

## Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Requirements Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Contractor Compliance

**Q:** What is the Good Faith Efforts Worksheet form and how is it to be completed?

**A:** This form captures efforts by the prime contractor to solicit DBEs for each area of work type that will be subcontracted out. A separate Good Faith Efforts Worksheet must be provided by the prime contractor for each area of work type to be subcontracted out. There are specific instructions that accompany this form that prescribe minimum efforts which bidders must make in order to be in compliance with the DBE requirements.

**Q:** Can non-certified DBEs be used?

**A:** While non-certified DBEs can be used, only DBEs, MBEs, and WBEs that are certified by EPA, SBA, or MDOT (or by tribal, state and local governments, as long as their standards for certification meet or exceed the standards in EPA policy) can be counted toward the fair share goal. Proof of certification by one of these recognized and approved agencies should be sought from each DBE.

**Q:** How does a DBE get certified?

**A:** Applications for certification under MDOT can be found at <http://mdot270.state.mi.us:8080/UCP/FormsServlet>.

Applications for certification under EPA can be found on EPA's Small Business Programs website at <http://www.epa.gov/osbp/grants.htm> under Certification Forms.

**Q:** If a bidder follows the MDOT DBE requirements, will the bidder be in compliance with the SRF/DWRF DBE requirements?

**A:** No. Federally funded highway projects utilize DBE goals, which require that a certain percentage of work be performed by DBE subcontractors. For SRF/DWRF projects, there is no financial goal. However, there is a solicitation effort goal. Bidders must use Good Faith Efforts for each and every area of work to be subcontracted out to obtain DBEs. The bidders are not required to use DBEs if the quotes are higher than non-DBE subcontractors. **There is no required DBE participation percentage contract goal for the SRF/DWRF.**

**Q:** Must the Good Faith Efforts Worksheet and supporting documentation be turned in with the bid proposals?

**A:** Yes. This is a requirement to document that the contractor has complied with the DBE requirements and the Good Faith Efforts. These compliance efforts must be done during the bidding phase and not after-the-fact. It is highly recommended that the need for these efforts and the submittal of the forms with the bid proposals be emphasized at the pre-bid meetings. Failure to show that the Good Faith Efforts were complied with during the bidding process can lead to a prime contractor being found non-responsive.

**Q:** What kinds of documentation should a contractor provide to document solicitation efforts?

**A:** Documentation can include fax confirmation sheets, copies of solicitation letters/e-mails, printouts of online solicitations, printouts of online search results, affidavits of publication in newspapers, etc.

**Q:** How much time will compliance with the Good Faith Efforts require in terms of structuring an adequate bidding period?

**A:** Due to the extent of the efforts required, a minimum of 30 calendar days is recommended between bid posting and bid opening to ensure adequate time for contractors to locate certified DBEs and solicit quotes.

**Q:** How does a contractor locate certified DBEs?

**A:** The Michigan Department of Transportation has a directory of all Michigan certified entities located at <http://mdot270.state.mi.us:8080/UCP/HomePageServlet>. Additionally, the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database is another place to search and can be found at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)

**Q:** If the bidder does not intend to subcontract any work, what forms, if any, must be provided with the bid proposal?

**A:** The bidder should complete the Good Faith Efforts Worksheet with a notation that no subcontracting will be done. However, if the bidder is awarded the contract and then decides to subcontract work at any point, then the Good Faith Efforts must be made to solicit DBEs.

**Q:** In the perfect world, the Good Faith Efforts Worksheet is required to be turned in with the proposal. What if no forms are turned in with the bid proposal or forms are blank or incomplete? Should this be cause to determine that the bidder is non-responsive?

**A:** While the Good Faith Efforts Worksheet is important, it is more critical to confirm that the contractor complied with the DBE requirements prior to bid opening. The owner should contact the bidder as soon as deficiencies are noted for a determination/documentation of efforts taken to comply with the DBE requirements. Immediate submittal of the completed forms will be acceptable provided the Good Faith Efforts were made and it is just a matter of transferring information to the forms.

**Q:** If the prime contractor is a DBE, does he have to solicit DBE subcontractors?

**A:** Yes, the DBE requirements still apply if the prime intends to subcontract work out. Good Faith Efforts must be used to solicit DBEs.

**Q:** If the area of work is one where there are less than three DBE contractors, how is the contractor to document this?

**A:** Copies of printouts from MDOT and CCR showing no DBEs and advertisements soliciting quotes for all subcontract areas, including the questionable areas, will be adequate.