

Defense thinks small for new contracts
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DETROIT, March 26 (UPI) -- The U.S. Defense Department is increasing efforts to target small businesses for contract work, a department official said.

At a Small Business Defense Procurement Summit held in Detroit -- one of several planned for various cities -- Ashton Carter, undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, said the department spends up to \$200 billion per year on contracts with small business, The Detroit News reported Saturday.

"Small business is a necessary ingredient of getting a better deal for the defense dollar for two reasons," Carter said. "One is you tap into the talent and energy and vitality of small business. ... And secondly, you get more competition from small businesses."

Michael Blake, associate director for the White House Office of Public Engagement, said the budget for small businesses would jump by \$4 billion this year, climbing from 21.9 percent to 23 percent of the department's outside contracts.

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said, "We've got hundreds of companies in Michigan that do defense work. We want to continue to increase that number and make sure they know about opportunities in the defense area. It's a growing part of Michigan's economy."