



Lab positions local women business owners for success

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More than 160 small business owners, most of them women, attended the first ChallengeHER conference in New Mexico to learn how to navigate the sometimes complex process of competing for federal and management and operating (M&O) contracts. Held October 26 in Albuquerque, the event was co-sponsored by Los Alamos and Sandia national laboratories.

In March, the National Nuclear Security Administration's Small Business Program Manager Greg Gonzales and representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) challenged Los Alamos and Sandia to lead the initiative to bring the national conference to New Mexico. Women Impacting Public Policy, a national nonpartisan public policy organization that advocates on behalf of women business owners, collaborated in the effort.

Los Alamos National Laboratory wants to do its part to position women business owners in New Mexico for success. During the conference, Acquisition Services Management (ASM) Division Leader Doug McCrary provided information on the Laboratory's Small Business Program, the Lab's mission, and products and services the Laboratory purchases. He participated in the "Working with Buyers: Prime and Subcontracting Opportunities" panel discussion.

"Doug got to field many questions," says Chris Fresquez, the Laboratory's Small Business Program manager. "Most panels do not typically inspire so many questions. The attendees at this conference were very involved."

Continued efforts to support women business owners are guided by the WOSB Federal Contract Program, which went into effect on February 4, 2011, and aims to ensure women-owned small businesses (WOSBs) have an equal opportunity to participate in federal contracting. Statistics show that businesses participating in this development program demonstrate much higher odds of winning contracts.

The Laboratory's commitment to WOSBs requires constant vigilance. Although the Laboratory surpassed its goal of 14 percent women-owned small business procurements in fiscal year 2016 (coming in at 15.8 percent), ongoing outreach to all small business owners is important.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is especially interested in seeing successful figures because the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 authorizes DOE to count subcontracts awarded to small businesses by Los Alamos and other M&O contractors

toward DOE's own small business goals. The resulting Management & Operating Subcontract Reporting Capability (MOSRC) initiative allows DOE to raise previously failing grades. The Lab submitted the first set of top 20 small business transactions in December 2015, which contributed to DOE going from the grade of F to A for the first time. The fiscal year 2016 top 20 data will be submitted this month, and Los Alamos will provide monthly data to the MOSRC system beginning in fiscal year 2017.

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