SETUP GUIDE

IGCE Builder Setup Guide

Get the three MCP servers configured in Claude Desktop, register two free API keys, and have all three IGCE builders (FFP, LH/T&M, CR) ready to run in about 15 to 20 minutes.

Skill
igce-builder-suite (FFP, LH/T&M, CR)
github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-skills

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1102tools.com

Part 1: Before you start

You'll need:

- Claude Desktop (Mac or Windows, free)
- A Claude Pro subscription ($20/mo) recommended for extended workflows
- About 15-20 minutes to register two free API keys and install three MCPs

All three IGCE builders (FFP, LH/T&M, CR) require the same three MCP servers. Set those up once and all three skills work.

The three MCP servers

MCP	What it does	API key needed
bls-oews	BLS OEWS wage data (~830 occupations, 530+ metro areas)	Yes (free, BLS)
gsa-calc	GSA CALC+ awarded ceiling rates (230K+ records)	No
gsa-perdiem	GSA per diem lodging and M&IE, all CONUS	Yes (free, api.data.gov)

Both required keys are free.

Part 2: Setup steps

Step 1: Install Claude Desktop

Download Claude Desktop for Mac or Windows from Anthropic:

https://claude.ai/download

Install and open it at least once. Sign in with your Anthropic account.

Claude Pro ($20/mo) is optional but recommended if you plan to run IGCEs regularly. The free tier works for single lookups but will hit limits on multi-step builds.

Step 2: Register the two API keys

BLS API key (for bls-oews):

1. Visit https://data.bls.gov/registrationEngine/
2. Fill out the form. Use "accessing OEWS wage data" as the purpose if asked.
3. Your v2 API key arrives via email.
4. Free tier: 500 queries per day.

api.data.gov key (for gsa-perdiem):

1. Visit https://api.data.gov/signup/
2. Enter first name, last name, email.
3. Key is displayed immediately and also emailed.
4. Free tier: 1,000 requests per hour.

Store both keys somewhere safe. Next step pastes them into config.

Step 3: Install the three MCPs

Visit https://1102tools.com/tools and scroll to these three MCPs: bls-oews, gsa-calc, gsa-perdiem.

You have two install methods per MCP. **Copy Config is the recommended path** because it works in any MCP client and avoids the third-party extension warning. Pick one:

Option A (recommended): Copy Config

Each MCP has a Copy Config button that clipboards a JSON block. Open your Claude Desktop config file:

- **macOS:** `~/Library/Application Support/Claude/claude_desktop_config.json`
- **Windows:** `%APPDATA%\Claude\claude_desktop_config.json`

Paste all three blocks into the `mcpServers` section. Replace placeholder values for the two API keys with your actual keys. Save the file.

Copy Config works with any MCP client including Cursor, Cline, Zed, and Claude Code.

Option B: .mcpb (one-click, Claude Desktop only)

Each MCP has a .mcpb download button. Click, then double-click the downloaded file. Claude Desktop picks it up automatically.

You will see a warning: "Installing will grant this extension access to everything on your computer." This is the standard Anthropic warning for any third-party extension. Approve if you trust the source.

After installing the .mcpb: go to Claude Desktop Settings → Extensions, and paste your BLS key into bls-oews, your api.data.gov key into gsa-perdiem. Save.

Step 4: Install the IGCE skills

With MCPs configured, now install the skill files. In Claude Desktop:

1. Open **Customize** (left sidebar)
2. Click **Skills**
3. Click the + sign
4. Click **Create skill**
5. Choose **Upload a skill**
6. Drag and drop `igce-builder-suite.zip` into the window

Claude Desktop extracts the three skill folders (FFP, LH/T&M, CR) from the bundle and registers each as its own skill. All three appear in your Skills list.

Step 5: Restart Claude Desktop

Quit Claude Desktop fully and reopen it. First use of each MCP will auto-install its underlying Python package via `uvx`. This can take 30-60 seconds the first time.

Step 6: Verify it works

In Claude Desktop, try a short test:

> *List common MSAs using the bls-oews MCP.*

You should get a response listing metro areas. If you get an error, see Troubleshooting below.

You're done. Invoke any of the three IGCE builder skills with a prompt like:

> *Build a CPFF IGCE for four researchers in Bethesda, 3-year period of performance.*

The skill runs a pre-flight MCP check first to confirm all three servers are ready.

Part 3: Troubleshooting

Nothing happens when you double-click the .mcpb file. Confirm Claude Desktop is installed and has been opened at least once since install. The file association is registered on first run.

The MCP installed but tools are missing. Open Claude Desktop Settings → Extensions. Make sure the MCP is toggled on and has no error badge. If there's an error badge, the most common cause is a missing or incorrect API key.

The key I pasted is rejected. Recheck the key: no extra quotes, no trailing spaces, no line breaks. BLS keys are long hex strings. api.data.gov keys are long alphanumeric strings.

Changes to config don't take effect. Claude Desktop caches config at launch. Fully quit (Cmd+Q on macOS, right-click tray icon → Quit on Windows) and reopen.

How do I know which MCPs loaded? Open a new chat in Claude Desktop and ask: "What MCP servers are available in this session?" Claude will list loaded servers.

Part 4: More info

- Website: https://1102tools.com
- Install page: https://1102tools.com/install
- Tools page with per-MCP config snippets: https://1102tools.com/tools
- GitHub: https://github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-skills
- Issues: https://github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-skills/issues

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