



## Supplier Diversity Best Practices

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This document includes some best practices to increase participation of small and diverse businesses in your agency's contracting and procurement. The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) can help you apply these strategies in your agency. We can include appropriate staff from the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) or other agencies in these conversations as well.

### 1. Proactively identify your contracting and procurement needs. Early planning and advanced notice support supplier diversity.

- Identify your agency's schedule of planned procurements for the fiscal year or, preferably, the biennium
- If a schedule is not available, review past spend data to identify general categories of goods and services your agency regularly purchases
  - Your agency's response to questions one through four of the Procurement Risk Assessment report submitted to DES can help find this information
- Break down your spending needs by procurement type:
  - Master contracts using the [master contract sales database](#)
  - Internal contracts
  - Direct buy purchases

### 2. Review your procurement practices.

- Review how purchases are bundled/consolidated and whether unbundling these contracts will create more inclusion opportunities. [Click here for more information on unbundling](#)
- Understand your agency's [direct buy purchasing authority](#)
- Determine your [agency's delegated procurement authority](#)
- Is it likely bidders will subcontract some of the work? If so, consider requiring bidders to submit an inclusion plan as part of their bid package where the contractor sets goals, identifies small and diverse vendors, and reports on subcontractor spending with diverse vendors. [Click here for more information on inclusion plans](#)
- Write solicitations and contracts in [plain talk](#), which assists all bidders and makes the contract more accessible. [Click here for more information on contract language](#)
- Review your agency's standard contract language and reevaluate any requirements that may be barriers for small and diverse businesses
- Publish contract and procurement opportunities with plenty of lead time – advanced notice is key to encouraging small and diverse businesses' participation



### 3. Identify diverse options for each category of spending.

- Use this [search tool](#) on DES' website to identify master contracts with small and diverse vendors
- Use [WEBS](#) to identify businesses registered with DES
  - WEBS includes all certified veteran owned businesses, and self-registered small businesses
  - For help, review these [instructions](#) or see the [WEBS Vendor Search tutorial](#)
  - Try starting your search with broad commodity codes
- Search the [OMWBE's directory](#) of certified minority- and woman-owned businesses
- Agencies cannot count spending on non-certified businesses in these categories
- Only use certified DVA firms for veteran-owned businesses, and certified OMWBE firms for minority- and woman-owned businesses; some businesses may have one, two, or all three of the certifications, but they are all different

### 4. Other Market Research and Outreach

If you cannot find a certified business in your area of work, early planning will allow you to conduct market research and targeted outreach, and to receive technical assistance from OMWBE in this effort. Agencies should conduct outreach, consistent with their annual inclusion plans submitted to OMWBE, whether it is targeted for a specific contract OR for future needs. Below are some actions that you can take when you can't initially locate a certified business to supply the product or conduct the work you need.

- Contact OMWBE and DVA to identify other options for utilization of small and diverse businesses that are not currently certified.
- Identify businesses you currently contract with that may qualify for OMWBE or DVA certification. If any of these businesses are not certified, send them to OMWBE or DVA for certification. See this [multi-agency fact sheet](#) for more information to know where to refer a business that wants to be certified by OMWBE or DVA, or registered in WEBS.
- Develop a communication strategy to engage with small and diverse businesses. Assess how your agency does outreach and whether it is effective. For more information on outreach, [click here](#).
- Contact certified small and diverse businesses to make them aware of bid opportunities.
- Contact groups and business associations that have minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned businesses as members and ask for them to share opportunities with their members and contacts.
- Host, sponsor, or attend trade shows to inform small and diverse businesses of contracting opportunities. Check [OMWBE's website](#) or [DVA's website](#) for upcoming events, or call OMWBE at (360) 664-9750.



- Advertise contracting opportunities on your agency's website, newsletters, and social media channels. Share these opportunities with [OMWBE](#), the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), the Equity Commissions, and other organizations that distribute contracting opportunities. For a list of organizations, see [Supplier Diversity Partner Resources](#).

### 5. Monitor

Monitor your agency's spend with small and diverse businesses throughout the year so you know what is working and can adjust your strategies as needed. You can access your agency's current small and diverse business spend data by following the Enterprise Reporting Guidelines.

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For questions or support, contact [supplierdiversity@omwbe.wa.gov](mailto:supplierdiversity@omwbe.wa.gov) or 360-280-3121.