

## **The Youth is the Future of Government Contracting**

One of the most exciting things that I “get to do” is talk to young people and encourages them to consider pursuing a career in government contracting. Maximizing their skills at a young age and preparing their career as a Government Contractor will enhance their possibilities to become tomorrow’s government entrepreneurs. These opportunities have become more important in recent years, the federal government as an organization is looking for more innovated ways to incorporate youth into their acquisition programs. Doing business with the government has always had an open lane for anyone with the services, products and proper business model, even the youth of today.

More and more state, local and federal government agencies are creating funding and contracting opportunities to support youth involvement. Bringing an education awareness program to support youth participation will enhance the possibilities of job creations for youth and bring innovated ideals to our government acquisition programs. There are several ways that youth can involve themselves in government contracting, 1) serve as a government contracting officer or contracting specialist, 2) providing a service or a product to the government for purchase and 3) become a supporter of small business doing business with the government.

The government views young people as the entrepreneurs of the future. Many government agencies have gotten involved to support our youth as they attempt to broaden youth initiative in government contracting. SBA has developed a teen Website designed to introduce young entrepreneurs to the concept of small business ownership as a viable career choice. The innovative website [www.sba.gov/teens](http://www.sba.gov/teens) helps young people shape and implement their dreams of entrepreneurship. This site features the fundamentals of starting a small business from brainstorming to evaluating the feasibility of your idea, developing the all-important business plan, learning from successful young entrepreneurs, making sound financial decisions and utilizing various entrepreneurial development services – SCORE, Junior Achievement, DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) and the National Academy Foundation. These valuable resources provide face-to-face counseling and training as well as online counseling and training in starting and growing a business.

Health and Human Services, Corp of Engineers, Department of Defense is just a few federal agencies who have initiatives to support youth in government contracts. Businesses such as the Department of Youth Services, (DYS) a community base business offers services with the government through their youth participation. Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) is another organization who has maximized their involvement with the federal government to obtain contracts. YAP provides direct services to youth who are currently, have been, or are at risk of referral to incarceration and who have been rejected by all other similar service providers. The Academy of Excellence (TAOE) designed a Government Economic Empowerment Campaign (GEEC) Program to get youth involved at an early age. TAOE has set out to find agencies and corporations interested in partnering to provide gateways to ensure youth understand that many careers associated with the Federal Government Contracting via internships, fellowships and scholarships.

Youth in Government Contracting will be an ongoing initiative to better incorporate youth into an industry that supports the growth of small businesses. It’s imperative that youth continue to seek opportunities within the federal government market which will then enhance the future of our government.

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