

Advocacy Commends SBA for Improvements in its Proposed Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program and Recommends That SBA Consider the Costs of the Rule on Firms that Self-Certify.

On May 3, 2010, the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Advocacy (Advocacy) submitted comments to the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) on SBA's Proposed Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program, 75 Fed. Reg. 1003 (March 4, 2010). Public Law 105-554 created an acquisition tool that would allow agencies to restrict competition to qualified women-owned small businesses in certain industries. SBA's proposed rule would allow small women-owned businesses to self-certify their eligibility for these restricted federal contracts. A complete copy of Advocacy's letter to SBA is available at: www.sba.gov/advo/laws/comments/.

- SBA is proposing to create a repository so that self-certifying women-owned businesses do not have to submit certifying documents each time they are the apparent successful offeror. There is no timetable for setting up this repository.
- SBA has identified eighty-three industries in which women-owned small businesses are underrepresented or substantially underrepresented as required by Public Law 105-54. This current proposed regulation does not appear to take into consideration new industries in which women-owned small businesses are underrepresented or substantially underrepresented.
- Advocacy commended SBA for addressing past discrimination against women-owned small businesses in competing for federal contracts, and Advocacy recommended that SBA take into account new technologies and industries that may not yet be represented in The NAIC system. Advocacy also recommended that SBA reconsider the costs of establishing eligibility to compete for these contracts.

For more information about the proposed rule, please visit Advocacy's Web page at www.sba.gov/advo or contact Major L. Clark III, Assistant Chief Counsel, at (202) 205-7150 (or major.clark@sba.gov).