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opportunities as a result of changes included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 (NDAA) to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program.

Jan. 17, 2013

Small businesses owned by women will have greater access to federal contracting opportunities as a result of changes included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 (NDAA) to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program.

"Today, women own 30 percent of all small businesses up from just 5 percent 40 years ago," said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. "As one of the fastest growing sectors of small business owners in the country, opening the door for women to compete for more federal contracts is a win-win."

The NDAA removes the anticipated award price of the contract thresholds for women-owned small businesses (WOSB) and economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses (EDWOSB) to allow them greater access to federal contracting opportunities without limitations to the size of the contract.

Prior to the new law, the anticipated award price of the contract for women-owned and economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses could not exceed \$6.5 million for manufacturing contracts and \$4 million for all other contracts.

The Women's Federal Contract Program allows contracting officers to set aside specific contracts for certified WOSBs and EDWOSBs and will help federal agencies achieve the existing statutory goal of five percent of federal contracting dollars being awarded to WOSBs.

The law also requires the SBA to conduct another study to identify and report

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requirements and either self-certify or obtain third party certification. There are four approved third-party certifiers that perform eligibility exams: El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, National Women Business Owners Corporation, U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council. Additional information and links about approved third-party certifiers are available at www.sba.gov/wosb.

To qualify as a WOSB, a firm must be at least fifty-one percent owned and controlled by one or more women, and primarily managed by one or more women. The women must be U.S. citizens and the firm must be considered small according to SBA size standards. To be deemed "economically disadvantaged," a firm's owners must meet specific financial requirements set forth in the program regulations.

The WOSB Program identifies eighty-three, four-digit North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) codes where WOSBs are underrepresented or substantially underrepresented. Contracting officers may set aside contracts in these industries if the contract can be awarded at a fair and reasonable price and the contracting officer has a reasonable expectation that two or more WOSBs or EDWOSBs will submit offers for the contract.

More information on the Women-Owned Small Business Program is at www.sba.gov/wosb.

Small Business

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