

FCSM 24: Building Capacity

The Benefits of a Multidisciplinary Team in Federal
Program Evaluation and Research

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October 22, 2024



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[Overview

- Building a High Performing Organization – **Anna Maria Calcagno**
- SBA's Equity in Procurement Evaluation Portfolio – **Olivia Gonzalez**
- Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and the SBA – **Kate Yang**

Building a High Performing Organization

Dr. Anna Maria Calcagno

Director, Office of Strategic Management and Enterprise Integrity

SBA Statistical Official, Chief Evaluation Officer, and Deputy Performance Improvement Officer

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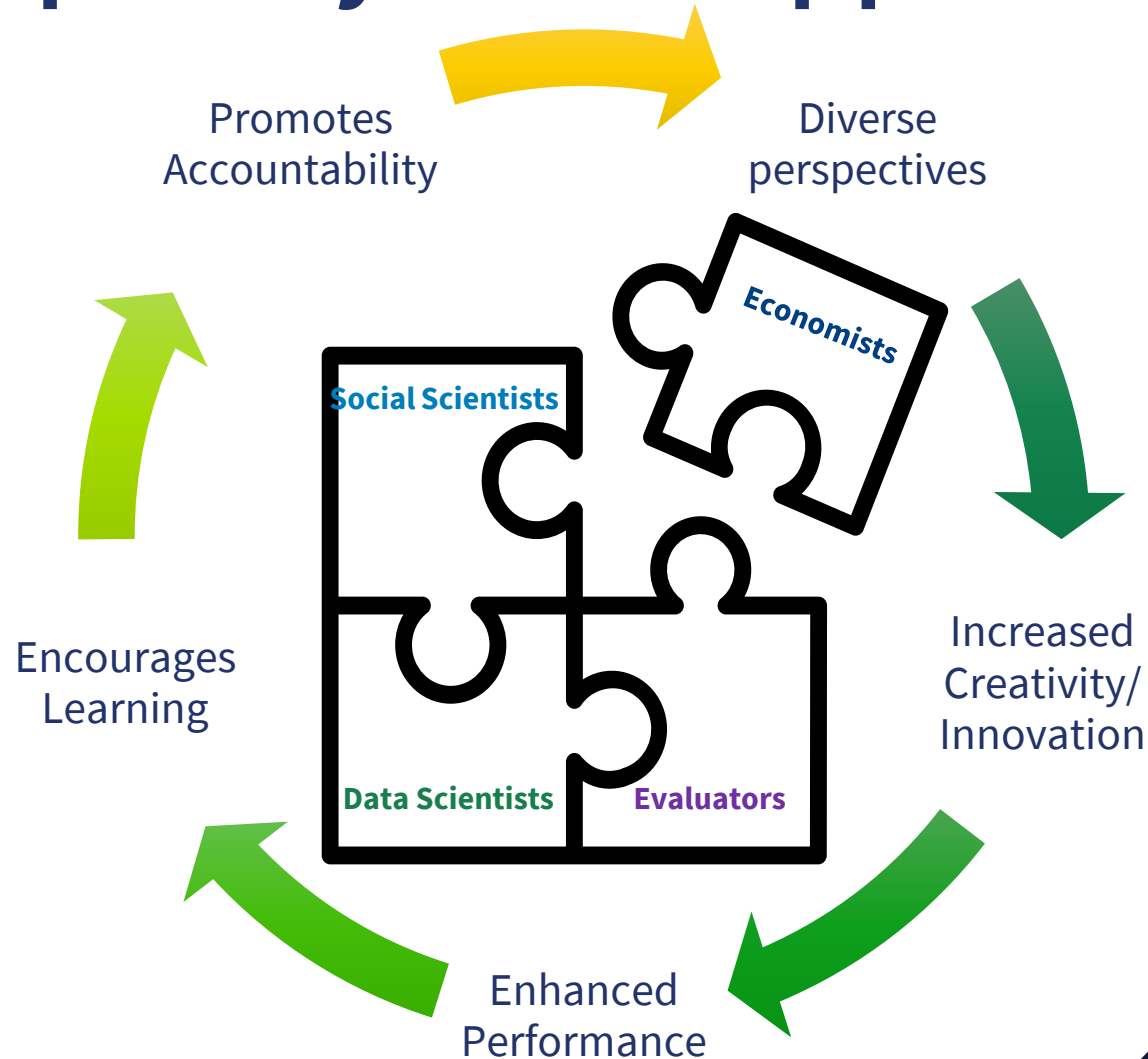
Organizational Framework for High Performing Organizations*



* Based on Baldrige Excellence Framework

Multidisciplinary Team Approach

The Analysis and Evaluation Division has 3 unique branches which are integrated to form a multidisciplinary team centered around a common vision and purpose.



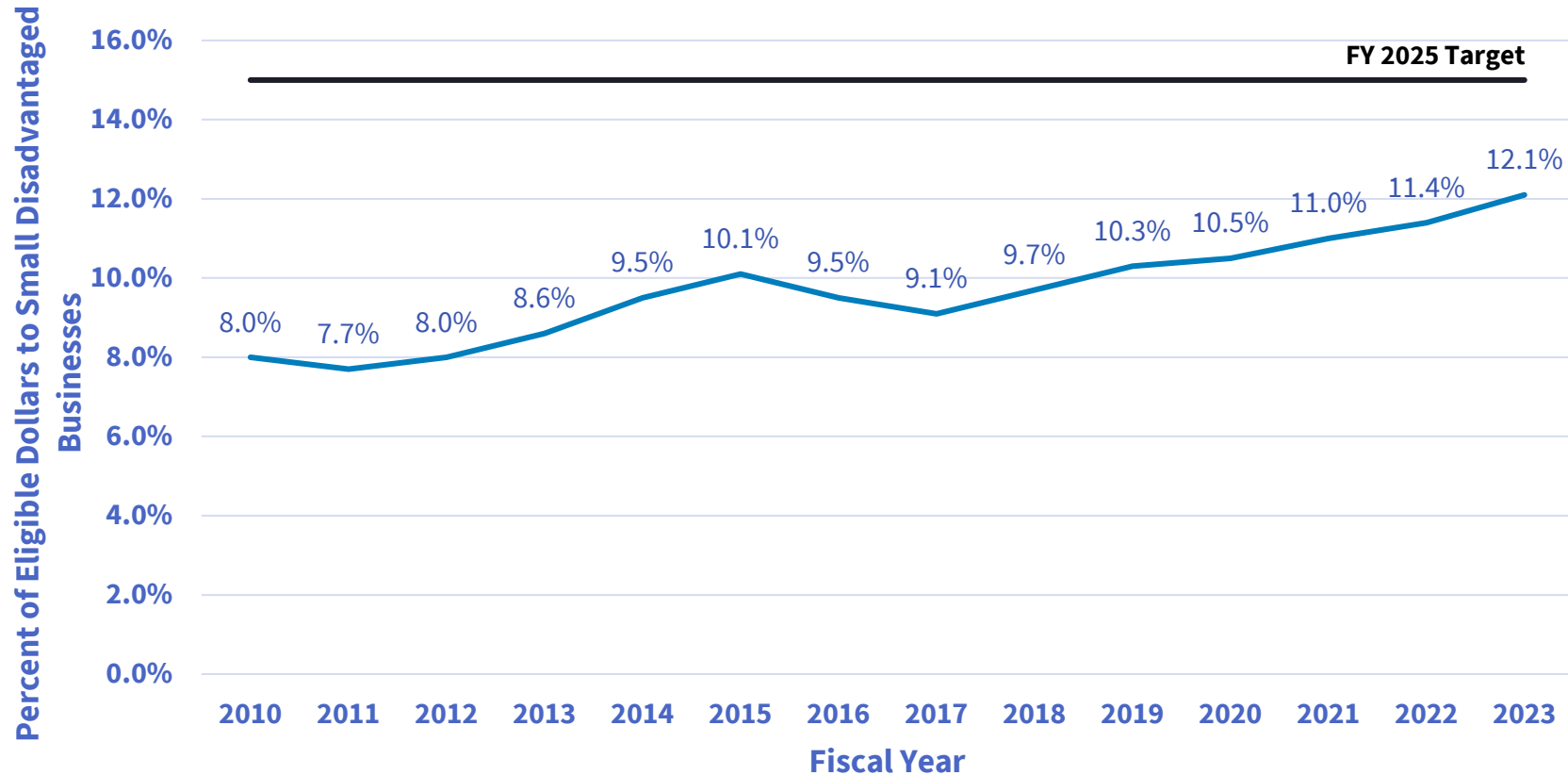
Vision: To be the central and authoritative evidence resource for the SBA

Mission: Advance evidence to better inform decision makers and integrate agency wide data for enterprise-wide analyses and solutions

Agency Priority Goal: Increasing Disadvantaged Small Business Growth through Federal Procurement

- The Federal Government is the largest procurer of goods and services in the world. With **more than half a trillion dollars spent in annually**, these dollars represent a tremendous opportunity for small businesses.
- The SBA sets annual federal contracting goals for select small business types. These include: 5% of contracting dollars for **women-owned small businesses**, 3% for **service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses**, 3% for **small businesses certified as operating in and employing residents from HUBZone locations**, and 15% for **small disadvantaged small businesses**.
- In January 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration announced a bold goal of **increasing the share of federal contracting dollars going to SDBs to 15% by FY2025**, a 50% increase from spending levels when he first took office.
- In FY 2023, for the third consecutive year, the federal government **exceeded its annual goal** for federal contracting dollars awarded to small disadvantaged businesses.

Federal Contracting Utilization by Small Disadvantaged Businesses, FY 2010 – FY 2023



SBA Kicks off Portfolio of Projects on Equity in Procurement

- To support this ambitious goal, **OMB asked SBA to evaluate equity in procurement** across the federal government.
- In FY 2023, the SBA kicked off a off a large-scale, multi-year evidence building effort in **strategic alignment with OMB**.
- This portfolio takes a **mixed methods approach** to studying which agency practices across the government contribute to equitable Federal spending and how we can achieve this 15 % target in FY 25.

SBA Enterprise Learning Agenda Question

How can the SBA advance equitable contracting policies and streamline small business certification to help more underserved small businesses win Federal contracts?

SBA's Equity in Procurement Evaluation Portfolio

Olivia Gonzalez

Economist, Office of Strategic Management and Enterprise Integrity

October 22, 2024



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[Equity in Procurement Portfolio

Objective: To
Promote
Agency
Action






Draft Deliberative – Pre-Decisional

[Background Research

- During our research and analysis to support our recommendations of potential evaluation methods and partners, we discovered several important factors that need to be considered
- Our portfolio approach was based on **research and stakeholder engagement**, that produced the following insights.
- A systematic approach to evaluating equity in Federal procurement would require:
 - **Quantitative and qualitative** analysis
 - **Literature review** of best practices in equitable contracting
 - **Studying all 24 CFO Act agencies** – limiting our study sample before “equity” and “best practices” are defined could leave out important agencies to study
 - Partnering with **equity experts** to help conceptualize the evaluation questions and methods
 - Partnering with **Federal procurement data experts**
 - **Partnering with contractors** with extensive data science, statistical, and qualitative analysis experience

[Project 1: Literature Review

Goal: Explore the following Foundational Topics

1. Defining equity in procurement 
2. Understanding inequities in Federal contracting 
3. Overview of practices to promote equity 

Project 2: Quantitative Analysis

Goal: Discern where the biggest spending disparities are by various criteria

Small Business Administration Opportunity NAICS

Small Business Group
 WOSB 

Actionable Dashboard
 will be shared with Federal agencies in FY25 Q2

Opportunity NAICS	U.1 Utilization Ratio	A.1 Availability Ratio	D.1 Disp Ratio	Projects	Agency Obligations to Small Businesses
Office Furniture (including Fixtures) Manufacturing	0.15	0.27	0.56		\$4,180,833
Business Schools and Computer and Management Training	0.19	0.37	0.51	10	\$10,690,735
Printing and Related Support Activities	0.07	0.34	0.20	8	\$585,355
Other Information Services	0.18	0.28	0.65	3	\$3,930,066
Employment Services	0.10	0.38	0.26	4	\$7,329,393
Specialized Freight Trucking	0.20	0.27	0.75	3	\$1,170,923

Project 3: Qualitative Investigation of Leading Practices



Goal: Gather multiple perspectives about leading practices and publish implementation guides for CFO Act agencies

- 1. Document Review**

OMB Memos, Literature Review Findings, OSDDBU SBPAC Best Practices Presentations

- 2. Interviews**

CFO Act Agencies, Federal Policymakers/Influencers, SBs, SB Advocacy Organizations

- 3. Synthesis**

Of all evidence from across the portfolio into practical and actionable summary documents for Federal agencies

[Equity in Procurement Portfolio

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Draft Deliberative – Pre-Decisional

[Equity in Procurement Portfolio



[Equity in Procurement Portfolio

- The synthesization of all qualitative and quantitative insights across the portfolio will inform:
 - **Actionable recommendation sheets** for 24 CFO Act Agencies
 - **Implementation guides** for leading practices
 - Portfolio **infographic & fact sheets**
 - Portfolio **Summary Presentations**
 - Additional portfolio summary products

A Case of Collaboration in Evaluation: Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance

Dr. Kate Yang

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Senior Evaluator, GSA Office of Evaluation Sciences



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What is the Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES)?

The **Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES)** is an **interdisciplinary team** that works across the federal government to **help agencies build and use evidence.**



A snapshot of our work

Since 2015, we have...



Hired over 175
team members



Brought in talent
from nearly
100 institutions



Completed over
120 collaborations



Completed over
100 evaluations



Partnered with over
20 federal agencies

Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and SBA

What did we evaluate?

- The 8(a) Business Development Program (8(a) program) is a 9-year program that serves socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners
 - Provides participants with training and technical assistance
 - Participating businesses are eligible for limited competition contracting opportunities with Federal agencies
- The SBA aims to increase participation in its 8(a) program
 - Many business owners initiate applications but never submit incomplete applications

Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and SBA

How did the evaluation work?

- We worked with the 8(a) program team to design new email outreach to people who had initiated applications to the program
 - This was a new form of outreach for the 8(a) program team
- We designed two types of email outreach strategies to address different barriers in the application process:
 - To address incompleteness, we compiled a checklist of application requirements
 - To address application complexity, we provided contact information to encourage applicants to meet with local partner organizations that support the 8(a) application process (APEX Accelerators)

Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and SBA

How was the evaluation designed?

- The evaluation included 15,811 applications
 - New applications initiated by businesses between April 15th and May 29th, 2024
 - Applications initiated prior to April 15th but never submitted
- Outcome data were received on July 8th
- Applications were randomly assigned to one of four groups

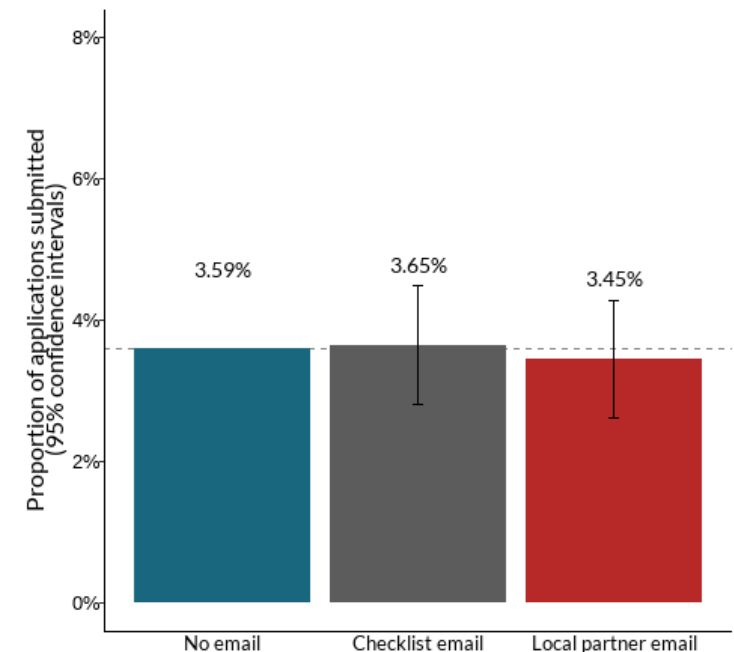
Intervention group	N
No email (Business-as-usual)	3,597
Checklist email	3,684
Local partner organization email	3,699
Checklist + local partner organization email	4,010

Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and SBA

What did we learn?

- Proactive email outreach did not increase application submission in the ten weeks following the emails
- Our estimates of the effects of the checklist email and the local partner organization email were not significant for any of our outcome measures (whether applications were submitted, screened as complete, or had documentation of a local partner meeting)
- Out of 15,811 initiated applications in our sample, 596 were submitted, 298 were screened as complete, and 50 included documentation of having met with a local partner

Figure 1. Proportion of submitted applications



Increasing application submissions for small business contracting assistance: A collaboration between OES and SBA

What are the implications?

- The primary limitation was the relatively short time frame between the intervention and measurement of outcome data
 - Less than 4% of businesses submitted applications during the evaluation period
 - Future follow-up study could evaluate the outcomes of this evaluation using a longer window of submission data
- Exploratory result (not pre-registered): Applicants who received the local resource email were marginally more likely to meet with a local partner organization
 - Additional outcome data may allow us to assess robustness of this finding
- Additional evaluation underway for increasing federal contract awards to 8(a) firms

Q&A



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