



News Release

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Obama Administration Announces Efforts to Increase Access to Contracting Opportunities for Minority-Owned, Small Businesses

Secretary Locke, Administrator Mills will lead government-wide initiative; federal officials to participate in more than 200 procurement events across the country

WASHINGTON – The Obama Administration today reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that minority-owned and small businesses, including women- and veteran-owned businesses, have greater access to federal government contracting opportunities.

Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and Small Business Administrator Karen Mills announced a government-wide plan that includes federal agency procurement officials holding or participating in more than 200 events over the next 90 days to share information on government contracting opportunities, including those available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“Small and minority-owned businesses must play a significant role in our efforts to restore economic growth. Small businesses employ half of the nation’s private sector workforce; create a large share of the Nation’s new jobs; and introduce many groundbreaking ideas into the marketplace,” President Barack Obama said. “It is essential that we provide our Nation’s small businesses with maximum practicable opportunity to participate in Federal Government contracting.

“In order for the Federal Government to better meet or exceed the goal of 23 percent of prime contracts for small businesses, Vice President Biden and I have tasked Small Business Administrator Karen Mills and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke with leading a federal government-wide initiative to increase outreach,” Obama continued. “Over the course of the next ninety days agency officials will take an important step forward by holding or participating in more than two-hundred events focused on sharing information on government contracting opportunities.”

“In these tough economic times, the Recovery Act is providing billions of dollars in opportunity and incentives to help businesses grow – and the President and I are committed to ensuring that small and minority-owned businesses are part of our economic recovery every step of the way,” said Vice President Joe Biden. “By taking advantage of the expertise of an array of companies, we are going to be able to build a stronger, more secure foundation for long-term economic growth.”

“It has been a priority from day one of this administration to ensure that small and minority-owned businesses are aware of and have access to federal contracts and funding opportunities,”

Locke said. “Over the past 40 years, minority-owned businesses have grown from 300,000 to nearly 4 million today. Their success and the success of small American businesses are vital to our economic recovery.”

“Government contracts can play a key role in helping small businesses turn the corner in terms of expansion and job creation,” Mills said. “But make no mistake, the benefits the government receives are equally as impressive – working with small businesses allows the federal government to work with some of the most innovative companies in America – with direct line to CEO”

As part of the Commerce-SBA initiative, over the next 90 days:

- Federal agency procurement officials will hold or participate in more than 200 events to share information on government contracting opportunities, including those available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- SBA and Commerce will expand their outreach to fellow contracting officials across the federal government, passing along best practices for outreach and education to every agency to ensure they have the tools they need to meet their annual contracting goals.
- Locke and Mills will promote small business contracting opportunities in remarks, events and discussions with small business groups across the country, including minority, women and veteran groups.

Beyond the next 90 days, Commerce and SBA will support, monitor and track the impact of these efforts going forward to help ensure the Administration is maximizing opportunities for small businesses.

Small business owners can find out about federal contracting opportunities by visiting www.fedbizopps.gov. Local Commerce and SBA officials are also available in local offices across the country to assist small businesses interested in contracting opportunities. Contact information for local offices can be found www.commerce.gov and www.sba.gov.

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