

Consideration of Good Faith Effort for Projects with DBE Goals More Than Zero

Adequate good faith efforts mean that the bidder took all necessary and reasonable steps to achieve the goal which, by their scope, intensity, and appropriateness, could reasonably be expected to obtain sufficient DBE participation. Adequate good faith efforts also mean that the bidder actively and aggressively sought DBE participation. Mere *pro forma* efforts are not considered good faith efforts.

The Department will consider the quality, quantity, and intensity of the different kinds of efforts a bidder has made. Listed below are examples of the types of actions a bidder will take in making a good faith effort to meet the goal and are not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive, nor is it intended to be a mandatory checklist.

- (A) Soliciting through all reasonable and available means (e.g. attendance at pre-bid meetings, advertising, written notices, use of verifiable electronic means through the use of the NCDOT Directory of Transportation Firms) the interest of all certified DBEs who have the capability to perform the work of the contract. The bidder must solicit this interest within at least 10 days prior to bid opening to allow the DBEs to respond to the solicitation. Solicitation shall provide the opportunity to DBEs within the Division and surrounding Divisions where the project is located. The bidder must determine with certainty if the DBEs are interested by taking appropriate steps to follow up initial solicitations.
- (B) Selecting portions of the work to be performed by DBEs in order to increase the likelihood that the DBE goals will be achieved.
 - (1) Where appropriate, break out contract work items into economically feasible units to facilitate DBE participation, even when the prime contractor might otherwise prefer to perform these work items with its own forces.
 - (2) Negotiate with subcontractors to assume part of the responsibility to meet the contract DBE goal when the work to be sublet includes potential for DBE participation (2nd and 3rd tier subcontractors).
- (C) Providing interested DBEs with adequate information about the plans, specifications, and requirements of the contract in a timely manner to assist them in responding to a solicitation.
- (D) (1) Negotiating in good faith with interested DBEs. It is the bidder's responsibility to make a portion of the work available to DBE subcontractors and suppliers and to select those portions of the work or material needs consistent with the available DBE subcontractors and suppliers, so as to facilitate DBE participation. Evidence of such negotiation includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of DBEs that were considered; a description of the information provided regarding the plans and specifications for the work selected for subcontracting; and

evidence as to why additional agreements could not be reached for DBEs to perform the work.

- (2) A bidder using good business judgment would consider a number of factors in negotiating with subcontractors, including DBE subcontractors, and would take a firm's price and capabilities as well as contract goals into consideration. However, the fact that there may be some additional costs involved in finding and using DBEs is not in itself sufficient reason for a bidder's failure to meet the contract DBE goal, as long as such costs are reasonable. Also, the ability or desire of a prime contractor to perform the work of a contract with its own organization does not relieve the bidder of the responsibility to make good faith efforts. Bidding contractors are not, however, required to accept higher quotes from DBEs if the price difference is excessive or unreasonable.
- (E) Not rejecting DBEs as being unqualified without sound reasons based on a thorough investigation of their capabilities. The bidder's standing within its industry, membership in specific groups, organizations, or associates and political or social affiliations (for example, union vs. non-union employee status) are not legitimate causes for the rejection or non-solicitation of bids in the bidder's efforts to meet the project goal.
- (F) Making efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, or insurance as required by the recipient or bidder.
- (G) Making efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or related assistance or services.
- (H) Effectively using the services of available minority/women community organizations; minority/women contractors' groups; Federal, State, and local minority/women business assistance offices; and other organizations as allowed on a case-by-case basis to provide assistance in the recruitment and placement of DBEs. Contact within 7 days from the bid opening the Business Development Manager in the Business Opportunity and Work Force Development Unit to give notification of the bidder's inability to get DBE quotes.
- (I) Any other evidence that the bidder submits which shows that the bidder has made reasonable good faith efforts to meet the DBE goal.

In addition, the Department may take into account the following:

- (1) Whether the bidder's documentation reflects a clear and realistic plan for achieving the DBE goal.
- (2) The bidders' past performance in meeting the DBE goals.
- (3) The performance of other bidders in meeting the DBE goal. For example, when the apparent successful bidder fails to meet the DBE goal, but others meet it, you may reasonably raise the question of whether, with additional reasonable efforts

the apparent successful bidder could have met the goal. If the apparent successful bidder fails to meet the DBE goal, but meets or exceeds the average DBE participation obtained by other bidders, the Department may view this, in conjunction with other factors, as evidence of the apparent successful bidder having made a good faith effort.

If the Department does not award the contract to the apparent lowest responsive bidder, the Department reserves the right to award the contract to the next lowest responsive bidder that can satisfy to the Department that the DBE goal can be met or that an adequate good faith effort has been made to meet the DBE goal.

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