



News Release

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SBA: New Authority Will Bolster Women-Owned Small Businesses

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today [issued a final rule](#) authorizing federal agencies to award sole-source contracts to women-owned small businesses eligible for the Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract Program. Effective October 14, 2015, the rule levels the playing field for women-owned small businesses across the federal contracting marketplace.

“Women-owned businesses are growing three times faster than their counterparts, yet the federal government has not achieved its goal of awarding 5 percent of federal contracts to women. By granting contracting officers this new authority to award sole-source contracts to women-owned businesses, SBA is taking a major step forward in leveling the playing field and supporting our country’s dynamic female entrepreneurs,” said SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet. “After all, if we want a more diverse supply chain, Uncle Sam needs to lead by example.”

SBA will use this new tool to continue to open doors for women entrepreneurs in the federal and commercial contract space. SBA’s efforts include actively promoting women-owned businesses through programs such as ChallengeHER, the Women’s Business Centers and InnovateHER, as well as implementing recent changes to its lending program that have made smaller dollar loans more accessible to women, and creating [the online portal, LINC](#), to ease the process of finding capital to grow or start small businesses.

SBA’s WOSB program was implemented in 2010. In July 2014, [Contreras-Sweet testified](#) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship that federal agencies needed sole source authority to level the playing field for women-owned businesses. With strong support from the small business committees, [SBA worked with Congress](#) and key small business stakeholders to include this provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, signed by President Obama in December 2014. To learn more about how SBA supports women entrepreneurs, visit www.sba.gov/wosb or contact WOSB@sba.gov.

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