

(e) Each small business set-aside purchase shall be made through bidding procedures established by the Secretary. Invitations to bid shall be sent to small businesses in addition to regular bidders to establish a reasonable price range commensurate with current market conditions. Subject to subsection (f) of this section, the purchase, contract, or expenditure of funds shall be awarded in accordance with [the rules and regulations for purchasing adopted by the Secretary] THIS ARTICLE.

(f) The Secretary shall accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from a small business for a small business set-aside, if the bid does not exceed by 5 percent the bid received from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder WHICH IS NOT A SMALL BUSINESS for the small business set-aside.

(g) The Secretary shall report twice a year to the Committee on Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review about the operation and effectiveness of the small business set-aside program.

SUBTITLE 2. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS PREFERENCE

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(a) Notwithstanding other provisions of this [act] ARTICLE, [products] SUPPLIES and services of the handicapped shall be purchased by the State in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(b) (1) The term "handicapped" refers to an individual or class of individuals under a physical disability (including blindness) or mental disability, which constitutes a substantial handicap to employment and is of such a nature as to prevent the individual under such disability from currently engaging in normal competitive employment.

(2) The term "charitable nonprofit agency for the ["]handicapped" means an agency organized under the laws of the United States and the State of Maryland operated in the interest of handicapped individuals, and the net income of which does not inure in part, or in whole, to the benefit of any shareholder or other individual and is certified as a sheltered workshop by the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor.

(c) The Secretary of General Services shall have the power, and it shall be his duty, to determine the fair market price on all suitable [products] SUPPLIES manufactured by the handicapped and services rendered by the handicapped and offered for sale to the State or any of its agencies by any charitable nonprofit agency for the handicapped, incorporated under the laws of this State, and manufacturing merchandise and providing services within this State, and approved for such purpose by the Department of