

# SBE TODAY

**SMALL BUSINESS EXCHANGE**

Volume 29, Edition 50 - September 6, 2013

DIVERSITY IN ACTION -

Published by SBE, certified SBE/DBE/MBE

## Minority contracting doesn't match population's numbers



About 17 percent of the U.S. population is Hispanic, and 13 percent is black.

In federal small-business contracting, award ratios for those groups are in the single digits.

Small businesses, called the “drivers and engines of growth” by President Obama, attracted about \$98.2 billion in government awards last year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg News. Hispanic-owned companies won about 8.4 percent of that total, or \$8.2 billion, while black-operated small businesses won about 7.2 percent, or \$7.1 billion.

“The needle hasn’t moved,” said Ruth Sandoval, president of the National Hispanic Business Group, a New York-based organization representing business owners.

The gap may reflect stiffer competition over a shrinking pool of contract revenue as agencies cut spending. Black- and Hispanic-owned businesses also may have difficulty breaking into the \$512 billion market because acquisition officers don’t have a mechanism to specifically target those companies.

Small businesses are generally defined by the government as having fewer than 500 employees or less than \$7 million in average annual sales.

Contracts for black-owned small companies declined about 1 percent in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30. Awards to the Hispanic-owned businesses rose 1.5 percent — a gain that wasn’t enough to compensate for a bigger drop in fiscal 2011, according to federal procurement data.

Both groups fared better than the broader contracting markets last year. Small-business contracts declined 3.7 percent in fiscal 2012, while total awards dipped 4.1 percent.

Still, minority small businesses are playing catch-up following sharp contracting declines in fiscal 2011 that outpaced those of small businesses and all companies.

Awards to the black-owned businesses plunged 6.5 percent from fiscal 2010 — more than four times the decline in all contracts. Awards to their Hispanic-owned counterparts

Continued on page 5

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# REQUESTS FOR BIDS & SUB-BIDS

## SKANSKA

Sub-Bids Requested From Qualified DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers

### Replace and Widen Genesee Bridge at Route 5

District 11 on Route 5

Contract No.: 110223U4

DBE Goal: 8 %

**Bid Date: September 12, 2013 – 2:00 PM**

Skanska is interested in soliciting in Good Faith all subcontractors as well as certified DBE companies for this project. All interested subcontractors, please indicate all lower tier DBE participation offered on your quotation as it will be evaluated with your price. Please call if we can assist you in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, insurance, necessary equipment, materials and/or supplies. Skanska will also review breaking out scope packages and adjusting schedules to help permit maximum participation.

Plans and Specifications are available for view at our main office in Riverside or on the Caltrans website: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/weekly\\_ads/index.php](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/oe/weekly_ads/index.php)

**Quotes requested from Subcontractors, Suppliers and Service Providers include, but are not limited to:** Construction Site Management, Storm Water Pollution Plan, Street Sweeping, Construction Area Signs, Traffic Control System, Type III Barricade, Fencing, Portable Delineator, Temporary Pavement Marking, Temporary Traffic Stripe, Channelizer, Temporary Railing, Portable Changeable Message Signs, Temporary Crash Cushion Module, Metal Beam Guard Railing, Roadside Signs, Abandon Culvert, Cold Plane Concrete Pavement, Remove Concrete (Structure), Concrete Barrier, Bridge Removal, Clearing and Grubbing, Roadway Excavation, Develop Water Supply, Structure Excavation (Bridge), Structure Excavation (Retaining Wall), Structure Backfill, Sand Backfill, Rock Blanket, Soil Nail, Erosion Control, Fiber Rolls, Class 2 Aggregate Base, Hot Mix Asphalt, Place Hot Mix Asphalt Dike, Tack Coat, Concrete Pavement, Seal Pavement Joint, Furnish & Drive Steel Pile, CIDH Concrete Piling, Prestressing CIP Concrete, Structural Concrete (Bridge), Structural Concrete (Retaining Wall), Structure Concrete (Box Culvert), Minor Concrete, Shotcrete, Treat Bridge Deck, Joint Seal Assembly, Joint Seal, Bar Reinforcing Steel (Bridge), Bar Reinforcing Steel (Retaining Wall), Furnish & Install Sign Structure, Furnish Laminated Panel, Furnish Single Sheet Aluminum Sign, Roadside Sign, Alternative Pipe Culvert, Reinforced Concrete Pipe, Corrugated Steel Pipe, Welded Steel Pipe Casing, Alternative Flared End Section, Rock Slope Protection, Slope Paving, Minor Concrete, Rock Slope Protection Fabric, Miscellaneous Metal, Miscellaneous Iron and Steel, Bridge Deck Drainage System, Chain Link Fence, Pipe Handrail, Cable Railing, Transition Railing, Terminal System, Crash Cushion, Concrete Barrier, Thermoplastic Pavement Marking, Thermoplastic Traffic Stripe, Paint Traffic Stripe, Pavement Marker, Signal & Lighting, Lighting & Sign Illumination, Fiber Optic Conduit, Electric Service (Irrigation, Traffic Monitoring Station) Closed Circuit TV System, Ramp Metering System, Slope Inclinometer, Landscape and Irrigation

**Subcontracting Requirements:** Skanska's insurance requirements are Commercial General Liability (GL): \$1M ea. occ., \$1M personal injury, \$2M products & completed operations agg. and general agg.; \$1M Auto Liability; \$5M Excess/Umbrella and \$1M Workers Comp. Endorsements and waivers required are the Additional Insured End., Primary Wording End., and a Waiver of Subrogation (GL & WC). Other insurance requirements may be necessary per scope. Subcontractors may be required to furnish performance and payment bonds in the full amount of their subcontract by an admitted surety and subject to approval by Skanska. Skanska will pay bond premium up to 1%. Quotations must be valid for the same duration as specified by the Owner for contract award. Conditions or exceptions in Subcontractor's quote are expressly rejected unless accepted in writing. Skanska is signatory to the Operating Engineers, Laborers, Cement Masons, Carpenters Unions and Teamsters. Subcontractors must provide weekly, one original and one copy of all certified payrolls, including non-performance and fringe benefit statements if required by law or by the Prime Contract. Subcontractor scope (including any conditions or exceptions) is required 24 hours prior to bid deadline to allow proper evaluation.

**Skanska is an Equal Opportunity Employer**

**Skanska Estimating Dept:**

1995 Agua Mansa Rd, Riverside, CA 92509 – Ph: (951) 684-5360, Fax: (951) 788-2449

Email: [joe.sidor@skanska.com](mailto:joe.sidor@skanska.com)

**Salt River Construction Corporation**  
5643 Paradise Drive, Suite 8 • Corte Madera,  
CA. 94925

License 570874-A

P: 415-435-1024 • F: 415-924-6248

[saltriverdredge@gmail.com](mailto:saltriverdredge@gmail.com)

General Contractor

We request bids from all qualified subcontractors and suppliers including MBE/WBE/SBE/UDBE for the following Project:

**East Bay Municipal Utility District: Camanche**

**North Shore Boat Dock Replacement,  
Oakland, CA**

**Bid Date: September 11, 2013 until 1:30 PM**

**(Accepting bids until September 10th, 2013 at close of  
business (5pm))**

Project Description: Work includes furnishing and installing a covered floating dock for boats, consisting of 52 berthing piers, a 395 feet by 6 feet walkway and a 50 feet by 6 feet access gangway, construction of an ADA accessible parking spot with a concrete reinforced retaining wall and flat work, fire line system, electrical with security gate lock, and performing related required work located at the District's Camanche North Shore Recreation Area, Amador County, California.

Trades include, but are not limited to: Cast in place concrete, concrete reinforcing, hot dip galvanized metal fabrications, fusion bonded epoxy coatings, fire protection specialties, electrical including area lighting, site signage, utilities, floating boat dock fabrication, web-based construction management assistance, trucking, import aggregates and temporary facilities, traffic control devices, erosion control materials, pipe and fittings, ready mix concrete, surveying, construction staking, and equipment rental.

Please let us know you are interested in bidding this project. Salt River Construction Corporation will make plans and specifications available provided that any and all interested subs and suppliers contact by phone at 415-435-1024 or email address at [saltriverdredge@gmail.com](mailto:saltriverdredge@gmail.com). Viewing is also available online at EMBUD's website at [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com). Please contact Jeff Moseley at 415-435-1024 for additional information about project and/or project documents.

We encourage bids from all **Subcontractors/Suppliers** including MBE/WBE/SBE bidders. We are an equal opportunity employer. We offer to assist you with bonding, credit, and insurance.

Sub Bids Requested From Qualified MBE, WBE,  
DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for

**East Bay Municipal Utility District -**

**Argyle Reservoir Access Road • Spec No. 2074**

**Location: Contra Costa County, CA**

**Bid Date: September 11, 2013 @ 1:30 PM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: concrete; earthwork; trucking; and vehicle gate (fencing).

We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

**McGuire and Hester**

9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603

Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209

Contact: **Randy Somerday**

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Sub Bids Requested From Qualified DBE and UDBE Subcontractors & Suppliers for  
**City of Yuba City - Butte House Road & Pease Road Class II Bicycle Lanes • Project No. 12-06**

**Location: Yuba City, CA**

**Bid Date: September 11, 2013 @ 10:00 AM**

McGuire and Hester is seeking qualified subcontractors in the following trades: traffic control; clearing & grubbing; sawcutting; striping; signage; erosion control; SWPPP; and aggregate material (Class II 3/4" AB & Hot Mix Asphalt Type A).

We will pay up to and including one and one-half percent (1-1/2%) of your bonding cost. Certification assistance is available, as well as viewing plans and specs.

**McGuire and Hester**

9009 Railroad Avenue • Oakland, CA 94603 • Phone: (510) 632-7676 • Fax: (510) 562-5209

Contact: **Robert Herrera**

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# REQUESTS FOR BIDS & SUB-BIDS

RGW Construction Inc. is seeking all qualified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE's) for the following project:

**Alpine Avenue and Sinclair Avenue Resurfacing  
Federal Project No. STPL-5929(225)  
San Joaquin county  
DBE Goal: 7%**

**Engineer Estimate: \$979,000**

**Bids: September 19th, 2013 at 1:30pm**

**Requesting Sub-quotes for (including but not limited to):** Fabric and Oils, Construction Area Signs, Traffic Control, Raise Iron Utilities, Cold Plane, Clear & Grub, Landscaping, Concrete Curb & Sidewalk Misc., Painted Traffic Strip and Marking, Pavement Marking, Signal and Lighting, SWPPP Planning, Trucker and Sweeper.

**Scope of Work:** Resurfacing 1.08 miles of existing minor arterial and major collector roadways and repair portions of existing curb, gutter and sidewalks.

RGW is willing to breakout any portion of work to encourage DBE participation. Contact us for a specific item list.

Plans and Specs are available to view and copy at our office or from the Office of the Director of Public Works, 1810 East Hazelton Avenue, Stockton, CA 95205. Contact Derrick Woods 925-606-2400, derrick.woods@rgwconstruction.com for any questions, including bonding, lines of credit, insurance, equipment or material suppliers. Subcontractors should be prepared to submit payment and performance bonds equal to 100% of their quotation.

**RGW Construction, Inc.**

Contractors License A/B 591940

550 Greenville Road • Livermore, CA 94550 • Phone: 925-606-2400 • Fax: 925-961-1925

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PTEI request SOQ's from MBE/WBE/SBE for LADWP's Technical & Admin Svcs to support IRP Projects - CATEGORY II

Send SOQ's to vrojas@ptei.net by 9/10/2013. Specs/plans and assistance for bonds & insurances are available by contacting our office.

**Power-Tech Engineers, Inc**

355 South Lemon Ave Suite A • Walnut CA 91789  
(909)595-5314 Office • (909)595-5394 Fax

PTEI request SOQ's from MBE/WBE/SBE for LADWP's Technical & Admin Svcs to support IRP Projects - CATEGORY III

Send SOQ's to vrojas@ptei.net by 9/10/2013. Specs/plans and assistance for bonds & insurances are available by contacting our office.

**Power-Tech Engineers, Inc**

355 South Lemon Ave Suite A • Walnut CA 91789  
(909)595-5314 Office • (909)595-5394 Fax

## SKANSKA

Sub-Bids Requested From Qualified DBE Subcontractors & Suppliers  
**City of Lincoln Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Facility Expansion**  
**Contract No.: 184030298**

**Encouraged DBE/MBE/WBE/HUB Certified Firm Participation**

**Bid Date: September 10, 2013 – 2:00 PM**

Skanska, an equal opportunity employer, is interested in soliciting in Good Faith all subcontractors as well as certified companies for this project. All interested subcontractors, please indicate all lower tier participation offered on your quotation as it will be evaluated with your price. Please call if we can assist you in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, insurance, necessary equipment, materials and/or supplies. Skanska will also review breaking out scope packages and adjusting schedules to help permit maximum participation.

**Plans and Specifications are available for view/purchase at the following locations:**

- Skanska USA Civil Office, located at 1995 Agua Mansa Rd., Riverside, CA 92509
- Stantec Consulting Services Inc., located at: 3875 Atherton Rd, Rocklin, CA 95765
- For Purchase: ARC Sacramento PlanWell. Please call 916-443-1322

**Quotes requested from Subcontractors, Suppliers and Service Providers include, but are not limited to:**

**Materials:** Construction Area Signs, Utility Line Marking, Watering and Water Development, Corrugated Metal Pipe Culvert, Landscape Rock, Structural Steel, Structural Aluminum, Grating, Treads, Floor Plates, Metal Framing, Steel Platforms, Mechanical Identifying Devices, Bio filter Media Replacement, Fiberglass Launder Covers, FRP Weirs and Baffles, Polyethylene Storage Tanks, Davit Cranes, Seismic Equipment Restraints, Seismic Piping Restraints, Temporary Railing, Erosion Control, Fiber Rolls, Class 2 Base, Joint Seal, Plastic Pipe, Reinforced Concrete Pipe, Welded Steel Pipe, Alternative Flared End Section, Misc Metal, Misc Iron and Steel

**Works scopes:** Survey, Quality Control and Testing, Pipe Chlorination, Pipe Testing, System Startup and Testing, System Training, Clear and Grub, Fence Removal, Excavation Dewatering, Structure Excavation and Backfill, Trenching and Backfill, Storm Water Pollution Plan, Hydroseed, Sheet piling and Shoring, Chain Link Fence, Hot Mix AC Paving, Cast in Place Manhole Bases, Minor Concrete Structures, Concrete Saw cutting, Pipe Railing, Overhead Coiling Doors, Painting and Finishing, Mechanical Process Equipment Installation, Pre Engineered Metal Building and Canopy, Cathodic Protection of Underground Pipe, Process Piping, Process Electrical Systems, Site Lighting, Instrumentation and Controls, Thermoplastic Pavement Marking.

**Subcontracting Requirements:** Skanska's insurance requirements are Commercial General Liability (GL): \$1M ea. occ., \$1M personal injury, \$2M products & completed operations agg. and general agg.; \$1M Auto Liability; \$5M Excess/Umbrella and \$1M Workers Comp. Endorsements and waivers required are the Additional Insured End., Primary Wording End., and a Waiver of Subrogation (GL & WC). Other insurance requirements may be necessary per scope. Subcontractors may be required to furnish performance and payment bonds in the full amount of their subcontract by an admitted surety and subject to approval by Skanska. Skanska will pay bond premium up to 1%. Quotations must be valid for the same duration as specified by the Owner for contract award. Conditions or exceptions in Subcontractor's quote are expressly rejected unless accepted in writing. Skanska is signatory to the Operating Engineers, Laborers, Cement Masons, Carpenters Unions and Teamsters. Subcontractors must provide weekly, one original and one copy of all certified payrolls, including non-performance and fringe benefit statements if required by law or by the Prime Contract. Subcontractor scope (including any conditions or exceptions) is required 24 hours prior to bid deadline to allow proper evaluation.

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1995 Agua Mansa Rd, Riverside, CA 92509 – Ph: (951) 684-5360, Fax: (951) 788-2449  
Email: daniel.hawley@skanska.com



Current and On-going procurement opportunities for the Expo II Project are Available through the project procurement website:

<https://partners.myskanska.com/usa/clients/buildexpo/Expo2/Outreach/Lists/Bidding%20Opportunities/Bids%20Due.aspx>

Bid Packages Currently available are: Signage & graphics, Flatwork – City of LA, AC Paving, Floor & Wall tile, Bike Racks/Lockers, Permanent Striping & signs

Bid packages will be posted to the site on a continual basis. Plans, Specs and additional information are also available on the site. If you need assistance, please contact Christine Burton at 310-500-1466. SBE and DBE certified firms are encouraged to participate.

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## REQUESTS FOR BIDS & SUB-BIDS

Seeking D/DV/M/S/VS/WBE (Disadvantaged, Disabled Veteran, Minority, Small, Very Small, and Woman Business Enterprises) subcontractors and suppliers for

**San Vicente Marina Facilities, Specification 594**  
**Project Owner: San Diego County Water Authority**

**Project Location: North end of Moreno Ave., Lakeside, CA in San Diego County**  
**Bid Date: September 20, 2013**

**Trades:** Site grading, shoreline stabilization, pump stations, concession buildings, office building, drainage pipe, water tank, water pipe, sanitary sewer pipe, boat ramp concrete, floating docks, ADA compliant wheelchair lift, asphalt concrete paving, PCC paving, storm drain channels, bio-retention facilities, inlet filters, drainage facilities, selective demolition, fire sprinklers, landscaping, irrigation, habitat restoration, curbs, gutters, sidewalk, retaining walls, fencing, park amenities, shade structure, signage and striping, signal intersection, electrical, communications, foundation grouting, monitoring wells.

Plans and specifications can be purchased directly from SDCWA by filling out the Contract Documents Order Form found at <http://www.sdewa.org/contracting-opportunities>

Plans and specifications are available to be viewed and copied at the Pulice offices located at 591 Camino De La Reina, San Diego, CA 92018 from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Please call 619-814-3700 to make an appointment to view the plans and specifications.

Plans are also available for download on the eBidBoard website at:

<http://www.ebidboard.com/public/projects/index.asp?mbrguid=D27F6EF1-9BA1-46D6-B1CC-429FA8EB09CC>

**Pulice Construction, Inc.**

591 Camino De La Reina, San Diego, CA 92108  
 Phone: 619-814-3700 • Fax: 619-814-3770  
 Contact: **Arinda Cale** • E-mail: [acale@pulice.com](mailto:acale@pulice.com)

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Requesting Sub-bids from Qualified SBE/DVBE/MBE/WBE/OBE Subcontractors for:

**TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES TO SUPPORT INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN (IRP) PROJECTS**

**Los Angeles Department of Water & Power**

**Bid Deadline: September 12, 2013 by 2:00pm**

We are willing to assist all SBE, DVBE, MBE, WBE, and OBE subcontractors in obtaining bonds, lines of credit, and/or insurance. For information on the availability of plans and specifications, or if you are interested in participating in this project, please contact our office:

**Cordoba Corporation**

Andre Sahakian

1401 North Broadway • Los Angeles, CA 90012

Tel: (213) 895-0224 • Fax: (213) 895-6677

Email: [asahakian@cordobacorp.com](mailto:asahakian@cordobacorp.com)

PTEI request SOQ's from MBE/WBE/SBE for LADWP's Technical & Admin Svcs to support IRP Projects - CATEGORY III

Send SOQ's to [vrojias@ptei.net](mailto:vrojias@ptei.net) by 9/10/2013. Specs/ plans and assistance for bonds & insurances are available by contacting our office.

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# Paying for Infrastructure—at the Risk of Losing Jobs?

**BY Amanda Maher**

Infrastructure, a linchpin for economic growth, can be financed in any combination of ways. In a recent post, we looked at the follies of transportation finance: drivers don't want to pay an increased gas tax to fund a public transit system they don't use; cars are becoming more fuel efficient and therefore states are collecting less in gas tax revenue; and bicyclists are now facing excise taxes in some states.

But Massachusetts recently passed legislation that looks for an entirely new source of revenue, a source that has nothing to do with drivers, riders or other users of transportation: a new 6.25% sales tax on computer and software services that had otherwise been exempt.

Legislators say this new tax will raise \$161 million annually to fund the much needed maintenance and repair of Massachusetts' transportation systems.

While this tax affects virtually every industry in the state, including health care, life sciences, finance, manufacturing and hospitality, the "innovation economy" is expected to take the hardest hit. Importantly, the innovation economy is where policymakers have continuously pointed as the key driver of the state's job growth.

At the same time that many states offer tax incentives for business growth, Massachusetts becomes only the fourth state to impose such a "tech tax." Tech-friendly states, such as California, North Carolina and New York—many of the states with which Massachusetts competes for talent—do not have such a tax on the books.

Already, Florida Governor Rick Scott is making a push to recruit Bay State businesses with the appeal that Florida is a friendlier place to

do business. Rhode Island gubernatorial candidate Ken Block echoes that sentiment: "With a well-executed recruitment drive, we can attract businesses to our state and add jobs to our economy...It's an all-hands-on-deck moment for economic development in Rhode Island."

Delcie Bean, CEO of Paragus Strategic IT based in Hadley, MA has recently been considering opening a second location in inner city Springfield, MA until the tech tax was passed. Now, the CEO is exploring new office locations in either Nashua, NH or Hartford, CT to avoid the tax burden.

Massachusetts, once a tech leader thanks to the concentration of research-producing anchor institutions, now risks losing its competitive advantage. The well-paying jobs of the future will be created by "agile, innovative businesses that are able to use the opportunities offered by new technology to operate more efficiently," writes Ed McGrath in the MetroWest Daily News.

Many of these types of tech companies that are rapidly growing are also inner city firms that employ inner city residents. A look at the Inner City 100 is illustrative: PepperDash Technology Corp., Emma, Research Into Action and MSDSONline are just a few of the tech-related companies to land on the list.

A coalition of business leaders is working to have the legislation repealed; but in the meantime—it's worth considering: at what cost should policymakers finance public infrastructure? Improved roads and bridges won't be of much use if businesses hit the road and go elsewhere—taking hundreds of jobs with them when they do.

*Source: 2013 Initiative for a Competitive Inner City*

## Minority contracting doesn't match population's numbers

■ Continued from page 1

fell 4.4 percent, compared with the 3.9 percent drop in small-business contracts and 0.2 percent decrease in all awards.

While black- and Hispanic-owned small firms may have experienced a comparatively better year in 2012, the distribution of contracts is far from mirroring the nation's demographics, according to Harry Alford, chief executive of the Washington-based National Black Chamber of Commerce. The percentage of small-business contracts going to black-owned firms "should be double" what it is now, Alford said.

It has been such a tough year for black-owned businesses in the federal contracting market that Alford said he has encouraged some owners to seek commercial and overseas work.

"Is it worth the fight, or should you go and find business elsewhere?" Alford said. "I don't see a lot of people smiling who do business with the federal government."

One of the biggest hurdles that Hispanic small businesses encounter is a perception that the companies aren't quite American enough, Sandoval said. It's difficult to improve the situation "when the only discussion about the Hispanic community is about immigration," she said.

Federal budget cuts have made it even harder for the small businesses to win contracts, Sandoval said. The government is facing 10 years of automatic spending cuts that Congress agreed to as part of the 2011 debt-ceiling agreement. The cuts will reduce projected spending by about \$85 billion this year.

"We had a difficult time getting in to begin with," Sandoval said. "When you're talking about such a small piece of the pie as we are given, it's sad to see that we are going backward."

Contracts aren't keeping up with the rapid growth of the U.S. Hispanic population, she said. By 2050, Hispanic people will make up about 30 percent of the population, according to census data. Black people will make up

about 15 percent.

It may be difficult for agencies to target black- and Hispanic-owned businesses for small-business contracts.

Some black-owned and Hispanic-owned companies qualify for a federal plan, called the 8(a) Business Development Program, that sets aside work for small, "economically and socially disadvantaged" businesses. Yet no contracts are reserved specifically for either minority group.

"Procurement officers cannot see the race/ethnicity of business owners when they select them for a contract award," said John Shoraka, an associate administrator of government contracting at the Small Business Administration.

"Because of that, the SBA has been focusing heavily on recruiting and training firms from underserved communities to compete for and win federal contracts in the various socio-economic set-aside programs," Shoraka said in an e-mail. "The more qualified firms participating in SBA's government contracting programs, the greater likelihood for increasing actual contract awards."

Outside of the 8(a) program, small businesses aren't required to report their ethnic status, and minority contracting data may not "provide a complete picture of what is going on in the procurement marketplace," Shoraka said.

"There's neither incentive nor authority to set aside contracts for any ethnic group," said Joe Hornyak, a partner at the Tampa-based law firm Holland & Knight. The award distribution ends up being "kind of random," he said.

Obama in 2009 announced efforts to boost contracting opportunities for small and minority-owned businesses, saying they "must play a significant role" in efforts to restore economic growth.

*Source: © 2013 The Washington Post; Bloomberg News*