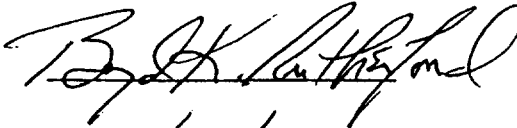


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Strategy to Implement the Service Disabled Veterans Executive Order (13360): Providing Opportunities for Service Disabled Veteran Businesses to Increase Their Contracting and Subcontracting (Revised¹)

Department or Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Designated Senior-level Official: Boyd K. Rutherford
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

Signature: 

Date: 5/14/07

Strategy

President Bush signed Executive Order (E.O.) 13360 on October 20, 2004, which strengthens legislation geared towards enhancing the procurement process and achieving the mandated 3 percent award goal for Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs).

According to Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation reports for fiscal year 2006, USDA awarded \$35.8 million, or .85 percent of its contracts to SDVOSBs. The 3 percent goal equates to a total of \$125 million worth of business, a significant challenge for USDA given that 50 percent to 60 percent of our total annual procurement spending is for agricultural food commodities, an area where there are few SDVOSBs. As we strive to meet the 3 percent goal, we plan to implement a series of steps to build our success.

These steps will be driven by a plan of action that identifies ways to significantly increase SDVOSB prime contracting and subcontracting opportunities in USDA procurements. A summary of actions to be included in this plan is provided below.

¹ This issuance replaces USDA's Strategy dated February 10, 2005

Actions

Designate a senior-level official to be responsible for developing and implementing the agency's strategy.

USDA has designated the Assistant Secretary for Administration (also USDA's Chief Acquisition Officer) to serve as USDA's Senior Official. The Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), leads and administers the SDVOSB Program for the Department. They are responsible for working with USDA agencies to identify opportunities to increase prime contracting and subcontracting with SDVOSBs. In addition, OSDBU has assigned a full-time program manager.

Make the agency's strategy publicly available and report annually to the Administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA) on implementation of the agency's strategy.

USDA's Strategy is publicly available on USDA's home page www.usda.gov with links to the Small Business Administration (SBA) home page. USDA makes progress reports on its implementation annually to the SBA.

In addition, USDA developed department-wide policy to implement the Strategic Initiative. This policy has been issued in both a Secretary's Memorandum and Departmental Regulation and is available on USDA's website <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR5090-005.pdf>.

Include development and implementation of the agency's strategy and achievements in furtherance of the strategy as significant elements in any performance plans of the agency's designated agency Senior-level Official, Chief Acquisition Officer, and Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

In accordance with the requirements of the E.O. 13360, implementation and achievements in furtherance of this strategy are included as a significant element in the performance plans of the designated individuals. Consistent with the objectives of the President's Management Agenda, these elements cascade to the performance plans of senior staffs and those in supporting organizations.

In addition, USDA will continue to:

- Ensure SDVOSB goal achievement is reported quarterly to Agency Heads and Under and Assistant Secretaries. These individuals hold their Deputy Administrators for Management and Heads of Contracting Activity (or Designee) accountable for goal achievement. Agency Heads also receive goal achievement ratings as part of their annual performance reviews.

- Conduct meetings with Agency Deputy Administrators for Management and Heads of Contracting Activity (or Designee) to discuss goal achievement and identify potential contracting opportunities for SDVOSBs.
- Ensure SDVOSB information technology goal achievement is reported to the USDA and Agency Chief Information Officers. These individuals are accountable for applicable information technology procurements.

Reserve agency contracts exclusively for Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.

We will ---

- aggressively identify procurement opportunities to assist USDA in getting to the 3 percent mandated SDVOSB prime contracting goal;
- aggressively identify procurement opportunities to assist USDA to meet or exceed the USDA 5 percent goal for information technology prime contracting with SDVOSBs;
- develop Agency-specific Goal Achievement Strategies for SDVOSBs including listings of potential contracting opportunities for SDVOSBs, including sole source and set-asides;
- identify/review, during the acquisition planning process and during the development of the procurement forecast, new contracts that will be set-aside exclusively for SDVOSBs;
- identify commonly used products and services and develop blanket purchase agreements with SDVOSBs to fulfill USDA requirements and expedite agency purchases;
- regularly review USDA's contracting portfolio to identify new as well as ongoing product and service requirements and coordinate with USDA agencies to ensure SDVOSBs are provided full consideration; and
- coordinate with USDA agencies to reserve appropriate contracts exclusively for qualified SDVOSBs.

Encourage and facilitate participation by Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses in competitions for award of agency contracts.

We will ---

- fully consider SDVOSBs when developing acquisition strategies and conducting market research to identify and utilize SDVOSBs to meet USDA requirements to the maximum extent practicable to achieve USDA program goals;
- require consideration be given to SDVOSBs when using Federal Supply Schedules and Government-wide acquisition vehicles, including the use of the Veterans Technology Services Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (VETS GWAC) for information technology requirements;
- provide assistance to USDA agencies to identify qualified SDVOSBs that can meet USDA's requirements;
- promote and facilitate teaming agreements to enhance the capability and capacity of SDVOSBs to fulfill USDA contracting requirements;
- encourage the use of www.vetbiz.gov and other sources to identify SDVOSBs as potential contractors;
- encourage SDVOSBs to register their firms in the Central Contractor Registration database as prospective contractors and update their entries, as required;
- partner with other Federal, State, and local agencies to share best practices and further enhance USDA's SDVOSB Program;
- recommend that each USDA agency conduct/participate in at least one veteran outreach event annually;
- continue to conduct OSDBU Vendor Outreach Sessions focusing on SDVOSBs; and
- recognize outstanding contracting officers for their efforts in awarding contracts to SDVOSBs.

Encouraging agency contractors to subcontract with Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and actively monitoring and evaluating agency contractors' efforts to do so.

We will ---

- include subcontracting goals of not less than 3 percent for SDVOSBs in all major acquisitions and 5 percent in all applicable information technology acquisitions;
- meet with large prime contractors to encourage use of SDVOSBs;
- review subcontracting data in the Electronic Subcontracting Reporting System to identify SDVOSBs providing products and services to USDA; and
- recognize outstanding prime contractors that have been supportive and proactive in awarding subcontracts to SDVOSBs.

Training agency personnel on applicable laws and policies relating to participation of Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses in Federal contracting.

We will ---

- develop an on-line USDA training module and recommend that all agency contracting officers, program officials, and purchase card holders utilize the training program to increase their awareness of the SDVOSB program;
- recommend that all agency contracting officers utilize training programs such as the Defense Acquisition University online courses and others to increase their awareness of the SDVOSB program; and
- conduct a training session at the annual USDA procurement conference to inform Contracting Officers of best practices in doing business with SDVOSBs.

Disseminating information to Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses that would assist these businesses in participating in awards of agency contracts.

We will ---

- invite and meet with veteran associations at our First Tuesday Association Breakfast Briefings held at USDA in order to exchange and provide information relating to SDVOSBs;
- meet one-on-one with SDVOSBs to provide advice and council on “Doing Business with USDA”;
- participate in conferences, trade shows, industry days and meetings as speakers, exhibitors, panelists and matchmakers and distribute information on USDA opportunities;
- sponsor targeted USDA Industry Days to showcase SDVOSBs;
- advertise in trade journals and other publications to increase SDVOSBs knowledge of USDA’s business;
- work in cooperation and partnership with veteran associations to disseminate and share information; and
- partner with other Federal agencies to distribute USDA information on contracting and subcontracting opportunities.