COPY · PASTE · ADAPT

1102tools
Prompt Guide

What to actually ask once the MCP servers are installed. Competitor intel, bid decisions, recompete timing, pricing, and the regulatory checks in between, phrased as prompts you can paste into your AI and adapt. Every pattern in here was executed against the live servers, and the wording carries what that testing found.

SAM.gov
Entities, exclusions, opportunities. 19 tools.

USASpending
Every award, every recipient. 55 tools.

GSA CALC+
Awarded ceiling rates. 8 tools.

BLS OEWS
Market wages by metro. 7 tools.

GSA Per Diem
Travel rates, all CONUS. 6 tools.

eCFR
FAR and CFR text, current. 13 tools.

Federal Register
Rules since 1994. 8 tools.

Regulations.gov
Dockets and comments. 8 tools.

8 MCP SERVERS · 124 TOOLS · EVERY PATTERN RUN LIVE

AUGUST 2026
1102tools.com

Contents

How to use this guide

This guide assumes the MCP servers are already installed. If they are not, the universal setup guide covers that for 11 platforms; drop it into your AI and it walks you through the install.

Everything below is meant to be copied, pasted, and adapted. Square brackets mark the parts you replace: `[COMPANY]`, `[NAICS]`, `[STATE]`. If you do not know your NAICS or PSC code yet, the codes prompts at the end of the SAM.gov section find them; run those first. They need no API key, USASpending answers both lookups, so a rate-limited SAM.gov key cannot stand between you and your own codes. A lot of this guide runs the same way: the research prompts live on key-free USASpending, and SAM.gov enters when you reach live opportunities and company vetting. Your AI will usually pick the right server on its own; if it reaches for the wrong one or answers from memory, name the one you want: “use the sam-gov MCP” or “use USASpending for this.” When a number matters, ask for the raw value and where it came from, and when recency matters, 1 cheap call checks when USASpending last refreshed its award data. Every pattern here was run against the live APIs, and the 1 prompt with no live source behind it says so in its own wording.

> **If the acronyms are new, 30 seconds of vocabulary**
>
> An MCP server is 1 of the 8 data sources on the cover; each speaks for one government system. NAICS and PSC are the catalog codes for what you sell: NAICS names your industry, PSC names the service or product. A set-aside is a competition restricted to small businesses, sometimes to one SBA program: 8(a) for disadvantaged firms, HUBZone for firms in designated underutilized zones, SDVOSB for service-disabled-veteran-owned, WOSB for woman-owned. A UEI is a company’s ID in SAM.gov. An IDV is an umbrella contract that task orders are placed under, and a recompete is the rebid when a contract ends. PWS, SOO, and IGCE are defined in Part 4, where they are used.

Prompts are written for one job each. Chain them: run a competitor scan, then feed what came back into the next prompt. The combination plays at the end of Part 1 show what chaining looks like when it is aimed at a bid decision.

Part 1: SAM.gov and USASpending, the two that matter most

Most of the value, and most of the confusion, lives in these two. They sound interchangeable and are not. SAM.gov is the government’s front door: who is registered to do business, who is excluded, and what opportunities are posted right now. USASpending is the government’s receipts: every award that has already happened, who got it, from which office, and for how much. Forward-looking versus backward-looking. You market with one and you research with the other.

	SAM.GOV	USASPENDING
What it is	Registration, exclusions, and posted opportunities	Award and spending history for every agency
API key	Required, free, rotates every 90 days	None
Rate limits	Tiered by account role; see the callout below	Generous; comfortable for deep research
Freshness	Opportunities and registrations are live	Fed by FPDS on a lag, and new DoD awards are withheld from public reporting for 90 days
What only it has	Exclusion records, registration status and expiration, SBA certification entry and exit dates, active solicitations, sources sought	Complete award history, subawards, recipient profiles, agency spending breakdowns, IDV structures
Best at	Vetting a specific company; catching opportunities	Sizing markets and competitors; timing recompetes

> **Check your SAM.gov key tier before you rely on it**
>
> SAM.gov keys are rate-limited by the account behind them, and the API discloses the tiers when you hit the wall: 10 requests per day for an account holding no SAM role, 1,000 per day for a personal account with a role, 10,000 for a federal system account. A 10-a-day key dies inside a single combination play from this guide. The tier rides the account, not the key: regenerating keys buys you nothing, I watched 3 keys from roleless accounts hit the same wall in one evening. Blowing the cap also costs more than the day; the lockout I measured ran past the next daily reset. So the fix is roles, not keys: log in, get a role on your account, then generate the key from there. Ignore the error text's advice to switch to a system account key; system accounts are issued to government systems, not vendors. No SAM.gov account at all? Registering is free at sam.gov and can take days to weeks, so plan for it. And know the one failure with no workaround: live opportunity search exists only on SAM.gov, so when that prompt stalls on a rate limit, wait for the reset instead of hunting a reroute that does not exist.

Which one do you actually need?

You may not need SAM.gov at all. If the job is competitor research, market sizing, or finding out who buys what you sell, USASpending answers it with no key, no rotation, and no meaningful rate ceiling. A surprising amount of what people reach for SAM.gov to do is really an awards question, and awards live in USASpending.

You need SAM.gov when the question is about a specific company's standing or about work that has not been awarded yet. Exclusion and debarment checks before you team. Whether a registration is active and when it expires. Small business status and SBA certifications, including when a company entered a program like 8(a) and when it exits, which used to mean a separate trip to the SBA's Dynamic Small Business Search. And the forward pipeline: solicitations, sources sought, and RFIs are posted here and nowhere else.

> **The DoD delay, checked against the live data**
>
> New DoD awards are withheld from public FPDS reporting for 90 days for operational security, and USASpending inherits that. But the picture is messier than "everything is a quarter behind": modifications and obligation activity on existing DoD contracts show up within days, and award notices posted on SAM.gov are not delayed at all. Practical reading: treat a competitor's newest DoD awards as invisible for up to 90 days, trust the activity you can see on their existing contracts, and use SAM.gov award notices when you need the fresh wins.

SAM.gov prompts

Catching opportunities. One behavior worth knowing first: SAM marks a notice active until its archive date, so "active" does not mean the response deadline has not passed; in live testing, half the notices marked active had deadlines already behind them. The prompts below filter on the deadline, which is the date you actually care about.

> *Search SAM.gov for solicitations and combined synopses under NAICS [NAICS] with a response deadline between today and [N] days out. Give me title, agency, deadline, and set-aside type, and drop anything whose deadline has already passed even if SAM still marks it active. The search filters 1 notice type per call, so expect 2 searches merged, not 1.*

> *Find sources sought notices under NAICS [NAICS] from the last 60 days, plus anything titled RFI; RFI is a title word, not a notice type, so it rides on the sources sought search as a title check. Flag which ones close within 2 weeks. Then run it again under PSC [PSC] if I give you one; the filters combine as AND, so separate runs cover more ground than one narrow query.*

> *Pull the full description for opportunity [NOTICE ID] and summarize what they actually want, the evaluation approach if stated, and anything that looks like incumbent language.*

> *Show me contract award notices under NAICS [NAICS] from the last [N] days: who won, how much, and the award date. These post to SAM immediately, including DoD awards that will not hit USASpending for 90 days. Coverage is uneven by NAICS, though: a narrow code over a short window can legitimately return 0 or 1 notice, so widen the window before concluding nothing posted.*

> *Search opportunities under NAICS [NAICS] from the last 90 days with the result limit set high, then filter for [AGENCY] yourself from the agency path field in the results. The agency filter only screens what was fetched, so if the total count is much larger than what came back, page through before concluding anything.*

Vetting a company before you team, sub, or compete. One naming trap: SBA program certifications live in the entity record, not in the tool named for reps and certs, which returns FAR clause responses instead. The wording below steers around it.

> *Check whether [COMPANY / UEI] has any exclusion records. If records exist, tell me whether any are currently active and what they are for.*

> *Search SAM.gov entities for [COMPANY]. If more than one active registration comes back, list every UEI, CAGE code, and address before picking one; large companies register each location separately, and the answer changes depending on which record you check. Group them by mailing address to spot the headquarters, and normalize the punctuation first; the same address gets spelled several ways across records.*

> *Look up [COMPANY] in SAM.gov and tell me: is the registration active, when does it expire, what is its primary NAICS, and what socioeconomic categories does it hold? If more than 1 active registration exists, say how many and name the UEI you picked before answering.*

> *Pull [COMPANY]'s SBA certifications from their SAM entity record, with the entry and exit date for each. If they are in the 8(a) program, the exit date is the graduation date. Expect lapses: a firm found through its old set-aside wins can show an empty list or an exit date already past, and the dates on the record are the authoritative answer.*

> *Run a vendor responsibility check on [UEI] for registration status and exclusions, then pull FAPIIS integrity records separately; the one-pass check does not include those.*

> *Search SAM.gov for active registrants in [STATE] under NAICS [NAICS], counting any NAICS on file rather than primary only, which surfaced 4x more firms in testing, holding [woman-owned / SDVOSB] status. Ask for the total count first: results come back 10 to a page, so tell me how many pages that implies and keep paging until done or I say stop, deduping by UEI since a page can repeat a record. I am building a teaming shortlist. For HUBZone or 8(a), name the program instead of a code: SBA certifications filter through their own SBA parameter, separate from the plain business type codes, added to the sam-gov server in August 2026, so update the server if that search errors. Either way, confirm the certification entry and exit dates on each firm's record; lapses are common.*

Speaking the government's codes: NAICS and PSC. Nearly every prompt in this guide wants a code. These find yours, and none of them needs a SAM.gov key; if a PSC search stalls on a rate limit, say "use USASpending to find the PSC code" and the same answer comes back key-free.

> *What NAICS code covers [PLAIN-ENGLISH BUSINESS ACTIVITY]? Give me the code and the closest alternates so I do not file under the wrong one.*

> *Look up NAICS [CODE] and tell me the SBA small business size standard for it, in dollars or employees. One honesty note, the only one of its kind in this guide: no tool in this suite returns the size standard table live, so the answer comes from your AI's training data. Confirm the current threshold at sba.gov before you rely on it.*

> *What PSC codes cover [PLAIN-ENGLISH SERVICE]? Give me the codes and official names so I can search with them.*

> *Look up PSC [CODE] and tell me exactly what it covers and whether it is current or retired.*

> *Find the PSC code for [PLAIN-ENGLISH SERVICE], then search SAM.gov opportunities under that exact code with a response deadline still open. Codes first, opportunities second, one chain.*

USASpending prompts

Competitor intelligence. One quirk to know: date-window filters here run on when an award was last touched, not when it was signed, so "last 12 months" means recent activity, which usually is what you want anyway.

> *Search USASpending recipients for [COMPANY] and list every match with its lifetime award total and whether it is the parent rollup or a subsidiary record. The same company appears several times and the totals differ by a lot, so name the record you pick and use it in everything that follows. If the search returns only near-misses, try the other recipient search tool before deciding the company is not in the data.*

> *Pull [COMPANY]'s federal contract awards with activity in the last 12 months: award ID, agency, amount, NAICS, and period of performance end date. Sort by amount. Add "in NAICS [NAICS] only" if I want one code.*

> *Pull [COMPANY]'s awards for the last 2 years sorted by amount, in batches of 25 to 30 rows so nothing overflows, then tally them by awarding agency yourself and show me where the concentration is. There is no direct agency-breakdown-by-recipient call; for a company with hundreds of awards, the top 25 to 30 by dollar shows the real concentration, just say that is what the tally covers.*

> *Pull [COMPANY]'s 10 largest prime awards by amount, and check each recipient name actually contains the company's name; name matching can pull in joint ventures under a different display name. Then search subawards under each genuine award ID and merge the results. Who do they sub to, and for how much? Expect some of the largest primes to show 0 subawards on file; treat that as a reporting gap, not proof they self-perform everything.*

> **Subaward data is only as good as the prime's reporting**
>
> Primes self-report subawards through FSRS, small subcontracts below the reporting threshold often never appear, and there is no lookup for "who does this company sub under" at all; the data only travels prime-downward. A thin subaward picture may be a reporting gap, not the whole story.

Market and agency intel.

> *How much did [AGENCY] obligate under NAICS [NAICS] in the most recently completed fiscal year? Break it down by sub-agency and show the top 10 recipients. Some agencies report as a single flat sub-agency here, VA included; a 1-row breakdown means there is no further split, not that the query failed.*

> *Show me total federal spending under NAICS [NAICS] by state for the last fiscal year. The geography tool returns states unsorted, so sort them by amount yourself before showing me. I am deciding where the work actually is.*

> *What percent of [AGENCY]'s dollars under NAICS [NAICS] in the last 2 years carried a small business set-aside versus none? There is no direct breakdown call: run the NAICS total twice, once with the full small-business set-aside code list applied and once without, then divide. Break out [8(a) / SDVOSB / WOSB] specifically if I ask; each set-aside type is its own query.*

> *Show me [AGENCY]'s obligations under NAICS [NAICS] by fiscal year for the last 5 years. Growing, flat, or shrinking is the first bid decision, and a single-year number hides it; when I ran this, the most recently completed year turned out to be the low point of the range.*

> *List the largest IDVs under NAICS [NAICS]. For the one I pick, try the direct children lookup first, then a keyword search on the IDV's contract number. Both can come back empty on the same active vehicle; if they do, say so plainly instead of concluding it has no orders, because the gap is usually in how USASpending links the children, not in reality.*

Recompete radar. The date filters cannot select on period of performance end dates, so the working method is sort and scan, and it works well.

> *Pull [AGENCY]'s contracts under NAICS [NAICS] above $[FLOOR], sorted by end date descending. Drop any row with an obviously corrupted end date; they occasionally come back centuries off and tend to sit right at the top. Then keep paging past the far-future awards until the end dates fall inside the next 9 months; those are my recompete targets. For a broad agency and code that takes several pages, not the first one.*

> *When do [COMPANY]'s contracts end? List their awards sorted by end date descending, dropping corrupted dates on sight. Their longest-remaining commitments come first; keep paging until the dates cross today, and stop once they fall inside the next 12 to 24 months. That stretch is what they will be defending and when; no filter jumps straight to it.*

Combination plays

The two databases answer different halves of the same question, so the strongest prompts use both. Run these as one request; your AI will make several tool calls and stitch the answer.

> *Size up [COMPANY] as a competitor: their last 24 months of awards and top agencies from USASpending, then their registration status, socioeconomic categories, and any exclusions from SAM.gov. If SAM returns multiple registrations, say so and list them before picking. Finish with 2 sentences on where they are strong and where they are exposed.*

> *Find 8(a) firms winning work under NAICS [NAICS]: search USASpending for awards with 8(a) set-aside types, take the top recipients, then pull each one's SBA certification dates and current contract end dates. Flag firms graduating within 18 months whose contracts also end within 12; those are the real targets. If a firm shows no 8(a)*

> *certification despite winning 8(a) work, or an exit date already past, read that as graduated; lapsed entries can linger on the record with their dates intact.*

> *Vet [COMPANY] as a teammate: exclusions and registration expiration from SAM.gov, then their award history from USASpending, including whether they have primed work at [AGENCY] before.*

> *Should I bid [NOTICE ID]? Pull the opportunity description from SAM.gov, then use USASpending to find who holds similar work at that agency under the same NAICS: award sizes and end dates, biggest first. Check the end dates before calling anyone the incumbent; an already-ended award usually means the work moved to a follow-on order, so look for a newer award to the same recipient before concluding they exited.*

> *What did the government actually pay for work like [REQUIREMENT]? Find comparable awards under NAICS [NAICS] in USASpending and label the values for what they are: multi-year contract ceilings, not hourly prices. Then put awarded CALC+ ceiling rates for the matching labor categories next to them as the per-hour benchmark. Scale from one, rates from the other; do not divide one by the other without a period of performance and staffing count you can defend.*

Part 2: The pricing three

GSA CALC+, BLS OEWS, and GSA Per Diem answer one question from three directions: what should this cost? CALC+ is what awarded GSA Schedule (MAS) contractors carry as ceiling rates, and only them; the big direct-agency contracts are bought outside the Schedule, so read CALC+ as the rate sanity check, not a price match for any specific contract. OEWS is what the labor underneath costs on the open market. Per diem is what the travel line is allowed to be. The IGCE skills chain all three automatically, but standalone prompts are how you sanity-check a price fast.

GSA CALC+.

> *I do not know GSA's exact labor category title for [ROLE]. Show me the closest matching titles with how many rate records each carries, so I search the right string.*

> *What do awarded GSA schedule rates look like for [LABOR CATEGORY]? Give me the percentile distribution and the education breakdown, then run it again filtered to junior and senior experience bands so I can compare. Treat exact percentile figures as approximate past whole dollars, and know the distribution runs on every title containing the phrase, not the bare title alone; check the title-count prompt above against it before quoting.*

> *Pull [COMPANY]'s GSA rate card and every row whose labor category contains [KEYWORD]. Ask for the total category count and page through until you have every row; the card reports which rows came back and whether more remain. There is no server-side vendor-plus-keyword search, so the keyword screen happens on the rows you fetched.*

> *Is $[RATE]/hr defensible for [LABOR CATEGORY]? Run a price reasonableness check against awarded CALC+ rates and tell me what percentile band it lands in.*

BLS OEWS. The built-in shortcut lists lean toward IT and professional titles; if your occupation or metro is missing from them, ask for the SOC and metro codes by name first, and read a "not in the built-in lookup" warning as not-on-the-shortlist, not wrong-number.

> *What does [OCCUPATION] earn in [METRO AREA]? Median and 75th percentile annual wage, current data year. Confirm the data year first; a wrong year fails silently as empty data, which is exactly why the confirmation comes first.*

> *Compare wages for [OCCUPATION] across [METRO 1] and [METRO 2], then pull the national median separately as the baseline. I am deciding where a position can realistically be staffed.*

> *Give me the raw BLS wage for [OCCUPATION] in [METRO], median and 10th and 90th percentile, current data year, with no loaded-rate estimate attached. The burden math is mine.*

> *Cross-check [OCCUPATION] in [METRO]: what burdened rate does the BLS wage imply at standard multipliers, and where does that land against awarded CALC+ rates for the closest labor category?*

> *Compare median wages for [OCCUPATION 1], [OCCUPATION 2], and [OCCUPATION 3] side by side in [METRO]. I am pricing a mixed labor category task order and want the whole staffing picture in one table, not separate lookups.*

GSA Per Diem.

> *What are the current lodging and M&IE rates for [CITY, STATE]? Note any seasonal rate changes inside the fiscal year, and confirm which locality the rate table actually matched.*

> *Estimate per-traveler travel cost for [N] nights in [CITY, STATE] in [MONTH], including first and last day M&IE at 75 percent. Name the month; without it the estimate prices the locality's most expensive one. I will multiply by headcount myself; the estimator prices one traveler.*

> *Look up the per diem rate for ZIP [ZIP] instead of city and state. Use this whenever a city lookup answers with an unmatched-locality warning; the ZIP path resolves the same rate table cleanly.*

Part 3: The regulatory three

eCFR, Federal Register, and Regulations.gov are the compliance and pipeline layer. eCFR settles what the rule says today. The Federal Register shows what is changing. Regulations.gov shows who is fighting about it and what they said.

eCFR.

> *Quote FAR [CITATION] as it reads today. Then pull its version history and give me the latest substantive amendment date from there; the citation note baked into the clause text can run behind it.*

> *List the sections in FAR Part [PART] that changed in the last year, then compare before and after on whichever look substantive. Whole-part comparisons do not work; it is section by section.*

> *Find where the FAR defines [TERM], then pull the full text of that section so I get the complete definition with its citation, unless the term lives in FAR 2.101: that section runs past 100,000 characters and the pull can fail outright. For 2.101 terms, list the matched paragraphs in order instead and tell me if the last one looks cut off mid-list; multi-part definitions continue in clauses that never repeat the term.*

Federal Register.

> *Search Federal Register documents on [TOPIC] from the last 6 months across all document types, ordered by relevance; the live items are often notices and RFIs, not just proposed rules. For anything with an open comment period, give me the deadline.*

> *Before reading individual documents, give me the count of Federal Register activity on [TOPIC] by agency for the last 12 months. 1 call, and it shows which agencies are actually moving before I drill into anything.*

> *Track FAR Case [NUMBER]: every Federal Register document in its history, in order, with where it stands now, including whether it was withdrawn. The full history comes back padded with semiannual Unified Agenda notices that merely list the case among hundreds; separate the documents whose title names the case from that background noise before summarizing.*

Regulations.gov.

> *What is open for comment right now on [TOPIC]? Use the Federal Register's open comment periods with a term filter for this one; the Regulations.gov version filters by agency only. Give me the docket ID, or the document number when a notice carries no docket, and the closing date.*

> *Show me FAR and DFARS proposed rules with an open comment period right now, filtering out the routine paperwork notices, and check both the FAR and DARS agency codes; a case can sit under either. This is the clean pipeline view; the raw open-comment feed buries the 2 or 3 real rulemakings under dozens of renewals.*

> *On docket [DOCKET ID], search the comments for words like association, chamber, coalition, or institute to surface the organizational submitters, then pull full detail with attachments on the top hits. I want the industry positions with real names, not a random page of individual filers.*

Part 4: The skills need one prompt, not many

The six skills are different animals, and this is why the prompt catalog above is all MCPs. A skill is launched, not prompted. Say the deliverable and it takes over: it asks the framing questions, walks the decision tree, pauses for your approval, and writes the document. There is no prompt craft to teach because the interview is the craft, and the skill conducts it.

Contract types, if the shorthand is new: FFP is firm-fixed-price, T&M is time-and-materials, CPFF is cost-plus-fixed-fee, OT is an other transaction agreement. And the deliverables themselves: a PWS (performance work statement) and a SOO (statement of objectives) describe the work a contract will buy, and an IGCE (independent government cost estimate) is the government's own price estimate for it. If you are bidding rather than buying, these are still your tools; they build the scope and pricing backup behind a proposal.

> *Write me a PWS for [REQUIREMENT].*

> *Convert this SOO into a PWS. [PASTE SOO]*

> *Build a firm-fixed-price IGCE for [REQUIREMENT].*

> *Build a T&M IGCE for [REQUIREMENT], [N]-year period of performance.*

> *Build a CPFF IGCE for [N] researchers in [CITY], [N]-year period of performance.*

> *Build an OT cost analysis for a [N]-milestone prototype effort.*

The pricing skills will check that the three pricing MCPs are connected before they start, and the scope skills end by handing their staffing table to the IGCE builders, so the chain from "write me a PWS" to a priced estimate is those prompts in sequence and nothing more.

More info

- Install everything: `https://1102tools.com/downloads/1102tools-universal-setup.pdf`
- Tool catalog and per-server detail: `https://1102tools.com/tools`
- MCP source and testing records: `https://github.com/1102tools-dev/federal-contracting-mcps`
- Skill source: `https://github.com/1102tools-dev/federal-contracting-skills`

Written August 2026 by James Jenrette / 1102tools. Every prompt pattern in this guide was executed against the live servers before publishing, and the wording reflects what that testing found, including the limits. Independently developed and not endorsed by any federal agency.