

Panetta warns DOD small-biz contracting goal is impending

- By [Matthew Weigelt](#)
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Defense Secretary Leon Panetta has warned the Defense Department's senior leaders that they will not reach the small business contracting goal for the fiscal year if they keep moving at the current pace.

“With only six weeks left in this fiscal year, we are falling short of meeting our departmentwide small business contracting goal of 22.3 percent,” he wrote in a [memo](#) Aug. 24. “I therefore urge you and everyone in your organization who is involved in the acquisition process to review all planned acquisitions for the remainder of the year to identify opportunities for increased contracting with small businesses.”

Ashton Carter, under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics, would issue more guidance, Panetta also wrote.

“Dynamic small businesses play a central role in strengthening the Department of Defense industrial base and improving our acquisition outcomes,” he wrote. “Small businesses not only lead the nation in innovation, they are also proven drivers of competition and incubators for business growth.”

In a [letter](#) sent to Panetta Sept. 2, Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.), chairwoman of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, offered her full support because Panetta had made small-business contracting a priority.

She recommended that DOD consider small businesses when officials write policies that influence how acquisition officials and program managers interact with contractors.