



Executive Order Expands Protections Of Federal Workers

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On July 21, President Barack Obama issued an executive order prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity by federal contractors and agencies. The order also adds these categories to the affirmative action requirements.

Before signing the order, Obama stated, "America's federal contracts should not subsidize discrimination against the American people." The order goes into effect immediately for federal agencies. However, the Secretary of Labor will prepare regulations regarding the federal contractor obligations within 90 days of the date of the executive order, which will apply to contracts entered into on or after the effective date of the rules. Federal contractors or subcontractors holding contracts of \$10,000 or more—a lower threshold than the \$50,000 contract requirement for full affirmative action obligations—are subject to this order.

Obama's order is likely to have the biggest impact on federal contractors not already accustomed to the full affirmative action requirements. These federal contractors should review their policies, and revise them if necessary, to ensure that they comply with the new mandate.

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