

FAIRNESS IN PROCUREMENT ALLIANCE (FPA)

The Fairness in Procurement Alliance (FPA) is an advocacy coalition representing the procurement interests of all of the groups for whom Congress created the 'set-aside program', a constituency of 10 million small and minority businesses.

FPA activities are designed to assist businesses controlled by Hispanics; Blacks; Women; Veterans; Asian Americans; Native Americans; Disabled Veterans' and/or businesses certified as 8(a) or located in Hub Zones.

The mission of FPA is to bring fairness to public procurements so that small and minority businesses can both compete and prosper at the federal, state and local levels.

FPA was founded in June 2005 as a loose coalition of 14 minority and small advocacy groups¹ which came together to support a 'size protest' test case (SIZ-2005-05-09-22) filed against a company which had allegedly misrepresented its affiliation with a large business to unlawfully secure '*set-aside contracts*'. The protest, which resulted in a major 'test case victory' for the small and minority business community, demonstrated that the current '*size protest system*' does not deliver justice when a small business wins the case and the 'system' needs to be overhauled. The Coalition, which at the time was called, *Fairness in Set-Aside Procurement Coalition (FSAPC)*, stayed together and developed plans to conduct academic research, offer trainings and influence public procurement policy.

FPA has been successful at identifying regulations and practices that required changes, at publishing reports on contracting abuse and at proposing initiatives and solutions addressing ending procurement abuse against small and minority businesses.

¹ <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2005/10/prweb302024.htm>

FPA has been credited with conceiving such initiatives as the '*Free Universal Access*' (FUA); the '*Contracting Abuse Resolution Board*' (CARB) and the '*Small Business Set-Aside Alliance*' (SBSAA). Additionally, FPA produced a report detailing '*Contracting Abuse by the Air Force*' involving set-asides.

FPA has also launched successful educational efforts aimed at creating awareness - within the procurement community - about the abuses committed under the camouflage of '*brand-name or equal procurements*' and about '*end-user unjust and unethical justification*,' endemic procurement practices which have favored 'large' and 'established' businesses at the expense of emerging small enterprises.