

**2022 DON Gold Coast
Advancing Equity in Federal Procurements
September 8, 2022**

Featuring: Dr. Charles Barber,
Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>
1 Have you established budgetary estimates for the additional compliance costs small business will need to absorb to be in alignment?	Q1: Budgetary estimates for small business compliance costs fall outside of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Office's scope of responsibility.
2 As a Small Business owner, what guidance should be looking out for from the government to ensure our policies and practices align with and meet the Executive Order?	The current administration has committed to increasing by 15 percent, the percentages of federal contracting dollars that go to small, disadvantaged businesses over the next five years. That said, while there is no specific silver bullet to guarantee full cultural alignment, every business owner or agency leader has an inherent responsibility to ensure they are leading their organizations down the right path in terms of building an enduring enterprise culture characterized by a highly capable, diverse work force that prioritizes fairness, equity and respect throughout the talent management lifecycle. Not only does it make good business sense, but there's also a moral imperative in effect here, too. // For these reasons, small business owners should take a realistic, holistic approach to the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within their own organizations and self-assess whether they are merely checking compliance boxes or are truly committed to implementing enduring transformation throughout their businesses. The current administration has done a great job of providing clear guidance as to how federal agencies should be managing their own DEI programs and initiatives. As a small business owner, applicable alignment with these precepts would be a logical first step in the process of meeting the intent of this and other Executive Orders as well as other federal directives. The Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce is a valuable resource document that provides insights into industry best practices and strategies for managing DEI programs and initiatives. It also provides additional background information on other executive orders relative to specific DEIA issues. An understanding of the tenets set forth in this document and other excellent agency-specific DEIA strategy documents can give small business owners a leg-up in terms of how they can prioritize their own efforts to further promote alignment.
3 Compliments and appreciate the challenges you must be facing. With the reported lack of qualification of recruits causing lower numbers in, one can assume the DEI goals and challenges for diversity may influence Recruiting Command process. How does the DEI effort minimize the potential for less than socially adaptable recruit making end goals a bigger challenge?	First and foremost, we need to accept that the Department of the Navy is not immune to discrimination, bias or prejudice, and that persistent underrepresentation in the military's senior officer ranks and senior executive civil service levels continues. For this reason, it is a national security imperative that we seek to recruit, hire, promote, and retain the most qualified candidates who will enable us to build a more inclusive, equitable and accessible workforce. With this in mind, we should always look at recruitment as a single component of the broader multifaceted talent management process (alongside retention, promotion, career development, etc.) where diversity in thought, problem solving, creativity and innovation are contributing strategic strengths that must be cultivated in order to promote a strong national security. // Our intent with taking a DEI-minded approach to recruitment is that we WILL attract the most diverse pools of qualified candidates best suited to serve in teams comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences and who more closely resemble the overall US population's collectively diverse experiential perspective. One example of how we are addressing this specific point is through our efforts to update our recruiting content so that it represents all service members. We are also strengthening our community engagement through internal programs and external initiatives with minority serving institutions to build a stronger narrative about the new and existing opportunities available to diverse candidates. We are keenly focused on leveraging data to develop strategies that boost retention of minorities so that they can have more opportunities to promote into both military and civilian leadership ranks. We are further taking a hard look at our promotion and selection boards, professional military education and assignments processes through a fairness and equity lens to ensure we are strengthening our overall talent pipeline. Finally, we are examining organizational climate through best practices like surveys, DEI maturity model assessments and other tools to address potential hidden bias and barriers that may adversely impact retention of minority members. At the same time we are working to promote an overall inclusive DON culture that celebrates diversity while reinforcing how our collective differences can serve as our biggest strengths that can enable us to retain a competitive advantage over our adversaries.
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<u>Links Discussed During Session</u>	