

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

September 8, 2017

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G St., NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We are writing to you in our capacities as Ranking Member and Vice-Ranking Member of the House Committee on Small Business. The Committee on Small Business is committed to overseeing the programs and operations of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Federal government procurement for goods and services leads to billions of dollars in contract awards annually. Federal contracting can also be an important revenue source for businesses of any size. The Small Business Act authorizes the Small Business Administration (SBA) to implement programs and further provide tools to small businesses to help them gain access to federal contracting opportunities. SBA's procurement center representatives (PCR) are an important component of this support. PCRs work with federal agencies by reviewing proposed acquisitions, recommending small business contract set-asides, and performing surveillance reviews (which monitor small business contracting at federal agencies). We are hereby asking for a GAO evaluation that focuses on the important role of SBA's PCRs.

A PCR's key responsibilities include making recommendations to agency contracting officers that proposed contracts be set aside for eligible small businesses – through informal and formal means. A PCR generally will issue an informal communication after discussing and reaching an agreement with a contracting officer to accept a recommended set-aside. If the PCR and contracting officer do not reach an agreement, the PCR can submit a formal action to the contracting officer. PCRs also have other avenues available to carry out their responsibilities.

Over the years, concerns have been raised about the number of PCRs employed by SBA, their effectiveness, and their location relative to where contract performance occurs.¹ Given these concerns, we ask that you address the following:

¹ For example, recently concerns have been raised about the adequacy of PCR coverage, including location, for contract activity performed in Puerto Rico.

1. How many PCRs are employed by SBA, and how does SBA determine the resource level and geographic coverage needed to effectively carry out PCR responsibilities?
2. How does SBA evaluate the effectiveness of SBA's PCRs in helping small businesses, and to what extent are PCRs successful in helping small businesses gain access to federal contracting opportunities?
3. To what extent are PCRs receiving guidance, training, and supervisory support needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities?

We would also be interested in any other matters you think should be part of your evaluation. Please work with Halimah Locke, Professional Staff Member for Procurement to Ranking Member Velázquez, who can be reached at 202-225-4038 on the time frames and other issues related to your review. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Nydia Velázquez
Ranking Member



Alma Adams
Vice-Ranking Member