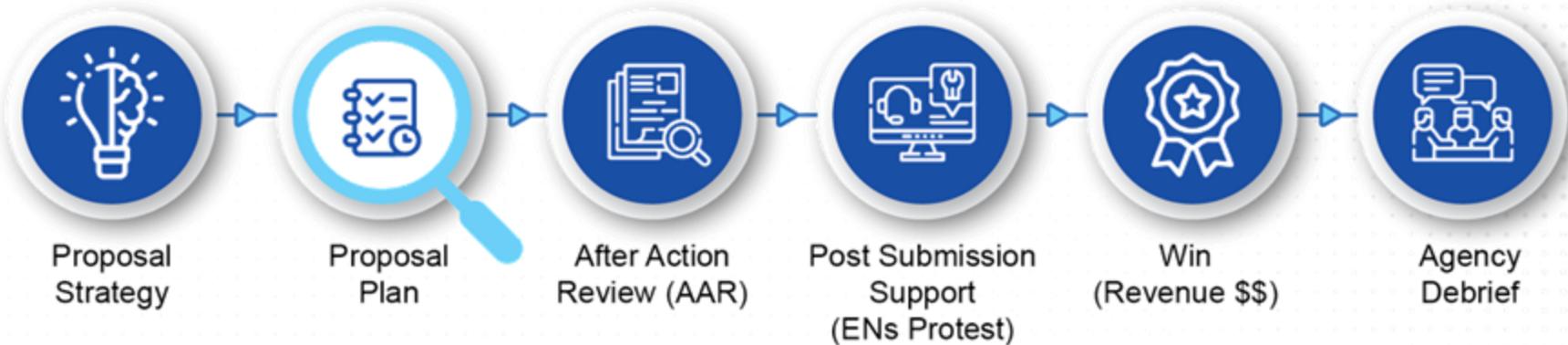- Review Team (Color Teams)

Read the RFP

- Read the RFP Cover-to-Cover
- Focus on Key RFP Sections

Section	Content & Importance
Section A – Solicitation/Contract Form	Official contract details, key dates, and submission instructions.
Section B – Supplies or Services and Prices	Breakdown of deliverables and pricing structure.
Section C – Statement of Work (SOW) / Performance Work Statement (PWS)	Defines the work required—pay close attention here!
Section L – Instructions to Offerors	How to format and submit the proposal (critical for compliance).
Section M – Evaluation Criteria	How the government will score your proposal—align your response to these criteria.

Proposal Process

Proposal Strategy → Proposal Plan → After Action Review (AAR) → Post Submission Support (ENs Protest) → Win (Revenue $$) → Agency Debrief

Kickoff | Writing | Review | Submission

Kickoff → Review #0 → Writing → Review #1 → Revision → Review #2 → Revision → Final Review → Revision

Source: www.proposalhelper.com

Anatomy of a Winning Proposal

- Clear compliance matrix
- Persuasive executive summary
- Section-by-section responsiveness
- Solutioning, not just capabilities
- Graphics that clarify, not decorate
- Past performance tied to each requirement
- Resumes that speak to the RFP, not outdated generic profiles

Writing Relevant Proposal Content

- Tailor to the RFP – not your marketing brochure
- Address each requirement directly
- Use "so what?" test for every paragraph
- Focus on outcomes, not just activities
- Include quantifiable results when possible
- Use active voice and direct language

Compliance = Qualification, Not Differentiation

- You must be 100% compliant to be read
- Compliance is binary: Pass/Fail
- Differentiators matter only *after* compliance

Tips to Avoid a Proposal Disaster

- Submit early to avoid technical issues

- Confirm receipt (especially via portals)

- Document assumptions and risk mitigation

- Maintain all the backup and buildup files to refresh memory

- Archive the final package exactly as submitted

Where Most Go Wrong

- Ignoring the RFP structure
- Reusing generic past proposals
- Assuming AI tools on the market today can actually write compliant proposal content
- Writing for internal satisfaction, not evaluators
- Missing the compliance marks
- Inadequate review process
- Pricing without strategy

AI in Proposals

- AI cannot replace the human expertise required for strategy, risk assessment, and technical solutioning
- AI is a powerful assistant that takes over repetitive tasks
- Frees up your team to focus on strategy and writing persuasive content.
- AI augments the proposal team, speeds up the process

Best Uses of AI in Proposals

- **RFP Ingestion & Compliance:** Tools can scan dense RFPs (Section L and M) to generate a first pass at the requirements or proposal requirements matrix.

CAUTION: it is **not** a reliable source to generate a **compliance matrix**

- **Drafting & Content Generation:** AI can draft first versions of routine sections (e.g., past performance, company background, executive summaries).

Benefit: Eliminates "blank page anxiety" and cuts down on the time spent on basic, repetitive writing tasks.

- **Readability & Editing:** Tools can quickly summarize lengthy, technical passages and change passive voice to active voice, improving the proposal's clarity and professionalism for evaluators.

CAUTION: read the output, it has a tendency to change the meaning and intent.

The AI Trap: Critical Human Oversight is Required

The single biggest mistake is relying on generic AI to write the final submission. **Human oversight is essential** to prevent the following pitfalls:

- **Technical Accuracy:** AI-generated content must be fact-checked by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to ensure technical accuracy and feasibility.

- **Generic Content:** AI often produces content that is generic and fails to speak to the agency's specific needs (**Section C**).

- **Fabrication & Risk:** Generic AI may make inaccurate assumptions or even fabricate data (hallucinations), which can lead to a non-compliant or damaging submission.

- **Security:** Be mindful of data privacy and security when using AI tools for sensitive government proposals *(before you shrug - your technical solution to a government problem could be considered sensitive)*

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Understand How the Government Evaluates

- Evaluation is *criteria-based*, not opinion-based
- Section **L** = Proposal Instructions
- Section **M** = Evaluation Criteria
- Read both *together* before you start writing
- Most importantly, ensure you understand what is required – read Section **C** = Statement of Work

Source Selection Methods – What They Mean to You

- **LPTA (Lowest Price Technically Acceptable)**: Be lean, be compliant
- **Best Value Tradeoff**: Strengthen technical approach, show Return on Investment (ROI)
- **Advisory Down-Select**: Treat Phase 1 like a knockout round
- **Oral Presentations**: Prepare like a live job interview

Evaluators Are Human – Help Them Help You

- Use headings that match evaluation factors
- Start every section with a **summary sentence – the takeaway**
- Avoid jargon, especially company-created acronyms whenever possible
- Follow a consistent reading pattern to ease understanding and expectation
- Use callout boxes or bold text for strengths
- Include a **compliance matrix** in your volume (if allowed)

Post-Submission – Stay Engaged

- Respond quickly to clarifications or ENs (Evaluation Notices)
- Prepare your **Orals or Q&A** team in advance
- Document assumptions in pricing and technical approach
- Request a debrief—even if you win

Source Selection Summary

- Understand the Evaluation Criteria (Section M of the RFP)
- Develop a Strong Compliance Matrix
- Differentiate Your Solution
- Price Competitively
- Leverage Strong Past Performance
- Write for Evaluators, Not Just for SMEs
- Conduct Rigorous Proposal Reviews
- Submit Early and Verify Submission
- Prepare for Post-Submission Activities

THANK YOU!

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