

EPA'S OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION

ISSUE SUMMARY:

EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) consists of two primary programs: the Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman (ASBO) program and the Small Business Solutions and Opportunities (SBSO) program. Collectively, the two programs operate to advance the business, regulatory and environmental compliance interests of the nation's small businesses. Small businesses serve a vital role in fueling job creation, innovation and economic growth within the United States. OSDBU's small business programs provide critical support to help further EPA's mission and enable small businesses to perform their important role in powering the U.S. economy.

UPCOMING MILESTONES:

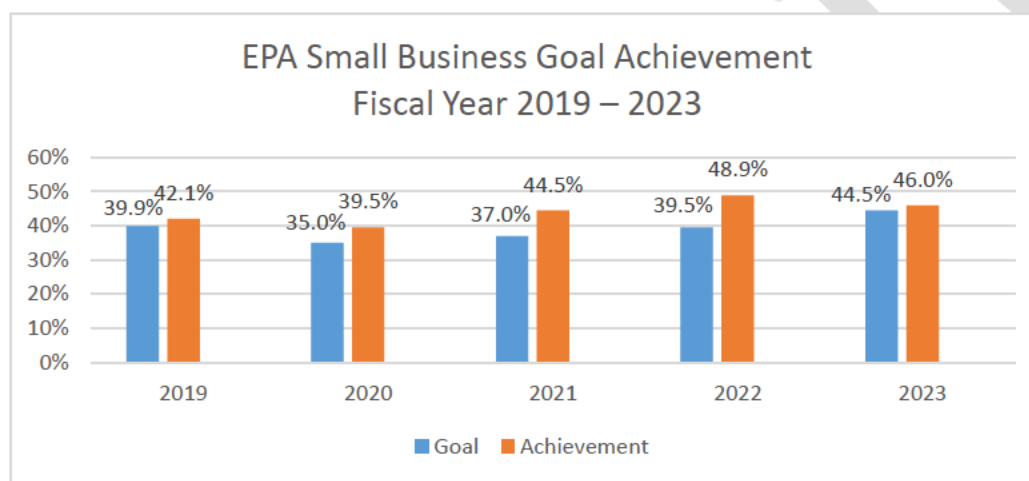
- **Quarterly** – The SBSO team will conduct and/or participate in quarterly outreach and industry engagements to provide small business training and technical assistance, and to identify capable small business solutions to meet EPA's acquisition needs.
- **January – May 2025** – OSDBU will prepare and submit a series of annual EPA small business contracting compliance reports ultimately submitted to Congress, and also to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for an assessment of the EPA's Small Business Procurement Scorecard grade.
- **May 2025** – OSDBU will host the 35th Annual Administrator's Small Business Program Awards ceremony to commemorate National Small Business week.
- **May/June 2025** – The ASBO Team will provide oversight and support to the National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program Annual Training Conference.

BACKGROUND:

The ASBO serves as a liaison for the public, small business community and EPA by helping to ensure that technical resources on asbestos, environmental regulations and compliance assistance information is accessible. The ASBO addresses asbestos-related inquiries; advocates for small business interests in the Agency's rule development process; and fosters partnerships with state and regional program representatives, trade associations, and other federal agencies. These partnerships provide the information and perspective that EPA needs to help small businesses achieve their environmental goals. Specific products and services provided by the ASBO include: monitoring and supporting the National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP); developing small business engagement guides and resources for EPA programs, hosting small business engagement opportunities at EPA; managing a toll-free hotline for small businesses and asbestos-related inquiries; and issuing the *SmallBiz@EPA* monthly news bulletin to help inform the small business community. With the help of ASBO services, EPA has received an A rating every year since 2005 from SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman due to the agency's exceptional service in responding to small business concerns.

The SBSO program is mandated under Section 15(k) of the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. § 644(k). As prescribed under that section, the program provides expertise in maximizing small business prime and subcontracting opportunities to expand the competitive supplier base in furthering the agency's mission. The program offers statutorily required

counselling to the EPA contracting community on all aspects of the acquisition cycle, including reviewing proposed procurement strategies for all EPA acquisitions above \$250,000. It also affords statutorily mandated advocacy and technical assistance to the various categories of small businesses, including small disadvantaged businesses; women-owned small businesses; certified small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones; and service-disabled veteran owned small businesses. Although the SBSO program provides critical assistance in championing small business solutions, EPA's contracting professionals, working collaboratively with program officials and the SBSO Team, are ultimately responsible for structuring agency acquisitions to afford small businesses contracting opportunities. Because of this close collaboration, the EPA has earned a grade of "A" or "A+" on the Small Business Procurement Scorecard administered by the SBA for 14 consecutive years. It has also awarded an average of over 40% of total acquisition dollars to small business, which is well above the established government-wide statutory goal of 23%. Below is the achievement of the Agency's small business goals over the last five completed Fiscal Years (FY).



KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☒ Congress
 ☒ Industry
 ☒ States
 ☒ Tribes
 ☐ Media
 ☒ Other Federal
 Agency
 ☐ NGO
 ☐ Local Governments
 ☐ Other (name of stakeholder):

MOVING FORWARD:

In 2025, OSDBU will:

- Continue engagement with state Small Business Environmental Assistance Program partners through a new cooperative agreement projected for awarded in FY 2025.
- Work with EPA's Office of Acquisition Solutions to strengthen the effectiveness the agency's Acquisition Forecast process as a procurement planning tool for internal and external stakeholders.
- Continue to leverage technology to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of operations to support small businesses, including deploying a new electronic outreach coordination tool that will provide greater automation in planning OSDBU external small business training and technical assistance activities.

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: AO, REGION 10

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: OMS, OAS