

NEWSLETTER

September 2025



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TIP OF THE MONTH

Understanding & Leveraging Federal Small Business Goals

Federal law requires that the government as a whole, as well as individual procuring agencies, attempt to meet certain goals for awarding prime contracting and subcontracting dollars to small businesses and certain subcategories of small businesses. Understanding the government’s small business goals can make a company more competitive in the federal government marketplace.

What Are the Federal Small Business Goals?

[Federal statute](#) requires that the government, each fiscal year, make good faith efforts to award a certain percentage of prime contracting dollars to small businesses and certain subcategories of small businesses. The statutory goals are to award at least 23% of prime contracting dollars to small businesses, five percent to small disadvantaged businesses, five percent to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, five percent to woman-owned small businesses, and three percent to participants in the U.S. Small Business Administration’s HUBZone program.

How Are the Small Business Goals Enforced?

Contrary to common belief, the small business goals are unenforceable goals, not mandates. An agency that misses one or more of its goals may receive a lower score on the SBA’s [annual small business scorecard](#), but missed goals do not result in an agency losing funding or in other tangible consequences. However, agencies are tasked with making a good-faith effort to meet their goals.

How Has the Government Performed Recently?

According to the [most recent SBA scorecard](#), covering Fiscal Year 2024, the government

exceeded the 23% small business goal by awarding 28.76% of eligible prime contracting dollars to small businesses. In the most recent scorecard, the government awarded 12.27% of prime contracting dollars to SDBs, 4.97% to WOSBs, 5.14% to SDVOSBs, and 2.75% to HUBZones.

How Has Each Agency Performed?

In addition to tracking how the government, as a whole, performs with respect to its small business goals, the SBA tracks how each agency with procurement authority—24 agencies in total—performs each year. Contractors can review how each agency performed by clicking on the individual agency reports under the [SBA scorecard](#).

How Can Contractors Leverage SBA Scorecard Data?

SBA scorecard data can offer important insights into an agency’s goaling needs. For example, if a contractor has—or is interested in obtaining—a HUBZone certification, and a particular agency has recently fallen short on meeting the 3% HUBZone prime contracting goal, there may be an increased opportunity for a company with that certification to sell to that agency.

Review each agency’s SBA [scorecard](#) to determine which agencies have recently experienced shortfalls in contracting with small businesses, SDBs, SDVOSBs, WOSBs, and HUBZone firms and connect with agency Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization to better understand how to sell to each agency.

NICC APEX ACCELERATOR NEWS YOU CAN USE

The Basics of HUBZone Eligibility

The government awarded \$17.6 billion in prime contracts to SBA-certified Historically Underutilized Business Zone participants in Fiscal Year 2024, and HUBZone firms were awarded \$4.7 billion in subcontracts. What does it take to be eligible for HUBZone certification?

[This article explains, in plain English, four major components of HUBZone eligibility:](#) small business status, ownership, the location of the company’s principal office, and the requirement that at least 35% of the company’s employees reside in HUBZones. The article also covers common questions, like whether a part-time employee can count toward the 35% threshold.

Would you like to learn more about the HUBZone certification or take the first steps toward your company’s application? Your APEX Accelerator can help! Contact your APEX Accelerator counselor to arrange an appointment.

GOVOLOGY WEBINARS

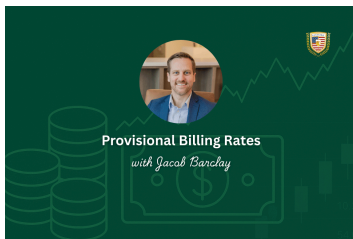
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Commercializing Innovation Technology

Date: September 4, 2025
Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT
Presenter: Jerry Hollister, BBC Entrepreneurial Training and Consulting

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Provisional Billing Rates

Date: September 9, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Jacob Barclay, Barclay Group LLC

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Avoiding Common Bid Protest Mistakes

Date: September 11, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: John Holtz and Gregory Weber, Koprince McCall Pottroff, LLC

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Winning Proposals: Your Comprehensive Guide to Responding to Federal RFPs (3-Part Series) (2025 Update)

Date: September 16-18, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Brent Paris, Sandy Allbee, and Ashley Coronado (BID DESIGNS)

[Click Here to Learn More](#)



Evolving DoD Contractor Cybersecurity Requirements (Q3-2025 Update)

Date: September 25, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Adam Austin, Totem Technologies

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

RECOMMENDED READINGS

FAR Overhaul: OMB Sends 16 Legislative Proposals to Congress, Pushing Sweeping Acquisition Reform

As the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul process moves forward, the Office of Management and Budget has taken the next step by recommending that Congress take 16 specific actions to align federal procurement statutes with the RFO's deregulatory vision. [Read the FAR Overhaul legislative proposals article](#) about this development in the FAR Overhaul process.

FAR Part 6 Rewrite: What It Means for Small Business Set-Asides, Socioeconomic Programs, and the Rule of Two

The recent Revolutionary FAR Overhaul rewrite of FAR Part 6, which addresses competition requirements, could have implications for small businesses and companies participating in SBA's socioeconomic contracting programs. [Read the article about the FAR Part 6 rewrite](#) and its implications for small business.

SBA Introduces Its New Small Business Search System

Recently, with little fanfare, the SBA released its Small Business Search system, replacing the Dynamic Small Business Search system that had been in use for a number of years. Per the SBA, existing business profiles have been migrated to this new platform. [Read the article about the new SBA Small Business Search System](#) and its upgraded features.

CMMC & FOCI RESOURCES AND NEWS

This section highlights items of special interest and importance to the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs (DOD OSBP). Please take a moment to visit the sites listed below for additional information.

Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC)/Cybersecurity Compliance Resources

[DOD CMMC Resource Page](#) – Resources to assist government contractors with understanding and complying with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

[Project Spectrum](#) – Project Spectrum is working with APEX Accelerators to assist small businesses in achieving compliance with CMMC/cybersecurity requirements.

Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence (FOCI) Resources

[FOCI Frequently Asked Questions](#) – FOCI is a status or situation in which a contractor with access to classified information has some foreign investment or association with foreign interest. Learn more about the federal government's requirements relating to FOCI.

<https://business.defense.gov/> – The official website of DOD OSBP. It contains additional information, news, events, and other items for those interested in doing business (or currently engaged) with the DOD.

CMMC Readiness: Top 3 Disruptions Affecting the Defense Industrial Base

The finalization of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification rule marks a shift in how Defense Industrial Base contractors engage with the Defense Department. Yet a recent survey paints a concerning picture: more than 16% of respondents reported little to no readiness for CMMC compliance, half admitted to being only moderately or slightly prepared, and 13% said they'd taken no action at all. [Read the article about the top three disruptions affecting the Defense Industrial Base.](#)

How CMMC is Addressing Years of Systemic Failures in Protecting Sensitive Data

The Defense Department is on the cusp of implementing the CMMC program after years of government efforts to fix systemic weaknesses in how the federal government and its contractors handle sensitive information. [This article examines the long and winding road of how the DoD arrived at CMMC as a necessary solution to cybersecurity shortfalls.](#)

DoD Addresses Two Big Challenges to Make CMMC a Reality (Audio)

The Defense Department feels better than ever about the future of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification program. DoD is close to solving two big obstacles to get CMMC off the ground more than six years after first introducing the data security program. [This audio clip provides additional details.](#)

CMMC Is Here to Stay: DoD's Push to Secure the Defense Industrial Base

After years of debate, delay, and skepticism, the Department of Defense is sending a clear and unmistakable message: the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) framework is real, it's moving forward, and it's essential to national security. [Read the article about the DoD's commitment to moving forward with its CMMC program.](#)

California Defense Contractor and Private Equity Firm Agree to Pay \$1.75M to Resolve False Claims Act Liability Relating to Voluntary Self-Disclosure of Cybersecurity Violations

In what has become something of a trend, a government contractor will pay to settle

allegations that it violated the False Claims Act by knowingly failing to comply with contractual cybersecurity requirements. The settlement agreement indicates that the amount of the payment could have been much higher had the contractor not cooperated with the government. [Read the article about this case and the details of the settlement agreement.](#)

Dealmakers on Notice: DCSA Filings Expected to Surge

As FOCI disclosure obligations extend to unclassified DoD contracts over \$5 million, the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency expects its annual FOCI reviews to jump from approximately 2,000 to more than 40,000. [Read the article about the expansion of FOCI disclosure obligations.](#)

Navigating the Updated SF-328 Form (Podcast)

DCSA recently issued a revised Standard Form 328 (Certificate Pertaining to Foreign Interest). [This podcast describes the changes and how contractors can navigate them.](#)

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This APEX Accelerator (formerly known as PTAC) is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense.

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