



News

Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: March 2, 2016
Release Number: 16-14

Contact: Miguel Ayala (202) 450-0148
Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news
Follow us on [Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#)

SBA: Federal Government Breaks Contracting Record for Women-Owned Small Businesses

For the first time, federal government hits women's contracting goal; 5.05 percent or \$17.8 billion awarded to Women-Owned Small Businesses; Senior Administration officials and Members of Congress herald historic contracting achievements

WASHINGTON – Maria Contreras-Sweet, Administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and a member of President Obama's Cabinet, was joined by Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-07), Ranking Member of the House Small Business Committee, Representative Judy Chu (D-CA-27) and Representative Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17) today to announce that the federal government has surpassed its five percent contracting goal for Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB) for the first time in history.

"Meeting this goal means five percent is no longer our ceiling but our foundation upon which to build," said **Contreras-Sweet**. "A recent SBA-commissioned study revealed women-owned businesses already employ eight million American workers, but when it comes to receiving contracts and capital, women are still under-represented. That's why the SBA has added 36 new industry categories where women can now compete for set-aside contracts and sole-source awards. This will dramatically expand contracting opportunities for women-owned businesses, paving the way for new jobs and industries to be created."

Contracting accomplishments announced today include:

- In FY15, **5.05 percent or \$17.8 billion** of all federal small business eligible contracting dollars were awarded to WOSBs, the first time this specific benchmark has ever been reached. Since taking over as SBA Administrator,

Contreras-Sweet has made it a top priority to increase federal contracting opportunities for Women-Owned Small Businesses.

- The federal government surpassed its 23 percent small business procurement goal for the **third year in a row**, awarding an all-time high of 25.75 percent, or **\$90.7 billion**, in federal contracts to small businesses. These contracting funds support more than **537,000 jobs** and have a significant impact on job creation, innovation, and growth in communities throughout the country.
- Federal contract dollars awarded to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDB) **also reached historic highs**. For the **4th consecutive year**, the federal government exceeded the goal for SDVOSBs, achieving **3.93 percent or \$13.8 billion** of all federal small business eligible contracting dollars. SDBs received **10.06 percent or \$35.4 billion** of all small business eligible contracting dollars, the highest percentage in history.

A recent [report commissioned by Contreras-Sweet](#) showed that WOSBs are underrepresented or substantially underrepresented in 113 North American Classification System (NAICS) groups. These findings will be used to expand opportunities for women-owned businesses and provide a broader range of industries for contracting officers to find eligible women-owned businesses.

In April 2013, WIPP, American Express OPEN and the SBA partnered to launch [ChallengeHER](#), a national initiative to help boost government contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses.

“Small businesses often get too little credit for their work as our nation’s leading job-creators, generating nearly two out of three net new jobs in our economy,” **Contreras-Sweet** added. “Last fiscal year the federal government awarded its highest percentage of contracting dollars to small businesses in the history of the United States, totaling more than \$90 billion. Those resources supported more than half a million jobs in communities across this country. When these federal dollars churn in local communities, they create a multiplier effect that strengthens the local tax base and leads to better government services and better schools. That’s the promise of our work.”

More information about these contracting figures can be found [here](#).

The SBA’s complete Annual Procurement Scorecard will be released later this year. To learn more about the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract Program, visit: <http://www.sba.gov/wosb>. For more information on ChallengeHER, visit: <http://www.wipp.org/ChallengeHER>.

###

ABOUT THE U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small

business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, the SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. www.sba.gov