

# MDOT MBE/DBE Form E

## Good Faith Efforts Guidance and Documentation

### Part 1 - Guidance for Demonstrating Good Faith Efforts to Meet MBE/DBE Participation Goals

In order to show that it has made good faith efforts to meet the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation goal (including any MBE subgoals) on a contract, the bidder/offeror must either (1) meet the MBE/DBE Goal(s) and document its commitments for participation of MBE/DBE Firms, or (2) when it does not meet the MBE/DBE Goal(s), document its Good Faith Efforts to meet the goal(s).

#### I. Definitions

**MBE/DBE Goal(s)** – “MBE/DBE Goal(s)” refers to the MBE participation goal and MBE participation subgoal(s) on a State-funded procurement and the DBE participation goal on a federally-funded procurement.

**Good Faith Efforts** – The “Good Faith Efforts” requirement means that when requesting a waiver, the bidder/offeror must demonstrate that it took all necessary and reasonable steps to achieve the MBE/DBE Goal(s), which, by their scope, intensity, and appropriateness to the objective, could reasonably be expected to obtain sufficient MBE/DBE participation, even if those steps were not fully successful. Whether a bidder/offeror that requests a waiver made adequate good faith efforts will be determined by considering the quality, quantity, and intensity of the different kinds of efforts that the bidder/offeror has made. The efforts employed by the bidder/offeror should be those that one could reasonably expect a bidder/offeror to take if the bidder/offeror were actively and aggressively trying to obtain DBE participation sufficient to meet the DBE contract goal. Mere *pro forma* efforts are not good faith efforts to meet the DBE contract requirements. The determination concerning the sufficiency of the bidder’s/offeror’s good faith efforts is a judgment call; meeting quantitative formulas is not required.

**Identified Firms** – “Identified Firms” means a list of the DBEs identified by the procuring agency during the goal setting process and listed in the federally-funded procurement as available to perform the Identified Items of Work. It also may include additional DBEs identified by the bidder/offeror as available to perform the Identified Items of Work, such as DBEs certified or granted an expansion of services after the procurement was issued. If the procurement does not include a list of Identified Firms or is a State-funded procurement, this term refers to all of the MBE Firms (if State-funded) or DBE Firms (if federally-funded) the bidder/offeror identified as available to perform the Identified Items of Work and should include all appropriately certified firms that are reasonably identifiable.

**Identified Items of Work** – “Identified Items of Work” means the bid items identified by the procuring agency during the goal setting process and listed in the procurement as possible items of work for performance by MBE/DBE Firms. It also may include additional portions of items of work the bidder/offeror identified for performance by MBE/DBE Firms to increase the likelihood that the MBE/DBE Goal(s) will be achieved. If the procurement does not include a list of Identified Items of Work, this term refers to all of the items of work the bidder/offeror identified as possible items of work for performance by MBE/DBE Firms and should include all reasonably identifiable work opportunities.

**MBE/DBE Firms** – For State-funded contracts, “MBE/DBE Firms” refers to certified **MBE** Firms. Certified MBE Firms can participate in the State’s MBE Program. For federally-funded contracts, “MBE/DBE Firms” refers to certified DBE Firms. Certified DBE Firms can participate in the federal DBE Program.

#### II. Types of Actions MDOT will Consider

The bidder/offeror is responsible for making relevant portions of the work available to MBE/DBE subcontractors and suppliers and to select those portions of the work or material needs consistent with the available MBE/DBE subcontractors and suppliers, so as to facilitate MBE/DBE participation. The following is a list of types of actions MDOT will consider as part of the bidder’s/offeror’s Good Faith Efforts when the bidder/offeror fails to meet the MBE/DBE Goal(s). This list is not intended to be a mandatory checklist, nor is it intended to be exclusive or exhaustive. Other factors or types of efforts may be relevant in appropriate cases.

##### A. Identify Bid Items as Work for MBE/DBE Firms

###### 1. Identified Items of Work in Procurements

- (a) Certain procurements will include a list of bid items identified during the goal setting process as possible work for performance by MBE/DBE Firms. If the procurement provides a list of Identified Items of Work, the bidder/offeror

shall make all reasonable efforts to solicit quotes from MBE Firms or DBE Firms, whichever is appropriate, to perform that work.

- (b) Bidders/Offerors may, and are encouraged to, select additional items of work to be performed by MBE/DBE Firms to increase the likelihood that the MBEDBE Goal(s) will be achieved.

## 2. Identified Items of Work by Bidders/Offerors

- (a) When the procurement does not include a list of Identified Items of Work, bidders/offerors should reasonably identify sufficient items of work to be performed by MBE/DBE Firms.
- (b) Where appropriate, bidders/offerors should break out contract work items into economically feasible units to facilitate MBE/DBE participation, rather than perform these work items with their own forces. The ability or desire of a prime contractor to perform the work of a contract with its own organization does not relieve the bidder/offeror of the responsibility to make Good Faith Efforts.

## B. Identify MBE Firms or DBE Firms to Solicit

### 1. DBE Firms Identified in Procurements

- (a) Certain procurements will include a list of the DBE Firms identified during the goal setting process as available to perform the items of work. If the procurement provides a list of Identified DBE Firms, the bidder/offeror shall make all reasonable efforts to solicit those DBE firms.
- (b) Bidders/offerors may, and are encouraged to, search the MBE/DBE Directory to identify additional DBEs who may be available to perform the items of work, such as DBEs certified or granted an expansion of services after the solicitation was issued.

### 2. MBE/DBE Firms Identified by Bidders/Offerors

- (a) When the procurement does not include a list of Identified MBE/DBE Firms, bidders/offerors should reasonably identify the MBE Firms or DBE Firms, whichever is appropriate, that are available to perform the Identified Items of Work.
- (b) Any MBE/DBE Firms identified as available by the bidder/offeror should be certified in the appropriate program (MBE for State-funded procurements or DBE for federally-funded procurements)
- (c) Any MBE/DBE Firms identified as available by the bidder/offeror should be certified to perform the Identified Items of Work.

## C. Solicit MBE/DBEs

1. Solicit all Identified Firms for all Identified Items of Work by providing written notice. The bidder/offeror should:
  - (a) provide the written solicitation at least 10 days prior to bid opening to allow sufficient time for the MBE/DBE Firms to respond;
  - (b) send the written solicitation by first-class mail, facsimile, or email using contact information in the MBE/DBE Directory, unless the bidder/offeror has a valid basis for using different contact information; and
  - (c) provide adequate information about the plans, specifications, anticipated time schedule for portions of the work to be performed by the MBE/DBE, and other requirements of the contract to assist MBE/DBE Firms in responding. (This information may be provided by including hard copies in the written solicitation or by electronic means as described in C.3 below.)
2. "All" Identified Firms includes the DBEs listed in the procurement and any MBE/DBE Firms you identify as potentially available to perform the Identified Items of Work, but it does not include MBE/DBE Firms who are no longer certified to perform the work as of the date the bidder/offeror provides written solicitations.
3. "Electronic Means" includes, for example, information provided *via* a website or file transfer protocol (FTP) site containing the plans, specifications, and other requirements of the contract. If an interested MBE/DBE cannot access

the information provided by electronic means, the bidder/offeror must make the information available in a manner that is accessible by the interested MBE/DBE.

4. Follow up on initial written solicitations by contacting DBEs to determine if they are interested. The follow up contact may be made:
  - (a) by telephone using the contact information in the MBE/DBE Directory, unless the bidder/offeror has a valid basis for using different contact information; or
  - (b) in writing via a method that differs from the method used for the initial written solicitation.
5. In addition to the written solicitation set forth in C.1 and the follow up required in C.4, use all other reasonable and available means to solicit the interest of MBE/DBE Firms certified to perform the work of the contract. Examples of other means include:
  - (a) attending any pre-bid meetings at which MBE/DBE Firms could be informed of contracting and subcontracting opportunities;
  - (b) if recommended by the procurement, advertising with or effectively using the services of at least two minority focused entities or media, including trade associations, minority/women community organizations, minority/women contractors' groups, and local, state, and federal minority/women business assistance offices listed on the MDOT Office of Minority Business Enterprise website; and
  - (c) effectively using the services of other organizations, as allowed on a case-by-case basis and authorized in the procurement, to provide assistance in the recruitment and placement of MBE/DBE Firms.

#### **D. Negotiate With Interested MBE/DBE Firms**

Bidders/Offerors must negotiate in good faith with interested MBE/DBE Firms.

1. Evidence of negotiation includes, without limitation, the following:
  - (a) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of MBE/DBE Firms that were considered;
  - (b) a description of the information provided regarding the plans and specifications for the work selected for subcontracting and the means used to provide that information; and
  - (c) evidence as to why additional agreements could not be reached for MBE/DBE Firms to perform the work.
2. A bidder/offeror 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.
3. The fact that there may be some additional costs involved in finding and using MBE/DBE Firms is not in itself sufficient reason for a bidder's/offeror's failure to meet the contract DBE goal, as long as such costs are reasonable. Factors to take into consideration when determining whether a MBE/DBE Firm's quote is excessive or unreasonable include, without limitation, the following:
  - (a) the dollar difference between the MBE/DBE subcontractor's quote and the average of the other subcontractors' quotes received by the bidder/offeror;
  - (b) the percentage difference between the MBE/DBE subcontractor's quote and the average of the other subcontractors' quotes received by the bidder/offeror;
  - (c) the percentage that the DBE subcontractor's quote represents of the overall contract amount;
  - (d) the number of MBE/DBE firms that the bidder/offeror solicited for that portion of the work;
  - (e) whether the work described in the MBE/DBE and Non-MBE/DBE subcontractor quotes (or portions thereof) submitted for review is the same or comparable; and
  - (f) the number of quotes received by the bidder/offeror for that portion of the work.
4. The above factors are not intended to be mandatory, exclusive, or exhaustive, and other evidence of an excessive or unreasonable price may be relevant.

5. The bidder/offeror may not use its price for self-performing work as a basis for rejecting a MBE/DBE Firm's quote as excessive or unreasonable.
6. The "average of the other subcontractors' quotes received by the" bidder/offeror refers to the average of the quotes received from all subcontractors, except that there should be quotes from at least three subcontractors, and there must be at least one quote from a MBE/DBE and one quote from a Non-MBE/DBE.
7. A bidder/offeror shall not reject a MBE/DBE Firm as unqualified without sound reasons based on a thorough investigation of the firm's capabilities. For each certified MBE/DBE that is rejected as unqualified or that placed a subcontract quotation or offer that the bidder/offeror concludes is not acceptable, the bidder/offeror must provide a written detailed statement listing the reasons for this conclusion. The bidder/offeror also must document the steps taken to verify the capabilities of the MBE/DBE and Non-MBE/DBE Firms quoting similar work.
  - (a) The factors to take into consideration when assessing the capabilities of a MBE/DBE Firm, include, but are not limited to the following: financial capability, physical capacity to perform, available personnel and equipment, existing workload, experience performing the type of work, conduct and performance in previous contracts, and ability to meet reasonable contract requirements.
  - (b) The MBE/DBE Firm's standing within its industry, membership in specific groups, organizations, or associations 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 efforts to meet the project goal.

#### **E. Assisting Interested MBE/DBE Firms**

When appropriate under the circumstances, the decision-maker will consider whether the bidder/offeror:

1. made reasonable efforts to assist interested MBE/DBE Firms in obtaining the bonding, lines of credit, or insurance required by MDOT or the bidder/offeror; and
2. made reasonable efforts to assist interested MBE/DBE Firms in obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or related assistance or services.

### **III. Other Considerations**

In making a determination of Good Faith Efforts the decision-maker may consider engineering estimates, catalogue prices, general market availability and availability of certified MBE/DBE Firms in the area in which the work is to be performed, other bids or offers and subcontract bids or offers substantiating significant variances between certified MBE/DBE and Non-MBE/DBE costs of participation, and their impact on the overall cost of the contract to the State and any other relevant factors.

The decision-maker may take into account whether a bidder/offeror decided to self-perform subcontract work with its own forces, especially where the self-performed work is Identified Items of Work in the procurement. The decision-maker also may take into account the performance of other bidders/offerors in meeting the contract. For example, when the apparent successful bidder/offeror fails to meet the contract goal, but others meet it, this reasonably raises the question of whether, with additional reasonable efforts, the apparent successful bidder/offeror could have met the goal. If the apparent successful bidder/offeror fails to meet the goal, but meets or exceeds the average MBE/DBE participation obtained by other bidders/offerors, this, when viewed in conjunction with other factors, could be evidence of the apparent successful bidder/offeror having made Good Faith Efforts.

### **IV. Documenting Good Faith Efforts**

At a minimum, a bidder/offeror seeking a waiver of the MBE/DBE Goal(s) or a portion thereof must provide written documentation of its Good Faith Efforts, in accordance with COMAR 21.11.03.11, within 10 business days after receiving notice that it is the apparent awardee. The written documentation shall include the following:

#### **A. Items of Work (Complete Good Faith Efforts Documentation Form E, Part 2)**

A detailed statement of the efforts made to select portions of the work proposed to be performed by certified MBE/DBE Firms in order to increase the likelihood of achieving the stated MBE/DBE Goal(s).

#### **B. Outreach/Solicitation/Negotiation**

1. The record of the bidder's/offeror's compliance with the outreach efforts prescribed by COMAR 21.11.03.09C(2)(a) through (e) and 49 C.F.R. Part 26, Appendix A. (**Complete Outreach Efforts Compliance Statement**)
2. A detailed statement of the efforts made to contact and negotiate with MBE/DBE Firms including:
  - (a) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the MBE/DBE Firms who were contacted, with the dates and manner of contacts (letter, fax, email, telephone, etc.) (**Complete Good Faith Efforts Form E, Part 3, and submit letters, fax cover sheets, emails, etc. documenting solicitations**); and
  - (b) a description of the information provided to MBE/DBE Firms regarding the plans, specifications, and anticipated time schedule for portions of the work to be performed and the means used to provide that information.

**C. Rejected MBE/DBE Firms (Complete Good Faith Efforts Form E, Part 4)**

1. For each MBE/DBE Firm that the bidder/offeror concludes is not acceptable or qualified, a detailed statement of the reasons for the bidder's/offeror's conclusion, including the steps taken to verify the capabilities of the MBE/DBE and Non-MBE/DBE Firms quoting similar work.
2. For each certified MBE/DBE Firm that the bidder/offeror concludes has provided an excessive or unreasonable price, a detailed statement of the reasons for the bidder's/offeror's conclusion, including the quotes received from all MBE/DBE and Non-MBE/DBE firms bidding on the same or comparable work. (Include copies of all quotes received.)
3. A list of MBE/DBE Firms contacted but found to be unavailable. This list should be accompanied by a Minority Contractor Unavailability Certificate signed by the MBE/DBE contractor or a statement from the bidder/offeror that the MBE/DBE contractor refused to sign the Minority Contractor Unavailability Certificate.

**D. Other Documentation**

1. Submit any other documentation requested by the Procurement Officer to ascertain the bidder's/offeror's Good Faith Efforts.
2. Submit any other documentation the bidder/offeror believes will help the Procurement Officer ascertain its Good Faith Efforts.