

Supplier Diversity Inclusion Plan • Fiscal Year 2017

Agency: Washington State Department of Transportation

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The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) plans to increase participation of minority, small, women and veteran owned firms via the following measures¹:

- 1) **WSDOT is exploring use of a Mentor Protégé Program on state funded projects. This Mentor Protégé program will likely consist of the following elements:**
 - 30 to 50 Mentors and Protégés participating with meaningful technical assistance and partnership opportunities.
 - Increased relationships between prime and diverse businesses.
 - Increased capacity of diverse businesses to participate on WSDOT heavy highway construction projects.
 - Increased minority, small, women and veteran owned business participation or notable progress toward meeting the Governor's Results Washington Goals.
- 2) **By spring 2018, if the Mentor Protégé Program is not demonstrating progress toward the Governor's goals, WSDOT will further evaluate implementing the Small and Veteran Enforceable Goals Program on the Connecting Washington funded projects. This program would likely consist of:**
 - Condition of award goals for small and veteran owned firms.
 - Additional tiered credit for small and veteran participation, based upon firm size and lack of history in working for WSDOT.
 - Overhead reimbursement for prime contractors for satisfactorily implementing the program.
 - Accountability through performance evaluations, review of Good Faith Efforts, and sanctions if necessary.
- 3) **WSDOT will continue its community engagement practices, including adopting other best practices as identified by the Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity:**
 - Engage vested stakeholders through the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program² Advisory Group.
 - WSDOT attends many community and trade-based organization meetings to share information and upcoming projects with diverse businesses. WSDOT will continue this activity with an increased emphasis on local connections.
 - Continue hosting and attending outreach events such as the Regional Contracting Forum, Business After Hours, Alliance Northwest, Regional Open Houses and other large conferences targeted to diverse populations.

¹ WSDOT is working with the minority and women's business community as well as prime contractors to determine the best approach to increasing Minority, Small, Veteran and Women owned business participation on state funded projects. While the above is WSDOT's current plan for improving participation, they are subject to change.

² The DBE Program is similar in many ways to the state Minority and Women's Business Enterprise Program; however, race-conscious enforceable goals are allowed under the DBE program as it is a requirement of federal-aid and not subject to RCW 49.60.400 (I-200).

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- Notifying firms of upcoming opportunities through the use of WEBS, other relevant websites, weekly email distributions, newsletters and handouts distributed at community and trade meetings.
- 4) **To ensure the state Mentor Protégé Program is implemented effectively, WSDOT is taking a multi-faceted approach to training. Statewide training will occur for both staff and external stakeholders as follows:**
- The internal training will provide agency staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully implement the program. To ensure proper accountability, WSDOT already evaluates all relevant staff on their ability to successfully implement diverse business programs; the new Mentor Protégé Program will be evaluated with other diversity programs.
 - External stakeholders will also be trained on how the Mentor Protégé Program works, with special emphasis placed on differentiating acceptable contractual behavior on state versus federal projects.
- 5) **To implement a successful Supplier Diversity Program, monitoring and transparency are critical, along with collaboration with partner organizations.**
- To ensure WSDOT is able to implement a successful state Minority, Small, Veteran and Women's Business Program, a monitoring mechanism must be in place. WSDOT is procuring B2GNow, a Supplier Diversity Software System that is already utilized in Washington state and will be configured for WSDOT's state and federal diversity programs. This software tool will allow WSDOT to monitor the effectiveness of our state program and report our progress to the public, which will enhance the program's transparency.
 - WSDOT will continue to work with our agency partners, specifically the Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity and DBE Advisory Group to resolve issues, enhance our programs and implement best practices.