KENSINGTON SALES GROUP · PLAYBOOK

The B2G SDR playbook: design and run a government sales development motion

A short, practical guide to standing up SDRs who book meetings with government buyers: which markets to pick, who to call, how to staff and pay the team, what to say, when to say it and how to measure it.

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Key takeaways

- A government SDR motion is not a commercial one with a new list. Buyers plan purchases a year or more ahead, follow procurement rules and buy through specific contract paths.
- Start narrow: one or two markets, a short list of well-fit accounts and three or four buyer roles.
- Time outreach to the fiscal calendar. Budget season is when needs get funded; the end of the fiscal year is when money gets spent.
- Qualify on five things — role, problem, funding, timing and purchase path — and hand off every meeting with written notes.
- Measure meetings held and pipeline created, not activity alone. Expect a longer ramp than commercial benchmarks suggest.

1. Why government needs its own SDR motion

The public sector is large, fragmented and runs on calendars that commercial teams rarely plan around.

The federal government committed about $755 billion on contracts in fiscal year 2024, according to the Government Accountability Office. Below the federal level, the U.S. Census Bureau counted 90,837 local governments in 2022 and 91,438 in 2025 — counties, cities, townships, school districts and special districts, each with its own budget, decision-makers and buying rules.

Three things make this market different for an SDR team:

- **Purchases are planned in public.** Budgets, capital plans and meeting minutes show what an agency intends to buy, often months before a solicitation. Good SDRs use that record as the reason for the call.
- **Fiscal years drive timing.** The federal fiscal year starts October 1. Forty-six states start theirs on July 1; New York starts April 1, Texas September 1, and Alabama and Michigan October 1 (National Conference of State Legislatures).

- **How they can buy matters as much as whether they want to.** Purchase thresholds, cooperative contracts and existing contract vehicles decide whether a deal can close this year. For federal buyers, the micro-purchase threshold rose to $15,000 and the simplified acquisition threshold to $350,000 on October 1, 2025.

2. Choose your markets and accounts

Pick the segments where you already win or have a clear path to buy. KSG groups the public sector into seven markets:

1. **Federal** — civilian agencies and the Department of Defense.
2. **SLED** — state agencies, counties, cities and towns.
3. **K-12 & Higher Ed** — school districts, community colleges and universities.
4. **Healthcare** — public hospitals, health departments and health systems.
5. **Tribal** — tribal governments and their enterprises.
6. **Special Districts** — transit, ports, airports, fire, parks and similar authorities.
7. **Utilities** — public water, wastewater, power and gas utilities.

Then build an ideal customer profile you can actually filter on:

- **Fit:** entity type, population or enrollment, budget size, region and the systems they run today.
- **Proof:** your current customers. Lookalike agencies are the easiest first meetings.
- **Path to purchase:** the contract vehicles, cooperative agreements or state contracts you hold, and the dollar thresholds your typical deal falls under.
- **Timing:** fiscal year start, budget adoption date and any expiring contracts in your category.

Start with a list an SDR can work deeply — a few hundred accounts, not tens of thousands. Expand once you know which segments convert. See defining TAM to target for a step-by-step method.

3. Map the buying group

Government purchases involve several people, and the person who signs is rarely the person with the problem. Build a sequence for each of these roles:

- **Program or department owner** — owns the problem and usually starts the purchase. This is your primary target.
- **Technical lead** — IT, engineering or operations staff who evaluate fit and integration.
- **Finance and budget staff** — know whether money exists and in which fiscal year.
- **Procurement** — runs the process and enforces the rules. Engage early on how they buy, but never during an active solicitation except through the designated contact.
- **Executives and elected or appointed officials** — set priorities. Use their public statements and plans as context rather than cold-calling them first.

Org charts, staff directories, meeting minutes and budget documents name most of these people. Our guide to government buying signals lists where to look.

4. Design the team

Decide four things before you hire: who the SDRs support, how many you need, how you pay them and who coaches them.

- **Alignment:** align SDRs to account executives by territory or market. The Bridge Group's 2025 SDR research found 82% of companies align SDRs to AE territories, at a median of 1 SDR to 2.4 AEs.
- **Management:** the same research found about 6.4 SDRs per first-line leader. A first government SDR hire still needs a named coach who knows the market.
- **Pay:** median SDR on-target earnings were $80,000 in the same study. Pay variable compensation on meetings held and accepted, with a kicker for pipeline that converts.
- **Ramp:** the Bridge Group reports an average SDR ramp of 3.0 months and average tenure of 1.9 years. Those figures cover B2B companies broadly; plan on a longer ramp for government, where reps must also learn procurement, fiscal calendars and agency structure.

Hire for curiosity and phone confidence. Government knowledge can be taught; the willingness to research an agency and call a program owner cannot. If you need meetings sooner than you can hire and ramp a team, an embedded outsourced team is one option — see outsourced SDRs for government sales.

5. Build messaging that earns a meeting

Government buyers respond to relevance, not urgency. Every touch should answer: why this agency, why now and why you.

- **Lead with their record.** Cite the budget line, capital project, strategic plan goal, grant award or new mandate that relates to what you sell.
- **Use peer proof.** Name similar agencies you serve, where you are allowed to. Public buyers trust their peers.
- **Name the path to buy.** If you are on a cooperative contract or state contract they can use, say so early.
- **Ask for a small next step.** A 20- to 30-minute conversation about how they're handling the problem today.
- **Be honest about fit.** If the timing isn't right, ask when it will be and follow up then.

Example first email

Subject: Your FY2027 fleet replacement plan

Hi Jordan,

The county's adopted capital plan includes replacing 40 public works vehicles over the next two years. Three nearby counties use our telematics to decide which vehicles to replace first and to report usage to their boards.

We're available through a national cooperative contract, so you wouldn't need a separate solicitation for a pilot.

Would 20 minutes next week be useful to compare how you're prioritizing replacements today?

Illustrative only: the agency, names and figures are invented. Use a cooperative contract only if you actually hold it.

6. Run multi-channel sequences

A simple, repeatable sequence beats a clever one. A good starting point for each buyer role:

1. **Day 1:** research-based email plus a phone call.
2. **Day 3:** LinkedIn connection with a short, personal note.
3. **Day 5:** call, and a voicemail that references the same budget line or project.
4. **Day 8:** email with a peer example or short case study.
5. **Day 12:** call a second contact at the same agency (technical or finance).
6. **Day 16:** email that offers something useful — a benchmark, a checklist or a short demo.
7. **Day 21:** final call and email asking when the topic will be on their agenda.

Then move non-responders to a nurture track timed to their next budget cycle. Calls matter in this market: many public-sector staff have direct lines published in staff directories, and a short call that references their own plan stands out.

Stay inside the rules

- **Respect quiet periods.** Once a solicitation is open, most agencies require all contact to go through the named procurement officer. Pause outreach to evaluators on that opportunity.
- **No gifts or meals.** Ethics rules limit what public employees can accept. Keep outreach to information and conversation.
- **Check lobbying rules.** Some states and cities treat certain contact with officials about contracts as lobbying that requires registration. Confirm the rules where you sell.
- **Follow email and calling laws.** Use accurate sender details and honor opt-outs.

7. Time outreach to the fiscal calendar

Government buying follows the money. Plan each quarter around where your accounts are in their cycle:

- **Budget preparation** (often 6–9 months before the fiscal year starts): departments decide what to request. This is the best time to shape needs.

- **Budget adoption:** funded priorities become public. Reference them in outreach right away.
- **Start of the fiscal year:** newly funded projects begin. Good time for discovery and demos.
- **End of the fiscal year:** agencies spend remaining funds. For federal agencies, the last quarter (July–September) has accounted for about a third of annual contract obligations, according to The Pulse of GovCon as reported by Federal Times — 31% in fiscal year 2021.

Use our city and county budget calendars and state legislative and budget calendar to schedule campaigns.

8. Qualify and hand off

Agree with sales leadership on what counts as a qualified meeting before the first call. In government, check five things:

1. **Role:** is this person part of the buying group?
2. **Problem:** do they have a need your product addresses?
3. **Funding:** is money budgeted, requested or available through a grant?
4. **Timing:** which fiscal year would a purchase fall in?
5. **Purchase path:** could they buy through a contract you hold, under a threshold, or would it need a full solicitation?

A meeting doesn't need all five confirmed, but the SDR should know which are still open. Every handoff should include written notes: who is attending, why they took the meeting, the signal that started the conversation, what's known about budget and timing, and the open questions. AEs should accept or reject each meeting within a day so SDRs learn quickly.

9. Measure what matters

Track a small set of numbers every week:

- **Accounts and contacts worked** — coverage of the target list.
- **Conversations** — live calls and meaningful replies, not dials or sends.
- **Meetings held and accepted** — the SDR's primary output.
- **Opportunities and pipeline created** — whether those meetings turn into real deals.
- **Conversion by market, persona and message** — where to focus next.

For reference, the Bridge Group's 2025 research reported a global median quota of 10 held Stage 0 meetings per month, about 4.1 quality conversations per day and $3.78 million in pipeline sourced per SDR per year — and that 60% of SDRs reached quota. Those are cross-industry benchmarks. Government programs with longer cycles and smaller account lists may book fewer meetings that are worth more; set targets from your own first 90 days.

10. Run the motion

- **Daily:** research blocks before call blocks, so every touch has a reason.
- **Weekly:** pipeline review with AEs, call coaching from recordings and a check on new buying signals.
- **Monthly:** review conversion by market and persona; retire messages that aren't working.
- **Quarterly:** re-score the account list against the coming budget cycle and add newly funded agencies.

11. A 30-60-90-day launch plan

Days 1–30: foundations

- Choose one or two markets and build the first target list.
- Write persona messaging and the first sequence.
- Set up CRM fields for fiscal year, funding status and purchase path.
- Agree on the qualified-meeting definition and handoff template.

Days 31–60: first conversations

- Launch sequences on the highest-fit accounts.
- Review call recordings weekly and refine messaging.
- Book and hand off the first meetings; collect AE feedback on each one.

Days 61–90: tune and scale

- Compare conversion by market, persona and message.
- Set targets from real results.
- Time the next campaign to upcoming budget adoptions and fiscal-year starts.
- Decide whether to add SDRs, add a market or deepen coverage.

How KSG helps

Kensington Sales Group has run government sales development programs since 2016. We embed SDRs who research agencies, call the right people and book qualified meetings across Federal, SLED, K-12 & Higher Ed, Healthcare, Tribal, Special Districts and Utilities. If you'd like help building or running this motion, book a 30-minute call or reach us at +1 202-997-8858.

Sources

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