

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

Department or Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Designated Senior-level Official
(pending approval by the
Secretary of Agriculture)**

**Michael J. Harrison
Assistant Secretary
for Administration**

Signature:

Strategy

According to Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation reports for fiscal year 2004, USDA awarded \$16.8 million (or .48 percent) of its contracts to Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOSBs). We recognize the need to do better, but it will take time to increase our achievements. 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 contracting and subcontracting opportunities in USDA contracting activities. A summary of actions to be included in this plan is provided below.

Actions

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

The USDA senior level designated official will be responsible for development and implementation of USDA's strategies. The senior level official will work collaboratively with the USDA Chief Acquisition Officer and the Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. They will be responsible for working with USDA agencies to identify opportunities to increase contracting and subcontracting with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

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

The strategy will be publicly available on USDA's home page www.usda.gov with links to the Department of Veterans Affairs home page. USDA will make progress reports on its implementation annually to the SBA.

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 Executive Order, implementation and achievements in furtherance of this strategy will be 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 will cascade to the performance plans of senior staffs and those in supporting organizations.

- 1 Agency's designated senior-level official
- 2 Chief Acquisition Officer
- 3 Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

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 service-disabled veteran-owned small business goal;
- identify/review, during the advance acquisition process and during the development of the procurement forecast, new contracts that will be set aside exclusively for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses; and
- coordinate with USDA agencies to reserve appropriate contracts exclusively for qualified service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Encourage and facilitate participation by service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in competitions for award of agency contracts.

We will ---

- develop a Secretary's Memorandum to share with USDA leadership emphasizing USDA's role in support of service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;
- brief agency heads and senior officials on their responsibilities and the advantages of contracting with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;
- provide briefing materials to all agency heads and program officials describing the service-disabled veteran-owned small business program;
- encourage the use of www.vetbiz and other sources to identify service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses as potential contractors;
- encourage service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses to register their firms in the Central Contractor Registration database as prospective contractors;
- recommend that each USDA agency conduct/participate in at least one veteran outreach event annually;
- continue to conduct Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) vendor outreach sessions focusing on service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;
- ensure that at least one service-disabled veteran-owned small business is solicited (in situations where such vendors exist) whenever the acquisition strategy does not involve a service-disabled veteran-owned small business set-aside or a sole source acquisition;
- require consideration be given to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses when using Federal Supply Schedules; and,
- recognize outstanding contracting officers for their efforts in awarding contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

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 ---

- require service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses be included as a significant evaluation factor in all RFPs;
- promote service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in USDA's subcontracting program by requiring buying activities to count prime contractor's compliance with the previous subcontracting plans as an evaluation factor in the award of any new government contracts;
- include suggested subcontracting goals of at least 3 percent for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in all major acquisitions; and
- recognize outstanding prime contractors that have been supportive and proactive in awarding subcontracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Training agency personnel on applicable laws and policies relating to participation of service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in Federal contracting.

We will ---

- 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 service-disabled veteran-owned small business program;
- Conduct a training session at the annual USDA procurement conference to inform Contracting Officers of best practices in doing business with SDVOSBs; and
- continue to conduct OSDBU bi-monthly training for agency small business specialists on laws and regulations related to the service-disabled veteran-owned small business program.

Disseminating information to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses that would assist these businesses in participating in awards of agency contracts.

We will ---

- continue recognizing outstanding service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses in USDA's annual awards program;
- invite and meet with veteran associations at our First Tuesday Association Briefings held at USDA in order to exchange and provide information relating to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses; and
- work diligently with veteran associations in disseminating information.

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