



# COMMUNITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS MILWAUKEE COUNTY

## GUIDANCE CONCERNING GOOD FAITH EFFORTS

When Milwaukee County assigns a DBE contract goal, a bidder/proposer shall, in order to be responsive, make good faith efforts to meet the DBE goal. The bidder/proposer can meet this requirement in either of two ways. First, the bidder/proposer can meet the goal, documenting commitments for participation by DBE firms sufficient for this purpose. Second, even if it doesn't meet the goal, the bidder/proposer can document adequate good faith efforts toward that end. This means that the bidder/proposer must show that it took all necessary and reasonable steps to achieve the DBE goal, which, by their scope, intensity, and appropriateness to the objective, could reasonably be expected to obtain sufficient DBE participation, even if they were not fully successful.

In any situation in which Milwaukee County has established a contract goal, 49 CFR, part 26, requires the use of the good faith effort mechanism delineated herein. CBDP will make a fair and reasonable judgment as to whether a bidder/proposer that did not meet the goal made adequate good faith efforts according to these requirements. It is important to consider the quality, quantity, and intensity of the different kinds of efforts that the bidder/proposer has made. The efforts employed by the bidder/proposer should be those that one could reasonably expect a bidder/proposer to take if the bidder/proposer 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. CBDP determination concerning the sufficiency of the firm's good faith efforts is a judgment call: meeting quantitative formulas is not required.

The following is a list of types of actions, which Milwaukee County will consider as part of the bidder/proposer's good faith efforts to obtain DBE participation. It 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:

1. Soliciting, through all reasonable and available means (e.g., attendance at pre-bid meetings, advertising and/or written notices), the interest of all certified DBEs who have the capability to perform the work of the contract. The bidder/proposer must solicit this interest within sufficient time to allow the DBEs to respond to the solicitation. The bidder/proposer must determine with certainty the DBEs are interested by taking appropriate steps to follow up initial solicitations.
2. Selecting portions of the work to be performed by DBEs in order to increase the likelihood that the DBE goals will be achieved. This includes, where appropriate, breaking out contract work items into economically feasible units to facilitate DBE participation, even when the prime contractor/consultant might otherwise prefer to perform these work items with its own forces.
3. 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.
4. Negotiating in good faith with interested DBEs.
  - a. It is the contractor/consultant's responsibility to make a portion of the work available to DBE contractors and to select those portions of the work consistent with the available DBE contractors, 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



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

- b. A contractor/consultant 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/proposer's failure to meet the contract DBE goal, as long as reasonable.** Also, the ability or desire of a contractor/consultant to do the work of a contract with its own organization does not relieve it of the responsibility to make good faith efforts. Prime contractors/consultants are not, however, required to accept higher quotes from DBEs if the price difference is excessive or unreasonable.
5. Not rejecting DBEs as being unqualified without sound reasons based on a thorough investigation of their capabilities. The contractor/consultant'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 contractor/consultant's efforts to meet the project goal.
6. Making efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining lines of credit or insurance as required by Milwaukee County or the contractor/consultant.
7. Making efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining necessary resources or related assistance or services.
8. Effectively using the services of available minority/women community organizations; minority/women contractors' groups; local, state, and Federal 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.

In determining whether a contractor/consultant has made good faith efforts, Milwaukee County may take into account the performance of other bidders/proposers in meeting the DBE contract goal. For example, when the apparent successful contractor/consultant fails to meet the contract goal, but others meet it, Milwaukee County may reasonably raise the question of whether, with additional reasonable efforts, the apparent successful contractor/consultant could have met the goal. If the apparent successful bidder/proposer fails to meet the goal, but meets or exceeds the average DBE participation obtained by other contractors/consultants, Milwaukee County may view this, in conjunction with other factors, as evidence of the apparent successful bidder/proposer having made good faith efforts.