



Administration makes it easier to award vets sole-source contracts

FAR amendment would more closely mirror language of Veterans Benefits Act

- By [Matthew Weigelt](#)
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The Obama administration today finalized acquisition rules to clarify that a contracting officer can award a sole-source contract to a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB), even if there is more than one company that can perform the work.

The contracting officer can make the sole-source award to that SDVOSB, as long as the officer expects to receive no bids from another SDVOSB, according to the [amendment to the Federal Acquisition Regulation](#). The new rule was published in today's Federal Register.

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The rule, which goes into effect Aug. 2, only applies to SDVOSBs.

The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council have determined the FAR should be revised to more closely mirror the [Veterans Benefits Act of 2003](#) and lessen the possibility of misinterpretation. They first proposed the rule in May 2009.

The changes are based on a [2007 Government Accountability Office protest decision](#).

A small-business owner who is a service-disabled veteran objected to the Air Force's decision to award a small-business set-aside contract instead of a sole-source award to a small business owned by a service-disabled veteran. The Air Force chose the set-aside because one other firm owned by a service-disabled veteran could have performed the contract's work. However, the protester countered that the company didn't respond to the solicitation.

About the Author

Matthew Weigelt is acquisition editor for Federal Computer Week.



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