

## Success Stories

# The Right Fit

Jennifer Giarratano

### Medical staffing startup gets a boost doing business with the government



Joyce Mathis had been doing business development successfully for years, most recently in medical staffing. Her end goal was much greater, though: to be a prime contractor, providing this service for the federal government and its entities, particularly military hospitals and clinics. She just wasn't sure how to get there.

"Joyce wanted to enter the government space as quickly as possible, but she didn't know

what it took to get government contracts, so she contacted us," said Jeff Patterson, director of the Atlanta office of the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center.

Patterson coached Mathis on the systems available to help small businesses do business with the government, particularly women-owned and disadvantaged business certifications, subcontracting with other primes and using databases that offer those opportunities.

"One way in getting those larger opportunities is to be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)," he said. "SAM — short for System for Award Management — is a portal that allows you to register your business and its capabilities to the government, one of the largest purchasers of goods and services."

Mathis decided to pursue certification for her new company, Global Action Resource Services (GARS), as a women-owned or disadvantaged small business, a marketing strategy that would bring it to the attention of both the government and larger companies looking to expand their contracting with such businesses. After researching her choices with Patterson, she self-certified and obtained her Women Owned Business Certification (WOSB / EDWOSB) small business certifications.

IN MARCH 2018, GARS was awarded the WOSB and Small Disadvantaged Business certifications. Jeff then advised Mathis to seek a company who had the 8(a) certifications to do a 51/49 percent teaming agreement, which would allow her company to share 49 percent of the revenue and employees on a contract for its full term. But first, Mathis had to find capital to inject into the business.

"When Joyce gets contracts, she has to have a certain amount of capital to cover up-front costs, whatever the contract dictates," said Patterson.

Three months later, GARS had formed a partnership and teaming agreement with another company.

"This arrangement was a win-win for both companies," said Patterson. "It made it possible for Joyce to introduce the partner company to the contracting officers she knew in the marketplace, secure contracts, gain past performance and keep the ball moving forward on her goal." He calls this arrangement a form of reverse engineering.

"Joyce takes her business to a company she brings in because of her business development and puts full trust in this partnership with them until she can build her own capacity and one day be a prime contractor."

Mathis then procured more than \$15 million in contracts with Department of Defense (DOD) agencies, half of which will go to her small business. Nearly 25 new medical personnel will be placed, with most of the staff already in place retaining their positions.

"The partner company was able to get the DOD contracts because of Joyce," said Patterson.

"This was a journey of faith and prayer for me. Jeff kept me focused, encouraged me to move forward and provided the tools I needed," said Mathis. "He is a great coach, both checking on me and never too busy to take my calls when I need him. It's a wonderful feeling, having an SBDC representative who is so engaged."

"A WOSB/EDWOSB can't be awarded sole-sourced contracts. However, GARS can participate as a sub on a teaming agreement until it grows and can apply for an 8(a) certification," said Patterson. "This is how Joyce is doing it, by building her past performance and reputation until she can meet the Small Business Administration requirements needed to get those contracts as a prime."