



# *News Release*

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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## **SBA to Implement Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program**

**WASHINGTON** - The U.S. Small Business Administration announced today that it has concluded its review of a recently issued report on a study it received from the independent National Academy of Sciences and will begin the necessary steps to implement the Women-Owned Small Business Contracting Program in a manner consistent with the recommendations contained within the study.

The first step in implementation is to prepare proposed regulations that would define the eligibility requirements for being considered a woman-owned small business, including requirements relating to ownership, control and economic disadvantage. The SBA will also request proposals for undertaking the industry-by-industry study, as recommended by the NAS, needed to determine those industries where women-owned small businesses are underrepresented and substantially underrepresented. The study is required by law.

The next step is to review the resulting study and implement the program in accordance with its findings.

“The SBA has been and continues to be committed to making sure that women-owned small businesses have all the possible opportunities to federal contracts,” said Allegra McCullough, associate deputy administrator for Government Contracting and Business Development. “We are therefore moving ahead to see that the contracting program for women-owned small businesses is implemented in a manner that will withstand legal scrutiny.”

This initiative is part of an overall effort by the SBA to increase contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses. The latest figures available indicate that prime contracting dollars awarded to women-owned small businesses increased from \$6.8 billion in FY 2002 to \$8.3 billion in FY 2003, representing an increase of \$1.5 billion in prime contracting dollars.

If subcontracting dollars are included, more than \$14 billion in contracts were awarded to women-owned small businesses in FY 2003.

Other contracting initiatives at the SBA have shown positive results for women-owned small businesses. For example, in the Business Matchmaking program, 50 percent of the contracts awarded have gone to women-owned small businesses and over 65 percent of the contracting dollars have gone to women.

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