

Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP) Washington, DC

04.20.10

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We Decide
The Voice for **Women** In Business In Our Nation's Capital

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The US Federal Government buys approx
\$300 Billion work of goods and services
per year.

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Question:

How does a small business compete?

- **Against big business?**
- **Against incumbents?**
- **Against personal relationships?**

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US Federal Government Set-Aside Programs

- Back in 1953, when Congress established the SBA with passage of the Small Business Act, legislators aimed to drive more government contracts to small companies. The current Congressional target calls for 23% of all federal procurement contracts to go to small firms
 - 23% of prime contracts for small businesses;
 - With specifics:
 - 5% of prime and subcontracts for women-owned small businesses;
 - 3% of prime contracts for HUBZone small businesses;
 - 3% of prime and subcontracts for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Another Helpful Hint - The 'Rule of Two'

- The Federal Acquisition Regulation, the set of rules governing the contracting process for goods and services, mandates that
 - contracts valued at less than \$100,000 be automatically earmarked for small-business fulfillment, and
 - larger contracts be set aside if there's a "reasonable expectation" that at least two suitable small businesses will bid.

Sources sought are a valuable tool for the Government to find good small businesses to do the work. Please respond and promote your businesses!

Within that framework lies ample room for loopholes...

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Watch out for the loopholes

2004 - Titan Corp., a San Diego-based defense electronics firm with 12,000 employees and \$2 billion in annual revenue that year, had won nearly \$550 million in contracts under the small-business classification.

Federal regulations allowed companies to be classified as "small businesses" over the life of a contract even if the business grew or was acquired. Because major vendors like Boeing (BA, Fortune 500) and Raytheon (RTN, Fortune 500) routinely gobble up smaller contractors, dollars recorded as flowing to small companies can end up in the coffers of giants.

To address the issue, the SBA changed its rules last year to require small businesses who have won contracts of five years or longer to recertify every five years, or within 30 days of an acquisition. A bill proposed by Sen. John Kerry, who heads the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, would require businesses to be recertified every year.

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How to Make a Difference

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About Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP)

- WIPP is a bipartisan public policy organization representing 49 small business groups with a voice for well over half a million members across the country.
- Our members are women and minority business owners and our mission is to educate and advocate on the economic issues that affect their business growth.
- WIPP is an issue-driven organization.
- WIPP has a professional Government Relations team in Washington, DC.



The Economic Blueprint

The Economic Blueprint is our Call to Action to the US Congress and the Administration on the issues that we advocate for.

- Federal Procurement
- Health Care
- Technology and Telecommunications
- Energy and Environment
- Taxes
- Access to Capital

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How the Process Works for our Members

WIPP provides up-to-date information to its members:

- Briefings
- Weekly newsletter
- Action alerts
- Social media

WIPP members provide input and direction to our Government Relations team through:

- Surveys
- Participation in issue committees
- Instant Impact (advocacy) teams

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Why this approach works

- WIPP is focused on issues
- WIPP members have a voice
- WIPP's grassroots teams support its initiatives
- WIPP is a collaborative organization, with direct members and coalition partners

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How does WIPP's Legislative Process Work?

- We have a professional lobbying team
- We meet regularly with all members of Congress, regardless of party affiliation
- We provide them information, facts and solutions
- We stick to our mission of being issue- driven and restricted to small business issues only
- We never burn our bridges

Women's Federal Procurement Program

Background:

- In 2000, Public Law 106-554 established a women's procurement program to assist the government in meeting its contracting **goal of 5% with women-owned companies**. The program will allow contracting officers to issue contracts which limit competition to women-owned businesses. **To date, the federal government is only awarding 3.4% of its direct contracts to them.**
- In 2007 the Bush Administration proposed a rule which allowed contracting officers to restrict competition in 4 categories, and required agencies to find past discrimination towards women businesses.

Women's Procurement Program:

Successes:

- March, 2010, the SBA released a revised proposed rule that expands the industry categories to 83 (out of 109) industries, and removed the agency discrimination finding.
- This program does not expire if the government meets its women-owned goal of 5%.
- We're in comment period right now with implementation between October and December 2010

How can we work together so we both succeed?

We've spoken with:

Lorely Burt, Member of Parliament

- Specific topics included
 - Set Aside percentages
 - Access to the right networks for work

As a referral from the UK Embassy in the US:

The Right Honourable Harriet Harman QC MP, Minister for Women and Equality and Vera Baird QC MP, Solicitor-General

- Specific topics included
 - Set Aside percentages
 - Access to the right networks for work
 - Access to the required capital/monies to support the work

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**Where can we go from here....
...*together?***