



Office of General Services
**Division of Service-Disabled
Veterans' Business Development**

Guidelines for the Use of Set Aside Contracts with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses

Article 3 of the Veterans' Services Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (SDVOBs), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State's economy. One tool authorized by the law is the use of set asides. Set asides permit the reservation in whole or in part of certain procurements by State agencies for SDVOBs. These guidelines have been established by the Commissioner of General Services to assist in evaluating and managing the use of set aside contracts.

Types of procurements that may use set asides include:

- Construction
- Construction Related Services
- Non-Construction Related Services (including finance/bond management)
- Technology
- Commodities

A State agency may consider setting aside a procurement opportunity by limiting participation to SDVOBs at any time after considering the use of a preferred source. However, there is no obligation to use SDVOB set-aside contracts, and the decision to set aside a contract for SDVOBs is always at the discretion of the State agency. Set asides will be administered subject to the laws, rules and procedures governing contracting for each type of procurement, including, but not limited to:

1. Competitive bidding with award based on adherence to specifications and lowest price.
2. Competitive bidding with award based on technical responsiveness and best value.
3. Award based on qualifications and best value (for architects, engineers, land surveyors, and geologists).
4. Emergency award.
5. Single source award.
6. Sole source award.
7. Purchase based on exercise of discretionary authority subject to agency internal controls.
8. Other authorized procurement methods for making acquisition.

When a State agency commences the process for a procurement, after considering preferred sources, it may review the NYS Certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Directory, available at <https://online.ogs.ny.gov/SDVOB/search> to determine if there is a competitive field of certified SDVOBs that appear to be suitable in meeting agency needs and that have sufficient capacity and resources. If there is, the agency is strongly encouraged to reserve and conduct that procurement as a set aside for SDVOBs.

Each agency shall have in place an internal approval protocol for review of and finalizing the determination to proceed with a set aside procurement. It is recommended that at least two levels of approvals be included in the protocol. The approvals should be made part of the procurement record.

In order to determine that a competitive field of SDVOBs exists, an agency must review the certified SDVOB Directory and reasonably determine that at least two SDVOBs are able to respond to the procurement. During the agency review of the Directory and prior to the issuance of any public notice of the procurement opportunity, the agency may contact potential SDVOBs regarding their suitability to meet the agency's need and whether the SDVOBs are likely to respond to the procurement.

The agency, in providing public notice of the procurement opportunity, shall include in its advertisement in the Contract Reporter the fact that the procurement is a set aside and the pool of bidders is limited to NYS certified SDVOBs. The agency shall then proceed with its procurement in accordance with the acquisition processes that are usually employed to secure the particular type of procurement. In making the contract award, the agency must assess and make a determination that the price offered by the vendor is reasonable and reflective of fair market value. Such finding should be made a part of the procurement record.

Set aside procurements are subject to restrictions on communications during the procurement process governed by § 139-j and § 139-k of the State Finance Law, and State agencies must also evaluate the responsibility of the SDVOB based upon financial and organizational capacity, legal authority, business integrity, and past performance history prior to award of a set aside contract.

In the event that the set aside procurement does not result in a contract award, the agency shall follow its regular procurement practices to obtain the goods or services needed.

State agencies must report the number of completed set asides and ongoing set asides on a quarterly basis to the Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development. If there are no completed or ongoing set asides, the report should also indicate that status.

Reporting forms and other information regarding the SDVOB program may be obtained by visiting the Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development (DSDVBD) webpage at <https://ogs.ny.gov/Veterans/> or by contacting DSDVBD by phone or email:

Phone: (518) 474-2015

Email: veteransdevelopment@ogs.ny.gov