



June 30, 2026

Ryan Lambert
Associate Administrator
Government Contracting and Business Development
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

RE: Proposed Rule - Reforms to Remove SBA's 8(a) Program's Rebuttable Presumption of Social Disadvantage for Individually Owned Firms; Docket No. SBA-2026-0133/RIN 3245-AI75

Dear Associate Administrator Lambert:

As a leading representative of America's 36 million small businesses, Small Business Majority writes in strong opposition to the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) proposed rule to eliminate the 8(a) Business Development Program's rebuttable presumption of social disadvantage. This proposed rule, which intends to restructure eligibility for the 8(a) program and its benefits, would prevent thousands of small business owners from accessing opportunities to work with the federal government amid an already concerning decline in the small business supplier base. The 8(a) program has historically provided a launch point for those who continue to face barriers to success when navigating the federal contracting system. Although we agree that the 8(a) program could stand to be improved upon, this rule fails to make the necessary improvements to strengthen the program and instead waters down the intent of why the program was created in the first place.

Small business owners see the value in programs like 8(a) that provide opportunities to those historically locked out

The 8(a) program has elevated thousands of small business owners to success in their federal contracting journey by providing training, mentorship, and key set-asides for contract awards. This program has a proven track record within our direct membership base and throughout the country in supporting access to contracts in the face of a massive decline in small business suppliers in the federal procurement system. This decline continues to persist because of harmful actions taken by the administration, instead of proposing policies to strengthen access to opportunity for Main Street. These actions, taken together represent a "death by a thousand cuts" approach for the prospects of success for small businesses looking to grow through contract opportunities that have been historically provided by the government. From actions like the reduction of agency-wide procurement goals for small and disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) from 15% to 5% for federal contract goals to increased scrutiny on a program that deserves bipartisan commitments to strengthening and protecting its integrity, small businesses overall will continue to pay the price for harsh policies that keep firms locked out of opportunities.¹

The share of federal contracts to small and disadvantaged businesses in particular have dropped significantly over the last fiscal year. Total dollars going to small businesses overall is also on the downward trend, dropping from \$183.5 billion in 2024 to just \$179 billion in 2025.² When it comes to

¹ Federal News Network, "SBA resets some small business goals for 2025," January 31, 2025, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/acquisition-policy/2025/01/sba-resets-some-small-business-goals-for-2025/>

² Federal News Network, "Agencies award \$179B to small firms in 2025, down from 2024," June 25, 2026, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/contractsawards/2026/06/agencies-award-179b-to-small-firms-in-2025-down-from-2024/>

SDBs as a subset of small firms, the numbers show what appears to be a continued disinvestment in small businesses across certain socio-economic statuses, including women- and minority-owned small businesses. According to a recent report compiled by the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, contract dollars to minority-owned small businesses are down 22% overall including a 26% decline for Asian American-owned small businesses, a 25% decline for Black-owned firms, and a 19% decline to Native American, Alaska Natives and Hawaiian Native firms.³ Without the targeted support that the 8(a) program provides, small businesses will continue to suffer financially.

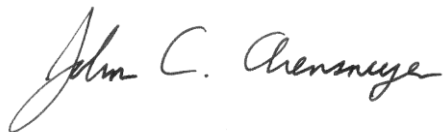
The rebuttable presumption of social disadvantage has existed for many years to level the playing field for small firms that have lacked the resources, connections and past performance history needed to bid and win federal contracts. Despite claims to the contrary, 8(a) is not an example of a so-called DEI program. It has benefited a wide range of small business owners throughout its existence, which explains why it has historically had bipartisan backing. Small Business Majority's research found that small businesses want to see these programs continue, despite government actions being taken over the last few years to weaken these programs. Small business owners from a range of backgrounds widely support programs like 8(a), with 79% of small business owners supporting government programs that provide assistance to targeted demographic groups.⁴

While 8(a) and other contract certification programs are far from perfect and are in need of bipartisan improvements, they represent a critical mechanism for not only directing more contracting dollars to small businesses that have been historically overlooked, but also providing critical training, technical assistance, access to networks, and long-term mentoring with larger contractors that equips 8(a) firms with the skills necessary to thrive after graduating from the program. We have seen the program equip businesses with the skills needed to become compliant with federal procurement policies, expand their workforce, and obtain the credibility needed to continue winning contracts in the federal space. The return on investment within the 8(a) program means growing businesses, more employment opportunities across our nation, and a diversified supply chain in the federal procurement system.

We urge the SBA to take seriously the consequences of these actions and to reverse course on these harmful changes that will only lower the share of small firms in our procurement base and will lead to fewer opportunities for small businesses to compete in federal acquisition processes.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss our concerns further, please do not hesitate to contact our Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, Alexis D'Amato Falvey at adamato@smallbusinessmajority.org.

Sincerely,



John Arensmeyer
Founder & CEO
Small Business Majority

³ Senate Small Business & Entrepreneurship Committee Ranking Member Sen. Ed Markey, "Trump's Contracting Catastrophe is Turning Main Street into Pain Street," June 2026, https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/0/3/037e39c8-850b-47f6-849d-bd58df3244b1/Co8E9F231CF2EEB5C9D1580A2F4D35228F57BD6268A9CAC8FAFBB9529929A497.contracting-report-final-.pdf

⁴ Small Business Majority, "Small businesses benefit from targeted grant and loan programs, support their continued existence," October 8, 2024, <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/entrepreneurship-independent-economy/small-businesses-benefit-targeted-grant-and-loan-programs-support-their-continued-existence>