

Women-Owned Small Businesses in the Federal Procurement Market

Women-owned small businesses are currently facing many barriers in the federal procurement market that hinder them from receiving federal contracts.

BY S. ANN BECKER AND DONN MILLER-KERMANI

Small businesses are the backbone of the United States economy, creating two-thirds of all new jobs across the nation. They account for the creation of 98 percent of new companies in America and supply 40 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.¹ Of all the privately-held small businesses in the United States, over 10 million are women-owned.² From the perspectives of both diversity and growth, this is a significant statistic, given that women-owned small businesses (WOSBs) have grown in both size and stature to nearly twice that of many U.S. firms. In 2003, U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao even noted that “today’s women-owned businesses are major contributors to jobs and the economic security of our nation.”³

The federal government recognizes the importance of small business in national prosperity and growth. In terms of being awarded government contracts, the government has mandated that certain types of businesses should be considered “small business preferences” through the Small Business Act.⁴ This mandate is implemented by the Small Business Administration (SBA), which is responsible for setting the goals of the small business preference program. For WOSBs, a goal is set at five percent of all federal government contracts. Unfortunately, this goal is not being met. The National Council for Research on Women reports that in fiscal year 2005, only 3.3 percent of federal contracts were awarded to privately-held WOSBs.⁵

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The Status of WOSBs in Federal Procurement

According to United States Code (USC), a WOSB concern is defined as being 51 percent owned by one or more women. In the case of publicly-owned businesses, at least 51 percent of the stock must be owned by one or more women—with management and daily business operations controlled by one or more women.⁶ According to the 2006 Census Bureau Report, women-owned businesses grew twice the national average (42 percent vs. 23 percent) over the past nine years.⁷ Additionally, one in 18 women in the United States is a business owner and most women-owned small firms have fewer than 10 employees.⁸ There are currently 7.7 million women-owned firms in the United States, accounting for 29.7 percent of all privately-held businesses in the nation. These firms employ over 7.1 million people and generate \$1.1 trillion in sales.⁹ However, three specific factors may be the direct result of barriers faced by WOSBs. These factors include:

1. Low percentages of WOSBs in male-dominated industries,
2. High percentages of self-employment among WOSBs, and
3. Low growth rates of WOSBs.

1. Male-Dominated Industries

The majority of women-owned firms is in the service industry and represents 69 percent of all service businesses in the nation. The **FIGURE** to the right further identifies the distribution of WOSBs across industries and shows significant percentages of WOSBs in both the retail and real estate industries. It is important to note the low percentages of business ownership by women in male-dominated industries, which may reflect real or perceived barriers that need to be overcome.

2. Self-Employment

In addition to these statistics, WOSBs continue to lag in revenue generation when compared to small businesses owned by men. Three percent of all women-owned firms have revenues of \$1 million or more, compared with six percent of firms owned by men with the same revenues.¹⁰ Another key difference is the high percentage of WOSBs having no employees at all. Eighty-one percent of WOSBs (5.4 million) consist of self-employed individuals with no employees. This information is critical from the perspective of financial growth and sustainability for WOSBs. It is therefore also important to

Distribution of Women-owned Firms in the United States

Industry	Percentage
Service	69
Retail Trade	14.4
Real Estate and Rental/Leasing	7.7
Finance and Insurance	2.6
Wholesale Trade	2.4
Construction	1.9
Transportation and Warehousing	1.2
Information	0.4
Mining	0.2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	0.1
Manufacturing	0.1
Industries Not Classified	0.1

identify barriers associated with WOSBs that prohibit or prevent them from expanding beyond self-employment.

3. Low Growth Rates

While the rate of WOSBs has increased by 42.3 percent between 1997 and 2005, the combined annual sales of these businesses grew only 4.4 percent—a drop of 37 percent in annual sales. A recent report issued by SBA shows that nearly 50 percent of all women-owned firms had sales of less than \$10,000 annually in 1997 and in 2002. Nearly 80 percent had annual sales of less than \$50,000 in these years.¹¹ These statistics reflect a low growth rate for many WOSBs after they are launched. This points to a need for further study as to why sales growth is stagnant or, for many WOSBs, nonexistent.

The Federal Procurement Market

One key area of growth potential for women-owned firms across the nation is in federal procurement. The U.S. government is the world's largest buyer of goods and services.¹² Purchasing agencies encompass all administrative components at the federal level and include military and defense spending that amounts to billions of purchases made annually. In fact, military and civilian installations spend, on average, over \$300 billion a year on procurement. Goods and services purchased by the federal government range from small office products in support of daily work tasks (e.g., paper clips) to sophisticated computer technology in support of homeland security (e.g., electronic surveillance devices).

The federal government relies on a well-established and efficient procurement system to make these purchases. Through its electronic dissemination systems, there are unprecedented opportunities for both small and large businesses to stay informed of the government's procurement needs.

Procurement for goods or services follows a particular set of rules depending on the purchase. For procurements under \$2,500, a government credit card is used. These "micropurchases" are typically transacted through the General Services Administration Web site, www.gsadvantage.gov. Larger procurement acquisitions are more often made known to suppliers through the federal Web site—FedBizOpps (FBO), www.fedbizopps.gov—following a set of rules that outline the formal solicitation process. These solicitations clearly specify the procurement requirements that must be met by a business in order for them to be considered as a potential supplier. Procurement opportunities, posted through FBO and ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000, are set aside strictly for small businesses. There is clear intention by the federal government to ensure participation by small businesses inclusive of those that are women-owned.

As previously stated, the government has mandated that certain types of small businesses be considered "small business preferences" through the Small Business Act. Through small business preferences, the Act recognizes that certain types of small business ownership require assistance in order to compete in the procurement arena. The goals set by the Act for small business preferences to be met each year by federal agencies are as follows:

- Prime contracts for small businesses (23 percent),
- Small disadvantaged businesses (five percent),
- WOSBs (five percent),
- HUBZone small businesses (three percent), and
- Service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (three percent).

The *Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)* Part 19, Small Business Programs,¹³ outlines the sections of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631)¹⁴ related to acquisition. For small businesses, FAR Part 19 specifically defines:

- Size standards,
- Policies,
- Determination of small business status for small business programs,
- Set-asides for small businesses, and
- The requirements of the small business subcontracting program.

These subparts are designed to clearly describe the rules and procedures necessary to ensure that various socioeconomic objectives are met.

However, it should be noted that these goals are merely regulation and not law. As such, they are not enforceable. It becomes the responsibility of each agency to implement processes and procedures in order to meet these goals. One example is the Department of Defense's (DOD's) *Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS)*. DFARS Part 219 refers to FAR 19.7 in regard to meeting subcontracting goals for WOSBs.

In 2000, President Clinton enacted Executive Order No. 13157¹⁵ "in order to strengthen the executive branch's commitment to increase opportunities for WOSBs." Through this executive order, SBA was required to establish an assistant administrator for women's procurement along with creating a Web site to provide information for WOSBs in regard to contracting opportunities. The Web site, www.womenbiz.gov, provides a gateway for WOSBs wishing to do business with the federal government. In conjunction with SBA, Congress established the Contract Assistance for Women Business Owners Act (CAWBO) in 2000 to serve as a tool to reach out to WOSBs.¹⁶ The purpose of CAWBO is to help to increase the number of federal contracts awarded to WOSBs.

Congress also passed the Equity in Contracting for Women Act (ECWA) in 2000, which sought to increase federal procurement opportunities for WOSBs by enacting Section 8(m) of the Small Business Act. This Act authorized contracting officers to restrict competition to those industries that have an underrepresentation of firms that are ready, willing, and able to participate in such contracts.¹⁷ As such, WOSBs were to be provided an opportunity to play a significant role in government contracting.

Potential Barriers and Their Implications

As previously mentioned, the factors of breaking into male-dominated industries, trends of self-employment, and low growth rates of WOSBs may be the direct result of numerous potential barriers that face many WOSBs, regardless of their interest in government procurement.¹⁸ These barriers have to do with the specific lack of access WOSBs have to many resources required to successfully compete in the government procurement market. Four prevalent potential barriers include:

1. Access to capital,
2. Access to markets,

3. Access to training and technical assistance, and
4. Access to networks.

These barriers must be taken seriously as detractors to economic growth. For many WOSBs, these barriers are more pronounced in the government procurement arena, given the low overhead charges, delays in payments, and rules and regulations that must be followed, among other factors.

1. Access to Capital

The National Women's Business Council (NWBC) held a summit, "Women's Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century," in 2003 that addressed the issue of access to capital by WOSBs. They reported on a study that found over 50 percent of surveyed women to have difficulty obtaining capital to start a business, instead relying heavily upon personal savings as a primary source of funding. The top concern of the summit participants, which numbered over 1,000, was identified as obtaining access to capital.

From the perspective of government contracting, difficulty in obtaining access to capital by WOSBs may be the difference between sustainability and possible bankruptcy when unforeseen events occur. It would be important for a WOSB to have access to a line of credit to support a federal award when payment is delayed. It would also be important to have access to capital to mitigate risks when unforeseen costs impact the bottom line. This is especially critical to the successful completion of a government contract, given the limited amount of overhead that constitutes profitability.

The Role of the Small Business Administration

SBA plays an essential role in supporting WOSBs in accessing capital to finance operations. The significant increase in WOSBs, as shown by unprecedented growth from 1998 to 2003, would suggest an SBA increase of capital made available to its constituents. However, according to NWBC, there was a 7.5 percent *decrease* in the average value of loans made to WOSBs in 2004 using SBA programs.¹⁹ However, more recent data suggests that the news is not all grim. In 2007, NWBC reported that "In FY2006, the SBA made 16,721 loans and equity investments in women-owned businesses, an increase of 134 percent from FY2001. These loans and investments totaled \$2.4 billion in FY2006, an increase of 70 percent from FY2001." This data shows that SBA is doing a much better job in providing capital to WOSBs. However, many would question whether more can

be done given the relatively minor role enterprising women play in the federal procurement arena.

However, whether SBA is providing sufficient funding is only part of the issue. From a government contracting perspective, perhaps a more important factor is whether sufficient funding is made available to support WOSBs each step of the way in successfully obtaining awards and meeting contract deliverables. Many WOSBs have a limited line of credit, which becomes an issue when procurement risks cannot be mitigated. Through increased efforts put forth by SBA in providing financial services and counsel to WOSBs, both business and government would benefit. With sufficient financing, there is a stronger likelihood for awards to be made to WOSBs.

Financial Options

Most financial experts would agree that insufficient financial resources can be the downfall of a startup business when unforeseen risks are realized. Compared to men, women typically start their businesses with fewer resources. "The difficulty of women-owned businesses in securing start-up financing is particularly troubling given the importance of what early-stage capital decisions have on the performance, growth, and survival of new ventures."²⁰

Angel Capital

One area of financing that appears to be a viable option for women entrepreneurs is angel investments. Angel investors provide funding in smaller amounts that typically range from \$100,000 to \$1 million, whereas venture capital firms typically make investments in excess of \$1 million to \$5 million. Given that the majority of WOSBs are in the service sector, this requires less startup capital than those in other nontraditional industries.

There are few empirical studies concerning financial options made available to American women. However, in a recent study examining a sample of 832 female business owners, it was found that eight times as many high-growth WOSBs use angel capital financing compared to venture capital.²¹ Further study is needed to determine the implications of this, given that venture capital financing is more difficult to obtain by women entrepreneurs than their male counterparts.

Though women may be pursuing angel capital, there are also barriers to obtaining this financing as well. Some women, as recent research suggests, may even be creating their own barriers. The reason for women entrepreneurs receiving less angel funding than men may be partly because women tend to seek funding at lower rates and are more likely to seek

funds from women angels than male angels.²² These WOSBs tend to seek funding at a lower level than men, even though there is an opportunity to obtain a higher level of funding.

Barriers are imposed by the angel capitalists as well. For example, women may be starting a business for which angel investors lack interest. Also, WOSBs may be viewed as riskier investments because they may be discriminated against by their customers, suppliers, or potential funding sources, thereby lowering the probability of the business' success.²³

Angel capital may also make a difference as to whether a WOSB can pursue the commercialization of inventions and concepts. This would open the door for funding from sources such as those provided by small business innovation research (SBIR) or small business technology transfer (SBTT) contracts awarded by federal agencies. Government awards, particularly in the defense, education, commerce, and transportation areas, would therefore become viable opportunities to further the commercialization of inventions.

The Banking Industry

A traditional means of financing is provided by the banking industry. However, evidence suggests that women are charged a higher interest rate on their loans, or have greater collateral requirements, compared to men.²⁴ This discrimination could be caused by the same industry perceptions as those listed for access to angel capital.

Male business owners were found to use significantly more debt from external sources to start their businesses, while female business owners preferred to use internal sources of financing.²⁵ In 1993, only 32 percent of women-owned firms used commercial banks for financing as opposed to more than 35 percent that use credit cards as a source of financing.²⁶ Women were found to be significantly more reluctant to apply for loans than men, even though they were at no greater risk of being denied if they applied.²⁷ "Women have a higher expectation of denial, and thus may avoid seeking debt capital that could allow them to grow their firms."²⁸

Many women entrepreneurs perceive that they are treated differently than men by financing institutions. However, research on the subject has found no evidence of systematic gender discrimination by banks.²⁹ Most research has offered explanations other than gender discrimination for the difference in male and female access to funding. One such finding is bias based on firm size, representing a preference to lend to larger firms, thus omitting many women-owned firms that tend to be smaller.³⁰

Lenders also tend to favor borrowers who have a record of profitability, longevity, and assets for collateral. WOSBs tend to be smaller, newer, and less profitable than their male

counterparts. They also tend to be more concentrated in the service sector which has fewer assets for collateral.³¹ If women are perceived to be riskier borrowers, they may be given credit under less favorable terms (e.g., higher interest rates) or denied credit altogether.³²

The limited access to business loans has become another barrier for WOSBs. Access to bank credit becomes essential for business success when contract awards are made. Also, even though an award is made, there may sometimes be a significant delay in obtaining funds from the federal agency. There may also be miscalculations by the business owner in terms of overhead costs such that additional capital is needed to complete contractual obligations. These are illustrative of various risk scenarios that require a strong relationship with a bank to support the WOSB venture.

2. Access to Markets

The federal government offers one of the largest market opportunities in the United States for WOSBs. The government purchases a wide range of goods and services that can be provided by WOSBs across the nation. From a small business perspective, an important aspect of doing business with the government is the 100 percent guarantee of payment when deliverables are met. Another important aspect is that traditional geographic boundaries associated with local markets are eliminated through the purchasing power of the government. However, there are several specific barriers that face WOSBs when doing business with the government.

Lack of Familiarity with Government Contracting

In order to do business with the government, businesses must be registered with the Central Contracting Registry (CCR). Out of the estimated 10.4 million privately-held women-owned firms in the United States, only 63,053 (less than one percent of all women-owned firms) are registered with the CCR. This low percentage may demonstrate a lack of familiarity with government contracting.

In a survey focusing on women-owned firms in the federal procurement market, participants identified dealing with large amounts of paperwork, not fully understanding the process, and complying with the complex requirements involved as the most significant obstacles they encountered when they first became involved in contracting.³³ Other reasons identified by women in the survey for not doing business with the government included the fact that there was nothing available in their local area or in their line of work, failure to get the business, or not being able to be the lowest

bidder. These obstacles could be contributing factors as to why many WOSBs are hesitant to pursue, or do not even consider pursuing, federal contracts.

Size and Experience

WOSBs are, on average, smaller and less experienced than their male counterparts, thus limiting their ability to attract larger, nontraditional clients such as large corporations and the federal government.³⁴ The Center for Women's Business Research reports that "women-owned businesses with \$1 million or more in revenue are more likely than their small counterparts to have large corporations (34 percent vs. 12 percent) and government (31 percent vs. 8 percent) as their primary clients."³⁵

Many WOSBs are not even aware that the government buys the goods and services they sell. Most are under the misimpression that the government only buys materials for weapons and large-scale construction projects. Yet, over 30 percent of DOD's procurement budget is earmarked for the products and services women tend to provide—laundry and food services, uniforms, and draperies.³⁶

The process involved in obtaining a government contract can be daunting for most small businesses. Given that the majority of WOSBs have fewer than 10 employees, the task can be even more intimidating. Complete understanding of the rules and regulations involved, coupled with the nerve-racking task of preparing a proposal, can discourage most WOSBs from pursuing a contract.

In addition, one of the primary evaluation factors used in determining an award of a federal contract is past performance. The inability of WOSBs to attract the federal government and large corporations as clients thus impedes their ability to have a record of past performance. This presents the age-old problem that one cannot attract clients without experience and one cannot receive experience without first having clients. Further research into this subject area seems appropriate in order to fully understand the dynamics involved.

3. Access to Training and Technical Assistance

Another barrier facing WOSBs involves accessible and readily available training resources and technical assistance. The Internet has made possible a multitude of training opportunities that do not require physical attendance in a classroom setting. SBA, for example, has many training materials on its Web site that focus on how to do business with the federal government. These training materials are relevant only if they meet the usability and learning requirements of targeted users.

Technical assistance requires readily available access to government personnel who are "in the know."

Training

Currently, there are a wide range of online resources that virtually connect the federal government to small businesses in order to promote sustainable economic development.³⁷ Essential online resources include:

- Training classes on starting a business;
- Business planning;
- Marketing;
- Human resource management;
- Government procurement;
- Electronic commerce; and
- Financial literacy, among others.

Unfortunately, small businesses across the nation are unaware of, or lack suitable access to, these electronic resources. This is particularly the case in remote and rural areas of the United States where Internet access speeds are considerably slow or if Internet access has limited availability.

In regard to accessibility barriers to utilizing government online resources, the underlying concept of eliminating these electronic barriers is to make them universally accessible to all Americans. Yet, there are Web sites and electronic resources that are still not necessarily accessible, when taking into account such factors as:

- English proficiency;
- Technology experience;
- Network access speeds; and
- Vision, hearing, and physical disabilities.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 provides a set of guidelines to make federal Web sites accessible to those with disabilities. However, more needs to be done to ensure technology barriers are removed to the degree that small businesses across the country can readily access the resources required in order to do business with the government.

SBA's Women's Business Center program has contributed greatly to WOSB success. NWBC reports that even though funding for the program has remained relatively flat (\$12 million in 2001 and \$12.5 million in 2003), there was a 91 percent increase in the number of clients served and a 376 percent increase in the number of new businesses created.³⁸ "For every 25 clients served, one new business is created, and for every 14 clients served, one new job is created."³⁹

While the Women's Business Center and its programs have aided in the success of many WOSBs, the main focus of these

centers, however, is starting and growing businesses, rather than assisting with the ins and outs of government contracting. While training is available in the area of government contracting through the centers, it is not the primary focus. A sampling of the first 19 centers on the list of Women's Business Centers provided by SBA showed only one center that offered any type of procurement assistance, counseling, or training. If women are to compete in the federal procurement market, more resources need to be made available to provide the necessary tools to compete effectively. This includes informing women of available opportunities, as well as providing access to training and technical assistance.

Technical Assistance

Gaining access to government personnel in a timely fashion is another potential barrier for WOSBs. There is a heavy reliance on Web site postings for the relaying of information to small businesses about procurement opportunities. Several new technologies, such as FBO, offer the potential for widespread information dissemination in regard to procurement opportunities. However, not all small businesses are aware of these technological mechanisms. It is important for the government to periodically promote awareness of these technologies through more traditional modes of communication.

Though the Internet has revolutionized communication across the nation, there are still situations where talking to a person face-to-face or over the phone is essential for getting more in-depth answers and for providing effective assistance. For small businesses pursuing federal procurement opportunities, or those that have already done so, it is imperative to have communication mechanisms in place for timely feedback. As such, it would be important to have access to both Internet and voice communication mechanisms for promoting small business success.

4. Access to Networks

Few would argue that a significant source of sustainable small business success is accessibility to formal and informal business networks and markets.⁴⁰ Entrepreneurship involves a formulation of relationships to establish resources in response to opportunities and for access to capital. Entrepreneurs have to establish connections to required resources through networking.⁴¹ Men have traditionally held central economic positions in society throughout recorded history, while women have done so for only the past 30 or so years. Thus, the barriers facing WOSBs in terms of accessibility to networks are critical to all facets of doing business, including government contracting.

Another source of these barriers may be perceived as societal in terms of fewer business networks formed by women. Accessibility to these networks is crucial in order to open doors to angel investments and procurement opportunities. Women may not be aware of such opportunities when limited to a small networking circle of friends and family.

Gender Differences

Women have a tendency to network differently than men. Men tend to place themselves in a hierarchy and jockey for position, whereas women are more interested in cooperation, harmony, and forming connections.⁴² Women tend to build a network of support. Unfortunately, these networking differences can cost women opportunities in financing and other areas where key decision-makers are male.

A large portion of the difference between male and female entrepreneurs is attributed to the specific opportunities and constraints placed on each. Women business owners have different personal and social networks that have an extensive impact on their business growth and survival, as well as formation. On average, women are more likely to be restricted on their array of jobs, their opportunities to advance, and placement in positions of influence that would give them the same power as men. Women may also be more likely than men to have domestic responsibilities, causing them to work part-time and/or to have interrupted careers. Women tend to see responsibilities and commitments whereas men see mostly opportunities and rights. Men tend to practice mixing both social and work networks (multiplexing), while women tend to focus mainly on social networking.⁴³

Women must escape from their current socialization networks in order to access the same networks as male entrepreneurs. "Women need to break into the 'old boys' network by deliberately invading male turf whenever possible."⁴⁴ This can be accomplished by a collected effort by women to make "entrepreneurship" a "sex-neutral term."⁴⁵

Federal Procurement Reexamined

Government procurement requires networking as well. Outreach programs are made available through a variety of government agencies. SBA, for example, holds matchmaking events. The purpose of these events is to match small companies with government agencies and large corporations in order for them to buy the small businesses' products and services, as well as to create relationships for future opportunities. Other government agencies hold "industry days" intended to provide briefings for prime contractors and small businesses on various procurement opportunities and to assist

small businesses in networking with prime contractors for subcontracting opportunities. “Pre-proposal conferences” are usually held before large contract opportunities are announced. Attendance at these events allows small businesses to network with others for subcontracting and teaming prospects.

As stated earlier, WOSBs tend to network socially. Therefore, in order to break the barriers in networking to the government, a change in the networking framework of women business owners to include these activities—that they may view as “male oriented”—must be adopted. In other words, women must learn to position themselves differently in the networks that exist. They must actively seek out networking opportunities and take advantage of all that is made available to them.

Social Perceptions

Social barriers are another obstruction to WOSB success.

“The challenge for women-owned businesses is to convince government procurement officials and corporate clients they are just as competent as men.”⁴⁶

In a 1994 survey conducted by the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), 38 percent of respondents stated the most significant challenge they faced was to be taken seriously. This includes:

- Proving their capability and credibility (18 percent),
- Competing and succeeding in a male-dominated environment (13 percent), and
- Overcoming sexism, discrimination, and stereotypes (8 percent).⁴⁷

Over 10 years after the NAWBO survey, women still find themselves struggling with this issue. Women lack parity in respect; they are not taken seriously as business people, which consequently puts them at a disadvantage.⁴⁸ These sentiments are even more prevalent in nontraditional women-owned industries such as construction. Also, buyer discrimination and the lack of women in corporate and government procurement offices pose significant obstacles as well.⁴⁹

Conclusion

WOSBs, along with other small businesses, are foundational to long-term growth of the U.S. economy. As such, it would be important to promote their financial success in both the commercial and government marketplaces. Small businesses in general, not just those that are women-owned, add great value to the competitive nature of the contracting arena. The

end result is government efficiency in using tax dollars wisely for federal awards.

The effective implementation of the EWCA is one such solution to assist WOSBs in increasing their share of the federal procurement market and to break the barriers that keep this from happening. Yet, there appear to be obstacles in applying this solution to the inequity situation. There have been legal claims, pressure from the House Small Business Committee, and hearings on Capitol Hill in pursuit of the Act’s proper implementation. However, SBA still seems to lack the resources needed to effectively implement the Act. Therefore, other solutions are needed to address barriers that prevent enterprising women from starting and sustaining businesses. Those entrepreneurs who offer innovative products and services benefit greatly from the federal government SBIR and SBTB programs in pursuit of commercialization. This is one example of how the government can promote enterprising women in pursuit of their dreams.

Research must continue in order to uncover and expose the barriers discussed in this article, as well as other undiscovered potential barriers, that hamper the progress of WOSBs in the federal procurement arena. One step that could be taken to get this process moving would be to survey small businesses to identify both real and perceived barriers to small business success in government contracting. The findings of these surveys can provide a basis for further study on potential solutions for overcoming these barriers in both the commercial and government sectors. *JCM*

ENDNOTES

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