

Want to Keep Jobs Around? Throw Out Insourcing

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The Department of Defense's policy of insourcing -- using government resources instead of private-sector contractors -- should be scrapped immediately.

Insourcing doesn't save the kind of money officials envisioned it would, and, more importantly, it's hurting the local defense- contracting industry and the economy in general.

Last year, the Obama administration announced that the Defense Department would begin insourcing as a way to save billions of dollars it discerned were being wasted by private contractors. The program aimed to cut 33,000 contractors by 2015 and replace them with government employees.

There's nothing wrong with making sure our tax dollars are being properly spent. But insourcing hasn't done much to address fraud and other problem areas in the contracting world.

Meanwhile, the blood-letting began, and it wasn't long until Colorado Springs contractors were feeling the pain.

Homeland Security strategist Delta Solutions saw its staff of 44 cut to four. Shape Technologies reduced its workforce by 14 percent, and the Cheyenne Mountain Air Station is about to replace 65 civilian workers with 40 government employees.

If the cost to the local and national workforce isn't enough to discredit the insourcing, consider another damning revelation: It simply isn't working.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates admitted last month that the Pentagon wasn't "seeing the savings it had hoped for" from insourcing.

And yet, despite its impotence, the policy remains in place.

The Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce is working with the state's congressional delegation to try to reverse the edict, and defense contractors and civic leaders are preparing a briefing for defense officials.

We hope those officials will see that cutting jobs is counterintuitive to healing an ailing economy.

If the Obama administration is willing to offer economic stimulus packages and tax breaks to create jobs, maybe it should consider returning to a tried-and-true approach to the issue -- contracting.

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