

FOCUS *on* DBE



Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) encourages doing business with Delaware Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs)

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Winning Contracts by Starting Small

When a small business does not have a track record to demonstrate contacting performance, getting a foot in the door can sometimes be a challenging and frustrating process. Many small businesses claim, “How can I gain the experience if I can’t get a shot at the opportunity?”

Whether the procurement opportunity is for professional services, commodities or public works, past performance and/or experience is an evaluation criteria used to determine if a business could handle the requirements of the contract. And in government contracting, past performance is most often a consideration in the evaluation of large or above threshold procurements – buys that require a formal bid process.

Following are some tips on how a small business can establish and demonstrate performance experience as well as gain business intelligence on winning contracts.

Start small

The state Purchasing and Contracting Advisory Council establishes thresholds that trigger formal bidding procedures in the areas of Materiel and Non-Professional Services, Public Works, and Professional Services. State agencies are required to use the formal bidding procedures when a purchase is made in an amount that exceeds the threshold limit.

Looking for opportunities below these thresholds may prove beneficial in gaining a performance track record.

Register to do business

To make sure you do not miss potential opportunities, be sure to register your business on both public and private company sites. To register your business for Delaware contracting opportunities, visit <http://bids.delaware.gov>

Registering your business provides a means for vendor outreach when opportunities arise. As a registered prospective vendor in Delaware, you’ll automatically receive e-mail notification when bid opportunities are tied to your specified code classification. When completing the online registration, make sure all codes that are related to your company’s goods and/or services are specified.

Consider all experience

In addition to looking for smaller size contracts to gain performance histories, be aware that work experience can come from private as well as public contracts. For businesses that have not previously performed government contracts, it is important to consider all past work when demonstrating ability to perform the requirements. Make sure your past experience is complementary to the procurement opportunity you seek.

Document performance

Upon completion of a project, ask your client to complete a performance evaluation. Performance questions

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State Procurement Thresholds			
	Under Threshold		Formal Bid Process
Material & Non Professional Services	Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000 - \$24,999	\$25,000 & Over
	Open Market Purchase	Three Written Quotes	Formal Bid
Public Works	Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000 & Over
	Open Market Purchase	Three Letter Bids	Formal Bid
Professional Services	Less Than \$50,000		\$50,000 & Over
	Open Market Purchase		Formal RFP Process

Newly Certified DBEs

A-Connection, Inc.

Fiber optic and phone cable laying including excavation relating to underground cable installation; repair & replacement; and concrete bases for poles.

American Engineers Group, LLC

Civil and structural engineering, design, and inspection services; drafting services; bridge construction management; and surveying services.

David Myers & Associates, LLC

Civil engineering, surveying, & mapping services (except geophysical); storm water hydrology, quality modeling computations & storm water quality consulting; and sediment & erosion control engineering.

First Insurance Management, LLC

Claims adjusting; insurance/workers compensations claims; legal file document preparation services; and temporary staffing services for medical/workers compensation claims.

Just Drafting & Construction Support Services, Inc.

Construction management including CPM scheduling, drafting services, and broker of brick, stone, and related construction material; metal, electrical apparatus, equipment and wiring supplies; and plumbing/heating equipment and supplies.

Kam Electric, Inc.

Licensed Master Electrician in Delaware and New Jersey performing electrical wiring and distribution; fire and security alarms; and HVAC wiring.

Madtoby Commerce, Inc. (DBA Contingent)

Software programming services; computer software consulting services; systems integration design consulting; and computer systems facilities.

Mid-Atlantic Maintenance Corporation

Temporary and permanent road markings; crack filling/asphalt patching; asphalt sealing; and design/install signs and pipe bollards in commercial parking lots.

My Three Kids Trucking

Dump trucking for gravel, sand, topsoil; topsoil hauling; and asphalt.

Network Management Resources, Inc.

Custom computer program or software development; computer systems integration and design services.

Oveter's Construction Company, Inc.

Demolition for building and structure; excavation contractors; sidewalk construction; asphaltting; and poured concrete foundation.

Shawntech Communications, Inc.

Computer systems design; telecommunications resellers; and other informational services including security systems.

Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc.

Transportation management consulting services and business management services related to transportation systems.

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should address satisfaction with quality of work; timeliness on delivery; ability to maintain costs; and organization and overall management of the project.

Such evaluations provide an instant picture of how past clients view your performance and can carry more weight in an evaluation process than merely providing a reference.

Follow the money

Particularly for government contracts, make it a habit to view usage reports. Public spend is public knowledge and, therefore, must be made available according to the Freedom of Information Act, also known as FOIA.

In Delaware, efforts to improve transparency have led to an invaluable online resource to gain business intelligence at <http://mymarketplace.delaware.gov>. Viewing these reports allows you to gain a better understanding of what products or services are being bought; how much they cost; when contracts are up for renewal; and who is buying products or services. Additionally, final awarded contracts in Delaware are now available online thus

providing you with knowledge on how to be competitive when responding to similar RFPs.

Know who is buying what

While all State of Delaware solicitations can be found on bids.delaware.gov, many of the buys in the state of Delaware are through Government Support Services (GSS). These buys include commodities that are used statewide such as Fleet Services, Printing and Publishing, Messenger Services, etc, with contracts usually lasting two years. More

information about what is on the GSS central contracting schedule is available online via the state's *mymarketplace* site at <http://mymarketplace.delaware.gov>.

For some businesses, getting on the GSS schedule is often the only entry point to procure with the State. As a first step, make sure you understand how your company's products and services are already being purchased. Then market your capabilities to the appropriate agency before the contract is up for renewal.

I Found It Cheaper

In an effort to ensure the State is getting the best value on all purchases under central contracts, Delaware's Office of Management and Budget's Government Support Services (GSS) now offers the *I Found It Cheaper* portal via <http://mymarketplace.delaware.gov>

The *I Found It Cheaper* site allows anyone to submit suggestions where items on the GSS schedule may be purchased for less. GSS then compares the current value of the buy to your suggestion.

So perhaps your business can sell it cheaper. Take advantage of this new capability to let GSS know if you have or have found a better deal.

Message from DBE Program Manager

As this year comes to a close, it is once again time to develop objectives for the future as well as to reflect on our past accomplishments. We would like to share with you a few achievements that occurred during our 2011 federal fiscal year.

- Exceeded our annual percentage goal of total dollars committed/awarded to DBEs
- Reviewed and set DBE participation goals on 45 federally-assisted construction projects.
- Evaluated and set DBE participation goals on 342 individual consultant agreement tasks.
- Received and processed 72 DBE certification applications.
- Approved the award and structure of DBE subcontracts totaling \$25.7 million.
- Represented the DBE Program at all federal-aid preconstruction meetings and various conferences.
- Hired an additional DBE Specialist and a new DBE Administrative Specialist.
- Reassigned an experienced DBE Specialist to focus on Contractor Compliance initiatives.
- Secured continued federal financial support for our DBE/OJT Supportive Services Coordinator.
- Revised and gained FHWA approval of our DBE Program Plan, effective October 2011 (available in the DBE section of our website: www.civilrights.deldot.gov).
- Reduced the average turnaround time taken to process a certification application by one-half.
- Continued improvement of our contractor compliance oversight, payment data gathering, monitoring, and follow-up process on all federal-aid construction and professional services contracts.
- Successfully implemented new contracting procedures to help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in DOT-assisted contracts.

We are excited about the groundwork we have laid for our program initiatives in 2012. Expect to see a new online DBE Directory of certified firms, which is currently in the final stages of production. This new format will offer an effective way for businesses to easily contact you when they are searching for qualified DBE firms. Remember, gaining DBE certification is only the first step of many that your small business will take on its path to success. It is up to each individual business owner to take advantage of the opportunities created through DBE certification by getting involved in the contract process early and often. Know your customer. Evaluate the goods or services that your business provides and find the organizations that use those services. Does your business offer something that is purchased directly by a prime contractor or is it typically purchased through statewide Central Contracting?

Develop trust with your contractors; show them the service that your business provides and how you will help them meet their DBE contract goals. Communicate and strive to be a reliable, capable, and flexible firm. As always, our skilled personnel are here for you to promptly answer any questions that you may have regarding the DBE contracting process.

Wishing all of you a safe and fulfilling New Year,



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Bid Opportunities

For hundreds of contracting opportunities, visit DelDOT's online DBE website at www.deldot.gov/information/business/dbe/index.shtml and click on Upcoming Projects.