



News Release

WEST VIRGINIA DISTRICT

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SBA Government Contracting Not Just For New Small Businesses

PARKERSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA — Small businesses, new and established, can benefit from doing business with the federal government. Purchasing approximately \$600 billion a year, the federal government buys goods and services ranging from space engines to janitorial work. The U.S. Small Business Administration works closely with federal agencies to ensure small businesses obtain their fair share of government contracts and subcontracts. In 2012, \$128.5 million was awarded to West Virginia small businesses.

Judy Sheppard, President and CEO of Professional Services of America Inc., was in business for more than 15 years before she entered the government contracting realm. Sheppard's Parkersburg office sits next to the Bureau of the Public Debt, and she couldn't comprehend why she wasn't able to do business with them. Sheppard spoke to the local small business specialist who directed her to the SBA to learn more about the Small Business Set-Aside Program. Through a congress mandated act, federal agencies are required to establish contracting goals, with at least 23 percent of all government contracts targeted to small firms.

Sheppard spent time researching the qualifications for becoming an 8(a) certified business. At first, she was overwhelmed and an application packet sat on the corner of her desk, and she would recall that, "Every day I would stare at the packet knowing I was losing money."

This did not sit well with Sheppard; she was determined to complete the process. She started chiseling away at the application and upon completion she kissed it, knowing her life and her company were about to change forever.

PSA is now a woman-owned, Native American, HUBZone-certified, SBA 8(a), small disadvantaged business. They engage in a wide variety of services primarily focusing on human resource staffing and project management. This fall, after completing the allowed nine years in the program, the company will graduate. Sheppard looks forward to the challenge and is eager to help other companies learn the process. PSA currently works with 28 federal agencies and employs over 300 staff members.

"It's never too late to get started doing business with the government," Sheppard said. "I was in the corporate sector for more than 15 years before I branched out; I saw an opportunity and went for it."

Sheppard credits the West Virginia District Office of the SBA stating, "When in doubt, reach out. When I first started the process – SBA, 8(a), GSA – it all sounded like a lot of alphabet soup to me. The team at the West Virginia District Office is wonderful and they really break everything down and make it understandable."

The West Virginia District Office delivers SBA programs and services to small business throughout West Virginia from two locations, Clarksburg and Charleston. In 2012, SBA trained over 1,500 WV small businesses on how to do business with the federal government, including SBA certification programs.

Sheppard received the SBA 2011 Small Business Person of the Year and the 2006 Women in Business Champion award. For more information on doing business with the federal government, visit <http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/contracting>.

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