



# **U.S. General Services Administration**

## **Equity Action Plan** *Updates for 2023*



## Message from Administrator Robin C. Carnahan

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

The sacred trust between government and its citizens should inform every action, every decision, and every policy. It's our responsibility to get people the services they need, when they need them – that's why we're taking a people-centered approach to government. We know that government only works when it works for everyone, so I'm proud to renew GSA's commitment to delivering a government that's equitable, accessible, and inclusive of the diverse nation we serve.

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.

That's why our Equity Action Plan is so important. The heart of this plan is community and it provides us with ways we can both transform government in the long-term and ensure that what the government delivers has meaningful impacts on the daily lives of people all across the country.

The good news is that we have the money and the momentum to make these kinds of impacts real. From Day One, the President has been focused on Investing in America – in our people, in our infrastructure, and in rebuilding our economy through historic, once-in-a-generation investments.

I've been out on the road a lot this year and I've seen these strategies in action firsthand.

To start, with over \$6 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, we're making smart investments in GSA-controlled Federal buildings all across the country. We're focused on building spaces that are part of the communities they inhabit, modernizing them so they can easily provide services to the American people, and ensuring their resilience and sustainability. With every investment, we're seeking to address climate change because it's a triple win: creating good jobs, saving taxpayer dollars, and making a healthier future for generations to come. We know that historically underserved communities are too-often disproportionately impacted by climate change, so we're making sure that this triple win benefits everyone.



From Arizona to Ohio, I've heard from workers that are proud to be part of this national transformation and that they see the benefits to their families, their communities, and American businesses. I've met with trade labor unions, workers, and leaders in the building and construction industry, all of whom have shared with me how they're committed to these same goals. They're recruiting more women and people of color and training them in the tools and technologies we need to implement billions of dollars in investments. They know what we know: these investments will create pathways to the middle-class, strengthen communities across the country, and build a stronger and more prosperous future for everyone.

At our federal buildings, we've been partnering with local small businesses to guide them through the process of accessing opportunities across the Federal marketplace. We've also been partnering with opportunity centers to raise awareness of these projects among the local communities. There's one location in D.C. where we've helped over 35 businesses get onto government schedules and helped secure jobs for over 2,500 people.

We're also focused on the physical accessibility of our buildings through our National Accessibility Program, the many efforts of our Office of Design and Construction, and our long-standing relationship with the U.S. Access Board. We also partnered with Challenge.gov to launch the "Access for All" universal and accessible design competition for U.S. architecture students to source best practice improvements.

As the caretaker of the nation's largest public art collection, we've preserved and expanded the people's collection over the last 50 years, placing art in Federal buildings and public spaces that tells the story of our nation and our democracy. We're committed to expanding opportunities for new artists to contribute, creating jobs while ensuring that the diversity and vibrancy of our portfolio reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the American story.

Our Federal Acquisition Service and Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization are committed to making it easier for businesses to succeed in the Federal marketplace. From forecasting tools and new identifiers for a diverse range of businesses to training and outreach programs, we're actively expanding our supplier diversity, reducing barriers, and improving outcomes. In fact, GSA awarded more than \$3.3 billion to small businesses, which represents over 50% of the agency's FY23 eligible spending, according to data current as of November 2, 2023.

GSA's work delivering "services that are simple to use, accessible, equitable, protective, transparent, and responsive for all people" is evident in our digital capabilities as well. Our public-facing websites are 508 compliant, support assistive technology, and are available in multiple languages. In fact, Vote.gov has recently added its first Alaska Native language and multiple Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander languages to increase accessibility while supporting cultural vitality. We're also



engaging in equity studies across our Technology Transformation Services to ensure that we're providing human-centered tools that meet the needs of every American.

We've been partnering across the government as well. Our Office of Government-wide Policy IT Accessibility team helps agencies meet Federal compliance standards while our U.S. Web Design Services offers toolkits and best practices to ensure that Federal websites are accessible for everyone – that includes providing specific resources to support customers in varying socio-economic communities. Through our work with the Department of Labor's Good Jobs Initiative, we're helping improve job quality and create access to good union jobs free from discrimination and harassment for all working people, with an emphasis on people of color, LGBTQ+, women, veterans, immigrants, individuals in rural communities, and individuals with disabilities.

Finally, we've been committed to strengthening ties and trust between Tribal Nations and the United States. From attending the Reservation Economic Summit and hosting our first Native Nations Industry Day at GSA Headquarters to holding nation-to-nation consultations and visiting with Tribal leaders and communities, we're building Nation-to-Nation partnerships so that our work in Indian Country strengthens businesses and communities.

Looking to the future, GSA's updated action plan aims to further advance equity through the agency's high-impact program areas like Federal procurement, Federal buildings, and Federal technology design and delivery. It also gives increased emphasis to GSA's role in helping to strengthen the government's ability to be more agile, responsive, and reflective of Americans' needs through evaluation and data-driven insights.

By focusing on these five strategies, GSA will use its unique position of delivering mission-critical services and core products across government to act as a force multiplier in advancing equity and reducing burdens for underserved communities. That is what good government is all about – and GSA is proud to do our part to strengthen our democracy and foster more trust between the Federal Government and the American people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robin Carnahan".

Robin C. Carnahan  
Administrator, U.S. General Services Administration



## Advancing Equity Through Agency Mission

The mission of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is to deliver the best customer experience and value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to the government and the American people. As we work to meet our goals of delivery on behalf of the government, we are only meeting our mission as a federal agency if the American people can equitably benefit from our efforts. That means that as GSA leverages its over \$85 billion buying power to provide Federal purchasers with cost-effective, high-quality products and services from commercial vendors, we are also advancing the diversity of the American supplier base and economic security for small businesses. When we provide critical technology services and modernizations, GSA has a mission to ensure that digital government is reflective of and designed to perform for all the diverse communities we serve. As GSA plans and completes large scale construction projects across our 375 million rentable square feet of Federal real estate, we do so in a manner that is informed by local communities to ensure that the sustainability, vitality and livability made possible through Federal investment is available to every American neighborhood. GSA's mission is government delivery – and that includes delivering on the American promise of equal opportunity, civil rights, and justice for all.

## Executive Summary

In response to *Executive Order 14091 on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, the U.S. General Services Administration has undertaken an agenda to operationalize equity across its public-facing mission critical programs and services. Not only do these updated strategies build on the successes and learnings from our 2022 Equity Action Plan, they further integrate cross-cutting equity goals in important and impactful ways. Deeper synergies are possible to realize across priorities related to economic justice, sustainable and equitable development, customer experience and digital government, gender equity, environmental justice, protecting civil rights, and support for an ecosystem of sociodemographic community groups, Tribes, and institutions.

Another core tenet of this plan is GSA's commitment to expanding Federal interagency coordination and advancing meaningful engagement with the public when it matters most and can make a difference. This collaborative posture reflects GSA's unique role in government as an agency that supports other agencies in their mission success. GSA's business is the business of government - whether that is helping buyers and sellers connect more efficiently and equitably in Federal marketplaces, modernizing and delivering high-impact digital solutions, challenging industry to join us in tackling the climate crisis through sustainable supply chain innovations, or driving the revitalization of American neighborhoods by putting people to work in their communities with good jobs paid for by once-in-a-generation infrastructure investments.

### **This plan outlines five strategies to advance and embed equity in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024:**

- **Advance Equity, Economic Justice, and the Diversity of the American Supplier Base through Federal Procurement.** This strategy supports the whole-of-government equity objective of economic justice; and it aims to address barriers faced by small and disadvantaged businesses as they participate in the Federal marketplace. Key actions are designed to improve contracting efficiency and success through data insights, innovative procurement tools, and greater collaboration across Federal agencies.



- **Deliver Equitable, Accessible and Inclusive Digital Government to the American Public.** This strategy supports the whole-of-government equity objectives of Economic Justice and Civil Rights; and it aims to address potential barriers and biases present in public interactions with civic tech. Key actions include advancing human centered design and community-informed user research practices, scaling language access, and ensuring responsible adoption and procurement of AI-enabled technologies.
- **Advance Equity, Economic Security, Sustainability and Environmental Justice through Large-Scale Construction Projects and the Federal Buildings Footprint.** This strategy supports the whole-of-government equity objectives of Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, and Housing Justice and Community Investment; and it aims to address barriers to community benefits realized through equitable and sustainable Federal development. Key actions are designed to improve planning and access to local opportunities - like good jobs and cleaner, more climate change-resilient communities, made possible by landmark Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act investments.
- **Advance Equity and Effectiveness of Federal Programs Through Rigorous Review, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement.** This strategy supports the whole-of-government equity objectives of Civil Rights, Health Equity, Economic Justice, Global Equality; and it aims to ensure Federal programs are working as intended, particularly programs that provide critical support to the public during emergencies and recovery after disasters. Key actions include scaling the Federal Government's use of evaluations to surface important findings and areas of improvement in the design and delivery of Federal programs.
- **Advance Equitable Access to Opportunity and Federal Resources for Local Communities and Minority Serving Institutions.** This strategy supports the whole-of-government equity objectives of Civil Rights and Economic Justice; and it aims to reduce barriers to access for institutions that, through Federal resources, help close critical gaps in capacity and infrastructure for the local communities they serve. Key actions include conducting proactive civil rights compliance reviews of the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program and broadening partnerships - including contracting agreements - between Federal agencies and Minority Serving Institutions.

**Approaches to the five strategies are meant to be tactical and have measurable outcomes.**

At the heart of these strategies are the American people – particularly those who are overcoming systemic burdens, have been locked out of a fair chance at opportunities or are disproportionately in the path of harm when disaster strikes. GSA has developed our agency actions to reflect the needs of the people, identified through data and feedback collected in our own regular engagement and evaluation practices and with the help of thoughtfully researched insights generated from trusted industry experts and Federal partners.



## Equity Progress Updates and Accomplishments

### 2022 Equity Action Plan Update

In January 2022, GSA released its [inaugural Equity Action Plan](#) in accordance with Executive Order 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. To develop this plan, GSA conducted equity assessments and identified a set of actions for three high-impact program areas: Federal procurement, Federal buildings footprint, and Federal technology design and delivery. The section below provides an overview of the key accomplishments achieved since publication of the original Equity Action Plan.

#### Advancing Equity and Supplier Diversity in Federal Procurement

- In FY 2022, \$2.8 billion of GSA contracting obligations went to small businesses, including 21.4% to small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs); In FY 2023, GSA increased its small business contracting obligations to \$3.3 billion, representing over 50% of the agency's eligible spending.
- Launched a new [Supplier Base Dashboard](#) to provide more transparency and public reporting on Federal efforts to increase the number of new entrants to the Federal marketplace and reverse the general decline in the small business supplier base.
- Signed a [new 8\(a\) partnership agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration](#) to increase 8(a) contracting opportunities and [make it easier for Federal agencies to buy from 8\(a\) businesses](#) for common goods and services needs.
- Established [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. [The 8\(a\) STARS III contracts](#) have been awarded to 1,111 SDB. 290 "rising stars" have received their first awards exceeding \$925 million in obligations.
- Expanded [tools to support Minority Serving Institutions](#) with training and technical assistance to achieve success in the Federal contracting marketplace.
- Established a Post-Award Engagement strategy to support disadvantaged and socioeconomic small businesses, which oftentimes still face challenges in successfully earning sales after being awarded a GSA contract.
- Published the first-ever [Supplier Diversity Plan](#) to support Federal marketplace participation of SDB.
- Updated the [Multiple Award Schedule Welcome Package](#) and [Roadmap](#) to improve information access and assist new contractors with success in marketing and managing their contracts.



## Advancing Equity and Accessibility in Federal Technology

- Launched an [Equity Study on Remote Identity](#), recruiting 4,000 Americans, to understand potential barriers and demographic disparities in identity verification technologies that are commonly used by the public when accessing Federal services and benefits.
- Developed and started implementing a roadmap for [USAGov](#) and [USAGov en Español](#) to streamline content and make it easier for the public to find and access Federal benefits and services across a digital platform that connects people with government information more than 117 million times a year.
- [Vote.gov](#) worked to expand access to voter registration information in communities that, due to language barriers, have not been historically part of the electorate. The platform added several Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) languages including: Bengali, Khmer, Korean, Hindi, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, with Chinese (both simplified and traditional) and its first Alaska Native language, Yup'ik-Akuzipik.
- [Login.gov](#) partnered with Federal agencies and State governments to provide secure, accessible identity verification services for benefits and emergency assistance programs. As an example, the U.S. Department of Labor pilot in Arkansas, helping more than 19,000 citizens of the State verify their identities while applying for unemployment benefits.
- Advanced public participation and equitable user research practices through user compensation pilots and increased outreach efforts to community-based organizations.
- Partnered with the U.S. Web Design System to launch new [Inclusion Pattern Guidance](#), a library of design guidance and examples focused on reducing the public's barriers in key digital government interactions and fostering effective, inclusive, and equitable digital experiences.

## Advancing Equity and Sustainability in the Public Buildings Footprint

- Leveraged the [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) and [Federal Interagency Thriving Communities Network](#) to develop engagement strategies that advance sustainable and equitable development goals and connect communities with resources in large-scale Federal investments made possible by the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) and [Inflation Reduction Act](#).
- Established partnerships with the U.S. Department of Labor 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.
- Launched the [Access-for- All universal design challenge](#) for U.S. architecture students and apprentices to source best national ideas on improving the accessibility and gender inclusiveness of Federal properties.
- Partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and updated the [Art in Architecture](#) program rules to expand public access and artist representation in the millions of dollars of commissioned artworks permanently installed in Federal facilities.





- Issued [recommendations](#) from the Environmental Justice and Equity in Federal Sustainable Buildings Task Group and appointed two new environmental justice subject matter experts to the Green Building Advisory Committee, a Federal advisory committee that explores the climate modernization and sustainable development of Federal real estate in ways that are responsive to the needs of local communities.
- Commissioned a survey and issued a first-ever GSA [report](#) on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) practices in design and construction industries.
- Partnered with the [National organization of Minority Architects](#) to expand career opportunities for underserved communities in the architecture, engineering, design, and construction industries.

## Additional Efforts to Advance Equity

### Implementation of Landmark Legislation

- [The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 \(ARP\)](#) was designed to address immediate needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on addressing historically disparate outcomes across race, class, and geography that were further exacerbated by the pandemic. To support the Federal Government's exploration of questions about equitable recovery, GSA's Office of Evaluation Sciences (OES) established an [ARP Evaluation Portfolio](#) with two core elements: a national evaluation conducted by a third-party research contract, and a portfolio of evaluations conducted by OES, in partnership with agencies and the White House Office of Management and Budget, on ARP-funded programs with equity goals. This body of work explores effectiveness of critical relief programs like Emergency Rental Assistance and Homeowner Assistance Fund.
- [The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law \(BIL\)](#) provides \$3.4 billion for GSA's Public Buildings Service, making a significant impact on 26 Land Ports of Entry modernizations along the Canadian and Mexican border. These projects will create new good-paying jobs, bolster safety and security, and make our economy more resilient to supply chain challenges – all while serving as models for sustainability and innovation and improving community livability.
- [The Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) provides GSA with \$2.15 billion for low-embodied carbon materials in construction and renovation projects, \$975 million for GSA to support emerging and sustainable technologies, and \$250 million to turn even more GSA facilities into High-Performance Green Buildings and accelerate efforts to achieve a net-zero Federal footprint. These investments will reduce long-term energy costs for American communities, strengthen America's domestic industrial base and catalyze innovation and job growth in homegrown industries that produce next-generation materials, products, and equipment. GSA estimates that these projects will create over 9,500 average annual economy-wide jobs across the length of the projects, support \$2.8 billion in labor income, and generate nearly \$1 billion in tax revenue for Federal, State and local governments.



## Support for Tribes and Native Communities

- GSA has prioritized engaging in Tribal Consultations in a proactive and meaningful manner throughout Fiscal Year 23. In addition to robust Tribal engagement as part of BIL project planning, GSA hosted the agency's first formal in-person [Tribal Consultation event at the Reservation Economic Summit \(RES\)](#) in April 2023. Over 100 participants joined Administrator Carnahan and GSA leaders for discussions on major topics of interest to Indian Country, including GSA's support of tribes, small business contracting, partnering with GSA to procure electric vehicles, and a pilot program to support Federal buying of carbon pollution-free electricity from Tribal organizations. Also, 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.

## Environmental Justice

- GSA is committed to institutionalizing the principles of [Justice40](#) - ensuring that the benefits of Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution, advancing equitable and sustainable development, and mitigating the disproportionate burdens faced by underserved communities in the climate crisis. Our [Good Neighbor Program](#) helps construction project teams, local governments and communities address common environmental justice challenges - like flooding from aging water systems, heat islands caused by lack of tree canopy, and air pollution from commercial traffic patterns - during the urban planning process. GSA's [Environmental Justice Scorecard](#) highlights include 27 Tribal Consultations related to environmental justice from January 2021 to September 2022 and improving environmental justice literacy through training provided to GSA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Network.

# Strategies to Advance Equity in Fiscal Year 2024

## Whole-of-Government Equity Objective: Economic Justice

### Strategy #1: Advance Equity, Economic Justice, and the Diversity of the American Supplier Base through Federal Procurement

#### Barriers to Equity

Through existing public research and GSA's own regular industry engagement efforts, the agency has identified core challenges<sup>1</sup> 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)<sup>2</sup> are vulnerable to compounding obstacles in achieving competitive pricing, administrative burdens in

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<sup>1</sup> The Probability of Winning Federal Contracts: An Analysis Of Small Minority Owned Firms (June 2022), U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency.

<sup>2</sup> Includes SBA certified socioeconomic set-aside categories: 8(a) Small Disadvantaged Businesses, Women-Owned Small Businesses, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses, Tribes and Tribal-owned businesses, and small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones



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.

## Key Actions

**Enable greater Federal contracting marketplace transparency and efficiency through data-driven tools and insights.** Federal agencies and the Federal acquisition workforce play a critical role in creating, sustaining, and growing opportunities where small businesses can fairly compete and succeed in being awarded government contracts. GSA is committed to helping buyers and sellers more effectively execute on all eligible small business opportunities, which includes our role in providing contracting data insights to the Federal Government and the public in support of these goals:

- **Expand Federal agency use of the Forecast of Contracting Opportunities Tool.** The tool assists with acquisition planning by helping vendors learn about potential prime contracting opportunities early in the process. Improved search functionality will simplify the process for the Federal user to post and maintain opportunities. Maximizing Federal agency use of the tool and creating a single forecast for the public to access will greatly ease the burden on small businesses attempting to track opportunities across multiple sources of information.
- **Launch and scale Federal agency adoption of new Government-wide Procurement Equity Tool.** The tool uses Federal contracting data sources to support market research focused on small disadvantaged businesses. Federal agencies can use the tool to find SDBs by geographic location, business type and category. Agencies can also find new SDBs that have registered to do business but have yet to receive a federal award.
- **Enhance eBuy, the Request for Quote (RFQ) platform for GSA Schedule.** eBuy is a powerful and intuitive acquisition tool used by thousands of Federal agencies and military services worldwide to help save government time and money as acquisitions achieve required competition, best pricing and value. Planned and ongoing updates to eBuy include new features that benefit both buyers and sellers by creating more visibility and simplification in quoting, Request for Information (RFI), and RFQ interactions.

**Facilitate greater supplier diversity and contracting success through GSA acquisition products and innovation.** GSA acquisition vehicles are trusted and proven entry points for small businesses to begin and find early success in the Federal marketplace. The Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) and Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWAC) are standout sources of eligible award dollars available to small disadvantaged businesses to compete for contracts in Federal common goods and services, and in high-growth categories like information technology and solutions. GSA supports overall governmentwide procurement equity efforts by ensuring the universe of our own contracting opportunities drive innovation and are responsive to the complex needs of our customers and vendors. These actions include:

- **Establish and implement a new 8(a) partnership agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.** This new 8(a) partnership agreement makes it easier for Federal agencies to use GSA's Government-wide contracts, including the Federal Supply Schedules, to identify and make awards to 8(a) firms. Creation of an 8(a)



Schedule pool will allow for sole source opportunities to SDBs, which significantly reduces burden on small businesses to obtain orders and gain Federal work experience. GSA will update the solicitation to begin adding new 8(a) contractors to the Schedule, will enhance eTools to identify eligible 8(a) contractors on eBuy and GSA Advantage! and will update and roll-out training for its acquisition workforce and Federal agencies on the new process.

- **Create new sustainability-focused markets in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Defense.** Climate risk adaptation efforts and Federal sustainability goals are positioned to deploy hundreds of millions of dollars in new acquisition opportunities, including those available to small businesses, over the near/medium term. GSA is driving new and emerging market successes in Low Embodied Carbon building materials, Zero-Emission Vehicles and supply equipment, scaling of eco-labels to reduce per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and expediting procurement availability of environmental technologies.
- **Finalize solicitations and awards for new Polaris and OASIS+ contracts.**<sup>3</sup> These newly launched governmentwide IT and professional services contracts offer more opportunities for small businesses to compete for prime contracts, including small business and socioeconomic set-asides. Since 2015, GSA's current OASIS vehicle has helped Federal agencies obligate more than \$67 billion.
- **Improve accessibility and reduce administrative burden.** GSA committed to reviewing 37 Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) forms and identifying six design changes to appearance and layout (e.g., limiting use of capitalization and italics, continuity of 12-point font and bolded text for readability) that could make the standard forms easier to navigate for people with dyslexia, limited vision and intellectual disabilities. GSA will redesign FAR forms and launch a public awareness campaign about the updates. For FY 2024, GSA will also [increase its pledge to the AbilityOne program](#), a critical source for buying goods and services from suppliers who support the employment of people with disabilities.
- **Further implement and enhance the Post-Award Engagement (PAE) Strategy.** Fiscal Year 2023 sales data for SDBs and SESBs will serve as the Year 1 baseline to evaluate the efficacy of PAE plan activities. Based on analysis, GSA will update actions for post-award interventions that address the phenomena of persistent low or no sales, including: targeted training, matchmaking industry days and technical assistance.

## Measuring Our Progress: Federal Procurement Equity

GSA will know if we are achieving measurable results for the small business communities we serve by tracking quarterly and annual progress against key metrics, including:

- increased number and percentage of disadvantaged and socioeconomic small businesses active in core GSA marketplaces;
- increased total dollars and percentage obligated to SDBs and SESBs relative to GSA's overall eligible annual spending;
- downward trends in number and percentage of SDBs and SESBs with no or low sales;
- upward trends in SDBs and SESBs average dollar value of awards and percentage of market share;
- upward trends in SDBs and SESBs overall new entrants and increased participation in high-growth and emerging market segments;
- improved overall qualitative data results from customer and vendor surveys, focus

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<sup>3</sup> GSA is responsive to any protest decisions and remains committed to providing opportunities for small businesses while supporting Federal agencies in their small business goals.



groups, and training feedback.

## Whole-of-Government Equity Objective: Civil Rights, Economic Justice

### Strategy #2: Deliver Equitable, Accessible and Inclusive Digital Government to the American Public

#### Barriers to Equity

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 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 responsible development, deployment, and procurement of technologies used by the Federal Government to communicate or interact with the public.<sup>4</sup> 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.

#### Key Actions

**Mitigate bias and advance responsible adoption of civic technologies, including machine learning-enabled and emerging technologies.** GSA's own internal product testing processes, as well as publicly available, peer-reviewed technical research studies from academic institutions and government research partners - like the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - have identified user experience disparities and efficacy gaps in machine learning and AI-enabled technologies that adversely impact users, including: people with darker skin tones, people in rural areas with low bandwidth, people using older electronic devices, nonbinary and transgender people, people with disabilities, and people whose native language is not English.<sup>5</sup> The negative impacts listed above compound for government websites and digital services, including services that have the potential to impact rights (like access to benefits or other government services). For example, a user with darker skin tone who is more likely to live in a neighborhood with low-bandwidth internet access and have an older device is thus more likely to experience increased friction in their attempt to use a government website or service.

<sup>4</sup> [AI Guide for Government](#), IT Modernization Centers of Excellence; [Blueprint for AI Bill of Rights](#), OSTP

<sup>5</sup> [Face Recognition Technology Evaluation \(FRTE\) Part 1: Verification \(2023\)](#), NIST

- **Complete the Equity Study on Remote Identity-Proofing and publish findings.** GSA launched the study and is recruiting 4,000 members of the public for participation. The peer-reviewed final report will present a statistical analysis of the performance of proofing checks, like facial verification, across a number of sociodemographic factors and explore the causes behind any negative or inconclusive results. GSA will use the results of this study, in combination with findings from other Federal agency efforts, to establish recommendations and inform future product iteration, including on Login.gov.
- **Advance equity through civic tech shared services and large-scale modernization investments.** GSA provides expertise via a portfolio of mission critical digital government projects through its universe of technologists and product managers in TTS Consulting, Presidential Innovation Fellows, U.S. Digital Corps and the Benefits Studio. The agency also supports improvements to government delivery and IT infrastructure, including automation, through investments made by the Technology Modernization Fund. These platforms are positioned to apply equity frameworks in the way government programs and services are effectively designed and delivered to the American public.

**Expand digital accessibility, language access, public participation and equitable user research practices.** Traditional outreach, user research, data collection (including Artificial Intelligence-trained datasets), content strategy and customer experience testing methods often do not sufficiently include underrepresented groups. This means that as technology is built and deployed, those end users of the public who likely most need to connect with government information and services will often have the most difficulty accessing them. GSA will continue actions that strengthen relationships with stakeholders and meaningfully integrate the needs of communities as part of our digital services.

- **Strengthen relationships with underserved user communities and build capacity for research operations.** Governmentwide customer experience efforts focus on improving the digital interactions of communities and individuals with accessibility needs such as physical or mental disabilities and those experiencing major life events such as recovering from disasters, emergencies or financial shock, new and expecting parents, and those planning for retirement. GSA will continue integrating usability testing and research operations capabilities, including the expansion of user compensation pilots,<sup>6</sup> to directly track how well our digital services are working and meeting the diverse needs of the public.
- **Modernize GSA's high-impact<sup>7</sup> service providers to improve digital accessibility and language access.** GSA's public-facing digital assets like USA.gov, Login.gov and Vote.gov connect tens of millions of Americans to Federal services and information. GSA will continue modernization efforts to make our digital services more accessible, understandable, and easy-to-use. This includes platforming new language translations and designing from native speaker experiences, like USAGov en Español, as well as driving universal design standards in partnership with U.S. Web Design System.
- **Develop a plain-language accessibility checklist in collaboration with the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP).** This will enable any team developing cloud-based services and digital solutions to incorporate accessibility into their process, regardless of their expertise. Operationalizing accessibility knowledge and evaluation for Federal employee use helps improve overall digital government

<sup>6</sup> [Handbook: Doing Research at GSA Technology Transformation Services](#)

<sup>7</sup> Federal agency [High Impact Service Providers \(HISP\)](#) are identified by the President's Management Agenda due to the scale and impact of their public-facing services.



accessibility and performance outcomes for older devices, such as, and especially for mobile, rural, and low-bandwidth users.

## **Measuring Our Progress: Equitable and Accessible Digital Government**

GSA will know if we are achieving measurable positive change in Federal public-serving digital products and services by tracking progress against key metrics, including:

- reduced negative impacts (e.g., false rejection rates in biometric identity-proofing, task completion rates, slow page load times for low- and limited-bandwidth connections) and closing those efficacy gaps across sociodemographic factors
- increased product efficacy and higher overall scores in usability tests
- increased digital accessibility fluency and compliance across GSA high-impact products
- increased number of community-based organizations with active user research pipelines for GSA product testing
- increased and proportionate participation of users from underserved community groups in GSA product testing at scale
- increased number of available and platform-integrated non-English languages in high-impact digital services and products

## **Whole-of-Government Equity Objective: Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Housing Justice and Community Investment**

### **Strategy #3: Advance Equity, Economic Security and Environmental Justice through Large-Scale Construction Projects and the Federal Buildings Footprint**

#### **Barriers to Equity**

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 transportation connectivity to job opportunities, higher exposure to many forms of pollution, and less access to green space. The impacts of this inequity are apparent in the persistent lower household income, high unemployment, and poorer health outcomes.<sup>8</sup> 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.

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<sup>8</sup> [Assessing the Legacies of Historical Redlining](#), Urban Institute (2023)



## Key Actions

**Aid the economic success of construction industries, contractors, and labor forces.** Governmentwide implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is estimated to create 800,000 good-paying jobs<sup>9</sup>, but the possibility of critical shortages in construction and craft labor could threaten the timely and successful completion of these projects.<sup>10</sup> GSA is committed to scaling the impact of our BIL and other building modernization investments through collaboration with other Federal agencies and our industry partners.

- **Implement the Good Jobs Initiative partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor** to create and support clear pathways for workers to high-quality, good-paying jobs in construction, maintenance, manufacturing, and operations. The actions outlined in the signed Memorandum of Understanding<sup>11</sup> aim to support equitable and effective workforce development, including those from nontraditional and underserved labor sources; and improve job quality, standards and metrics on GSA construction sites.
- **Build and release new Geographic Information System (GIS) data-informed public forecasting resources for BIL and IRA related construction projects.** GIS is a computer system that analyzes and displays geographically referenced information. It uses data that is attached to a unique location. By providing more visibility and transparency about where and when Federal projects are happening, GSA can help Federal contractors, trade labor, and community stakeholders effectively plan and better connect with opportunities. This effort will help more Americans, including those from underserved communities, with access to quality employment in their communities.
- **Increase contracting opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged small businesses across growing markets in construction, clean energy, and sustainability.** GSA will take actions aimed to maximize participation of SDB and build its small business contractor base by improving the forecasting process, strengthening relationships with existing contractors, executing its plans for industry engagement and utilizing the Governmentwide Procurement Equity Tool to identify eligible and new businesses ready to bid for work where GSA projects are located.

**Achieve equitable and sustainable development impacts through data-driven insights, Federal partnerships and community engagement.** New Federal integrated data mapping and urban planning resources, like the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool have provided GSA with deeper insights about community needs and challenges during the project planning process. This includes opportunities for GSA to collaborate directly with State/local governments and communities on ways to address environmental justice concerns, meet development goals, and scale impact through better and more robust coordination between Federal agencies.

- **Identify and announce a near-term portfolio of projects for targeted environmental justice and sustainability actions.** GSA's [Center for Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program](#) will develop a priority list of site repair work at Federal buildings that would correct deficiencies in ways that also bring positive local sustainability impacts, address environmental justice concerns, and fulfill community planning goals. Relevant issues would include stormwater runoff, extreme heat, and tree canopy, as well as accessibility and improving aesthetics. These projects will provide meaningful benefit to the communities surrounding Federal properties and help to maximize the positive

<sup>9</sup> [Macroeconomic Consequences of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), Moody's Analytics (November 2021)

<sup>10</sup> [Will a labor crunch derail plans to upgrade U.S. infrastructure?](#), McKinsey & Company (October 2022)

<sup>11</sup> [General Services Administration - Department of Labor Good Jobs Memorandum of Understanding](#) (2023)





impact of GSA repair investments.

- **Continue Leveraging the Federal Thriving Communities Network<sup>12</sup>** to connect GSA stakeholder communities with additional climate and infrastructure resources. While GSA does not issue grants, it can proactively ensure that the communities we serve are better able to connect with place-based technical assistance and other IRA and BIL resources made available through Federal agency partners like U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Commerce.
- **Complete a study on the impacts of Federal real property disposal.** After it is determined that excess real property is no longer needed by the Federal Government, various statutes authorize conveyance<sup>13</sup> to State and local governments and in some cases, to nonprofits at up to 100% discount for public benefit use. Some of the qualifying uses include public health, homeless assistance, education, park and recreation, correctional, law enforcement, and emergency management. This study will give GSA important new insights on how portfolio disposal decisions affect surrounding communities in the near and long-term.

### **Measuring Our Progress: Equitable and Sustainable Public Buildings Footprint**

GSA will know if we are achieving measurable positive impacts in the communities where Federal construction projects and buildings are located by tracking progress against key metrics, including:

- increased diversity in the supplier base, including broadened participation from Tribal and disadvantaged businesses contracted to Federal construction projects and increased total dollars awarded to these businesses as a percentage of project value
- increased number of small and socioeconomic businesses, including new entrants, awarded contracts in the region where Federal projects are located
- increased number of Project Labor Agreements executed
- overall improved job and jobsite quality scores across GSA portfolio projects
- increased and more accessible pathways to training and employment opportunities in regions where GSA projects are located
- increased initiation and execution of community development goals established during Planning Outreach and Partnership engagements
- number of GSA community stakeholders who are awarded place-based assistance grants through Thriving Communities opportunities; indicators of reduced burden in disadvantaged Census tracts with GSA environmental justice ameliorations

### **Whole-of-Government Equity Objective: Civil Rights, Health Equity, Economic Justice, Global Equality**

#### **Strategy #4: Advance Equity and Effectiveness of Federal Programs Through Rigorous Review, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

##### **Barriers to Equity**

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

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/Federal-interagency-thriving-communities-network>

<sup>13</sup> <https://disposal.gsa.gov/s/PBC>



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.<sup>14</sup> 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.

## Key Actions

### **Complete, publish and share learnings from governmentwide equity evaluations.**

GSA serves a unique function in the government by providing other Federal agencies with [help building and using evidence](#). We partner with Federal agencies to answer priority questions with rigorous evaluation methods and administrative data. We design and conduct evaluations of existing programs - including life-saving programs like disaster relief, emergency assistance, and crisis hotlines - and recommend evidence-based program changes, with the ultimate goal of improving how the government is serving all Americans.

- **Increase the number of Federal agencies and programs initiating equity evaluations.** GSA currently partners with a handful of Federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Treasury and the U.S. Department of Education. GSA will increase its capacity for new evaluation agreements and work to recruit additional Federal agencies and programs to the service. Additionally, GSA will partner with the White House and interagency councils to bolster Federal agency capacity and readiness to undertake evaluations.
- **Conduct public engagement and increase awareness of equity evaluation findings.** The conclusions and recommendations generated from these evaluation efforts are not only useful to the Federal Government. They provide important insights to State and local governments who coordinate downstream Federal resources to communities and act as a public accountability tool to the communities themselves. GSA will undertake a strategic communications campaign to raise awareness of key findings and ensure the research has maximum impact through its scaled application by end users.

### **Measuring Our Progress: Equitable Administration of Government Programs**

GSA will know if we are effectively supporting positive change in Federal programs and the equitable delivery of government by several key factors, including:

- number of Federal agencies and programs undertaking equity evaluations

<sup>14</sup> [How COVID-19 Has Magnified Pre-existing Inequalities in the US](#), Boston University (2022)



- Number of Federal agencies and programs implementing updates based on findings
- increased number of people and communities reached by engagement and public outreach actions about evaluation findings
- indicators of reduced burden and improved access where Federal program delivery has been revised based on evaluation findings

## Whole-of-Government Equity Objective: Civil Rights, Economic Justice

### Strategy #5: Advance Equitable Access to Opportunity and Federal Resources for Local Communities and Minority Serving Institutions

#### Barriers to Equity

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.<sup>15</sup> 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.

#### Key Actions

##### **Deliver more Federal goods and products to American communities in critical need through the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program.<sup>16</sup>**

Administered by GSA, the program enables certain non-Federal organizations to obtain personal property that the Federal Government no longer needs. This property includes computers, office equipment and furniture, motor vehicles, aircraft, vessels, scientific devices and heavy machinery. GSA facilitates the distribution of millions of dollars in surplus Federal goods annually and the program is administered in each of the 56 States and territories by a State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP). In addition, State agencies, cities, local governments, Tribal governments, and non-profit organizations for the purposes of public health or education or services to veterans may obtain Federal surplus personal property through the donation program. Examples of recipients of property donations include, but are not limited to: public works departments, public health departments, childcare centers, homeless shelters, school districts, food banks, and HBCUs or other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

- **Establish a plan to conduct proactive reviews for the 56 State Agencies for Surplus Property 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.** GSA's Office of Civil Rights is responsible for GSA's administration of Title VI and will work to increase equitable access to programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from GSA.
- **Initiate an engagement and outreach plan to raise awareness in local communities about resources available through their State Agency for Surplus Property.** GSA

<sup>15</sup> [Public and Private Investments and Divestments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#), American Council on Education (ACE), UNCF (2019)

<sup>16</sup> GSA guide: [Federal Personal Property for Reuse and Sale](#)



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will integrate technical assistance and public education about the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program alongside other regular community engagement efforts that the agency coordinates.

## **Advance procurement opportunities and partnerships between Federal Agencies and Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions.**

HBCUs and MSIs provide vital support to communities through higher education, cutting edge research, public health ecosystems, pathways to quality employment, and well-being for economically and socially underserved Americans. The Federal Government can better benefit from the deep and rich expertise of these institutions and can improve pathways to more robust and meaningful partnership with them, including through Federal contracting.

- **Increase the number of eligible HBCUs and MSIs on the GSA Multiple Award Schedule.** The MAS is a long-term contract with commercial entities that provides Federal agencies with billions of dollars in annual access to common products and services needed by the government. GSA plans to conduct outreach to eligible institutions currently without MAS contracts, conduct training and provide technical assistance on how to get on the MAS, and host HBCU-focused industry days, matchmaking events and other strategic engagements to raise awareness and help better position HBCUs and MSIs to successfully do business with the Federal Government
- **Launch and scale adoption of new GSA public digital resource for MSIs.** GSA's new [public website to support Minority Serving Institutions](#) will aggregate information and resources that help both Federal agencies and MSIs develop and sustain partnerships or contracting agreements. Resources include market research, capabilities assessments, support for exploring joint venture and other contractor team agreements and data tools to help advance supplier diversity across Federal Government procurement

## **Measuring Our Progress: Equitable Access to Federal Resources**

GSA will know if we are effectively supporting positive change in Federal programs and the equitable delivery of government by several key factors, including:

- number of completed civil rights SASP compliance reviews
- increased number of people, communities, and MSIs reached by engagement and public outreach actions
- increased number of underserved communities, organizations, or geographic areas that seek to participate in the Federal surplus goods program
- indicators of reduced burden and improved access where program compliance reviews and any required updates have been implemented
- Increased number of MSI and HBCUs participating in Federal contracts
- Increased number of overall Federal contracting dollars obligated to MSIs and HBCUs