



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization
Small Business AdVocAte

Notes From Scott...



*Scott F. Denniston
 Director, VA OSDBU*

I hope this issue of the [VA Small Business AdVocAte](#) finds everyone doing well. 2007 brings with it enormous changes in VA's small business programs that offers great promise for increasing VA acquisition opportunities for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB).

On December 22, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law the Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-461). This law contains important provisions effecting veteran entrepreneurs in the conduct of VA acquisitions and applies solely to VA. The law formally establishes, in statute, a procurement hierarchy/contracting preference that moves SDVOSBs and VOSBs to the head of the line in VA acquisitions. The law also establishes a set-aside mechanism for VOSB, among other important provisions (see article on Pages 1-2 for more information on

P.L. 109-461).

P.L. 109-461 is effective June 20, 2007, and work is underway to publish VA's implementing regulations for public comment. The implementing regulation will come in the form of a change to the VA Acquisition Regulations (VAAR). We have received a number of inquiries from veteran entrepreneurs and VA acquisition professionals alike about using the set-aside and sole source award authorities for VOSBs at this time pending issuance of the implementing regulations. The short answer is no, the law is not effective until June 20, 2007, and we strongly encourage VA acquisition professionals wait for guidance from VA's Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) in the form of an Information Letter (IL) or VAAR change.

A major challenge to implementing P.L. 109-461 will be educating and training VA's workforce of the significant changes brought about by the law. To that end, OSDBU is available to provide training to acquisition professionals, program officials, engineering officers and personnel, purchase cardholders and anyone else involved in the acquisition process that could use this training. Training can be accomplished by video
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Congress Moves Veteran Entrepreneurs to the Front of the Line in VA Acquisitions

On December 22, 2006, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 109-461, The Veterans Health Care, Benefits and Information Technology Act of 2006. P.L. 109-461, effective June 20, 2007, is applicable only to VA prime and subcontracting opportunities and will have a significant effect on how VA conducts its acquisitions. Public Law 109-461:

- ◆ Establishes a set-aside and sole-source award mechanism for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB).
- ◆ Establishes a clearly defined contracting

preference (hierarchy) for VA acquisitions, moving SDVOSBs to the head of the line, followed by VOSBs then Section 8(a) contractors and HUBZone contractors.

- ◆ Requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish prime and subcontracting goals for SDVOSBs and VOSBs (the SDVOSB goal cannot be less than the 3 percent required by P.L. 106-50).
- ◆ Requires establishment of a mechanism to ensure subcontracts awarded by VA prime contractors go to eligible VOSB and SDVOSB concerns.
- ◆ Requires registration of SDVOSB and
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Remembering Those Who Served

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VOSB firms in VA's

- ◆ Vendor Information Pages (VIP) Database (www.vip.vetbiz.gov).
- ◆ Requires VA to verify ownership and control of the company and the status of veteran owners. Providing ownership and control information to VA is optional and veterans may continue to sell to VA without verifying their status. However, participation in the set-aside and subcontracting programs is limited to eligible businesses registered in VIP.
- ◆ Provides continued VOSB and SDVOSB status for surviving spouses of veteran entrepreneurs for up to 10 years under certain circumstances.
- ◆ Provides for debarment from VA acquisitions of those firms willfully misrepresenting their status.
- ◆ Requires GAO annually assess VA's VOSB contracting program and report findings to Congress

Much work remains to get this law implemented in VA by June 20, 2007. The implementing VA Acquisition Regulation (VAAR) must be published for public comment. VA must acquire authority from the Office of Management and Budget for new data to be collected on the VetBiz.gov VIP Database as well as publish a revision to the Privacy Act Notice that governs the database.

As we work in the direction of implementation, we will be educating and training the VA workforce and industry about these important changes. Now that veterans are being put to the front of the line for VA acquisitions, we have a significant opportunity to show the rest of the Federal community that VA is truly the leader in contracting with SDVOSBs and VOSBs. Thank you for your continued support of America's small businesses, particularly our veteran entrepreneurs!



Welcome to OSDBU's Newly Designed Web site

By: Deborah Van Dover, Senior Procurement Analyst

OSDBU has recently completed a redesign of our Web site. Not only was it time to reorganize, add and remove some material; the old Web site was not 508 compliant. Federal agencies must ensure that technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities to the extent it does not pose an "undue burden." Section 508 speaks to various means for disseminating information, in-

cluding computers, software, and electronic office equipment. It applies to, but is not solely focused on, Federal pages on the Internet or the World Wide Web. Our robust new site meets these requirements and we hope you will find it informative as well.

Our Web site contains information on doing business with VA, as well as providing links to various contracting offices within VA, the Forecast of Contracting Opportunities, and information relative to Federal Supply Schedules. We also have information relating to subcontracting; the subcontracting standard operating procedures (SOP) and the most current subcontracting directory.

The Web site includes information on conferences and links to resources for all small business types. We have tried to develop a site which will be user friendly as well as providing worthwhile information. Please take some time to browse our updated Web site; if you find information missing which you believe would be worthwhile, please contact me at (202) 565-7795 and we will work to add it.



General Services Administration Awards New VETS GWAC for IT Services

By: Cordell Smith, Small Business Specialist

On December 19, 2006, the General Services Administration (GSA) awarded its long-awaited Veterans Technology for Services Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (the VETS GWAC). Forty Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small firms received awards under the GWAC, which covers a five-year base period and a five-year option period. The contract could be worth up to \$5 billion. GSA subsequently issued a Notice to Proceed on February 2, 2007, indicating that the GWAC is now available to accept orders.

The new GWAC could help VA as well as all other federal agencies to improve on their goals for contracting with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small businesses. While VA buys its hardware through the Scientific and Engineering Workstation Procurement (SEWP) contracts handled by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, VA requirements for information technology services are candidates for the VETS GWAC.

GSA has two other GWACs in the information technology area as well: the HUBZone and 8ASTARS GWACs, focusing on HUBZone and 8(a) firms respectively. In legislation adopted last December, the "Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006," the Congress directed that VA give its first priority to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small firms. Unlike purchases from the Federal Supply Schedules, which are conducted under FAR Part 8, purchases using the VETS

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teleconference or on site, as necessary. We encourage Chief Logistics Officers (CLOs) and Heads of Contracting Activities (HCA) to consider this training for their VISNs/facilities. To arrange for training, please contact Wayne Simpson, 202-565-8131 or by e-mail.

VA's socioeconomic accomplishments for FY 2006 have been finalized. For the first time, VA exceeded the SDVOSB goal, posting accomplishments of 3.39% against the 3% statutory goal. Congratulations!!! Although the socioeconomic data of other agencies is not yet available from the Small Business Administration (SBA), I am optimistic that VA's accomplishments will be the best of major agencies/departments (those reporting expenditures in excess of \$1 billion). We're now preparing awards under the Secretary's FY 2006 Socioeconomic Achievement Awards Program to recognize the many accomplishments of VA's dedicated acquisition professionals. More information on VA's FY 2006 socioeconomic accomplishments can be found on Page 4 in this edition.

Please remember that VA's Continuing Resolution (CR) status continues to effect VA's Forecast of Contracting Opportunities (FCO) when forecasted acquisitions are not conducted in the quarter for which they are forecasted. We hope you will ensure your respective FCOs are updated at least monthly so that small businesses may rely on the FCO as a reliable source of information, obviating the need to call contracting officers and small business specialists for this information.

Thanks again for everyone's continued support of small business—the engine that drives America's economy. From all of us here in OSDDBU, best wishes for continued health and success!!

Scott

(Vets GWAC for IT Services ... continued from Page 2)

GWAC follow the ordering procedures in FAR Part 16 to ensure Fair Opportunity (FAR 16.505). This is also true of NASA SEWP contracts; a Department of Defense Inspector General report recently "dinged" DOD contracting officers for using the wrong provisions. See report D-2007-023 of November 13, 2006.

For more information on the VETS GWAC go to www.gsa.gov/vetsgwac. For more information on SEWP go to www.sewp.nasa.gov.

State of the HUBZone Program

By: Wayne Simpson, Deputy Director



On March 7, 2007, Michael P. McHale, SBA's Associate Administrator for the HUBZone Program briefed Federal OSDDBU personnel at SBA's Headquarters on the state of the HUBZone Program.

Acquisition professionals are reminded that HUBZone set-asides are a higher priority than small business set-asides. FAR 19.1305(a) states that contracting officers shall set-aside acquisitions exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold for competition exclusively among HUBZone small business concerns and to consider HUBZone set-asides before HUBZone sole source awards or small business set-asides. Federal statute places HUBZone contracting as a higher priority than ordinary small business set-asides.

McHale reinforced the importance of the HUBZone Program and its positive impact on communities covered by the program and dispelled a number of myths about the HUBZone Program.

Myth No. 1: It's difficult to identify HUBZone firms when conducting market research to establish a basis for a HUBZone set-aside. The reality is that it is quite simple to identify HUBZone firms. Using the "Contracting Officer's HUBZone Gateway" on the HUBZone Home Page (<https://eweb1.sba.gov/hubzone/internet>), is one method, as well as using the Dynamic Small Business Source System (DSBSS) feature in the Central Contractor Registration database (www.ccr.gov).

Myth No. 2: The HUBZone Program is composed of small, undercapitalized, low-tech service and construction firms. Reality: There are now over 13,000 firms in the HUBZone portfolio with combined annual receipts of \$24.9 billion. If these collective firms were a single firm, that firm would have as many branches as Starbucks Coffee, and the firm's revenue would make it a Fortune 100 company. HUBZone firms are represented in 89 of the 92 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Sectors. A quick snapshot of HUBZone firms shows:

- ◆ 931 firms have annual revenues of \$10 million or more
- ◆ 620 firms have more than 100 employees
- ◆ 141 firms are clothing manufacturers
- ◆ 498 firms are machine shops
- ◆ 1,177 are computer service firms

HUBZone small businesses employ over 207,000 employees – 133,000 of these employees (65%) reside in HUBZones. HUBZones are located in over 12,000 counties across America. 75 million American's live in HUBZones—nearly a quarter of America's population.

Myth No. 3: The HUBZone "Rule of Two" does not apply to procurement actions formally set-aside for small business concerns (a.k.a. historical small business set-asides). Reality: There is no exemption to the HUBZone Rule of Two for historical small business set-asides, based upon specific language found in the HUBZone Act of 1997, the FAR, SBA's regulations, Federal Court rulings and Comptroller General Decisions.

Myth No. 4: Movement of a historical small business set-aside to a HUBZone set-aside cannot be accomplished until a small business impact study is conducted. If
(State of the HUBZone Program, continued on Page 4)

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it is determined that the proposed HUBZone set-aside will “impact” a small business (former contract recipient), the requirement cannot be issued as HUBZone set-aside. Reality: Unlike the Section 8(a) Business Development Program, there is no requirement to conduct an impact study when a procurement is moved from a small business set-aside to a HUBZone set-aside.

The HUBZone Program is designed to increase employment opportunities in HUBZone communities by stimulating capital investment in these areas and to empower communities through economic leveraging and the resulting “multiplier effect” that comes from this investment.

McHale shared with the briefing’s participants that some HUBZone firms have been opting out of the HUBZone Program because Federal contracting opportunities are not being realized by these firms. Specifically, contracting officers are using small business set-asides when HUBZone set-asides could and should be used. SBA regulations require a contracting officer set-aside a requirement for HUBZone small business concerns if the requirement is not ineligible for inclusion in the HUBZone Program, e.g., FPI, JWOD, before using a small business set-aside.

Contracting officers should take note that GAO has sustained protests where agencies inappropriately used small business set-asides instead of HUBZone small business set-asides. In some instances, GAO has directed the solicitation be re-issued after proper market research was conducted or that the agency “make reasonable efforts” to ascertain and gauge HUBZone interest in the acquisition. In one case GAO recommended an agency reimburse for protest costs.

SBA will continue its pilot program of electronically monitoring FedBizOpps to increase program awareness among Federal agencies and remind acquisition professionals of the statutory 3% HUBZone prime contracting goal. Contracting officers may expect to receive electronic notifications from SBA when electronic monitoring detects a small business set-aside that may have more appropriately been conducted as a HUBZone set-aside.

Future plans include letters from McHale to contracting officers requesting forecasted purchases be conducted as HUBZone small business set-asides and will include HUBZone-generated market research to support the request.

VA’s OSDBU will step-up its oversight to ensure that HUBZone small business set-asides are conducted before using small business set-asides.

Public Law 109-461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006, statutorily mandates a procurement preference in VA that assigns a higher priority to using SDVOSB and

VOSB set-asides than contracting using the HUBZone Program. Notwithstanding the changes effective June 20, 2007, with implementation of P.L. 109-461, one thing that remains unchanged: HUBZone set-asides are still a higher priority than ordinary small business set-asides.

Market research is the key to effectively determining any acquisition strategy and successfully defending against a protest should the acquisition strategy be challenged by a HUBZone firm when a small business set-aside is used.

Keep in mind that the HUBZone Program is about jobs and building communities that are historically underutilized—not so much as building companies. To help make that point, McHale quotes former President Ronald Reagan: “The best social program is a job.”

Fiscal Year 2006 Socioeconomic Accomplishments – Thanks for the Numbers!!

VA’s FY 2006’s socioeconomic accomplishments are impressive. VA exceeded all of the statutory socioeconomic goals for FY 2006. VA reported expenditures totaling approximately \$10.3 billion. The chart below shows the socioeconomic breakdown:

Category	Secretary’s Goal	Accomplishment
Small Business	25%	29.45% (\$3.03 billion)
Small Disadvantaged Business	4%	4.93% (\$507.4 million)
Section 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Business	5%	3.92%(\$402.7 million)
Women-Owned Small Business	5%	5% (\$513.1 million)
Veteran-Owned Small Business	7%	6.49% (\$666.8 million)
Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned	3%	3.39% (\$348 million)
HUBZone Small Business	3%	3.28% (\$336.9 million)

Most notably is VA, for the first time ever, exceeded the 3% statutory goal for SDVOSBs and we posted 6.49% against the 7% VOSB goal set by the Secretary. Although numbers are not available for other departments, we have every reason to believe the VA continues to be the leader in these important categories. In FY 2005, VA was the leader among major Federal contracting activities (those organizations reporting expenditures of \$1 billion or more) with 2.15% in accomplishments in the SDVOSB category.

Although VA did not meet the Section 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Business Goal of 5%, the VA did meet the statutory goal of 5% for small disadvantaged businesses. There is

(2006 Socioeconomic Accomplishments, continued on Page 5)

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no statutory goal assigned to Section 8(a), the VA goal is assigned by the Secretary. When combined with the small disadvantaged business accomplishments, VA spent \$910.1 million (8.85%) with small disadvantaged businesses, including Section 8(a) firms. All Section 8(a) firms are considered small disadvantaged businesses, all small disadvantaged businesses are not certified by the Small Business Administration as Section 8(a) firms. VA is required to track its small disadvantaged business accomplishments broken down by Section 8(a) and all other small disadvantaged businesses. Section 8(a) is a procurement mechanism and accomplishments shown in this category represent acquisitions conducted using the Section 8(a) Program.

Given the performance demands and many competing interests faced by VA acquisition professionals, the FY 2006 accomplishments are noteworthy and greatly appreciated by small businesses. Through its procurement dollars, VA has once again shown why it is the chief advocate for America's veterans!

Subcontracting Corner

Electronic Subcontracting Reporting Systems (eSRS) Changes

By: Mark J. Taylor, Small Business Specialist

Many of the VA Contracting Officers (CO) are aware that eSRS is experiencing "growing pains". The system that went live in October 2005 is being populated as intended and, with the help of the Federal Acquisition community, we strive to improve this system which is part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE).

Lynette Simmons and I serve as Co-Agency coordinators for VA. We meet monthly with our counterparts in other agencies and administrations to keep abreast of ongoing changes in the eSRS and to recommend changes if necessary, that are agreeable to the group.

The eSRS workgroup has established a Change Control Board (CCB). The CCB serves as the decision-making body for proposed Change Requests (CRs) that affect the eSRS System and manage the changes required to keep the system current with needs of the end users, the CO and the contractor. The responsibility of the eSRS CCB is to make decisions that improve system life cycle performance, functionality, and meet regulatory requirements.

The CCB meets quarterly with select members/eSRS agency coordinators to discuss possible changes and their impact on other elements within the IAE and to vote on issues that will positively affect the federal subcontracting program.

The eSRS workgroup has solicited input from field of-

fices government wide since it's inception on how to improve the system and these issues are forwarded to the CCB for action. Changes are sent forward to the eSRS designer *Simplicity Corporation*, an 8(a) company. The pending changes are as follows:

Issue: The Report Summary Views become full of reports over time. This makes searching and sorting time consuming and cumbersome.

Proposed Change: Provide the contractor the ability to archive or remove from the current view selected reports by date range or similar method. There should be a method of returning removed data to the current view.

Issue: The contractor currently has no automated method of notifying the government of their intent and desire to recall a report submitted in error. Currently the contractor must contact the appropriate government agency and request a submitted report be rejected.

Proposed Change: Provide the contractor the ability to recall and include remarks on a submitted report. This will return the report to the contractors worklist in an editable status.

Issue: The current eSRS does not provide government users with field help.

Proposed Change: Provide the government users the same level of field help as all prime contractors currently have. The government and contractor help should be editable independently.

Issue: The current eSRS provides limited capability for users to attach remarks to reports.

Proposed Change: Provide the government user with the capability to attach remarks to any report, (i.e. acknowledge, reject, re-open).

Issue: The current eSRS provides 2 decimal places in computational fields. Several contractors have requested the number of decimal places be expanded to 5.

Proposed Change: Expand all computational fields to 5 decimal places.

Once these changes are decided by the CCB, they must go for further review for impact on other government systems within the IAE. The intent of the eSRS CCB is to make the system more user-friendly. We appreciate your suggestions to date and strongly encourage you to e-mail any issues you may have that will lead to system improvement to mark.taylor@va.gov and lynette.simmons@va.gov.

VA and SBA 8(A) Partnership Agreement

By: Lynette Simmons, Procurement Analyst

The new Partnership Agreement (PA) between VA and SBA was signed January 16, 2007, and will remain in effect until September 30, 2009.

The PA delegates SBA's contract execution functions to VA for expediting the award of contracts pursuant to Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. Without the agreement, VA acquisition and logistics professionals must follow the procedures contained in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 19.8.

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Can a contracting officer (CO) issue a purchase order when an 8(a) participant has been identified on all simplified acquisition under \$100K without a request for eligibility determination to SBA?

- ◆ No, request an eligibility determination from SBA's District Office responsible for servicing the selected 8(a) participant when an 8(a) participant has been identified.

QUESTION: Will CO, small business specialists, etc., be required to participate in 8(a) Business Development Program contract training when conducted by the SBA?

- ◆ Yes, it is mandatory and required PA.

QUESTION: Where will the training take place and how do I register?

- ◆ The training will take place at the SBA Headquarters as well as via the ReadyTalk Remote Access System. Each session will accommodate 30 participants and will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ◆ The training sessions will be held every other Thursday starting March 8th from 8:00am – 12:30pm. The sessions held in July through December will be held on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

To register via email contact Ms. Edwards at: Melinda.Edwards@sba.gov. You will need to provide the following:

- ◆ Name, agency name, phone and fax number, email address, the session you will be attending, and the date.

Remote Access Training

Log in via the web, at www.readytalk.com \ To join the conference via web use the above link, and select "Join a Conference." Enter the Access code and register for the conference.

Dial 1-866-740-1260
Enter access code 2770107
To join the conference via phone, please dial the toll-

free number and enter the access code
You will be placed on hold until the chairperson starts the call

QUESTION: What are the procedures for submitting an offering letter for sole source requirements exceeding the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of \$100K when an 8(a) participant has been identified? What shall be included in the acceptance letter from SBA?

- ◆ Submit the offering letter to SBA's District office responsible for servicing the selected 8(a) participant. Upon receipt of an offering letter, SBA will issue either an acceptance or rejection letter within 5 working days. Absent a notification of rejection within 5 working days of receipt of the offer from SBA, acceptance may be assumed on the 6th working day.
- ◆ Acceptance will include a size verification and determination with respect to all elements of eligibility (i.e., determinations of adverse impact, NAICS code appropriateness, and program eligibility).

Question: What are the procedures for submitting an offering letter for sole source requirements when VA has not identified a specific 8(a) participant for a requirement?

- ◆ An open offering letter for sole source requirements shall be submitted to the SBA District Office that services the geographical area where the VA contracting activity is located.

Question: What are the procedures for submitting the offering letter for competitive 8(a) requirements?

- ◆ An offering letter for competitive 8(a) requirements shall be submitted to the SBA District Office that services the geographical area where the VA contracting activity is located.
- ◆ Upon receipt of an offering letter, SBA will issue either an acceptance or rejection letter within 5 working days. Absent a notification of rejection within 5 working days of receipt of the offer from SBA, acceptance may be assumed on the 6th working day.

****EXCEPTIONS****

For construction services, the offering letter shall be sent to the SBA District Office located in the geographical area where the work will be performed, in case of construction contracts to be performed; overseas, the offering letter shall be submitted to SBA's Headquarters.

Question: Do I need an eligibility determination for the apparent awardee? What about negotiated procurements? Where is it sent?

- ◆ The contracting officer shall submit a request for eligibility determination to the SBA District Office servic

(VA and SBA 8(A) Partnership Agreement, continued on Page 7)

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- ◆ ing the apparent awardee.
- ◆ SBA shall issue an eligibility determination for the apparent awardee within 2 working days.
- ◆ For negotiated procurements, following receipt of initial offers including price, the contracting officer may request an eligibility determination for all firms in the competitive range, if discussions are to be conducted.
- ◆ Following receipt of initial offers including price, and with 2 working days after a request from the contracting officer, SBA shall issue an eligibility determination for all firms in the competitive range, if discussions are to be conducted.
- ◆ Eligibility determination requests shall be sent to the SBA offices servicing those firms in the competitive range.

Question: What if I have a competitive and sole source 8(a) requirement, but no specific 8(a) participant has been nominated, what do I do?

- ◆ When no specific 8(a) participant has been nominated for a competitive and sole source requirement, submit to the SBA District Office servicing the geographical area in which the procuring activity is located.

Question: What about competitive and open construction requirements?

- ◆ Submit to the SBA District Office serving the geographical area in which the work is to be performed or, in the case of overseas contracts, to the Office of 8(a) Business Development located at SBA Headquarters.

Question: Once an 8(a) requirement is awarded, who receives copies of award documents?

- ◆ A copy of any contracts as defined in FAR 2.101, including basic contracts, orders, modifications and purchases orders, executed under the PA to the SBA servicing District Office within 15 working days of the date of award.
- ◆ Also submit a copy to OSDBU.

Question: What shall we do prior to final award in all 8(a) competitive acquisitions?

- ◆ Request an eligibility determination from SBA.

Question: Does VA have the option to use tripartite procedures to award 8(a) contracts and purchase order to 8(a) participants as specified in FAR Subpart 19.8?

- ◆ Yes, VA shall retain that option.

Question: Does VA need SBA’s approval of novation agreements submitted by the 8(a) participant?

- ◆ Yes.

Question: What if VA wants to terminate a contract in whole or in part?

- ◆ SBA requires advance notice (as the prime contractor) prior to issuance of a final notice terminating the contract in whole or in part.

Question: What about NAICS codes for all 8(a) contracts?

- ◆ The contracting officer shall ensure that all NAICS codes for all 8(a) contracts are applied in accordance with FAR 19.102.

Question: What about joint ventures involving 8(a) participants?

- ◆ Submit all proposed joint ventures involving 8(a) participants to SBA for approval before contract(s) award.

The Partnership Agreement is on OSDBU’s Web site at www.va.gov/osdbu. If you have questions, please contact Lynette Simmons at (202) 565-8136 or Lynette.Simmons@va.gov.

IT Security Awareness & Technology Expo

By: Linda Sitney, Small Business Specialist

We would like to thank everyone who took time out of your business day to support the OSDBU sponsored IT Awareness & Technology Expo on March 1st in VACO C Level conference room. The Expo featured Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) and Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB). We hope you were able to obtain information on SDVOSBs and VOSBs capable of meeting your IT security and technology needs. OSDBU plans to do several Expos each year to assist VA in the accomplishment of its socioeconomic goal for SDVOSBs and VOSBs. We encourage your suggestions on the types of Expos that will be beneficial to you in the accomplishment of your mission. Please e-mail your suggestions to Linda Sitney at Linda.sitney@va.gov.

Jim “The Milkshake Man” Mayer

By: Tamika Gray, Small Business Specialist

Jim Mayer volunteers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, where he is widely known as the “Milkshake Man”. Since 1991, Jim, who lost his legs in Vietnam brings cheer to the wounded warriors/amputees he visits several times a week by delivering milkshakes to them.



(Jim “The Milkshake Man” Mayer, continued on Page 8)

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Jim has paid for countless milkshakes out of his own pocket and has also received gift cards/certificates for the purchase of milkshakes from the McDonald’s Family Restaurants of the Greater Washington, D.C., area. Because Jim volunteers for such a good cause, OSDBU also donated gift cards/certificates (during the holidays) to assist him in further continuing his legacy of delivering milkshakes and cheer.

A former light weapons infantryman, Jim who was wounded in Vietnam in April 1969, continues to serve his nation through his volunteering. Jim currently works in VA’s Office of Seamless Transition.

OSDBU commends Jim on his continuous efforts and would like to thank him for his service. America owes a great debt of gratitude to all veterans; therefore, thank you all who have served for serving our country!

Who’s Who in VA’s OSDBU...Meet the Team Players!

Prime Contracting Team

By: Deborah A. Van Dover, Senior Procurement Analyst



From left to right: V. Johnson, C. Smith, and D. Van Dover

VA’s Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) is currently organized into three teams; prime contracting, sub-contracting and outreach. This article will introduce you to the members of the prime contracting team, as well as outline the duties and responsibilities of this team.

The members of the prime contracting team are: Victoria Johnson, Small Business Specialist (Bundling), Cordell Smith, Small Business Specialist (Bundling), and Deborah Van Dover, Senior Procurement Analyst. The mission of our team is to assist VA acquisition professionals in creating and maintaining small business opportunities and to assist the small business community in locating those opportunities. Additionally, we perform training and provide guidance to VA’s acquisition community.

Specific duties of the prime contracting team include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ review of VA form 2268
- ◆ contract bundling reviews
- ◆ work with VA acquisition professionals on small business issues
- ◆ provide training on small business programs and compliance

- ◆ review specific solicitation packages for compliance with regulations relative to small business programs
- ◆ assignments as task force members on high visibility projects (i.e., Project Hero)
- ◆ user group member for VA’s National Standardization Program groups
- ◆ task force group member for Prime Vendor programs
- ◆ review legislation/proposed legislation and provide comments
- ◆ review FEDBIZOPPS synopses
- ◆ work with OA&MM policy division to develop guidance
- ◆ conduct market research
- ◆ review federal register---disseminate findings
- ◆ review GAO cases and disseminate pertinent case information
- ◆ provide assistance and guidance to small businesses
- ◆ work with VHA Office of Logistics on acquisition issues
- ◆ compose high level reports i.e. bundling report to congress
- ◆ attendance at conferences
- ◆ responding to inquiries on OSDBU mailbox

Individual assignments within the team are made as listed below. In the event an inquiry does not fit into one of these categories, please contact the senior procurement analyst, Deborah Van Dover.

Principal Commodities/Services:

Victoria – Consulting & Advisory Services and Subsistence;
 Deborah – Medical, Dental, Laboratory & Veterinary Equipment and Supplies and Medical Services (Non-Consulting & Advisory);
 Cordell – Information Technology Services, Equipment & Supplies, Construction Services and A/E Services

VA National Programs/Special Assignments:

Victoria – Subsistence Prime Vendor Program
 Deborah – Pharmaceutical Prime Vendor, Med/Surg Prime Vendor VHA Standardization
 Cordell – CARES, VISTA

Small Business Programs:

Victoria – Small Business, SDB, 8(a), Partial SB Set-Asides and Outreach Events
 Deborah – WOSB, VOSB, SDVOSB and Outreach Events;
 Cordell – HUBZone, Small Business Competitive Demo Program

VA Form 2268 is submitted to OSDBU electronically at 2268@va.gov or by fax at 202-565-8156. These forms are not to be submitted to individuals within OSDBU. The senior procurement analyst retrieves the form 2268, when submitted, and makes assignment to the appropriate prime contracting team member in accordance with the breakdown listed above. After review, the form is returned to the senior procurement analyst for signature or nonconcurrency.

(Prime Contracting Team, continued on Page 9)
(Prime Contracting Team, continued from Page 8)

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions, or just need to discuss an issue. Our respective telephone numbers are: Victoria Johnson, (202)565-8339, Cordell Smith, (202) 565-7740, and Deborah Van Dover, (202)-565-7795.

Subcontracting Team

By: Mark J. Taylor, Small Business Specialist

The focus of this article is to explain the duties of the OSDBU Subcontracting Team. The subcontracting team reviews, recommends approval or non-concurs on subcontracting plans submitted to us by the contractor through the contracting officer. A letter is sent to the contracting officer with our recommendations for approval or non-concurrence. If a subcontracting plan is not approved, this office lists the discrepancies within the plan for the contractor to correct. In order to receive a recommendation for approval, the subcontracting plan must comply with the 11 elements of a subcontracting plan listed in the Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 19.704.



L. Simmons & M. Taylor

The Team also conducts trend analyses of prime contractors for 3-5 year periods to assess how much they have increased or need to improve on their respective subcontracting accomplishments. This is our attempt to be proactive in identifying those companies that are unable to meet their goals. To provide assistance, we review their outreach efforts to small businesses and give them marketing tips as well as encourage small business concerns to contact primes and market their companies in an effort to gain subcontracting opportunities.

The Subcontracting Directory for VA prime contractors is located on the OSDBU Web site. Small businesses that wish to market themselves as subcontractors are strongly encouraged to access the OSDBU Web site. Click on “Doing Business with VA”, click on “Subcontracting”, and then scroll to the “Subcontracting Directory”.

This fiscal year, the subcontracting team is becoming more proactive in accessing needs of prime contractors and the team plans to accompany the Defense Logistics Agency on Compliance Reviews for selected contractors. The aim of this is two-fold: (1) to help them succeed in reaching their goals and; (2) to catalog and distribute best practices of those prime contractors that consistently meet or exceed their subcontracting goals.

The subcontracting team also serves as agency coordinators for the Electronic Subcontracting Management System (eSRS), which is part of the Inte-

grated Acquisition Environment (IAE). In this role, we work with other federal agency coordinators to fine tune the submission process of the subcontracting accomplishments, approve registration of agency officials in the eSRS, and ensure the dollar amount attributable to VA is accurate as entered into the system. As this is a relatively new reporting system, your suggestions are more than welcome as we grow together to optimize this system.

As of October 2005, the Standard Form 294 - Individual Subcontract Report and Standard Form 295 - Summary Subcontracting Report have been replaced with the Individual Subcontract Report (ISR) 294 and Summary Subcontract Report (SSR) 295. These reports are no longer submitted by paper, but are submitted electronically in the eSRS at www.esrs.gov. This is perhaps one of the more common errors on the subcontracting plan. Although all contractors and VA contracting officers have been notified of this change, we still get “too many” with this outdated error.

We also are the VA points of contact for the Memorandum of Understanding between VA and the Small Business Administration 8(A) Partnership Agreement. The team reviewed the initial draft sent by the SBA and made changes to the documents that are consistent with VA policy. Then, prepared a white paper for the Director to review and discuss prior to him signing the MOU and sending back to SBA. The team attended the first 8(a) training on the Interagency Partnership Agreement. We also review FAR changes prepare white papers regarding those changes to the Director for consideration and discussion prior to those comments leaving this office. We provide counseling on small business issues and particularly subcontracting. We also hold conference calls and conduct training on subcontracting and eSRS with VA and federal acquisition personnel upon request, or as new changes are about to be implemented. Other duties include, but are not limited to answering congressional and other incoming correspondence to OSDBU.

Please contact your subcontracting team members for questions or comments at mark.taylor@va.gov or lynette.simmons@va.gov.

Outreach Team

By: Tamika Gray, Small Business Specialist

The Outreach team consists of two enthusiastic Small Business Specialists, Linda Sitney and Tamika Gray. We are responsible for educating the small business community on VA’s mission, acquisition operations, contracting and subcontracting opportunities, and assisting small business concerns in their VA marketing efforts. We are also responsible for serving as the “voice” for OSDBU; keeping our “fingers on the pulse,” staying current with FAR and VAAR changes that may potentially effect small businesses in contracting with VA.



L. Sitney & T. Gray

Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

(Outreach Team, continued on Page 10)

(Outreach Team, continued from Page 9)

- ◆ responding to outreach telephone calls
- ◆ responding to outreach e-mails
- ◆ responding to outreach WEBCIMS assignments and congressional inquiries
- ◆ hosting vendor day sessions
- ◆ one-on-one counseling with small business concerns
- ◆ conference planning
- ◆ conference attendance
- ◆ running statistical socioeconomic conference attendance reports
- ◆ fulfilling field requests to receive promotional items and OSDBU handouts
- ◆ small business concerns training
- ◆ reviewing and monitoring VA's forecast of contracting opportunities (FCO)
- ◆ setting up expos at Central Office i.e. SDVOSB Office Supplies & Cyber Security Expos
- ◆ preparing OSDBU publications i.e. trifold, presentations, etc.
- ◆ editing and publishing of the VA OSDBU *Small Business AdVocAte* (newsletter)
- ◆ writing articles for various publications i.e. Set-Aside Alert, *AdVocAte*

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or concerns. Our respective telephone numbers are: Linda Sitney (202) 565-8132 and Tamika Gray, (202) 565-8133.

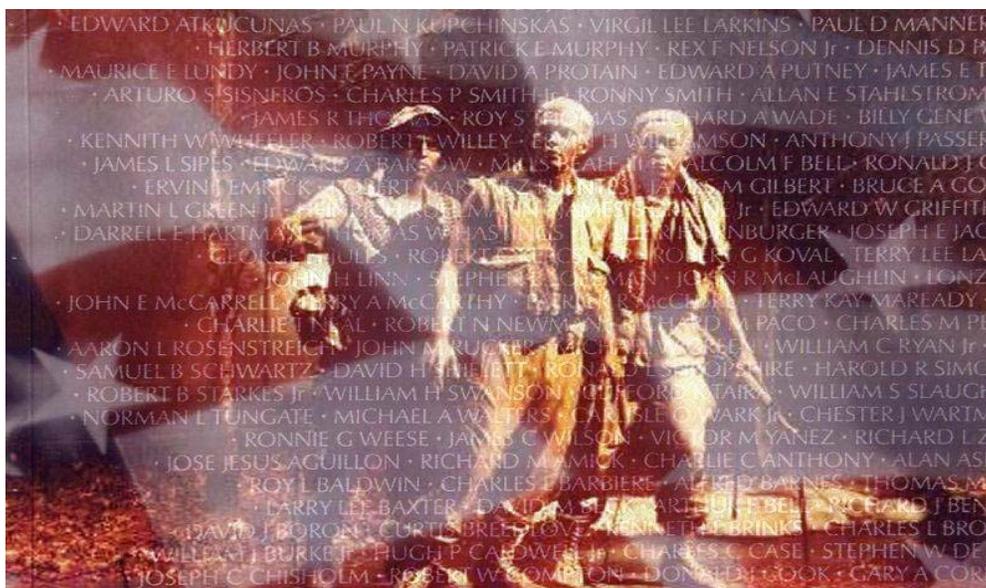


OSDBU
Wishes
Everyone a
Happy St.
Patrick's
Day!



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Graphic by: Lee S. Girard



Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION
March 12—15, 2007	Reservation Economic Summit (RES) 2007, Las Vegas, NV
March 19—32, 2007	22nd National Logistics Conference, Miami, FL
March 20—24, 2007	National Small Business Federal Contracting Week, Washington, DC
March 21, 2007	VA OSDBU Vendor Counseling Session, Washington, DC
March 29, 2007	Alliance South 2007, College Park, GA
March 29, 2007	Working with the Federal Government and Large Integrators, Montgomery, MD
April 1, 2007	Winter Sports Clinic, Colorado Springs, CO
April 12, 2007	Diversity Business Conference, Las Vegas, NV
April 17, 2007	SBA Southeastern Regional Business Matchmaking , Atlanta, GA
April 17—21, 2007	Veteran & Small Business Training & Outreach Conference, Sparks, NV
April 18, 2007	VA OSDBU Vendor Counseling Session, Washington, DC
April 18, 2007	3RD Annual NEPA PTAC EXPO 2007, Wilkes-Barre PA
April 19, 2007	OSDBU Procurement Conference, Upper Marlboro, MD
April 23—25, 2007	North California Procurement Conference, Shreveport, CA
April 26, 2007	Alliance West 2007, San Jose, CA
April 30, 2007	NCA Vendor Conference, Alexandria, VA
May 2, 2007	AT&T Small Business Conference, Washington, DC
May 7, 2007	Virginia Minority Business Supplier, VA
May 9—12, 2007	CelerbAsian Business Conference, San Francisco, CA
May 16, 2007	VA OSDBU Vendor Counseling Session, Washington, DC
May 15, 2007	VISN 8 & SBA Small Business Conference, FL
May 22, 2007	2007 Tennessee Business Matchmaking, Franklin, TN
May 22—24, 2007	Great Plains PRO-BIZ Summit, Rapid City, SD
May 29, 2007	Teaming to Win 2007, Wheeling, WV
May 30, 2007	Procurement Conference, Warrensburg, MO
May 30—31, 2007	1st Federal EXPO 2007, San Juan, PR
May 31, 2007	5th Annual Procurement Matchmaking Symposium, El Paso, TX
June 3, 2007	Alliance Texas 2007, Grapevine, TX
June 25—29, 2007	3rd Annual National Veterans Conference, Las Vegas, NV
July 17, 2007	Procurement Technical Assistance Center's Program, Westchester County, NY
July 25, 2007	32nd Annual Convention & Business Expo, San Antonio, TX
July 28, 2007	SBA Midwestern Regional Business Matchmaking, Chicago, IL
August 15, 2007	National Defense Industrial Association Small Business Conference, San Diego, CA
October 25, 2007	Riverside PTAC Veterans Conference, Riverside, CA
December 8, 2007	GSA Small Business Conference, Honolulu, HI