

Agencies Break Records Meeting Small Business Contracting Goals



SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet praised the Pentagon's role in helping exceed the governmentwide goal. Bob Nichols/USDA

By Charles S. Clark

Agency buyers met and exceeded their statutory goal of awarding 23 percent of contract dollars to small businesses in fiscal 2014, the Small Business Administration announced on Friday, handing out a best-ever 24.99 percent of awards to eligible small firms and topping the previous record of 23 percent last year.

Small businesses overall received \$91.1 billion in federal contracts, an increase of \$8 billion over the fiscal 2013, according to SBA's annual score card. The evolving methodology of the score card has been criticized by some lawmakers.

Twenty agencies received "A" or "A-plus" grades on the latest assessment, with the perfect scores going to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Commerce and Homeland Security departments. The government as a whole earned an "A."

The only agency to receive a failing grade was the Energy Department which, as its response

noted, uses a "unique long-standing business model, whereby 85 percent of our total procurement bases go towards the operation of our site and facility management contractors."

Five agencies met the criteria in all four categories, which include small businesses owned by women, small disadvantaged businesses, service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, and small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones. Those agencies were the Homeland Security, Agriculture, Treasury and Transportation departments, and SBA itself.

The Defense Department, which received an "A," accounted for the largest share of small business contracting dollars, representing \$54.3 billion out of the \$91.1 billion total that went to small firms. Hence SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet made the announcement Friday in a press conference at the Pentagon with Frank Kendall, undersecretary of Defense for acquisition, technology and logistics.

"The Defense Department's outstanding progress allowed us to make our goals by having two of

three dollars small-business eligible," she said as she introduced military service procurement chiefs, one Virginia Pentagon contractor who is a veteran and another from Baltimore who hired employees who previously were incarcerated. "The DoD has walked the walk and made great strides," she said. It's a "shining example of what leadership can do," because small businesses that work with the federal government average nearly double the revenue of those that do not.

Category records were broken governmentwide, she said, with the contracts for disadvantaged businesses rising from 5 percent to 9.5 percent, those to service-disabled veterans' firms from 3 percent to 3.7 percent, and those going to women-owned firms rising from 4.3 percent to 4.7 percent, "just shy of the goal."

Contreras-Sweet stressed that President Obama has been personally involved in steering contracts to small

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**BART Earthquake Safety Program Aerial Structures
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Atkinson Contractors, LP

18201 Von Karman Ave, Suite 800. Irvine, CA 92612
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 Contact: Andrew Nelson

Atkinson is a union contractor and an Equal Opportunity Employer. 100% Performance & Payment Bonds from an approved
 surety company will be required for subcontractors greater than \$500,000. Atkinson will pay the cost of bonds up to 1.5%.
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 include a waiver of subrogation. This is a BART OCIP project. Subcontractors must provide contractor's license number and
 Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) registration number with their quote.

Plans and specs are available for viewing in our San Francisco office located at 450 Mission Street, Suite 402, San Francisco,
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 appointment to view plans and specs in our Irvine (Orange County) office.

McGuire and Hester

9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603 • Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209
 Contact: Dave Koerber
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Sub Bids Requested From Qualified DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for
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Vacaville-Dixon Bicycle Route Phase 5B

Location: Vacaville, CA

Project No. CML-5923(110)

Bid Date: August 4, 2015 @ 2:00 PM

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: trucking; construction area
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from 0.5 Mile North of Mojave Drive to 1.5 Mile North of Stoddard Wells Road Overcrossing

Bids Wednesday, August 5, 2015

Description of Work and Material Supply (but not limited to):

Aggregate Base, Architectural Treatment, Asphalt Paving, Biologist, Clear & Grub, Concrete Barrier, Concrete Paving, Construction Area Signs, Demolition, Drainage, Earthwork, Drilled Piling, Driven Piling, Electrical, Environmental Services, Erosion Control, Fencing & Railing, Flatwork, Guardrail, Imported Borrow, Irrigation, Joint Seal, Landscaping, Pavement Marking, Maintenance of Traffic, Minor Concrete, Misc Iron & Steel, Overhead Sign Structures, Painting, Pipe Supply, Precast Prestressed Concrete Girders, Rebar, Retaining Wall, Road Barrier, Roadway Joint Seal, Roadway Sign, Rock Slope Protection, Sewer, Shotcrete, Signal and Lighting, Soil Nail Wall, Soundwall (Masonry Block), Street Sweeping, Structural Concrete, Structural Steel, Survey, SWPPP, Traffic Control System, Traffic Monitoring Stations, Trucking, Wireless Vehicle Detection System (Refer to project specs for complete bid item list). **This project has a 12% DBE Goal.**

Atkinson Contractors, LP

18201 Von Karman Ave, Suite 800. Irvine, CA 92612

socal.estimating@atkn.com

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TO DOWNLOAD PLANS, SPECS AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:
Please go to http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/project_ads_addenda/08/08-3555V4/

Robert A. Bothman, Inc.

2690 Scott Blvd. • Santa Clara, CA 95050
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BART EARTHQUAKE SAFETY PROGRAM FRUITVALE STATION AND COLISEUM STATION CONTRACT NO. 15PJ-130

Location: Oakland, California

Owner: BART

Bid Date: Tuesday August 11th at 2:00 PM

Bid documents can be viewed at our office or by contacting us for a link to access the plans and specifications.

Please call our office for any assistance with bonding; insurance; obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials; lines of credit and/or technical assistance.

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DOWNTOWN SJ & CITY HALL BRT STATIONS

Location: San Jose, California

Owner: Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority

Bid Date: Thursday July 30th at 3:00 PM

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Please call our office for any assistance with bonding; insurance; obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials; lines of credit and/or technical assistance.

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Contact: **Tim Herrera**

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Invites sub-bids from qualified union DBE businesses for the following project:

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HISP) Traffic Signal Upgrades Project, Project No. 3682

Location: City of Santa Barbara

BID DATE/TIME: 7/23/2015 @ 3:00PM

SEEKING: Traffic Control and Concrete

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McGuire and Hester

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Contact: **Dave Koerber**

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Sub Bids Requested From Qualified DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for

County of Yuba - Olivehurst Avenue Complete Streets Project - Location: Yuba County, CA

Project No. 2015-8058 / CML-5916 (096)

Bid Date: August 4, 2015 @ 2:00 PM

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Why are Government Contractors Cutting Their Cybersecurity Budgets?

By Mohana Ravindranath

Government contractors reduced their spending on cybersecurity in the past year, despite several high-profile data breaches, a new survey shows.

About 52 percent of businesses reported a slight decrease in cyber spending in the past year. About 17 percent said their cyber spending increased dramatically, while 31 percent said it increased slightly, according to a new survey from contracting analysis firm Deltek.

“We’re surprised that over half of the companies . . . had experienced decreased spending in cybersecurity,” Deltek Vice President Kevin Plexico said during a call discussing the results. “Our best guess is that the ones that are decreasing are probably not the ones that have had breaches.”

Still, about 46 percent of respondents said they had experienced some type of physical or virtual breach, according to Deltek. About 33 percent said they experienced denial-of-service attacks, 33 percent cited data breaches and 13 percent pointed to physical breaches.

Large contractors are also cutting their overall IT budgets, Deltek found. About 60 percent of large firms -- generating \$100 million to more than \$1 billion in annual revenue -- decreased their IT budgets last year. Sixty-six percent of small firms, generating less than \$20 million, saw an increase in IT budgets.

That divergence between small and large firms will probably even out through 2016, the report said, because large companies said they expected a slight increase in IT spending, while smaller companies expected a decrease.



During the call, Plexico said he was “a bit surprised” at decreasing IT budgets, because “normally, when you see companies growing . . . you sort of expect that IT budgets are going to grow along side that.”

But respondents reported feeling pressure to “effectively decrease cost so that overhead cost could be recaptured in profit,” he said.

When asked about their biggest IT challenges, budget pressure and IT security were among the most frequently cited, according to Deltek.

Government contractors are diversifying beyond federal business, the report said. About 62 percent of contractors’ business came from federal customers last year, the survey found. The previous year, about 427 firms reported 84 percent of their business came from federal customers.

“Firms made it clear that they are not standing still waiting for the business environment to improve,” Deltek’s report said. “Companies are expanding their operations outside of federal contracting in search of higher-growth markets.”

Source: <http://www.nextgov.com>

Agencies Break Records Meeting Small Business Contracting Goals

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business -- a sector that is “more nimble, more agile, and which drives innovation” with new patents, she said. “The jobs tend to be American, neighborhood and local manufacturing.”

Kendall called the day “a very important milestone,” citing his five-year effort with Ash Carter—now the Defense secretary, to develop the Pentagon’s “Better Buying Power” initiative for small and large contractors. “Two of its elements involve small business,” he said. “Innovation and efficiency to control costs” and, “for practical reasons, small businesses tend to be leaner and more anxious to get the work, so it’s more economical for us.”

Kendall added that, “We’re not satisfied with ‘A,’ next year we’re going for ‘A-plus.’”

John Shoraka, SBA’s associate administrator for government contracting, explained the grades are based 80 percent on the number of prime contractor dollars recorded in the federal procurement database, 10 percent for subcontractors and 10 percent on subjective success factors such as leadership, and controls on data measurement quality. He acknowledged the criticism that SBA’s baseline for determining the award percentages is not comprehensive, excluding, for example, leasing dollars and funds for overseas contingency operations. “We are working with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy for next year to eliminate as many exclusions as possible,” he said, which actually makes it harder to meet the goals.

One reason for the recent improvements, he added, is that Senior Executive Service managers are now accountable for their agency’s small business award performance.

A dissenting view on Friday came from House Small Business Committee Chairman Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, who challenged the score card’s methodology, saying its baseline depends too much on prime contractors.

“The SBA is robbing small businesses,” he said, pointing to \$78 billion in federal contract dollars reported into the federal procurement data system but not in the baseline. “For every dollar the SBA doesn’t count, small businesses are losing 23 cents” or nearly \$18 billion in fiscal 2014 contracts. “The reason Congress asks for these numbers is so we can use them -- not so that the administration can pat itself on the back once a year,” Chabot said. “These are supposed to provide insight to help Congress craft policies that strengthen our industrial base. This sort of misreporting doesn’t help.”

Source: www.govexec.com