

Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities

Mentor Protégé Program

Program Overview

The Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion & Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO) is implementing a Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) designed to enhance the ability of Small Diverse Businesses (SDBs) to compete for Commonwealth non-highway capital construction and supplies and services procurement opportunities. The program expands BDISBO's efforts to identify and respond to the developmental needs of SDBs.

The MPP is designed to encourage prime contractors and/or suppliers to provide developmental assistance to DGS-verified SDBs to help them successfully solicit and perform on Commonwealth contracts. The MPP will help SDBs operating in Pennsylvania grow by improving the technical and business capabilities necessary to compete for the Commonwealth's prime contract and subcontract awards.

The MPP is a voluntary program and BDISBO will assist Protégés who cannot find a Mentor. To the extent possible, the MPP will either match Mentor and Protégé businesses of the same field, discipline, and geographic region or will allow the Mentor to pair with a Protégé of their own choosing. A pairing – whether established independently or with BDISBO's assistance - will not create a contract between the Mentor and Protégé.

Once a Mentor and Protégé are matched and agree to enter into the MPP, they will enter into a "Mentor Protégé Program Agreement" (MPP Agreement) which will define the relationship between the Mentor and Protégé firms and any developmental goals identified by the participants.

In addition, the Mentor and Protégé must be able to meet the obligations outlined in the MPP Agreement as detailed below.

Program Duration

The MPP Agreement term will be for up to 2-years with renewal options as agreed to by both parties.

Program Eligibility

Mentors. To be selected as a Mentor, a firm must:

1. Be a prime contractor eligible for Commonwealth contracts for supplies, services, information technology services, construction, and construction-related services. The Mentor must not be under suspension or debarment, and must not be listed within the Commonwealth's Contractor Responsibility Program (CRP) database;
2. Have had at least one "prime" contract award with the Commonwealth within the last three years valued at or above \$300,000.00; and
3. Be willing to abide by and sign the MPP Agreement committing to the requirements of the MPP.

Protégés. To be eligible as a Protégé, a firm must:

1. Be a DGS-verified SDB eligible for Commonwealth contracts for supplies, services, information technology services, construction, and construction-related services. The Protege must not be under suspension or debarment, and must not be listed within the Commonwealth's Contractor Responsibility Program (CRP) database. Protégés must notify BDISBO within 30 days of any change to their status as a DGS-verified SDB;
2. Be willing to abide by and sign the MPP Agreement committing to the requirements of the MPP; and as applicable
3. Prospective Protégés new to the Commonwealth's procurement processes must also meet the following additional requirements:
 - A. Complete the Supplier registration process;
 - B. If they have not already done so, become a DGS-verified SDB; and
 - C. Attend one solicitation event (i.e., supplier forum, pre-proposal conference or pre-bid conference) or attend a BDISBO training event (i.e. "Doing Business with the Commonwealth").

Selection and Matching

Mentors and Protégés may self-match, where Mentors and Protégés voluntarily agree to participate together in the MPP, or they may be matched with the assistance of BDISBO.

Incentives

Mentors. Mentors who are current/active and in compliance with all MPP terms and obligations may receive the following benefits for participating in the MPP:

1. Receipt of a recognition award based upon a Mentor's level of participation; and
2. Invitation to an awards ceremony where annual awards will be presented to the Mentor-Protégé team that has demonstrated exceptional teamwork and to the Mentor that provides the most effective developmental support to a Protégé. BDISBO, in consultation, with DGS's senior management, will solicit nominations from participating Mentors and Protégés to determine the award winners.

Protégés. Protégés may receive the following benefits for participating in the MPP:

1. Receipt of a recognition award based on a Protégé's level of participation;
2. Invitation to an awards ceremony where annual awards will be presented to the Mentor-Protégé team that has demonstrated exceptional teamwork and to the Mentor that provides the most effective developmental support to a Protégé. BDISBO, in consultation, with DGS's senior management, will solicit nominations from participating Mentors and Protégés to determine the award winners; and
3. Invaluable guidance and business development assistance which includes personalized support and direction in navigating the Commonwealth's procurement process from a successful, experienced Commonwealth supplier – the Mentor.

Program Application Process

Firms interested in participating in the MPP must submit a MPP Agreement signed by both parties. The MPP Agreement may be submitted electronically to GS-BDISBO@pa.gov or via U.S. First Class mail to BDISBO-MPP, 401 North Street, Room 601, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

The MPP Agreement must contain:

1. The name and address of the Mentor and Protégé point of contact, who will oversee the MPP Agreement and respond to all inquiries associated with the Agreement;
2. A description of the developmental assistance that the Mentor will provide to the Protégé; and
3. A schedule containing milestones which correspond to the elements identified as the developmental assistance the Mentor will provide within the identified program participation term.

MPP Terms and Obligations

The Mentor and Protégé must both agree to the following terms:

1. A Mentor and Protégé must each individually submit to BDISBO's MPP Program Manager the following reports: a semi-annual report, and a post-assessment report due at the conclusion of the MPP Agreement term. All reports must detail the Mentor's efforts to develop or enhance the Protégé's capabilities, outline the assistance provided, identify the goals achieved since the inception of the MPP Agreement, and describe the impact on the Protégé's ability to be awarded contracts and subcontracts by Commonwealth agencies;
2. A Mentor or Protégé may voluntarily withdraw from the MPP relationship after providing a written request to BDISBO 60 days prior to the proposed termination and must be reviewed and approved by BDISBO; and
3. Withdrawing from the MPP will have no impact on any existing Commonwealth contractual requirements of the Mentor or Protégé.