



Inclusion Plans FAQ

What is an Inclusion Plan?

Inclusion plans outline commitments a contractor, vendor, or consultant will make toward the state's goal to increase spending with small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses. Inclusion plans can be used in a wide variety of procurement types for public works as well as goods and services.

Inclusion plans are important because they:

- Demonstrate a contractor, vendor, or consultant's commitment to include small, veteran, and diverse businesses.
- Allow collaboration with an agency to develop a comprehensive strategy to identify the eligibility and availability of small, veteran, and diverse businesses.

Can I require an Inclusion Plan in a bid?

Yes, agencies can require inclusion plans outlining outreach efforts as part of the proposal or bid or in the acceptance criteria, along with requirements for formatting, years of experiences, qualifications, pricing, etc.

You can consider bidders non-responsive if they fail to submit an inclusion plan where one is required. Bidders may be found non-responsive if their inclusion plan has a diverse participation goal amount of zero.

Inclusion plans may be required where the contractor has ancillary services that are not directly related to the proposal that could be performed by small, veteran, and diverse businesses, such as: IT support, engineering, manufacturing, operational, telecommunications, administrative, trucking, shipping, janitorial, etc.

Are Inclusion Plans enforceable?

When the inclusion plan is part of the contract, it is enforceable per the terms of the contract. However, failure to meet the goals is not necessarily a failure to meet all of the contract requirements. Refer to your Assistant Attorney General or legal counsel for additional guidance on contract language and inclusion plan implementation.

How are Inclusion Plans Beneficial?

Internal benefits:

- Creates a tool that will help increase small, veteran, and diverse business participation in state spending



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- Prepares the contract manager for monitoring subcontractor spend in Access Equity
- Cultivates diversity expectations among state agencies and businesses
- Builds an environment where state agencies receive information from contractors on who will be used for subcontracting work
- Promotes early planning to encourage registration or certification
- Clarifies the responsibility for collection of subcontractor data and the prime contractor's efforts and policies around inclusion

External benefits:

- Encourages positive economic impacts by increasing use of small, veteran, and diverse firms – promoting competition and job creation while decreasing contract costs
- Prepares the prime contractor for adding subcontractors and tracking payments in Access Equity
- Promotes equity by providing increased participation by people from underrepresented communities
- Furthers transparency in contracting

How do I know if an Inclusion Plan is right for my project?

Review your project details and ask the following questions to determine if an inclusion plan is appropriate for your project. If you answer “yes” to these questions, an inclusion plan makes sense on your project.

- Are small, veteran, and diverse businesses available to work (ready, willing, and able) on this project?
- Are there sub-contractible or partnership opportunities due to the size of the contract? Note, you might consider unbundling if this is the case.
- Does the contractor have ancillary services that are not directly related to the proposal that could be performed by small, veteran, and diverse businesses?

Is there ever a reason not to have an inclusion plan?

Some contracts will not require an inclusion plan. For example, when the project:

- Has no sub-contractible opportunities
- Is small, it likely will not benefit from an inclusion plan
- Requires unique qualifications or specific skills that no available small, veteran, and diverse businesses have.

How do agencies continue to improve their inclusion plan after it is in place?

- Conduct Evaluations/Consultations – Gather feedback and apply what you learn.



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- Verify that contractors enact the policies and procedures they commit to in the inclusion plan.
- Monitor contractor spending over the course of the project. Hold periodic meetings on current progress, particularly on larger contracts.
- Work collaboratively with your contractor so they meet their commitments.