October 24, 2018

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Consultant Mentor Protégé Program

MDOT is proud to announce the implementation of its Consultant Mentor Protégé Program.

MDOT’s Mentor Protégé program is designed to assist in sustaining and enhancing the capacity of small business consultants to successfully compete for new vendor-consultant procurement opportunities. There is also the opportunity to promote improved performance and efficiencies in the overall procurement and delivery of effective and efficient engineering and technical services to the department.

Beginning November 1, 2018, MDOT plans to advertise Request for Proposals for which the proposers are encouraged, but not required to have a Mentor Protégé engagement as part of their proposal. To be eligible for the Program, proposers should provide a Letter of Interest (LOI) describing specifically what work elements will be performed by the Protégé, how the mentor will guide and oversee the work, and how this engagement contributes to the overall Mentor-Protégé agreement and a plan between the two businesses. These LOI must be submitted to the following address:

        MDOT Office of Business Development
        ATTN: Nick Sundberg
        P.O. Box 30050
        Lansing, MI 48909
        Or
        Email: Sundbergn@michigan.gov

More detailed information on the Mentor Protégé Program is available at www.michigan.gov/mdotsbp under the “Mentor Protege” section.

Some of the desired outcomes of this program are:

- Small businesses are well represented across MDOT’s prequalification categories and in MDOT’s consultant selections.
- Small business job creation/retention is enhanced.
- Long-term profitable business relationships are fostered.
- Core capabilities of small business firms are enhanced.
- Collaboration and innovation on projects.
- MDOT meets or exceeds annual goals for participation by small business firms in the consultant program

If you have any questions, please contact Nick Sundberg, Office of Business Development, at 517-241-4806.

Sincerely,

Mark A Van Port Fleet, P.E.
Senior Chief Deputy Director
A Concept for a Consultant Mentor-Protégé Program at MDOT

The primary purpose of the Consultant Mentor-Protégé Program is to assist in sustaining and enhancing the capacity of local, Michigan-based small business consultants to successfully compete for new vendor-consultant procurement opportunities. There is also an opportunity to promote improved performance and efficiencies in the overall procurement and delivery of effective and efficient engineering and technical services to the department. This white paper explores the potential to expand on the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) current pilot and project-level programs and provide a more programmatic and sustained approach to achieving these objectives.

Program Goals
Desired outcomes of the program are as follows:

• Small businesses are well represented across MDOT’s prequalification categories and in MDOT’s consultant selections.
• Small business job creation/retention is enhanced.
• Long-term profitable business relationships are fostered and formed.
• Core capabilities of small business firms are enhanced.
• Collaboration and innovation on projects is fostered.
• MDOT meets or exceeds annual aspirational goals for participation by small business firms in the consultant program

Guiding Principles
1. Participation is voluntary.

2. The Protégé must be an MDOT-certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) or Small Business Enterprise (as defined in applicable federal law) and shall be financially prequalified by MDOT to perform engineering or technical services. The Protégé may be prequalified to perform MDOT work but it is not required. The Protégé is required to identify at least one prequalification category it is seeking to either acquire or maintain.

3. The Mentor should be prequalified through MDOT and actively working as a prime consultant on MDOT projects.

4. The Mentor-Protégé collaboration will be established by a signed, written development plan (Plan) with clear goals, expectations, duration, services, and effort to be provided, and a plan to monitor and report on outcomes. The Plan shall provide for minimum hours of effort on the part of both parties each month to fulfill their commitment. Plans may be amended by mutual consent. Submitted plans will be evaluated by the Mentor-Protégé Committee (established by MDOT’s Office of Business Development) for approval. Review process timeline to be established.

   a. The Plan may be terminated by mutual consent or by MDOT for relevant cause. The initiating party must notify the committee and either their Mentor or Protégé of termination. If the Mentor-Protégé relationship was included as a factor in the selection of the prime consultant, termination of the Mentor-
Protégé relationship must be approved by the Mentor-Protégé Committee. The decision of the committee will be provided to the Project Manager and will be included in the project evaluation process.

5. Quarterly progress reports must be submitted by both the Mentor and Protégé to designated MDOT staff. MDOT staff are to conduct periodic scheduled interviews with the Mentors and Protégés.

6. Exclusive Mentor-Protégé relationships are not allowed. The Protégé and Mentor have the option to work for other entities and firms at any time during the established Mentor-Protégé plan. A Mentor may have multiple Protégés.

7. The Protégé must remain completely independent in their operations, business management, and finances, not specifically related to the approved Mentor-Protégé plan.

8. Mentor and Protégé management must be actively involved in the collaboration. Management should only include those authorized to execute contracts.

9. Protégé’s must independently perform at least one (1) task in the project directly related to achieving or retaining the targeted prequalification.

10. MDOT will:
   a. Commit adequate resources to develop and manage the program and perform an annual assessment of the program’s success in achieving its stated goals.
   b. Identify champions to promote and support the success of the program.
   c. Provide ongoing guidance to Mentors and Protégés during the program development and implementation process.
   d. Assess and identify candidate Mentors and Protégés and may request a Letter of Interest (LOI) with the proposal.
   e. Annually identify projects eligible for the Mentor-Protégé Program. Projects shall be selected based on risk, opportunity for collaboration, and opportunity for growth and development of skills and experience necessary to meet prequalification requirements. Large, multi-year projects may be ideal candidates depending on the complexity of the work, and provision for project collaboration centers or integrated on-site teaming arrangements may be deemed beneficial.
   f. Seek assistance from its partner associations (ACEC, COMTO, NAMCE, etc.) to identify program champions who will provide leadership to facilitate and promote Mentor-Protégé Program participation through training, communications, award programs, networking events, etc.

11. Plans may include a schedule of hours to cover the direct and indirect costs incurred by the Mentor to provide training and assistance to the Protégé. The schedule of hours is
subject to department approval and are eligible for reimbursement as part of the project.

12. When a project includes a Mentor-Protégé component, the Prime or Mentor will be the only entity scored. The Mentor-Protégé relationship will be scored as a part of the category “Understanding of Service” toward the selection. The points awarded will not exceed 20% of the total for this category.

13. Measurables of Success – two-phase performance measures
   a. Metrics within the Mentor-Protégé relationship
      i. Prequalification category gained and/or maintained.
      ii. Identified areas of training achieved as evidenced by increased number of employees, number of contracts bid, number of contracts obtained, etc.
      iii. Prime contract obtained through MDOT’s selected SBE prime contracts under $150,000.
   b. Success of program outcomes, for example: dollars spent on DBE/SBE, number of firms participating, number of prequalification’s awarded.

Next Steps

Proposed Project Selection Criteria

- Projects with multi-year design lead time will be ideal candidates depending on the complexity of the work.
- Projects with multi-disciplinary work items, e.g., road, bridge, signals, MOT/pavement markings, etc.
- Project selection will be based on risk, opportunity for collaboration, and opportunity for growth and development of skills and experience necessary to meet program goals.
- Projects may also be included in the program when the categories match small business prequalification needs.

Proposed Project Exclusion Criteria

- Projects with narrowly defined categories not suitable for subconsultant participation.
- Projects with significant risk for MDOT, the Protégé or the Mentor in completion of the work.
- Any project below the small business size cap or any project that is already designated as a small business program set-aside project.