



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of Business & Workforce Diversity
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois 62764

IDOT MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION

This document serves as the blueprint for the mechanics of the Mentor-Protégé Program (Program), the purpose of which has been set forth in a document titled Mentor-Protégé Program Guidelines (Guidelines).

Enrollment in the Program

All parties wishing to participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program shall complete the appropriate applications (either Mentor or Protégé Application) provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The completed application shall be accompanied by all supporting documentation required within the application form. The application and documentation shall be submitted as indicated in the body of the form. IDOT's Office of Business and Workforce Diversity (OBWD) shall verify whether the applicant meets the Program's minimum qualifications for acting as either a Mentor or Protégé. Each party shall be notified in writing, within thirty (30) days of submission of its application (date of actual receipt by IDOT), whether it has been deemed eligible to participate in the Program.

Following notification that an applicant has been deemed qualified to participate in the Program, the applicant must execute a Mentor-Protégé Program Pledge (Pledge). This Pledge shall constitute the applicant's certification that its principal has received, reviewed and agreed to abide with the spirit and letter of all rules and Guidelines of the Program. This signed Pledge shall also act as the applicant's formal enrollment in the Mentor-Protégé Program. The Pledge acts as IDOT's certification that the applicant is suitable for participation in the Program and will abide by all Guidelines. This Pledge and certification may be revoked by IDOT for cause as specified below.

Commencing the Relationship

All Mentor-Protégé relationships will commence with the signing of a written Mentor-Protégé Development Plan (Plan). The Plan shall be submitted to IDOT's Mentor-Protégé Oversight Committee (Committee) for review. The parties may request, in writing, the assistance of the Committee in drafting an appropriate Plan. A sample Plan shall be made available to participants upon request.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt, the Committee shall notify the parties of its acceptance or rejection of the terms of the proposed Plan. Reasons for rejection of a Plan shall be explained in writing to both parties. Specific criteria for content and implementation of the Plan are delineated in the attached Guidelines. Participants shall be given every opportunity to cure any defects in their proposed Plan until it is approved by the Committee. The Plan shall be deemed effective on the date that the Committee sends written notification of its approval of the Plan.

IDOT Oversight

IDOT oversight shall be conducted by the Committee. The Committee shall be the "working arm" of the Mentor-Protégé Program. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of four (4) IDOT personnel [three (3) from its Office of Business and Workforce Diversity and one (1) from its Division of Highways] and one (1) advisory FHWA ex-officio representative.

The Committee shall require the parties to submit quarterly progress reports, indicating the status of their progress toward each of the Plan's stated goals. The reports will indicate the steps taken during the quarter to further the Plan. The reports shall also list all projects for which the Mentor has received (or applied for) DBE credit for using the Protégé as a DBE subcontractor.

The quarterly reports must be signed and dated by an authorized principal of each firm. The Mentor and Protégé shall each submit an annual report regarding the Program and accomplishments for the year. Both the Mentor and Protégé shall indicate in their reports the status of each goal outlined in the Plan, accomplishments, and how the mentor specifically assisted the Protégé in reaching the stated goal/accomplishment.

Failure to timely submit reports, or submission of incomplete reports is possible grounds for dissolution of relationship. If at any time the Committee determines that the Guidelines of the Program or the spirit thereof are not being adhered to by the parties, or that satisfactory progress is not being made, the Committee reserves the right to revoke its approval of the relationship - thereby invalidating the Plan, and/or any individual participant's enrollment in the Program.

Reasonable progress will be expected, though this will vary according to each Plan. A finding that the parties have failed to make reasonable progress toward goals stated in the Plan shall be communicated with the parties, in writing, within fifteen (15) days of submission of the report. If one report (or failure to submit a report) indicates a failure to progress as expected by the Committee, the parties shall be given written notice that the Mentor-Protégé relationship is in jeopardy of being revoked and the underlying reasons. The parties shall be given an additional quarter to rectify their prior inaction or failure to progress. Two successive quarters deemed not to have yielded reasonable progress shall be grounds for revocation of the relationship.

The Committee will annually evaluate the Mentor-Protégé relationship using the following criteria:

- Satisfactory progress toward the stated goals of the Plan;
- Improved competency of the Protégé in specific aspects of highway contracting;
- Decreased reliance on the Mentor by the Protégé for equipment, personnel, capital;
- Increased capital and/or financial/bonding capacity; and
- Increased numbers of projects with contractors other than the Mentor and/or increased bids submitted as a prime contractor.

Program participants agree that interpretation of the Guidelines or regulations shall rest with the Committee. Parties may feel free (and in fact are encouraged) to seek interpretation of any provision they find ambiguous or confusing. If both Participants so desire, they may jointly appeal any adverse Committee decisions to the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation for reconsideration. These requests shall be in writing. The Secretary's determination shall be final.

Because involvement of both Mentor and Protégé industry representatives is critical to the success of the Program, overall guiding policy determinations shall be reviewed by the Small Business Sub-Committee of IDOT's Industry/Policy Committee prior to implementation whenever possible. This Sub-Committee shall consist of representatives from organizations including, but not limited to, the American General Contractors of Illinois (AGCI), Black Contractors United (BCU), the Federation of Women Contractors of Chicago (FWCC), the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA), Illinois Road and Transportation Builders Association (IRTBA), etc. Sub-Committee membership shall also include IDOT and FHWA (in an ex-officio, advisory role) personnel. Policy considerations, questions, comments, etc., shall be presented to the Sub-Committee from a variety of sources: the IDOT Industry /Policy Committee, the Mentor- Protégé Oversight Committee, individual Mentors and Protégés,

etc. The Sub-Committee shall make policy recommendations to both the IDOT Industry /Policy Committee and the Mentor- Protégé Oversight Committee.

DBE Goals and Administrative Costs

DBE goals shall be determined as delineated in the Guidelines with regard to projects in which it uses the Protégé as a subcontractor. When submitting a DBE Utilization Plan, the Mentor shall indicate in the appropriate place whether the Mentor will be using the Protégé as a subcontractor and to what extent. This will ensure that appropriate credit is given to the Mentor for that project's DBE goal. A fully executed and approved Plan must be in place at the time of submission of the Utilization Plan in order for a Mentor-Protégé relationship to be recognized in connection with any particular project. All federal regulations must be adhered to in the use of the Protégé as a DBE subcontractor. The goal reduction shall not be permitted unless the DBE successfully completes the work delineated in the Utilization Plan. Also, the goal reduction shall only be permitted upon certification by both parties that the Mentor has spent the required monthly minimum amount of time working with the Protégé pursuant to the Plan during any preceding quarters. Last, while a Mentor may have an approved relationship with more than one Protégé at a time, goal reduction shall not be cumulative on any single project, no matter how many Protégés act as subcontractors on that project.

Any monetary recompense (for administrative costs as permitted by federal regulations) to the Mentor for participation in the Program shall be specifically delineated in the Plan.

Reimbursement of administrative costs shall be permitted only in conjunction with specific projects in which the Mentor uses the Protégé as a subcontractor- whether or not the Mentor receives DBE credit for use of the Protégé as a sub. Billing for this reimbursement shall be submitted to IDOT in accordance with the Guidelines and shall be verified (signed) by both the Mentor and the Protégé.

Terminating the Relationship

Reasons for terminating the relationship are delineated herein and within the attached Guidelines. The relationship may be terminated by either party or the Committee. The relationship may not exceed thirty-six (36) months in duration. Any party requesting termination of the relationship (for reasons other than the expiration of the thirty-six month period) shall send written notice of its intent to the other party and IDOT. Similarly, the Committee shall notify both parties in writing of its intent to end the relationship. A relationship shall be deemed terminated effective on the date that written notification of the termination has been sent by any party or the Committee - this date shall be evidenced by postmark, date/time stamp of electronic mail, date of correspondence, etc. The Committee's decision to terminate a relationship is final.

Re-enrollment

Unless a participant is debarred from participation in the Program by IDOT, either party may remain enrolled in the Program following termination of a Plan due to expiration of the thirty-six (36) month deadline. Either party remains eligible to enter into a new Plan with a participant other than one with whom they have previously completed a relationship. One exception to this requirement: the parties may enter a Plan with a participant with whom they have previously had a Mentor-Protégé relationship if the prior Plan did not reach the thirty-six (36) month deadline and the Plan was not terminated by IDOT for violation of these or federal regulations.

Inquiries

Any questions regarding the Program or its Guidelines shall be directed to:

Illinois Department of Transportation
Office of Business & Workforce Diversity
2300 South Dirksen Parkway, Room 300
Springfield, Illinois 62764