

Pursuant to Executive Order 14091 (February 16, 2023) on "Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government"

2023 Equity Action Plan Summary

U.S. General Services Administration

Delivering equity through GSA

The U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA's) overarching goal is delivering value through efficient, effective government for the American people. As we look to the future, we're codifying another element into that goal: equity.

GSA has a big role to play in fulfilling the mission of government, whether we're investing in American jobs, partnering with American industry and trade labor, delivering digital government with good customer experience, building a more sustainable future, or bolstering the strength of communities across the country. In all this, we're committed to making meaningful equity impacts, recognizing that equitable approaches lead to better outcomes for everyone.

New strategies to advance equity

GSA has identified five areas of focus for its 2023 Equity Action Plan through data insights, user research pilots, planning outreach and partnership engagements, and community-based projects. GSA will continue to engage the public on these action areas, its progress, and next steps throughout the year and beyond.

1. Advance equity, economic justice, and the diversity of the American supplier base through federal procurement. *Through existing public research and GSA's own regular industry engagement efforts, the agency has identified core challenges facing disadvantaged small business communities that impede their success and contribute to persistent systemic economic disparities. Small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) and socioeconomic small businesses (SESBs) are vulnerable to compounding obstacles in achieving competitive pricing, administrative burdens in navigating government's diffuse information and processes, and disproportionately negative outcomes relative to other businesses while competing for federal contracts and obligations – including the approximately \$85 billion in annual contracts facilitated by GSA. GSA's plan to advance equity in federal procurement coordinates and builds on key actions that take a holistic approach to reducing barriers and improving outcomes at critical stages of the federal contracting lifecycle, with the goal to increase overall marketplace participation rates and the amount of federal contracting dollars awarded to underserved and disinvested communities. To address these barriers and others, GSA will:*

- Enable greater federal contracting marketplace transparency and efficiency through data-driven tools and insights.
- Facilitate greater supplier diversity and contracting success through GSA acquisition products and innovation.

New strategies to advance equity

- Create new sustainability-focused markets in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Defense.
- Establish and implement a new 8(a) partnership agreement with the Small Business Administration.
- Launch and scale federal agency adoption of the new Government-wide Procurement Equity Tool.

2. Deliver equitable, accessible, and inclusive digital government to the American public. *Although technology continues to rapidly evolve, persistent inequities in technology design and delivery – like higher false rejection rates, completion failure rates, and time burdens – disproportionately negatively impact those from historically and socially marginalized communities. Additionally, digital services very often fail to prioritize human-centered design and usability beyond compliance. This means that Americans who likely have a critical need to connect with government information and services through digital platforms also are likely to have the hardest time doing so.*

Examples include both lack of access to the newest hardware or good internet, which often means newer digital platforms do not perform as well (because they are not built for older devices or don't work with low bandwidth connections), or software that is not designed to work across all populations, such as lack of plain language impacting populations with limited English proficiency or poorly trained Artificial Intelligence (AI) models causing biometric systems to perform worse for people with different ages or skin tones. GSA – through its consulting and fellowships offerings such as the Centers of Excellence and the Presidential Innovation Fellows, shared services such as Login.gov and the US Web Design System, and federal partners in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and United States Digital Service – plays a central role in the

New strategies to advance equity

responsible development, deployment, and procurement of technologies used by the federal government to communicate or interact with the public. GSA is committed to delivering high-impact digital services and products in a manner that improves customer experience, reduces burden, broadens access, and advances civic tech practices that are intrinsically equity-aware and community-informed. To address these barriers and others, GSA will:

- Strengthen relationships with underserved user communities and build capacity for research operations.
- Complete the equity study on Remote Identity-Proofing and publish findings.
- Advance equity through civic tech shared services and large-scale modernization investments.
- Expand digital accessibility, language access, public participation, and equitable user research practices.
- Modernize GSA's high-impact service providers to improve digital accessibility and language access.

- 3. Advance equity, economic security, sustainability, and environmental justice through large-scale construction projects and the Federal Buildings footprint.** *The federal real estate footprint - including the 375 million rentable square feet owned and operated by GSA - has significant generational impact on communities nationwide. Federal construction projects act as anchors for economic security, reliable opportunities for good local jobs, defenses against the negative impacts of climate change, and can advance the overall livability and vitality of American communities. GSA's work often occurs in or adjacent to disadvantaged communities that have suffered from long-standing underinvestment and have dealt with historic challenges and barriers to equitable development. These communities tend to have poor trans-*

New strategies to advance equity

-portation connectivity to job opportunities, higher exposure to many forms of pollution, and less access to green space. The impacts of these inequities are apparent in the persistent lower household income, high unemployment, and poorer health outcomes. In order to help overcome these barriers, GSA is executing projects with enhanced stakeholder engagement and data analysis to better inform GSA decisionmakers and project teams about local development contexts and better connect project location, design, and facility operations with the needs of those communities that will benefit from more equitable development.

Projects implemented under the nearly \$7 billion made available to GSA through historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) investments are poised to bolster economies with small and local business participation, improve job and jobsite quality for workers and trade labor, address sustainability and environmental justice concerns, and strengthen relationships between levels of government, Tribes, and communities. To address these barriers and others, GSA will:

- Implement the [Good Jobs Initiative](#) partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).
- Build and release new Geographic Information System (GIS) data-informed public forecasting resources for BIL and IRA related construction projects.
- Identify and announce a near term portfolio of projects for targeted environmental justice and sustainability actions.
- Increase contracting opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged small businesses across growing markets in construction, clean energy, and sustainability.
- Increase funding for economic development and social mobility for Tribal communities and families through grants and training and technical assistance.

New strategies to advance equity

4. Advance equity and effectiveness of federal programs through rigorous review, evaluation, and continuous improvement. *GSA serves a unique function in the government by providing other federal agencies with help building and using evidence. The federal government's exploration of the equitable and effective deployment of benefits, resources and critical relief programs in the near and long term, particularly after national emergencies, is an essential part of how the government performs continuous improvement of its functions and works better for all Americans. As an example, federal resources deployed to address immediate needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic faced challenges in equitably reaching communities who were already suffering from legacy disparities in and outcomes across race, class, and geography; these systemic inequities were further exacerbated by the pandemic. By conducting more frequent and rigorous evaluation of both the methods used to deliver government resources and the impacts of federal programs on the public, the federal government has the potential to more fully understand if programs are working as intended, better interrupt bias further upstream and modernize systems for greater efficacy – with the ultimate goal of meeting the needs of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, when it matters the most.*

Undertaking evaluation can be expensive, time consuming, and may require federal agencies to build capacity for data or research needs before being able to initiate this important work. Additionally, once evaluations are completed, federal agencies face challenges with resources or infrastructure to act on key findings; and results from evaluations currently lack communication strategies that can more easily raise awareness for the public and catalyze implementation, including across non-federal stakeholders who also benefit from these insights. To address these barriers and others, GSA will:

- Complete, publish, and share learnings from governmentwide equity evaluations.

New strategies to advance equity

- Increase the number of federal agencies and programs initiating equity evaluations.
- Conduct public engagement and increase awareness of equity evaluation findings.

5. Advance equitable access to opportunity and federal resources for local communities and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Rural, socioeconomically underserved, and historically disinvested communities, including Tribes and institutions that serve disadvantaged and minority populations like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), disproportionately rely on federal goods and services to bridge critical resource gaps. Yet barriers to information, administrative burdens in navigating government processes, capacity and infrastructure gaps to meet government requirements, and equitable access to resource pathways prevent communities from fully realizing the available benefits from federal support and partnership. To address these barriers and others, GSA will:

- Deliver more federal goods and products to American communities in critical need through the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program.
- Establish a plan to conduct proactive reviews for the 56 State Agencies for Surplus Property (SASPs) to ensure their compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, with a goal of 14 SASPs for review each fiscal year.
- Initiate an engagement and outreach plan to raise awareness in local communities about resources available through their SASP.
- Increase the number of eligible HBCUs and MSIs on the GSA Multiple Award Schedule.
- Launch and scale adoption of new GSA public digital resource for MSIs.

What GSA accomplished

Below is a sampling of GSA's progress delivering on equity and racial justice since its first Equity Action Plan in 2022.

- ***Increased contracting to small businesses and SDBs.***
In FY 2022, \$2.8 billion of GSA contracting obligations went to small businesses, including 21.4% to SDBs. In FY 2023, GSA increased its small business contracting obligations to \$3.3 billion, representing over 50% of the agency's eligible spending.
- ***Awarded 1,111 SDB 8(a) STARS III contracts and 290 "rising stars" their first awards, exceeding \$925 million in obligations.***
These awards stemmed from GSA's establishment of new contracting pools in the growing federal marketplace of Information Technology services and solutions to bolster participation of Women-Owned Small Business, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business, and small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones.
- ***Established federal partnerships to advance equal opportunity in the construction trade workforce.***
Established partnerships with DOL on the Mega Construction Project Program and Good Jobs Initiative to advance equal opportunity in the construction trade workforce and expand the use of Project Labor Agreements on federal projects over \$35 million.

What GSA accomplished

- ***Worked to expand access to voter registration information in communities that face voter participation difficulties due to language barriers.***

Vote.gov added several Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander languages including: Bengali, Khmer, Korean, Hindi, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, with Chinese (both simplified and traditional) and its first Alaska Native language, Yup'ik-Akuzipik.

- ***Debuted a new feature to foster more Native American business participation in the federal marketplace.***

GSA issued a [Guide to Using GSA Solutions](#) and debuted a new search feature that enables buyers to search for Native American business categories in the GSA Advantage!®, GSA eBuy, and GSA eLibrary e-tools to find commercial products and services. This will foster greater Native American business participation in the federal marketplace, help customers more easily meet Buy Indian Act needs, and strengthen the ability for tribes to pursue intertribal commerce efforts.