
FREE AI TOOL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Search SAM.gov with AI using Anthropic's Claude Desktop

Ask SAM.gov questions in plain English. About 10 minutes from download to first query.

Tool

sam-gov-mcp
github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-mcps

Date

April 2026
1102tools.com

Part 1: Before you start

You'll need:

- Claude Desktop (Mac or Windows, free)
- A free SAM.gov API key (5 minutes to register)
- About 10 minutes total

The tool itself is free. A Claude Pro subscription (\$20/month) is optional and recommended if you plan to do longer research sessions. The free Claude tier works for quick lookups but will hit usage limits on bigger questions.

What this tool does

It turns SAM.gov into something you can ask in plain English. Once it's installed, you can ask Claude Desktop things like:

- Show me all sources sought notices for small business set-asides posted this week.
- Find 8(a) set-aside solicitations posted in the last 30 days.
- Pull the 12-month award history for Leidos. Break down by agency, NAICS, and ceiling vs. obligated amounts.
- Who's winning 8(a) awards at DHS in the last fiscal year, and for how much?
- Find IDIQ vehicles at DoD awarded in the last 24 months under NAICS 541512 so I can see which primes I could team on.

Claude pulls the answer straight from SAM.gov. No paid research platforms, no exporting CSVs, no learning an API.

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. The free tier is fine to start. Claude Pro (\$20/month) is recommended if you plan to do day-to-day research.

Step 2: Get your free SAM.gov API key

1. Go to <https://sam.gov> and sign in (or create a free account)
2. Click your username in the upper right, then **Account Details**
3. In the **API Key** section, request or view your Public API Key
4. Copy the key somewhere safe. You'll paste it in the next step.

The key is free.

Step 3: Install the SAM.gov MCP

An MCP is the connector that lets Claude Desktop talk to SAM.gov. You only need to install one. Here's the recommended way:

1. Open your Claude Desktop config file:
 - **macOS:** `~/Library/Application Support/Claude/claude_desktop_config.json`
 - **Windows:** `%APPDATA%\Claude\claude_desktop_config.json`
2. Paste this block into the file. If the file already has content, merge the `sam-gov` entry into the existing `mcpServers` object.

```
{
  "mcpServers": {
    "sam-gov": {
      "command": "uvx",
      "args": ["sam-gov-mcp"],
      "env": { "SAM_API_KEY": "your-key-here" }
    }
  }
}
```

1. Replace `your-key-here` with the SAM.gov API key from Step 2. Keep the surrounding quotes.
2. Save the file.

Alternative one-click install (Claude Desktop only): Visit <https://1102tools.com/tools>, find the SAM.gov row, and click the `.mcpb` download button. Double-click the downloaded file. Claude Desktop will prompt you to install the extension. After install, open Claude Desktop Settings, go to Extensions, paste your SAM.gov key into the `sam-gov` entry, and save.

Step 4: Restart Claude Desktop

Quit Claude Desktop fully and reopen it:

- **macOS:** Cmd+Q, then reopen
- **Windows:** Right-click the tray icon, Quit, then reopen

The first time you use the MCP, it will auto-install its underlying Python package. That takes 30 to 60 seconds on first run. After that it's instant.

Step 5: Verify it works

Open a new chat in Claude Desktop and try:

Show me all sources sought notices for small business set-asides posted this week.

You should get a short list of opportunities with titles, agencies, deadlines, and NAICS codes. If you get an error, see Troubleshooting below.

You're done.

Part 3: What to ask

Every prompt below was tested against the live SAM.gov API and returned real results. Copy them verbatim to start. Substitute your NAICS, your target agency, or a competitor's name as needed.

Find open opportunities

- Show me all sources sought notices for small business set-asides posted this week.
- Show me active small business set-aside solicitations posted in the last 30 days.
- Find 8(a) set-aside opportunities posted in the last 30 days.
- Find small business opportunities under NAICS 541611 posted in the last 30 days. (Swap 541611 for your NAICS.)

See who's winning (and for how much)

- Who's winning 8(a) awards at DHS in the last fiscal year, and for how much?
- Show me all SDVOSB awards across the federal government in FY25.
- Show me all Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) awards in FY25.

- Show me all HubZone awards in FY25.

Research competitors and primes

- Pull the 12-month award history for Leidos. Break down by agency, NAICS, and ceiling vs. obligated amounts.
- Pull the 12-month award history for Booz Allen Hamilton. Break down by agency and show ceiling vs. obligated.
- Pull the 12-month award history for [competitor name]. (Substitute any registered vendor.)

Find teaming and IDIQ opportunities

- Find IDIQ vehicles at DoD under NAICS 541512 awarded in the last 24 months so I can see what primes hold contracts I could team on.
- Show me 8(a) competed awards under NAICS 541611 in FY25 so I can find teaming partners.

Claude handles the back-and-forth automatically. Describe the question the way you'd describe it to a research analyst. Claude picks the right tools and combines results.

Part 4: Troubleshooting

The config file doesn't exist. That's fine. Create it yourself, paste the block from Step 3, save. Claude Desktop picks it up on next launch.

Claude says the sam-gov tool isn't available. Open Claude Desktop Settings, look for Extensions or Developer. Confirm sam-gov is listed and toggled on. 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. Keep the surrounding quotes in the JSON file.

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

How do I know the MCP loaded? Open a new chat and ask: "What MCP servers are available in this session?" Claude will list what's connected.

Running into limits on the free Claude tier. The free tier works for quick lookups but caps you on longer research sessions. Claude Pro (\$20/month) lifts that cap and is the recommended setup for real use.

Part 5: More info

- Website: <https://1102tools.com>
- All tools and configs: <https://1102tools.com/tools>
- Install page with video walkthrough: <https://1102tools.com/install>
- GitHub: <https://github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-mcps>
- Issues: <https://github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-mcps/issues>

Setup guide prepared April 2026 by James Jenrette / 1102tools. MIT licensed. Source: github.com/1102tools/federal-contracting-mcps.