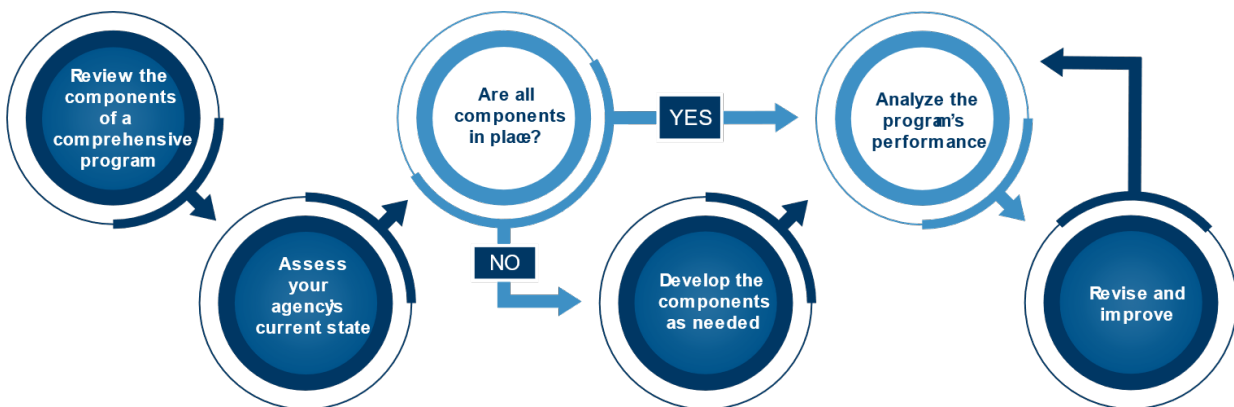


## Outreach Program Guidelines

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The purpose of an outreach program is to inform Washington small businesses, microbusinesses, minibusinesses, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses about contracting opportunities with the state. Outreach is conducted to encourage and facilitate the State's purchase of goods and services from these businesses to the maximum extent practicable. Outreach helps public agencies identify businesses that may be able to fill gaps in the availability of small and diverse businesses for state contracting needs. One result of outreach is to obtain participation from, and inclusion of, underrepresented or under-utilized vendors in state business.

Here are the steps for how to implement your agency's Outreach Program:



### 1. Review the components of a comprehensive outreach program:

- **General Outreach Plan** – Communicating, sharing information, and building relationships. General outreach includes attending outreach events such as the DES organized networking and matchmaking trade shows and attending other events that provide opportunities to exchange information (such as how to do business with the state, forecasted opportunities, and contacts; and vendor(s) can share marketing information) with state and small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses.
- **Targeted Industry Outreach Plan** – Outreach conducted with an industry for a noncompetitive purchase with the objective of finding and selecting a small, diverse, and/or veteran-owned business to meet an agency need.



- **Targeted Solicitation Outreach Plan** – Outreach conducted before and/or during the solicitation process with the objective of notifying small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses that an opportunity will be available.
- **Program Performance Assessment** – Track outreach efforts and establish accountability for a successful program. See below for analyzing your agency's program performance and continuous improvement.

## **2. Assess your agency's current state and develop any missing components.**

- Does your agency have plans for each of the three types of outreach: General Outreach, Targeted Industry Outreach, and Targeted Solicitation Outreach?
- Develop a method for tracking outreach efforts, including the type of outreach, dates, locations, and the platforms used to distribute information.
- Implement a process for assessing the outreach program's performance, using metrics such as the number of businesses contacted, how many submit bids, and how many are awarded contracts.

## **3. Analyze the program's performance. Strategies to create accountability in your agency include:**

- Review your agency's outreach efforts:
  - Number of certified businesses notified of procurements
  - Number of days prior to the RFP closure date did notification go out
  - Types of outreach plans used
  - Number of certified businesses submitting bids
  - Number of certified businesses awarded contracts
- Measure accountability by creating and defining outcome measures and plan out how they will be shared transparently and incorporated into your agency's outreach plans and activities
- Have procurement staff complete available cultural awareness/sensitivity, implicit bias, and equity training
- Seek feedback – using surveys, debriefs, and other methods – from stakeholders consistently, including businesses, successful and unsuccessful bidders, and community leaders and organizations. For a list of community resources, view [Supplier Diversity Partner Resources](#).
- Work with OMWBE to help your agency develop strategies to improve your outreach and support your efforts to meet diverse spending goals



- Assess feedback gathered and applied to your procurement process (e.g. bid debrief feedback)
- Survey contractors and partners and use the information gathered to make meaningful improvements to outreach efforts
- Conduct regular performance and process reviews (e.g. outreach, certification, contract). Examine trends in diverse contracting participation to guide future efforts or changes

#### **4. Revise and improve as needed. Outreach programs should include processes for ensuring a culture of quality assurance and improvement.**

- Assess feedback gathered and applied to your procurement process (e.g. bid debrief feedback)
- Survey contractors and partners and use the information gathered to make meaningful improvements to outreach efforts
- Conduct regular performance and process reviews (e.g. outreach, certification, contract). Examine trends in diverse contracting participation to guide future efforts or changes

Implementation of a general outreach plan is located [here](#).

Implementation of a targeted industry outreach plan is located [here](#).

Implementation of a targeted solicitation outreach plan is located [here](#).

An FAQ about outreach is located [here](#).