

Special Provision to Item 000

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise in Federal-Aid Contracts



1. DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this Special Provision is to carry out the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) policy of ensuring nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted Contracts and creating a level playing field on which firms owned and controlled by individuals who are determined to be socially and economically disadvantaged can compete fairly for DOT-assisted Contracts.

2. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN FEDERAL-AID CONTRACTS

2.1. **Policy.** It is the policy of the DOT and the Texas Department of Transportation (Department) that DBEs, as defined in 49 CFR Part 26, Subpart A, and the Department's DBE Program, will have the opportunity to participate in the performance of Contracts financed in whole or in part with federal funds. The DBE requirements of 49 CFR Part 26, and the Department's DBE Program, apply to this Contract as follows.

The Contractor will solicit DBEs through reasonable and available means, as defined in 49 CFR Part 26, Appendix A, and the Department's DBE Program, or show a good faith effort to meet the DBE goal for this Contract.

The Contractor, subrecipient, or subcontractor will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the performance of this Contract. Carry out applicable requirements of 49 CFR Part 26 in the award and administration of DOT-assisted Contracts. Failure to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this Contract, which may result in the termination of this Contract or such other remedy as the Department deems appropriate.

The requirements of this Special Provision must be physically included in any subcontract.

By signing the Contract proposal, the Bidder is certifying that the DBE goal as stated in the proposal will be met by obtaining commitments from eligible DBEs or that the Bidder will provide acceptable evidence of good faith effort to meet the commitment.

2.2. Definitions.

2.2.1. **Administrative Reconsideration.** A process by which the low bidder may request reconsideration when the Department determines the good faith effort (GFE) requirements have not been met.

2.2.2. **Commercially Useful Function (CUF).** A CUF occurs when a DBE has the responsibility for the execution of the work and carrying out such responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work.

2.2.3. **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE).** A for-profit small business certified through the Texas Unified Certification Program in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26, that is at least 51% owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, or in the case of a publicly owned business, in which is at least 51% of the stock is owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the individuals who own it.

2.2.4. **DBE Joint Venture.** An association of a DBE firm and one or more other firms to carry out a single business enterprise for profit for which purpose they combine their property, capital, efforts, skills, and knowledge, and

in which the DBE is responsible for a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the Contract and whose share in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture are commensurate with its ownership interest.

- 2.2.5. **DOT.** The U.S. Department of Transportation, including the Office of the Secretary, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- 2.2.6. **Federal-Aid Contract.** Any Contract between the Department and a Contractor that is paid for in whole or in part with DOT financial assistance.
- 2.2.7. **Good Faith Effort.** All necessary and reasonable steps to achieve the contract goal which, by their scope, intensity, and appropriateness to the objective, could reasonably be expected to obtain sufficient DBE participation, even if not fully successful. Good faith efforts are evaluated prior to award and throughout performance of the Contract. For guidance on good faith efforts, see 49 CFR Part 26, Appendix A.
- 2.2.8. **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).** A designation that best describes the primary business of a firm. The NAICS is described in the North American Industry Classification Manual—United States, which is available on the Internet at the U.S. Census Bureau website: <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>.
- 2.2.9. **Race-Conscious.** A measure or program that is focused specifically on assisting only DBEs, including women-owned businesses.
- 2.2.10. **Race-Neutral DBE Participation.** Any participation by a DBE through customary competitive procurement procedures.
- 2.2.11. **Texas Unified Certification Program (TUCP) Directory.** An online directory listing all DBEs currently certified by the TUCP. The Directory identifies DBE firms whose participation on a Contract may be counted toward achievement of the assigned DBE Contract goal.
- 2.3. **Contractor's Responsibilities.**
- 2.3.1. **DBE Liaison Officer.** Designate a DBE liaison officer who will administer the Contractor's DBE program and who will be responsible for maintenance of records of efforts and contacts made to subcontract with DBEs.
- 2.3.2. **Compliance Tracking System (CTS).** This Contract is subject to electronic Contract compliance tracking. Contractors and DBEs are required to provide any noted and requested Contract compliance-related data electronically in the Department's tracking system. This includes commitments, payments, substitutions, and good faith efforts. Contractors and DBEs are responsible for responding by any noted response date or due date to any instructions or request for information, and to check the system on a regular basis. A Contractor is responsible for ensuring all DBEs have completed all requested items and that their contact information is accurate and up-to-date. The Department may require additional information related to the Contract to be provided electronically through the system at any time before, during, or after contract award. The system is web-based and can be accessed at the following Internet address: <https://txdot.txdotcms.com/>.
- In its sole discretion, the Department may require that contract compliance tracking data be submitted by Contractors and DBEs in an alternative format prescribed by the Department.
- 2.3.3. **Apparent Low Bidder.** The apparent low bidder must submit DBE commitments to satisfy the DBE goal or submit good faith effort Form 2603 and supporting documentation demonstrating why the goal could not be achieved, in whole or part, no later than 5 calendar days after bid opening. The means of transmittal and the risk of timely receipt of the information will be the bidder's responsibility and no extension of the 5-calendar-day timeframe will be allowed for any reason.

2.3.4. **DBE Contractor.** A DBE Contractor may receive credit toward the DBE goal for work performed by its own forces and work subcontracted to DBEs. In the event a DBE subcontracts to a non-DBE, that information must be reported monthly.

2.3.5. **DBE Committal.** Only those DBEs certified by the TUCP are eligible to be used for goal attainment. The Department maintains the TUCP DBE Directory. The Directory can be accessed at the following Internet address: <https://txdot.txdotcms.com/FrontEnd/VendorSearchPublic.asp?TN=txdot&XID=2340>.

A DBE must be certified on the day the commitment is considered and at time of subcontract execution. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure firms identified for participation are approved certified DBE firms.

The Bidder is responsible to ensure that all submittals are checked for accuracy. Any and all omissions, deletions, and/or errors that may affect the end result of the commitment package are the sole liabilities of the bidder.

Commitments in excess of the goal are considered race-neutral commitments.

2.3.6. **Good Faith Effort Requirements.** A Contractor who cannot meet the Contract goal, in whole or in part, must make adequate good faith efforts to obtain DBE participation as so stated and defined in 49 CFR Part 26, Appendix A.

2.3.6.1. **Administrative Reconsideration.** If the Department determines that the apparent low bidder has failed to satisfy the good faith efforts requirement, the Department will notify the Bidder of the failure and will give the Bidder an opportunity to provide written documentation or argument concerning the issue of whether it met the goal or made adequate good faith efforts to do so..

The Bidder must request an administrative reconsideration of that determination within 3 days of the date of receipt of the notice. The request must be submitted directly to the Texas Department of Transportation, Civil Rights Division, 125 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701-2483.

If a request for administrative reconsideration is not filed within the period specified the determination made is final and further administrative appeal is barred.

If a reconsideration request is timely received, the reconsideration decision will be made by the Department's DBE liaison officer or, if the DBE liaison officer took part in the original determination, the Department's executive director will appoint a department employee to perform the administrative reconsideration. The employee will hold a senior leadership position and will report directly to the executive director.

The meeting or written documentation must be provided or held within 7 days of the date the request was submitted.

The Department will provide to the Bidder a written decision if the Bidder did or did not make adequate good faith efforts to meet the Contract goal. The reconsideration decision is final and is not administratively appealed to DOT.

2.3.7. **Determination of DBE Participation.** The work performed by the DBE must be reasonably construed to be included in the work area and NAICS work code identified by the Contractor in the approved commitment.

Participation by a DBE on a Contract will not be counted toward DBE goals until the amount of the participation has been paid to the DBE.

Payments made to a DBE that was not on the original commitment may be counted toward the Contract goal if that DBE was certified as a DBE before the execution of the subcontract and has performed a Commercially Useful Function.

The total amount paid to the DBE for work performed with its own forces is counted toward the DBE goal. When a DBE subcontracts part of the work of its Contract to another firm, the value of the subcontracted work may be counted toward DBE goals only if the subcontractor is itself a DBE.

DBE Goal credit for the DBE subcontractors leasing of equipment or purchasing of supplies from the Contractor or its affiliates is not allowed. Project materials or supplies acquired from an affiliate of the Contractor cannot directly or indirectly (second or lower tier subcontractor) be used for DBE goal credit.

If a DBE firm is declared ineligible due to DBE decertification after the execution of the DBE's subcontract, the DBE firm may complete the work and the DBE firm's participation will be counted toward the Contract goal. If the DBE firm is decertified before the DBE firm has signed a subcontract, the Contractor is obligated to replace the ineligible DBE firm or demonstrate that it has made good faith efforts to do so.

The Contractor may count 100% of its expenditure to a DBE manufacturer. According to 49 CFR 26.55(e)(1)(i), a DBE manufacturer is a firm that operates or maintains a factory or establishment that produces, on the premises, the materials, supplies, articles, or equipment required under the Contract and of the general character described by the specifications.

The Contractor may count only 60% of its expenditure to a DBE regular dealer. According to 49 CFR 26.55(e)(2)(i), a DBE regular dealer is a firm that owns, operates, or maintains a store, warehouse, or other establishment in which the materials, supplies, articles, or equipment of the general character described by the specifications and required under the Contract are bought, kept in stock, and regularly sold or leased to the public in the usual course of business. A firm may be a regular dealer in such bulk items as petroleum products, steel, cement, gravel, stone, or asphalt without owning, operating, or maintaining a place of business if the firm both owns and operates distribution equipment for the products. Any supplementing of regular dealers' own distribution equipment must be by a long-term lease agreement and not on an ad hoc or contract-by-contract basis. A long-term lease with a third-party transportation company is not eligible for 60% goal credit.

With respect to materials or supplies purchased from a DBE that is neither a manufacturer nor a regular dealer, the Contractor may count the entire amount of fees or commissions charged for assistance in the procurement of the materials and supplies, or fees or transportation charges for the delivery of materials or supplies required on a job site.

A Contractor may count toward its DBE goal a portion of the total value of the Contract amount paid to a DBE joint venture equal to the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the Contract performed by the DBE.

2.3.8. **Commercially Useful Function.** It is the Contractor's obligation to ensure that each DBE used on federal-assisted contracts performs a commercially useful function on the Contract.

The Department will monitor performance during the Contract to ensure each DBE is performing a CUF.

Under the terms established in 49 CFR 26.55, a DBE performs a CUF when it is responsible for execution of the work of the Contract and is carrying out its responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work involved.

With respect to material and supplies used on the Contract, a DBE must be responsible for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering the material, installing the material, if applicable, and paying for the material itself.

With respect to trucking, the DBE trucking firm must own and operate at least one fully licensed, insured, and operational truck used on the Contract. The DBE may lease trucks from another DBE firm, including an owner-operator who is certified as a DBE. The DBE who leases trucks from another DBE receives credit for the total value of the transportation services the lessee DBE provides on the Contract. The DBE may also lease trucks from a non-DBE firm, including from an owner-operator. The DBE that leases trucks equipped with drivers from a non-DBE is entitled to credit for the total value of transportation services provided by non-DBE leased trucks equipped with drivers not to exceed the value of transportation services on the Contract

provided by DBE-owned trucks or leased trucks with DBE employee drivers. Additional participation by non-DBE owned trucks equipped with drivers receives credit only for the fee or commission it receives as a result of the lease arrangement.

A DBE does not perform a CUF when its role is limited to that of an extra participant in a transaction, Contract, or project through which funds are passed in order to obtain the appearance of DBE participation. The Department will evaluate similar transactions involving non-DBEs in order to determine whether a DBE is an extra participant.

If a DBE does not perform or exercise responsibility for at least 30% of the total cost of its Contract with its own work force, or the DBE subcontracts a greater portion of the work than would be expected on the basis of normal industry practice for the type of work involved, the Department will presume that the DBE is not performing a CUF.

If the Department determines that a DBE is not performing a CUF, no work performed by such DBE will count as eligible participation. The denial period of time may occur before or after a determination has been made by the Department.

In case of the denial of credit for non-performance of a CUF, the Contractor will be required to provide a substitute DBE to meet the Contract goal or provide an adequate good faith effort when applicable.

- 2.3.8.1. **Rebuttal of a Finding of No Commercially Useful Function.** Consistent with the provisions of 49 CFR 26.55(c)(4)&(5), before the Department makes a final finding that no CUF has been performed by a DBE, the Department will notify the DBE and provide the DBE the opportunity to provide rebuttal information.

CUF determinations are not subject to administrative appeal to DOT.

- 2.3.9. **Joint Check.** The use of joint checks between a Contractor and a DBE is allowed with Department approval. To obtain approval, the Contractor must submit a completed Form 2178, "DBE Joint Check Approval," to the Department.

The Department will closely monitor the use of joint checks to ensure that such a practice does not erode the independence of the DBE nor inhibit the DBE's ability to perform a CUF. When joint checks are utilized, DBE credit toward the Contract goal will be allowed only when the subcontractor is performing a CUF in accordance with 49 CFR 26.55(c)(1).

Long-term or open-ended joint checking arrangements may be a basis for further scrutiny and may result in the lack of participation towards the Contract goal requirement if DBE independence cannot be established.

Joint checks will not be allowed simply for the convenience of the Contractor.

If the proper procedures are not followed or the Department determines that the arrangements result in a lack of independence for the DBE involved, no credit for the DBE's participation as it relates to the material cost will be used toward the Contract goal requirement, and the Contractor will need to make up the difference elsewhere on the project.

- 2.3.10. **DBE Termination and Substitution.** No DBE named in the commitment submitted under Section 2.3.5. will be terminated for convenience, in whole or part, without the Department's approval. This includes, but is not limited to, instances in which a Contractor seeks to perform work originally designated for a DBE subcontractor with its own forces or those of an affiliate, a non-DBE firm, or with another DBE firm.

Unless consent is provided, the Contractor will not be entitled to any payment for work or material unless it is performed or supplied by the listed DBE.

The Contractor, prior to submitting its request to terminate, must first give written notice to the DBE of its intent to terminate and the reason for the termination. The Contractor will copy the Department on the Notice of Intent to terminate.

The DBE has 5 calendar days to respond to the Contractor's notice and will advise the Contractor and the Department of the reasons, if any, why it objects to the proposed termination of its subcontract and why the Department should not approve the prime Contractor's request for termination.

The Department may provide a shorter response time if required in a particular case as a matter of public necessity.

The Department will consider both the Contractor's request and DBE's stated position prior to approving the request. The Department may provide a written approval only if it agrees, for reasons stated in its concurrence document, that the Contractor has good cause to terminate the DBE. If the Department does not approve the request, the Contractor must continue to use the committed DBE firm in accordance with the Contract. For guidance on what good cause includes, see 49 CFR 26.53.

Good cause does not exist if the Contractor seeks to terminate, reduce, or substitute a DBE it relied upon to obtain the Contract so that the Contractor can self-perform the work for which the DBE firm was engaged.

When a DBE subcontractor is terminated, make good faith efforts to find, as a substitute for the original DBE, another DBE to perform, at least to the extent needed to meet the established Contract goal, the work that the original DBE was to have performed under the Contract.

Submit the completed Form 2228, "DBE Termination Substitution Request," within seven (7) days, which may be extended for an additional 7 days if necessary at the request of the Contractor. The Department will provide a written determination to the Contractor stating whether or not good faith efforts have been demonstrated. If the Department determines that good faith efforts were not demonstrated, the Contractor will have the opportunity to appeal the determination to the Civil Rights Division.

- 2.3.11. **Reports and Records.** By the 15th of each month and after work begins, report payments to meet the DBE goal and for DBE race-neutral participation on projects with or without goals. These payment reports will be required until all DBE subcontracting or material supply activity is completed. Negative payment reports are required when no activity has occurred in a monthly period.

Notify the Area Engineer if payment to any DBE subcontractor is withheld or reduced.

Before receiving final payment from the Department, the Contractor must indicate a final payment on the compliance tracking system. The final payment is a summary of all payments made to the DBEs on the project.

All records must be retained for a period of 3 years following completion of the Contract work, and must be available at reasonable times and places for inspection by authorized representatives of the Department or the DOT. Provide copies of subcontracts or agreements and other documentation upon request.

- 2.3.12. **Failure to Comply.** If the Department determines the Contractor has failed to demonstrate good faith efforts to meet the assigned goal, the Contractor will be given an opportunity for reconsideration by the Department.

A Contractor's failure to comply with the requirements of this Special Provision will constitute a material breach of this Contract. In such a case, the Department reserves the right to terminate the Contract; to deduct the amount of DBE goal not accomplished by DBEs from the money due or to become due the Contractor; or to secure a refund, not as a penalty but as liquidated damages, to the Department or such other remedy or remedies as the Department deems appropriate.

- 2.3.13. **Investigations.** The Department may conduct reviews or investigations of participants as necessary. All participants, including, but not limited to, DBEs and complainants using DBE Subcontractors to meet the

Contract goal, are required to cooperate fully and promptly with compliance reviews, investigations, and other requests for information.

2.3.14.

Falsification and Misrepresentation. If the Department determines that a Contractor or subcontractor was a knowing and willing participant in any intended or actual subcontracting arrangement contrived to artificially inflate DBE participation or any other business arrangement determined by the Department to be unallowable, or if the Contractor engages in repeated violations, falsification, or misrepresentation, the Department may:

- refuse to count any fraudulent or misrepresented DBE participation;
- withhold progress payments to the Contractor commensurate with the violation;
- reduce the Contractor's prequalification status;
- refer the matter to the Office of Inspector General of the US Department of Transportation for investigation; and/or
- seek any other available contractual remedy.