SBA’s Size Standards Analysis:

An Overview on Methodology and Comprehensive Size Standards Review

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What Is A Small Business?

• A business concern operated for profit
• Independently owned and operated
• Not dominant in field of its operation
• U.S. based and makes significant contribution to the U.S. economy
• Meets small business size standard for its industry
What Are Size Standards?

- Numerical definitions of what constitutes “small”
- A business concern is small if it is at or below a size standard
- Size standards are established by industry, as defined under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
- Table of Size Standards is available on [www.sba.gov/size](http://www.sba.gov/size)

How Business Size Is Measured?

- Average annual revenue - retail trade and most service industries
- Average number of employees - manufacturing, wholesale & some mining/transportation industries
- Assets (financial institutions)
- Electric output – electric generation, distribution and transmission
- Daily refining capacity – petroleum refiners
Some Size Standards Trivia

• 1,141 industries (6-digit NAICS)
• 18 sub-industries (“exceptions”)
• 42 different size standards
  ▪ 31 receipts based
  ▪ 8 employee based
  ▪ 3 others
• Lows and highs
  ▪ Receipts based – $0.75M to $35.5M
  ▪ Employee based – 50 to 1,500 employees

Common Size Standards

• $0.75 million for most agricultural industries (set by statute)
• $33.5 million for heavy construction industries
• $14.0 million for specialty trade contractors
• 500 employees for most manufacturing and mining industries
  (accounts for 75% of employee based standards)
• 100 employees for all wholesale trade industries
• $7.0 million for most retail and service industries
  (accounts for 58% of receipts based standards)
• 500 employees for nonmanufacturers (non-manufacturer’s rule)
% Small Under Current Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>NAICS Title</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-33</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>44-45</td>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Real Estate Rental &amp; Leasing</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>Admin. Support &amp; Waste Management Services</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<td>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</td>
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</tr>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Arts, Entertainment &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of Size Standards

- Federal small business procurement programs
- SBA loans
  - Industry standards or
  - Alternative size standards for 7(a) and 504 Loan Programs
- All other Federal programs
What Triggers A Size Standards Review?

- Changes in industry structure
- Inflation
- Changes in the industry classification system
- Changes in Federal contracting marketplace and other small business assistance programs
- Requests/concerns/suggestions from industry groups and other Federal agencies
- Congressional mandates (e.g., Small Business Jobs Act of 2010)
- Economic events and disasters

Current Issues and Concerns

- Size standards have not kept up with changes in
  - Industry structure
  - Federal contracting marketplace
  - Economic conditions
- Current size standards are too complex
- Current size standards are too low or too high for some industries
- Needs separate standards for Federal contracting
- Needs tiered standards – small, medium & large
Comprehensive Size Standards Review

- Last done in 80s (SBA attempted to simplify size standards in 1992 and 2004)
- Since then, *ad hoc* adjustments – individual industries or groups of industries – and periodic inflation adjustments
- Began current comprehensive review in 2007
- Issued a “Size Standards Methodology” White Paper
- The methodology is available on the SBA website at [www.sba.gov/size](http://www.sba.gov/size) for public review and comments
- Submit comments through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (Docket # SBA-2009-0008)

Objectives of Comprehensive Review

- Review all size standards on a sector by sector basis
- Address current issues and concerns
- Ensure that size standards
  - Reflect current market conditions and industry structure
  - More effectively target Federal assistance to intended beneficiaries
  - Are fewer, simpler and easier to use
Basic Premises to Establishing Size Standards

- Size standards should vary by industry, but not by program
- Help small and new businesses become competitive in their industries
- Ensure that small businesses get a fair share of Federal government purchases and sales
- Expand access to credit for small businesses

An Overview of Size Standards Methodology

Legislative definitions/requirements (15 U.S.C. 632)
- Independently owned & operated
- Not dominant in field of operation
- U.S. based – make significant contributions to the economy
- “Smallness” shall vary by industry to reflect differing industry characteristics

Primary factors
1. Industry structure
   1.1. Average firm size
   1.2. Average assets size
   1.3. Industry concentration
   1.4. Size distribution of firms
2. Federal procurement - small business share in federal contracts

Secondary factors
1. Technological change
2. Competing products from other industries
3. Industry growth trends
4. History of activity in the industry
5. Impacts on SBA programs

Weighting method
Proposed size standards
Final size standards

Adjustment of monetary size standards for inflation
Industry structure and Federal procurement trends
Public input
- Input from industry groups
- Public comments on proposed rule
- Input from other Federal agencies
Primary Factors

• Average firm size (simple and weighted average)
  ▪ Receipts
  ▪ Number of employees

• Average assets size (startup costs and entry barriers)

• Industry concentration
  ▪ 4-firm concentration ratio (≥ 40% - high concentration)

• Distribution of firms’ market share by size
  ▪ Gini coefficient

• Federal procurement
  ▪ Small business share of Federal contract dollars

Secondary Factors

• Technological change

• Industry growth

• Inter-industry competition

• Impacts on eligibility for SBA and other Federal programs

• Other industry specific factors, if any
Public Input and Other Factors

- Suggestions from industries
- Suggestions from Federal agencies
- Public comments to the proposed rules
- Administration's (and SBA's) priorities and policy objectives
- Current economic conditions

Size Standards Based on Industry Factors

- Establish comparison industry groups
  - “Anchor” size standard group
  - “Higher” size standard group
- Compare each industry factor of each industry with those of the comparison industry groups
  - If a specific industry's factor is similar to that of the anchor group, the anchor standard is adopted for that factor
  - Significant differences from the anchor group would support a size standard above or below the anchor
- Establish a set of fixed size standard levels
Comparison Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts-based size standards</th>
<th>Employee-based size standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anchor group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Anchor group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries with $7 million size standard</td>
<td>Industries with 500-employee size standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher-level size standards group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Higher-level size standards group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries with size standards of $23 million or higher (group average $29 million)</td>
<td>Industries with size standards of 1,000 employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Size Standards - 8 Fixed Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts-based fixed levels</th>
<th>Employee-based fixed levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• $5.0 million</td>
<td>• 50 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $7.0 million (anchor)</td>
<td>• 100 employees (wholesale anchor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $10.0 million</td>
<td>• 150 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $14.0 million</td>
<td>• 200 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $19.0 million</td>
<td>• 250 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $25.5 million</td>
<td>• 500 employees (mfg anchor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $30.0 million</td>
<td>• 750 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• $35.5 million</td>
<td>• 1,000 employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example:
Size Standard Based on Average Firm Size

Industry Data
About 50% Between Anchor & Higher Level Group

Example – Contd.
Size Standard Based on Average Firm Size

Size Standard
About 50% Between Anchor & Higher Level Group
Size Standards
Based on Federal Contracting Factor

• Apply to industries with $\geq$ $100$ million in Federal contracts annually
• Compare small business share of Federal contract dollars to small business share of industry’s total sales
• If the difference between the industry and contract shares is
  ▪ 10% to 30%, use one fixed size level above the current standard
  ▪ > 30%, use two fixed size levels above the current standard

Average Size Standard - Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average firm size</td>
<td>$19$ million</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Rounded from $18.6 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average assets size</td>
<td>$10.0$ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry concentration</td>
<td>$35.5$ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size distribution</td>
<td>$35.5$ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal contracting</td>
<td>$25.5$ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of factors</td>
<td>$25.5$ million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Rounded from $25.1 million)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rulemaking Process

1. Analysis and preparation of a proposed rule
2. Internal clearance of the proposed rule in SBA
3. Review of the proposed rule by OMB
4. Publication of the proposed rule in *Federal Register* for comments
5. Analysis of public comments and preparation of a final rule
6. Repeat (1) and (2) above and publish the final rule in *Federal Register*

Anticipated Sequence of Sectors

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAICS</th>
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<td>Management of Companies</td>
</tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting</td>
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<td>31-33</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
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Update on Comprehensive Size Standards Review

**Final rules published** (Oct 6, 2010)
- NAICS 44-45: Retail Trade
- NAICS 72: Accommodation and Food Services
- NAICS 81: Other Services

**Proposed rules published in Federal Register for comments**
- NAICS 54: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
  - Published on March 16, 2011
  - Comment period ended on June 15, 2011 (more than 1,400 comments received)
  - [View comments through www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (RIN 3245-AG07)
- NAICS 48-49: Transportation and Warehousing
  - Published on May 13, 2011
  - Comment period ends on July 12, 2011
  - [Submit comments through www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (RIN 3245-AG08)

Update on Comprehensive Size Standards Review – Contd.

**Proposed rules under review**
- NAICS 51: Information
- NAICS 56: Admin Support and Waste Mgmt Services
- NAICS 53: Real Estate, Rental and Leasing
- NAICS 61: Education Services

**Proposed rules in progress**
- NAICS 22: Utilities
- NAICS 62: Health Care and Social Assistance Services

**For latest updates**, please check on “What's New” on SBA website at [www.sba.gov/size](http://www.sba.gov/size)
Challenges

- Lack of historical information on some size standards
- Lack of up-to-date data on industry structure, especially at a sub-industry level (“exceptions”)
- Economic Census (industry data)- 4 to 5 years old
- Risk Management Association (average assets data) – some industries are not covered
- FPDS (Federal procurement data system) – lacks specific size of individual contractors
- Rulemaking process (takes about two years to publish a final rule)

Challenges – Contd.

- Enabling businesses that are about to exceed or have just exceeded size standards to continue participating in Federal government programs without causing unfair competitive disadvantage to those small businesses that need Federal assistance the most
- Meeting Federal procurement needs without breaching the public perception of “what is small” and without adding complexity to size standards
Policy Questions

• What should be the largest size to be considered small?

• Should SBA consider using a single measure of business size for all industries, such as receipts, employees, or some other measure?

• Should size standards be lowered for some industries, either based on data or public perception?

• Should SBA consider establishing separate size standards for procurement and non-procurement programs, even if it would mean more complexity?

Policy Questions – Contd.

• How can SBA best simplify size standards without breaching the requirement that size definitions should vary by industry?

• Should SBA adjust (lower) employee based standards for labor productivity growth as it adjusts (increases) receipts based size standards for inflation?

• Should SBA consider establishing tiered size standards?

• If yes, how can SBA enforce/monitor small government contracting goals under tiered standards?
Conclusion

- SBA is committed to completing the ongoing comprehensive size standards review
- Small Jobs Act of 2010 has further reinforced this effort
- SBA is committed to improving its size standards methodology and making size standards more relevant and simple
- SBA highly encourages public to participate in this process by providing feedback, suggestions, or relevant data for your industry

Our Contact Information

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