

Native Corporations Defend SBA-8a Contracts

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Diana Gish/KMXT

Some Alaska

Native leaders are converging in Washington in advance of a Senate subcommittee meeting on government contracting. The focus on the hearing is the Small Business Administration's 8(a) business development program; specifically, the way Native Corporation contracts are awarded.

Contracts

to Alaska Native corporations have grown from 508 million-dollars in 2000 to 5.2 billion dollars last year according to figures released by the Senate Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight. That's the subcommittee that's conducting a hearing on Thursday to look into the way contracts are awarded to Alaska Native Corporations. Based on federal law Native corporations are eligible for no-bid federal contracts of any size. Other businesses under the small business program have a 5.5 million-dollar cap on contracts.

KMXT's Diana Gish spoke with Casey Sullivan, who is part of a new coalition called "Native Eight (a) Works," that represents a diverse group of Alaska Native corporations, Native American tribes, Hawaiian Native organizations as well as other organizations and businesses. The group was formed earlier this week to counter a growing criticism and increase understanding of the value of awarding federal contracts to native groups.