

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

And

THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) have an interest in increasing the participation of Women-owned Small Businesses (WOSB) in Federal procurement.

VA and SBA (the parties) support the Government's efforts to achieve the 5 percent contracting goal for Women-Owned Small Businesses established by the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-355) (FASA).

BACKGROUND

On October 13, 1994, President Clinton signed FASA into law. This landmark legislation established the government-wide goal for participation by small business concerns owned and controlled by women at not less than 5 percent of the total value of all prime contracts and subcontracts for each fiscal year.

FASA stated that WOSB are to participate in Federal procurement opportunities, and that WOSB should get part of the approximately \$200 billion in annual Federal procurements. FASA created a government-wide responsibility to meet the 5 percent goal for women, based on the total value of all Federal prime and subcontract awards in each fiscal year. FASA also challenged large Government prime contractors to form plans to increase subcontracting opportunities to WOSB.

The Small Business Act now requires SBA and each Federal agency to set-up annual prime and subcontracting goals for small businesses, small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women-owned small businesses, and qualified HUBZone small businesses. (15 U.S.C. 644(g)(1).)

PURPOSE

SBA and VA agree to cooperate in this MOU to increase the participation of WOSB in prime and subcontracting opportunities at VA. This partnership will maximize the use of VA and SBA resources and provide greater program recognition for results achieved.

VA and SBA support achievement of VA's FY 2000 small business program goals, which include a goal to award 5 percent of the total dollar value of VA prime contracts and subcontracts to WOSB.

RESPONSIBILITIES

VA's Responsibilities in Support of the MOU:

1. VA's Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), will appoint a primary and an alternate Women's Business Advocate. These individuals will serve as direct liaisons to the women-owned business community and will encourage each VA contracting activity and program office to consider WOSB for all procurement opportunities. They will work to raise the visibility of women-owned business in day-to-day procurement activities and will closely monitor VA's achievement of the 5 percent goal.
2. VA's Director, OSDBU, will work cooperatively with the SBA to enhance our existing awards program and provide external recognition for VA contracting activities that promote WOSB contracting through outstanding or innovative efforts.
3. VA's Secretary will issue a policy statement emphasizing the importance of achieving the 5 percent goal for WOSB to the Nation's economy and equal economic opportunity. VA will support this policy statement with additional policy statements if achievement of this goal is at risk.
4. VA will utilize SBA's PRO-Net database to match WOSB with VA procurement opportunities.
5. VA will work closely with SBA's Women's Business Centers throughout the country to provide information on VA's procurement opportunities.
6. VA will request SBA's participation in VA's OSDBU-sponsored outreach activities, as appropriate.
7. VA will publish a special edition of its employee newsletter, "OSDBU Update," focusing on WOSB issues, highlighting WOSB success stories and encouraging mentoring between successful WOSB and emerging WOSB.
8. VA will actively highlight information on procurement opportunities for WOSB on the OSDBU web site and will link the VA site to SBA's web site.
9. VA will continue to support the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise and the National Women's Business Council in developing and promoting new initiatives, policies, programs, and plans designed to foster women's business enterprise.

10. VA will work with SBA to develop procurement best practices that will provide greater subcontracting opportunities to WOSB.

SBA's Responsibilities in Support of the MOU:

1. SBA will report to the President and to the Cabinet about the progress of Federal agencies in fostering women's business enterprise in the Federal marketplace and in meeting the 5 percent goal required by FASA. In the report, SBA will include the status of efforts under this MOU and VA's progress toward the WOSB goal.
2. SBA will offer formal Government and press recognition of this MOU. SBA will coordinate and distribute information announcing VA's strategic steps to implement this MOU. In addition, SBA will work with VA to develop an enhanced awards program to recognize contracting activities that most successfully promote and award WOSB contracts and subcontracts.
3. SBA will link its Internet web site to VA's OSDBU web site.
4. SBA will help VA use PRO-Net to identify WOSB with products and services that meet VA's procurement needs.
5. SBA will schedule and facilitate annual performance reviews of this MOU with VA at the end of each year. These reviews will assess the progress of SBA and VA in completing their MOU responsibilities.
6. SBA will support training programs held by VA for WOSB, as requested, subject to the availability of funds. Training programs for WOSB will respond to the needs of WOSB, and will, among other things, provide assistance and advice to WOSB on marketing strategies and on doing business with the Federal Government.
7. SBA will support and advise the Women-Owned Business Advocate Working Group, made up of representatives of OSDBUs from various procurement agencies. This Group will meet quarterly to provide a forum for issues pertaining to WOSB.
8. SBA will be a primary resource for VA in continuing discussions on how to achieve WOSB goals. The program manager for WOSB Procurement Program will be the primary point of contact from the SBA.
9. SBA, through the Office of Women's Business Ownership, will establish and maintain a list of women's business associations and organizations for VA's use, upon request, in supporting wide distribution of procurement information.

TERM
This MOU is in effect for 2 years from the date of execution, and may be renewed by written agreement of SBA and VA.

TERMINATION

Either party may terminate this MOU on 30 days' written notice to the other party.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS

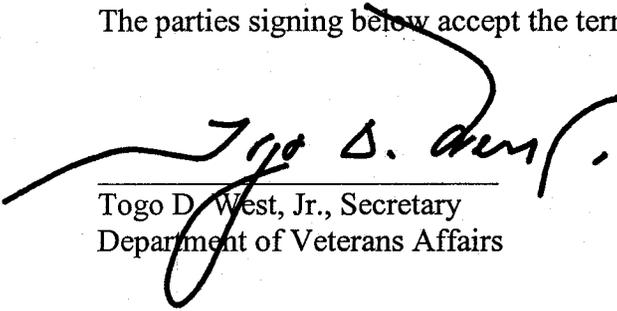
The officials responsible for this MOU are:

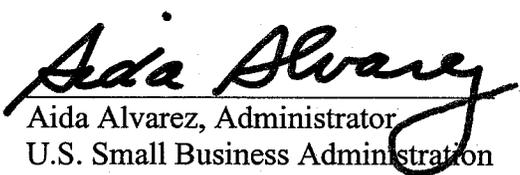
SBA: Barry S. Meltz
Acting Associate Administrator for Government Contracting
(202) 205-6474

VA: Scott F. Denniston
Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
(202) 565-8124

SIGNATURES

The parties signing below accept the terms of this MOU.


Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs


Aida Alvarez, Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration

5/18/2000

Date

APR - 4 2000

Date