

Federal contractors face intense hiring scrutiny

Thousands of area businesses are contractors or subcontractors to the federal government. Most of them know that they at least need affirmative action plans to comply with federal law; many view that as a relatively rote task once the plan is up and running.

All that is about to change as the government prepares to launch a much more aggressive campaign against discrimination in contractors' hiring and compensation practices.

Historically speaking

Let's first look at a little history. Executive Order 11246, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, prohibits discrimination in hiring or employment decisions on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, and national origin. Under the order, contractors and subcontractors with a federal contract of \$50,000 or more and 50 or more employees are required to develop a written affirmative action program, designed to foster equal employment opportunity for women and minorities. Those federal contractors are obligated to make good faith efforts to improve the diversity of their workforces.

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