

19.601 General.

(a) A Certificate of Competency (COC) is the certificate issued by the Small Business Administration (SBA) stating that the holder is responsible (with respect to all elements of responsibility, including, but not limited to, capability, competency, capacity, credit, integrity, perseverance, tenacity, and limitations on subcontracting) for the purpose of receiving and performing a specific Government contract.

(b) The COC program empowers the SBA to certify to Government *contracting officers* as to all elements of responsibility of any small business *concern* to receive and perform a specific Government contract. The COC program does not extend to questions concerning regulatory requirements imposed and enforced by other *Federal agencies*.

(c) The COC program is applicable to all Government *acquisitions* except for 8(a) sole-source awards. A *contracting officer shall*, upon determining an apparent successful small business *offeror* to be nonresponsible, refer that small business to the SBA for a possible COC, even if the next acceptable *offer* is from a small business.

(d) When a *solicitation* requires a small business to adhere to the limitations on subcontracting, a *contracting officer's* finding that a small business cannot comply with the limitation *shall* be treated as an element of responsibility and *shall* be subject to the COC process. When a *solicitation* requires a small business to adhere to the definition of a nonmanufacturer, a *contracting officer's* determination that the small business does not comply *shall* be processed in accordance with [subpart 19.3](#).

(e) *Contracting officers*, including those located overseas, are required to comply with this subpart for U.S. small business *concerns*.

(f) For the purpose of receiving a COC on an unrestricted *acquisition*, a small business nonmanufacturer *may* furnish any end item produced or manufactured in the *United States* or its *outlying areas*.

Parent topic: [Subpart 19.6 - Certificates of Competency and Determinations of Responsibility](#)