

Mentor Protégé Programs

One way women-owned small businesses can gain access to federal procurement opportunities is through mentor protégé programs. With the help of a mentor, a small business is able to gain access to additional business resources, including credit and capital, managerial and technical training, and networking opportunities. The main goal of the partnership between the mentor and protégé is to help the protégé become a valued business partner and to eventually be able to perform as a successful prime contractor.

Introduction

On May 23, 2000, Executive Order No. 13157 was issued to increase federal procurement opportunities for women-owned small businesses (WOSB). Each federal agency and Department with procurement authority is responsible for establishing a Mentor Protégé program to help achieve the 5 percent participation goal for WOSB for prime and subcontract awards for each fiscal year.

Is Certification Required to Participate In a Mentor Protégé Program?

Some federal Mentor Protégé programs require certification as a Small Disadvantaged Business, 8(a) firm, or HUBZone firm for program participation. However, there is currently no separate certification requirement for participation as a WOSB in a federal Mentor Protégé program.

What Qualities Should I Look For in a Mentor?

Before entering into a Mentor Protégé relationship, it is recommended that you make sure the mentor has the ability to make a commitment to help develop your company and to provide various forms of assistance to improve the ability of your small business to compete for contracts. Please ensure that your mentor: (1) has at least two years of financial profitability; (2) possesses good personal, professional and business character; (3) does not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors; (4) has experience in government contracting; and (5) has practical and expert business skills and knowledge to share with you as the protégé firm.

What Are the Benefits of a Mentor Protégé Relationship?

WOSBs may benefit from Mentor Protégé relationships, especially if the mentor is an economically viable prime contractor. Benefits from the Mentor Protégé relationship for WOSBs may include: (1) an increase in annual profits; (2) opportunities to joint venture with prime contractors; (3) increased working capital; (4) technical and managerial training opportunities; (5) increased personnel to manage projects; (6) larger working facilities; and (7) additional and/or state of the art equipment. In addition, protégés may enjoy the benefits of financial assistance in the form of equity investments and/or loans.

Where Can I Find a Mentor?

One way to find a mentor is to contact one of the federal agencies that has a Mentor Protégé program. Speak to the small business representative in the agency you contact. Most often, the small business office is the primary contact for small business procurement activity. That office is generally located within each agency's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). Another way to find a mentor is through marketing and networking. You may want to advertise your services to buyers on the SBA's PRO-Net <http://pro-net.sba.gov/> or the Federal Business Opportunities web site www.fedbizopps.gov. Both of these are popular sites visited by prime contractors.

Please also see the list below of Federal Agency Mentor Protégé Programs.

Corporate and Federal Mentor Relationships

Generally, corporate/federal contracting relationships are administered through the corporation's Small Business Development Office, Diversity Supplier Officer, Purchasing Department or offices with similar names. These offices are often in contact with federal agencies regarding procurement opportunities. The point of contact is usually the corporate Small Business Liaison Officer.

Federal Agency Mentor Protégé Programs

Many federal agencies have established Mentor Protégé Programs (MPP). These programs differ from agency to agency so it is recommended that you check the agency websites or contact the agency for specifics for each program. Federal Mentor Protégé Programs are listed below.

[Department of Defense](#) 703-588-8631

[Air Force](#) 210-536-1288

[Army](#) 703-693-6113

[Navy](#) 202-685-6485

[Department of Energy](#) 202-586-4620

[Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) 703-305-6606

[Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\)](#) 202-267-7454

[Department of Homeland Security](#) 202-205-0050

[National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#) 202-358-2088

[Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) 800-827-5722

[Department of the Treasury](#) 202-622-2826