

Breaking Into Tactical Strength and Conditioning: Contracting FAQ

1. What is a tactical strength and conditioning contract?

A tactical strength and conditioning coach contract is a formal agreement that allows a private company to provide coaches to a military unit or federal organization. In most cases, the coach is not hired directly by the government. Instead, the coach works for the company that won the contract and supports the unit or agency as part of that agreement. The contract outlines how long the support will last, what services are required, and what qualifications the coach must have. What this means for coaches is that their pay, benefits, job security, and hiring timeline are often tied to the contract company and the status of the contract itself, rather than the unit they support day to day.

2. Why are so many tactical strength and conditioning positions contract positions?

Many tactical strength and conditioning positions are contract positions because military and federal organizations commonly rely on private companies to supply specialized services like strength and conditioning coaching. Instead of hiring coaches directly, the government hires a company to provide qualified staff for a set period. What this means for coaches is that many jobs in the tactical field are tied to contract companies, contract timelines, and contract renewals rather than direct government employment.

3. What does *contingent upon contract award* mean in a job posting?

This means the company posting the job has not officially won the contract yet. They are identifying qualified candidates ahead of time so they can move quickly if they are selected. For coaches, this means you may be contacted by a recruiter, complete an interview, or even receive strong interest before the position officially opens. However, just because a job is posted does not mean that company will win the contract award. Until the contract is officially awarded, the position is not guaranteed, and there may be a waiting period before anything becomes final.

4. What is a contingent offer?

A contingent offer means the company intends to hire you if certain conditions are met. These conditions may include the company winning the contract, completion of background checks, verification of credentials, or final funding approval. In other words, the company wants to hire you, but the role is not guaranteed until those pieces are in place.

5. What is the difference between a personal services contract and a non-personal services contract?

In a personal services contract, the coach often feels highly integrated into the organization they support. They may work directly with unit leadership and medical staff and feel like part of the team day to day. However, they are still employed by the contractor. In a personal services contract, you may interview directly with members of the organization you are supporting.

In a non-personal services contract, the coach is more clearly an employee of the contract company. The coach still supports the unit, but supervision and program management typically come through the contractor rather than the government organization itself.

6. How is a contracted tactical strength and conditioning coach's compensation determined?

The government pays the contract company, not the individual coach. The company then uses that money to cover salary, benefits, insurance, taxes, and other overhead costs. Many of these contracts are built around staffing positions or labor hours rather than direct payment to individual practitioners. What this means for coaches is that their compensation is influenced not only by their qualifications and experience, but also by how the contract is priced, how the company structures its staffing model, and how much funding is available within that contract.

7. What are option years, and why do they matter?

Many contracts include option years, which allow the government to extend the program one year at a time. A contract might be a base plus 4. Meaning one base year and then several option years. For coaches, this means a job may continue well beyond the first year, but continued employment depends on the government choosing to extend the contract and the program remaining funded.

8. What is an LPTA contract?

LPTA stands for Lowest Price Technically Acceptable. Under this model, the government selects the lowest-priced proposal that still meets the required standards. In practical terms, that can affect salary ranges, staffing levels, and how aggressively companies price their contracts. Coaches working under these contracts may feel the effects of budget-driven decisions more than in other contract types.

9. What is an IDIQ contract?

IDIQ stands for Indefinite Delivery / Indefinite Quantity. This type of contract allows the government to order services over time instead of all at once. That means a program may start small and grow later through follow-on task orders or added positions. For coaches, this can mean new opportunities appear over time rather than all jobs being posted at once.

10. What is a Best Value Tradeoff contract?

In a Best Value Tradeoff contract, the government evaluates more than just price. It may consider experience, technical quality, staffing approach, and program design alongside cost. For coaches, that can mean companies place greater value on staff quality and experience, not just keeping costs as low as possible.

11. What is the typical timeline for a government contract?

Most contracts follow a general sequence:

- **Request for Information (RFI):** the government gathers industry input
- **Request for Proposal (RFP):** companies submit proposals
- **Contract Award:** the government selects the winning company

For coaches, this means hiring may seem slow early in the process, then move very quickly once the contract is awarded.

12. What happens when a contract is up for re-bid (recompete)?

When a contract period ends, the government may put it back out for competition or bid. A new company may win the next contract. In many cases, the job location stays the same and many of the current staff are offered positions by the incoming contractor. For coaches, the employer may change even if the actual job and supported unit do not.

12. How can I look up what contracts are available?

Coaches can search for many federal contracts on SAM.gov, which is the government's public contracting database. They can search by keywords such as H2F, POTFF, or human performance, or by contract number if they have it. These listings may include award announcements, solicitations, contractor names, estimated contract value, and the period of performance. Reviewing those documents can help coaches better understand a program's size, duration, and hiring timeline.