

Topics to be Addressed in Agency Equity Action Plans

Due Date: Thursday, January 20th, 2022 (Upload by 5:00 PM)
Method of Submission: MAX: <https://collect.max.gov/x/Ms6gnO>
Maximum Length of Report: See guidance below.
Format: Microsoft Word Document, 12 pt. font, normal margins
Release: This document, per Executive Order (EO) 13985, contains an Equity Action Plan (“Plan”) to meaningfully address the barriers and opportunities identified through the agency’s equity assessment. The Plan will be used to help set public expectations and promote accountability, and inform the agency’s longer-term equity planning and implementation strategy. The Plan should be reviewed by the agency’s Office of General Counsel (OGC) prior to submission, and may be used to inform public documents released by the Domestic Policy Council (DPC).

(1) **Executive summary**

- Agency name and mission: U.S. Trade and Development Agency

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority infrastructure projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project preparation and partnership building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.

Additional background on agency:

USTDA achieves its mission by funding feasibility studies, technical assistance and pilot projects that integrate U.S. private sector innovation into infrastructure projects at the critical early stages when design choices and technology options are determined. The Agency also connects overseas project sponsors with U.S. partners through its reverse trade missions, industry conferences and expert workshops.

USTDA's dual mission of facilitating overseas economic development and U.S. exports is unique among federal agencies. In carrying out its mission, the Agency places particular emphasis on vital economic sectors including clean energy, information and communications technology, transportation, healthcare infrastructure, and agribusiness.

- Summary of Action Plan

USTDA has long prioritized the advancement of equity and the removing of barriers through the creation of opportunities for small businesses and members of underserved communities. In particular, USTDA has prioritized the utilization of the SBA 8(a) to harness the innovation and ingenuity of small-disadvantaged business to achieve the Agency's mission. USTDA plans to do more in this area by:

-- Continuing to advance minority participation in USTDA's small business procurement program. Office of Acquisition Management will continue its advocacy for small-disadvantaged businesses with the goal of providing maximum practicable opportunities for small-disadvantaged business, including minority-owned and women-owned small businesses.

-- Continuing to prioritize outreach to Tribal Nations in accordance with President Biden's January 26, 2021, *Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships and Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2000 (Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments)*.

-- Continuing to prioritize domestic engagement of U.S. business stakeholders, with focused outreach to small-disadvantaged businesses. The goal of this outreach is to help create a more enabling environment for historically underrepresented businesses to participate in USTDA's grant-funded activities and in the process, access export markets consistent with the Agency's mission.

(2) Summary of early accomplishments

- Please highlight any equity-related achievements or successes (e.g., innovative stakeholder engagement, notable changes in policies or operations, new partnerships, etc.) since EO 13985 was released on January 20, 2021.

Despite limited dedicated resources to implementing EO 13985, USTDA conducted a successful outreach program with 42 percent of our total procurement dollars going to small-disadvantaged businesses owned by socially disadvantaged groups, far exceeding SBA’s 5 percent target. Below is a breakout of procurement dollars going to minority-owned and woman-owned small business during FY2021:

Minority-Owned Small Business = \$9,693,144.54 (42% of Total Procurement Value)
--Asian-Pacific American Owned = \$2,707,709.40
--Black American Owned = \$3,303,735.66
--Hispanic American Owned = \$971,783.53
--Subcontinental Asian (Asian-Indian) = \$2,610,163.03
--Other Minority Owned = \$99,752.89

Woman-Owned Small Business = \$5,671,240.71 (24% of Total Procurement Value)

Additionally, in April 2021 USTDA participated in a nine-agency consultation process with Tribal leaders, to listen and learn how the Agency could best engage, communicate and understand best practices for its future engagement with Tribal Nations. Following on this consultation process, USTDA participated in Reservation Economic Summit (RES) 2021, hosted by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, via a panel with the Small Business Administration and U.S. Export-Import Bank entitled “Grow Global: A Guide to Government Resources to Expand Your Business through International Sales.” USTDA has also consulted with the Native American Contractors Association (NACA) to share information about USTDA’s grant, procurement and employment opportunities and anticipates participating in the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Conference to be held in October 2022. The intent of these engagements is to advertise USTDA’s business and job opportunities to Tribal Nations and Native American-owned companies that work in the infrastructure space or that may bid for contract opportunities to provide support services to USTDA. As part of this outreach, USTDA also has expanded its outreach for its employment and internship opportunities to advance EO 13985.

In October 2021, USTDA onboarded a Director of Public Engagement, who will execute the Agency’s domestic engagement, including its outreach to small-disadvantaged businesses, with the objective of helping to create a more enabling environment for historically underrepresented businesses to participate in USTDA’s grant-funded activities and in the process, access export markets consistent with the Agency’s mission.

(3) Equity action plan

Please clearly identify **three to five** actions that your agency plans to undertake and list them **in order of priority**; provide evidence-based reasoning for selection; and outline high-level elements of implementation. (Actions should address the institutional resources available to offices responsible for advancing **civil rights** pursuant to Section 5(d) and **procurement and contracting** pursuant to Section 7(a) of EO 13985, but may also focus on other significant priorities identified by the agency regardless of whether they were included in the agency's equity assessment.)

For **each action**, please include:

A. Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

- *Describe the barrier you are trying to address.*
- *Specify the program, policy, or regulation that contributes to this barrier.*
- *Indicate which populations are most impacted by this barrier.*
- *List the evidence indicating that this barrier meaningfully impacts full and equal participation.*

B. Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

- *Describe the actions the agency will take to eliminate/reduce the barrier.*
- *Why did you prioritize these actions?*
- *Indicate how the actions are expected to result in reducing or eliminating the barrier to equitable outcomes. If not identified above, please indicate what evidence supports this connection.*

C. Tracking Progress

- *Describe what factors you will use to determine whether the agency action(s) has eliminated or substantially reduced the barrier to equitable access identified above in the near- to mid-term (2-4 years out).*
- *Indicate what success might ultimately look like in the long-term (5-8 years out).*

D. Accountability

- *Describe how the agency will hold itself accountable to implementing this action. Consider potential internal and external mechanisms (e.g., aligning with the Agency Strategic Plan and/or other public-facing documents, embedding equity-related goals in performance plans, holding virtual town halls, etc.) and how and when the agency will communicate progress to stakeholders.*

Action 1: Establish a dedicated Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), and appoint a director, who reports to the agency head (or deputy), and who will have responsibility for carrying out the purposes mandated by Public Law 95-507.

A. Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

- *Describe the barrier you are trying to address:*

Lack of funding for the establishment of an OSDBU. Further lack of staffing/ resources to continue USTDA’s robust outreach to underserved/underrepresented small businesses to contract with for agency program/services.

- *Specify the program, policy, or regulation that contributes to this barrier:*

Lack of adequate resources and approved staffing. Approval of additional FTEs and dedicated funding to establish OSDBU and hire personnel to support this requirement.

- *Indicate which populations are most impacted by this barrier:*

All underrepresented groups to include minority-owned and women-owned small businesses.

- *List the evidence indicating that this barrier meaningfully impacts full and equal participation:*

Notwithstanding the value of contracts awarded to small-disadvantaged businesses, there are a limited number of contractors from underrepresented groups that consistently participate in contracting opportunities with the agency. The growth of participation by underrepresented businesses requires continued and robust outreach, which necessitates a considerable amount of time and dedicated staff resources to be effective.

B. Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

- *Describe the actions the agency will take to eliminate/reduce the barrier.*

The agency will reduce this barrier with robust outreach to increase representation of underserved/underrepresented groups through increasing contractor diversity. With increased market intelligence on the underserved/underrepresented contractor ecosystem we can reduce barriers and increase representation and participation of minority and women owned small businesses in USTDA contract opportunities. Impact will be demonstrated by an increasing pool of underserved/underrepresented small businesses contracted to perform various services.

- *Why did you prioritize these actions?*

Businesses owned by individuals in underserved/underrepresented communities are still too often stifled in the Federal procurement process. An investment in these underserved/

underrepresented small business owners is a big step in restoring economic growth in those communities. Although USTDA has a very successful outreach program with on average 37 percent of our total small business procurement dollars going to small-disadvantaged businesses owned by socially disadvantaged groups, the lack of a dedicated OSDBU limits the reach of our outreach program. Currently, the Chief of the Office of Acquisition Management (AQM) takes on the role of Acting Director of the OSDBU, but AQM does not have dedicated resources to consistently support this effort.

- *Indicate how the actions are expected to result in reducing or eliminating the barrier to equitable outcomes. If not identified above, please indicate what evidence supports this connection.*

Currently, the Chief of the Office of Acquisition Management (AQM) takes on the role of Acting Director of the OSDBU, but AQM does not have resources to consistently support this effort. With the establishment of an OSDBU the agency would have the dedicated staff/resources to support this effort.

C. Tracking Progress

- *Describe what factors you will use to determine whether the agency action(s) has eliminated or substantially reduced the barrier to equitable access identified above in the near- to mid-term (2-4 years out).*

Data will be maintained on the agency's use of underrepresented contractor for contracted work on agency services.

- *Indicate what success might ultimately look like in the long-term (5-8 years out).*

Full success will be achieved with 50 percent or more of our total small business procurement dollars going to small-disadvantaged businesses owned by socially disadvantaged groups.

D. Accountability

- *Describe how the agency will hold itself accountable to implementing this action.*

Accountability will be maintained through agency procedures that ensure emphasis and priority for maintaining and increasing contractor diversity and increase representation of underrepresented groups.

Action 2: Prioritized outreach to Tribal Nations in accordance with President Biden’s January 26, 2021, Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships and Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2000 (Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments).

A. Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

- *Describe the barrier you are trying to address.*

Lack of funding and lack of staffing/existing resources to conduct effective outreach.

- *Specify the program, policy, or regulation that contributes to this barrier.*

Lack of adequate resources and approved staffing. Approval of additional FTEs and funding to hire personnel to support this requirement.

- *Indicate which populations are most impacted by this barrier.*

Tribal Nations.

- *List the evidence indicating that this barrier meaningfully impacts full and equal participation.*

There are a limited number of Tribal Nation contractors that participate in opportunities funded by the agency. Continued and robust outreach to Tribal Nations requires a considerable amount of time and requires dedicated staff to be effective.

B. Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

- *Describe the actions the agency will take to eliminate/reduce the barrier.*

The agency will reduce this barrier with robust outreach to increase representation of Tribal Nation groups through increased participation in USTDA funded activities. With increased market intelligence on the Tribal Nation contractor ecosystem and robust outreach we can reduce barriers and increase representation and participation of Tribal Nation groups in USTDA contract opportunities.

- *Why did you prioritize these actions?*

USTDA prioritized this action to support the Administration’s diversity and inclusion goals while also seeking to diversify the pool of contractors participating in agency funded activities.

- *Indicate how the actions are expected to result in reducing or eliminating the barrier to equitable outcomes. If not identified above, please indicate what evidence supports this connection.*

Increased engagement with Tribal Nation entities could result in the creation of increased jobs for Tribal Nation populations.

C. Tracking Progress

- *Describe what factors you will use to determine whether the agency action(s) has eliminated or substantially reduced the barrier to equitable access identified above in the near- to mid-term (2-4 years out).*

Data will be maintained on the agency's use of Tribal Nations contractors for work on agency funded activities.

- *Indicate what success might ultimately look like in the long-term (5-8 years out).*

Long-term success will be reached with increased participation of Tribal Nations contractors in agency funded activities.

D. Accountability

- *Describe how the agency will hold itself accountable to implementing this action.*

Accountability will be maintained through agency procedures that track and ensure priority is placed on outreach to Tribal Nations and their increased representation in USTDA-funded activities.

Action 3: Create a domestic presence of six regional satellite locations across the United States in furtherance of USTDA’s mission and to ensure proximity to key constituencies, including small-disadvantaged businesses in underserved/underrepresented communities.

A. Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

- *Describe the barrier you are trying to address:*

Lack of funding and lack of staffing resources to establish field operations in closer proximity to key constituencies, including underrepresented/underserved small businesses in rural, urban, and U.S. manufacturing centers. The lack of such field operations inhibits the ability small-disadvantaged businesses to participate in USTDA’s grant-funded activities and in the process, access export markets consistent with the Agency’s mission.

- *Specify the program, policy, or regulation that contributes to this barrier:*

Lack of adequate resources and approved staffing. Approval of additional FTEs and funding to hire personnel to support this requirement.

- *Indicate which populations are most impacted by this barrier:*

All underrepresented and socially disadvantaged groups in underserved rural and urban communities to include small, disadvantaged, minority- and women-owned businesses.

- *List the evidence indicating that this barrier meaningfully impacts full and equal participation:*

USTDA has facilitated more than \$75 billion in U.S. exports since its founding in 1992, including \$1.3 billion in U.S. small business exports from more than 330 communities across the United States. Notwithstanding the value of small business exports, there are a limited number of participants from underrepresented groups that consistently participate in USTDA grant-funded activities. The Agency believes that there is opportunity to drive more U.S. small-disadvantaged businesses to the international market through USTDA’s overseas grant program. Growing the participation of underrepresented businesses requires small business ecosystem intelligence and continued and robust outreach, which necessitates a considerable amount of time and dedicated staff resources to be effective.

B. Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

- *Describe the actions the agency will take to eliminate/reduce the barrier.*

The Agency will reduce this barrier with increased market intelligence on small business ecosystem and robust outreach to increase representation and participation of small-disadvantaged businesses in USTDA grant-funded activities. The Agency will also collaborate with national and local allies to create a more enabling environment for participation by small-disadvantaged businesses in overseas infrastructure development activities.

- *Why did you prioritize these actions?*

USTDA prioritized this action to support the Administration's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals while also seeking to diversify the pool of participants in USTDA's grant-funded activities.

- *Indicate how the actions are expected to result in reducing or eliminating the barrier to equitable outcomes. If not identified above, please indicate what evidence supports this connection.*

Increased engagement with small-disadvantaged businesses will result in the creation of a more enabling landscape that can help reduce barriers to market entry and increases U.S. export and job opportunities among historically underrepresented and undeserved small businesses.

C. Tracking Progress

- *Describe what factors you will use to determine whether the agency action(s) has eliminated or substantially reduced the barrier to equitable access identified above in the near- to mid-term (2-4 years out).*

Data will be developed and maintained on the participation of small-disadvantaged businesses in USTDA's grant-funded activities.

- *Indicate what success might ultimately look like in the long-term (5-8 years out).*

Long-term success will be reached with increased participation of small-disadvantaged businesses in USTDA grant-funded activities.

D. Accountability

- *Describe how the agency will hold itself accountable to implementing this action.*

Accountability will be maintained through agency procedures that track and ensure priority is placed on outreach to small-disadvantaged businesses and their increased participation in USTDA-funded activities.