



STANDARD COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

"In the News"

ARCHIVE

<http://www.fcw.com/online/news/151824-1.html>

GSA launches new initiative to help veterans

By [Matthew Weigelt](#)
Published on March 3, 2008

The General Services Administration wants to boost the amount of contracting dollars going to veteran-owned businesses with a new initiative announced today.

The 21 Gun Salute initiative aims to increase the number and percentage of agency contracting dollars going to small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, GSA said.

Officials want to allocate at least 3 percent of GSA's contracting dollars, or \$143 million, to service-disabled veteran small businesses in 2008, a mark the agency has struggled to reach, according to GSA.

Through the initiative, GSA said it wants to push its own contracting officers to buy from veteran-owned businesses that provide high-demand government products and services. It also wants to raise awareness among agencies about those businesses.

The initiative also would help veterans find markets for their products while establishing a mentor program and partnering with veterans organizations. One such organization is The Veterans Corp., a nonprofit that Congress created through the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act. It provides business resources to veterans who own businesses.

"Reaching out to service-disabled veterans is the right thing to do and provides government with resourceful women and men," GSA Administrator Lurita Doan said in a statement.

As GSA reaches out to agencies about veterans' businesses, officials said the agency also intends to increase how much money it sends to those businesses to reach the 3 percent goal, which it has failed to do.

According to the Small Business Administration's Small Business Procurement Scorecard from August, GSA missed the 3 percent goal for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses in fiscal 2006. And in fiscal 2007, GSA sent only 2.2 percent of its contracting dollars to the businesses, according to GSA.

John Moliere, a veterans' activist and president of Standard Communications, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business, called the initiative benign. But it, like the Veterans Technology Services governmentwide acquisition contract (VETS GWAC), could easily be overshadowed by other contracts, despite the initiative's and the contract's innovation, he said.

The 21 Gun Salute initiative and the VETS GWAC support President Bush's Disabled Veterans Executive Order, which directs all federal agencies to develop and implement strategies help veterans in federal contracting.

