

SBA considering mandating set-asides on multiple award contracts

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NEW YORK CITY--The federal government finally could reach its goal of awarding 23 percent of all contract dollars to small businesses by allowing, and possibly mandating, agencies to set aside orders against the General Services Administration's Multiple Awards Schedule and other indefinite delivery-indefinite quantity contracts, according to a senior Small Business Administration official.

Currently, agencies are not required to, and they often are discouraged from setting aside small businesses task and delivery orders that are placed against multiple award contracts. But the Small Business Jobs Act, signed by President Obama in September 2010 instructs SBA and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy to develop guidance that would reverse that policy.

To further its policy deliberations, SBA met with hundreds of small business owners on Wednesday in Manhattan as part of its Small Business Jobs Act tour. The event, one of 13 scheduled in locations across the country in March and April, is designed to provide the public with information about the provisions in the legislation, including 19 focused on contracting.

Arguably the most important, and potentially difficult to implement, provision would dramatically alter how agencies use the GSA schedules and IDIQ contract vehicles, which now represent 28 percent of the federal procurement marketplace. In 1990, IDIQs represented just 14 percent of the total contracting dollars spent by agencies.

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