



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 and diverse businesses. Inclusion plans can be used in a wide variety of procurement types and for a wide variety of work areas. Work areas could include, public works, goods and services, professional services, etc.

Inclusion plans are important because they:

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

Inclusion Plan Requirements

- 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.
- For Public Works, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) currently considers bidders non-responsive if they fail to submit an inclusion plan where one is required. Bidders may be found non-responsible 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 and diverse businesses, such as: IT support, engineering, manufacturing, operational, telecommunications, administrative, trucking, shipping, janitorial, etc.
- When the inclusion plan is part of the contract, it is enforceable per the terms of the contract.
- Refer to your Assistant Attorney General or legal counsel for additional guidance on contract language and inclusion plan implementation.

What are the components of an Inclusion Plan?

The following are potential components you would ask of a contractor, vendor, or consultant to put into their inclusion plan. You can also reference this [link to sample plans](#) for examples.



Component	Definition / Instructions
1. Anticipated Certified Diverse Business Participation.	Identifying the anticipated percent of small and diverse participation on this project. Participation can be as a prime contractor, subcontractor or joint venture partner.
2. The prime contractor's Diverse Business Subcontracting list.	Provide a list of small and diverse businesses that the prime contractor will utilize on the contract. This can include contracted services that support company operations and administration.
3. Planned efforts by the prime contractor to support small and diverse businesses, including but not limited to: <ul data-bbox="240 783 589 1129" style="list-style-type: none">• General Description, including any applicable policies and procedures• Mentoring, training, and capacity building programs• Prompt payment, retainage, and dispute resolution	Provide a description of prime contractor's plan to support small and diverse businesses. Examples may include: <ul data-bbox="626 667 1471 1098" style="list-style-type: none">• Policies and procedures the business will use to promote small and diverse business goals, and inclusion generally, and explanation of how these support diversity and inclusion.• Plan for unbundling jobs (smaller work packages) to allow for greater participation.• Current or planned small and diverse business programs such as apprenticeships, mentor, workshops, special events, bonding and surety programs, financing program, early payment programs.• Efforts to assist interested small and diverse businesses in obtaining related assistance or services.
4. A description of the prime contractor's planned efforts for outreach to the small and diverse business community.	Include participation and outreach plans that provide community education about government projects and opportunities to participate in those projects. For example, tradeshow, workshops, seminars, OMWBE webinars, sponsorships, and teaming with public or non-profits event organizers. Plans may include: <ul data-bbox="626 1413 1433 1528" style="list-style-type: none">• Communication plans.• Examples of the business outreach approach and methods such as website posting and advertising.
5. A description of the prime contractor's process to ensure small and diverse businesses have enough time and information to respond to solicitations.	Provide longer timelines to better allow small and diverse businesses time to respond to solicitations and submit an offer for subcontracts. Outline measures taken to promote small and diverse businesses interest and participation to ensure early contacts are meaningful.



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6. An explanation of how the prime contractor will ensure small and diverse businesses understand the bid and specifications and are able to improve if they are not selected.	Describe the bid process and requirements to provide adequate information about the subcontract and assist small and diverse businesses in responding and successfully competing for the solicitation. For example, pre-bid meetings, clear bid directions, debriefings, etc. A debrief can be helpful for bidders who are not selected for a subcontract to learn why they were unsuccessful and improve for the next solicitation – important experience for newer bidders.
7. A description of how the prime contractor considers small and diverse business in the development of bid packages.	Outline the process the prime contractor will use to select portions of the work it wishes to be performed by small and diverse businesses. Include details on how these bid packages will be able to be completed, such as setting flexible timeframes for performance and delivery schedules.
8. Identification of the prime contractor’s “Diversity Expert” and the name(s) of the person who oversees inclusion efforts on this procurement.	Provide the name(s), title(s), and duties of individual(s) working for the prime contractor who will have the authority and responsibility to implement, monitor, and report on its inclusion plan progress. A single point of contact makes managing inclusion on projects much easier for the agency and provides a contact for small and diverse businesses in case there are any disputes or issues.
9. A list of sample projects (5 maximum) with diverse business participation in the last five years.	Provide a list of past projects with small and diverse business participation.
10. Acknowledgement of prime contractor’s awareness and commitment to business diversity.	Submit a policy statement acknowledging the prime contractor’s commitment to developing opportunities for small and diverse business participation. This should include the business’ inclusion goals.
11. Acknowledgement of the prime contractor’s education and training programs for its employees for expected behaviors and performance in implementing the small	Describe the prime contractor’s internal training for each of the small and diverse business inclusion plan strategies, such as a list of trainings, who attended, percentage of relevant staff who received training, etc. Describe how the prime contractor has implemented training on the inclusion plan with subcontractors and suppliers. List how the business uses educational institutions, programs offered by



Component	Definition / Instructions
and diverse business inclusion plan.	OMWBE or other training to educate its subcontractors and suppliers.
12. Any additional information the business would like to include as a part of their plan.	Additional statements, documented process improvements, or any other related information and materials.

How are Inclusion Plans Beneficial?

Internal benefits:

- Creates a tool that will help increase small and diverse business participation in state spending.
- 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 and diverse firms – promoting competition and job creation while decreasing contract costs.
- 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 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?
- Does the contractor have ancillary services that are not directly related to the proposal that could be performed by small and diverse businesses?



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

- When a project has no sub-contractible opportunities.
- When a project is small, it likely will not benefit from an inclusion plan.
- When the project requires unique qualifications or specific skills that no available small 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.
- Verify 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.