

**Congress of the United States**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Small Business**  
2361 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6515

April 4, 2017

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We are writing to you in our capacities as Ranking Member and Vice-Ranking Member of the House Committee on Small Business. The Committee on Small Business is committed to overseeing the programs and operations of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Federal contracting can be a complex and challenging undertaking for any business, especially for our nation's small businesses in the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contracting Program. An issue of great importance to these businesses is their lack of access to federal contracting. There have been serious delays in the Small Business Administration's (SBA) implementation of reforms to the WOSB Federal Contracting Program. While there was authorizing legislation for a women's contracting program, it took more than 10 years for the program to be put into place. Since then, problems continue to plague the program. Specifically, women-owned small businesses face difficulty accessing contracting opportunities, in part due to the limitations on contracts available to the program. Such limitations lead to persistent disparities in the program, which must be addressed. In addition, the October 2014 GAO report, *Women-Owned Small Business Program: Certifier Oversight and Additional Eligibility Controls Are Needed* (GAO-15-54) identified serious deficiencies in SBA's oversight of the certification process generally and third-party certifiers specifically.

Given the Committee's concerns, we request that the Government Accountability Office conduct a review of the Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program. We ask that you address the following:

1. How are businesses certified as eligible for the WOSB Program in light of recent legislation included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015?
2. What is SBA's current oversight of the certification process and third-party certifiers, and to what extent have previously identified deficiencies been addressed?
3. What is the effect of the program on federal contracting opportunities available to women-owned small businesses and economically disadvantaged women-owned small businesses?

4. To what extent does the program serve women-owned small businesses and various socioeconomic categories of WOSBs?

Please work with Halimah Locke, Professional Staff Member for Procurement to Ranking Member Velázquez, who can be reached at 202-225-4038 and Vivian Ling, Counsel to Chairman Chabot, who can be reached at (202) 225-5821 on the time frames and other issues related to your review. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Nydia Velázquez  
Ranking Member



Alma Adams  
Vice-Ranking Member

Enclosed (1)