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Small Businesses

Isaac M. O'Bannon • May. 08, 2013

WASHINGTON — A newly-enacted rule changes regulations to the [U.S. Small Business Administration's](#) Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program to give greater access to federal contracting opportunities for women-owned businesses. The change is a result of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 (NDAA) signed in January.

The changes remove 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.

As a result of the rule change, contracting officers will be able to set aside specific contracts for certified WOSBs and EDWOSBs at any dollar level which will help federal agencies achieve the existing statutory goal of five percent of federal contracting dollars being awarded to WOSBs. The SBA is currently working on the changes to the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

Prior to the rule change, 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.

Firms that wish to participate in the WOSB program must meet the eligibility 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.

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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.

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