

ISSUE BRIEF

Preserve Small Business Set-Asides

ACRA Position

Congress and the administration should protect and enhance programs that ensure small businesses, including historically disadvantaged businesses – have the ability to compete for government contracts.

Background

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), small businesses account for almost two-thirds of all job creation in the United States, and 99.7 percent of companies with paid employees are small. The vast majority of cultural resource management firms qualify as small businesses.

Recognizing the challenges that smaller companies face in competing for federal government contracts, Congress has established a goal of awarding at least 23 percent of government contracts to small businesses.

In addition, Congress has enacted sub-goals for disadvantaged businesses, including under the 8(a) Business Development program, the HUBZone program for businesses in historically underutilized business zones, the Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOSB) program, the Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB) program and others. Some other federal agencies have programs intended to enable historically disadvantaged businesses to compete for government contracts, such as the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program for transportation contracts.

In recent years, these programs have faced criticism that set-asides for disadvantaged businesses are discriminatory. In addition, recent efforts to reform federal procurement laws have thrown into question the future of the small business set-aside.

Small business set-asides are integral to making sure that businesses of all sizes can compete for and win government contracts. Without them, smaller companies that lack the resources of bigger firms would be locked out of many contracting opportunities, hurting job creation and denying the federal government access to the specialized and innovative services that many smaller entrepreneurs can provide.

Sub-goals for disadvantaged businesses are instrumental in removing barriers that have long kept many entrepreneurs on the outside. The broad support for these programs is reflected in the fact that they have been supported and reauthorized by bipartisan majorities of Congress.

About the American Cultural Resources Association

ACRA is the national trade association supporting and promoting the common interests of cultural resource management (CRM) firms of all sizes, types and specialties. Member firms undertake much of the legally mandated CRM studies and investigations in the United States.

For more information, contact ACRA at info@acra-crm.org.