

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Business Diversity Department

The purpose of the NTTA's Business Diversity Department is to strengthen the Authority through the inclusion of disadvantaged, minority, women-owned, and small business enterprises (D/M/W/SBEs) in the procurement of goods and services. The department focuses on four major areas:

- Expanding outreach efforts and marketing initiatives
- Aligning policies and procedures with the current business environment and industry best practices
- Streamlining compliance and reporting processes
- Building capacity of qualified D/M/W/SBEs

The NTTA is committed to ensuring participation of D/M/W/SBEs in the NTTA's procurement process and contracting. In January 2010, the NTTA Board of Directors adopted the Disadvantaged, Minority, Women-Owned and Small Business Enterprises Policy, also known as the Authority's diversity policy.

The diversity policy incorporates the policies, objectives and requirements of state and federal laws relating to procurement and contracts and outlines the specific programs established by the NTTA to ensure participation of D/M/W/SBEs in NTTA procurement opportunities. The NTTA has developed three separate programs to support the diversity policy:

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program
- Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program
- Small Business Enterprise Program

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program

The DBE Program was created to ensure compliance on projects funded in whole or in part with federal funds. The NTTA establishes DBE goals following the process set forth in 49 C.F.R. Part 26, which the NTTA will strive to achieve in contracts relating to highway construction funded in whole or in part with federal funds received from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway Administration, or funded in whole or in part with federal funds received by the NTTA through the Texas Department of Transportation. Using race and gender-neutral measures, the NTTA does not use quotas in any way in the administration of the DBE Program.

Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program

It is the policy of the NTTA to promote increased participation of minority and women-owned businesses in contracts, procurement of goods, materials, supplies and services, whether or not related to federally funded projects. The NTTA's M/WBE Program is narrowly tailored and focuses on addressing disparity in use and underutilization of ready, willing and able minority and women-owned businesses in various categories of procurement and contracting opportunities available with the NTTA.

The NTTA establishes annual M/WBE industry-specific goals for contracts within the following purchasing categories: construction and maintenance and professional services. Goals are based on the availability of ready, willing and able M/WBEs within those respective categories.

Small Business Enterprise Program

The Small Business Enterprise Program operates in a race and gender-neutral manner. The program is open to all certified SBEs, whether they participate as prime contractors or subcontractors. To participate in the SBE Program, small businesses must be certified by TxDOT, and certification will be based on a firm's gross revenues or number of employees as defined by the Small Business Act, Section 3, and 13 C.F.R. § 121.201.

The NTTA has also initiated a Small Contracts Program. This program was designed to enhance contracting opportunities for qualified SBEs regarding construction and maintenance projects anticipated to cost \$300,000 or less. Selection of contractors under this Small Contracts Program shall be made in accordance with the NTTA's Procurement Policy, related procedures and applicable law. Participants in the Small Contracts Program must be prequalified by TxDOT to perform the aforementioned services. Information regarding TxDOT prequalification criteria is located at www.txdot.gov/business/prequalifyinfo.htm.

Outreach

Communication and support of the NTTA's business diversity process initiatives by entities that represent or promote D/M/W/SBE interests are crucial elements to a viable and inclusive SBE business process effort. Consequently, the NTTA's Business Diversity Department has formalized efforts to ensure communication and participation by external D/M/W/SBE-related entities in order to maximize the NTTA's D/M/W/SBE identification and solicitation efforts. Through various activities, the department is committed to encouraging diverse vendor participation.

Vendor Outreach Symposium – To increase its outreach efforts and to market contracting opportunities to the public, the NTTA hosts a Vendor Outreach Symposium (VOS) each quarter to provide information about upcoming projects. The event is a traveling road show and a one-stop outreach for prospective vendors. Participants have the opportunity to meet staff from various NTTA departments and various certification entities that provide information about how to become DBE- or M/WBE-certified. To learn more about these symposiums or if you have any questions, please email vendoroutreach@ntta.org or call the Vendor Outreach Symposium hotline at 972-447-3333.

Business Chat Sessions – Proprietors of disadvantaged, minority-owned, woman-owned or small business enterprises who are interested in doing business with the NTTA and who wish to promote their businesses and network are welcome to attend monthly Business Chat Sessions. NTTA staff explains the bidding process and highlights upcoming procurement opportunities with various NTTA departments. The Business Chat Sessions are designed to provide an informal setting for vendors to meet with key decision makers at the NTTA and share information about their respective companies. In addition, the Business Chat Sessions allow NTTA staff to present information to vendors in a manner that is tailored to the vendors' specific industries.

Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity Program – The ROAD Program seeks to promote and facilitate relationships between prime contractors and consultants to foster opportunities for D/M/WBEs to participate in large contracts with the NTTA. The ROAD Program provides opportunities for new and emerging D/M/WBE firms to have expanded access to resources, a broader scope of services, deeper technical knowledge and improved business management and operations processes by partnering with larger, more established firms offering similar services. The program is designed to equip D/M/WBE firms to compete for larger projects.

Business Diversity Advisory Council – The NTTA Board of Directors recommended a group of nine business and community leaders to guide the NTTA’s new Business Diversity Advisory Council. The group advises the NTTA in its efforts to encourage the participation of D/M/W/SBEs in NTTA contract opportunities, assists the NTTA’s Business Diversity Department with outreach activities, serves as a primary resource in identifying specific industry groups to target for procurements, and helps identify inclusion barriers experienced in contracting.

Business Diversity Department Website

Please visit the Business Diversity Department online at www.ntta.org for direct access to the NTTA’s Diversity Policy, Contractors Compliance Handbook, compliance reporting forms and other helpful links.