



City of Houston Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance

Minority, Women, Disadvantaged, and Small Business Enterprise Program (MWDBE/SBE)

Attend a **FREE** MWDBE/SBE Pre-certification Workshop. These workshops are offered every Thursday at 2:00 p.m., 611 Walker, 7th Floor. Please call 713-837-9000 (713-837-9040 TDD) for more information or visit the City's website at www.houstontx.gov.

From Our Director

The City of Houston is celebrating 26 years of providing Minority, Women, Disadvantaged and Small Business (MWDBE/SBE) owners with real opportunities. In a competitive environment, this program allows MWDBE/SBEs to compete on equal footing for contracts on City-funded projects and purchases.

Visit our website at www.houstontx.gov/aacc/index.html and download the following helpful publications:

- The Source Newsletter
- City Contracting Guide
- Sources of Assistance Business Resource Guide
- Construction Industry Resource Guide

They contain valuable resource and contact information.

We encourage you to look at our program. I am convinced that working with you, we can make a difference in your business. Attend one of our weekly Pre-certification Workshops for more information. Our continued success depends upon growing firms like yours.

Let us hear from you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Velma Laws".

Velma Laws, Director

Advantages

- Listing in the City's MWDBE/SBE Directory, which is accessible on the City's website, at www.houstontx.gov (click Departments, Affirmative Action, MWBE/SBE Directory).
- Non-reciprocal Common Certification Agreement with the Houston Minority Supplier Development Council, the Houston Women's Business Enterprise Alliance, the Texas Unified Certification Program, and the State of Texas Historically Underutilized Businesses Program.
- Access to workshops, seminars, and quarterly newsletter, "The Source".
- Bidding opportunities on contracts
- Certifications are valid for 1 year and certification is **FREE**.
- Our certification is also accepted by:
 - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - Port of Houston Authority
 - METRO
 - Houston Independent School District
 - Houston Community College System
 - Houston Housing Authority
 - Kellogg Brown and Root
 - Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
 - Texas Southern University Economic Development Center

Requirements

- The minority or female owner must possess at least 51% ownership, management, and control of the business.♦
- The minority, female, or small business owner must have the training/expertise to perform the work, and where required, have a license or certificate issued in his or her name.
- The firm must be independent and currently operating.
- Firms must maintain a significant local business presence in Harris, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, or Waller counties.
- The firm must meet the Small Business Administration Size Standard(s) for its industry classification(s).
- For DBE certification, applicant must have a Personal Net Worth of less than \$750,000 – excluding value of home and ownership interest in the business. There is no local presence requirement.♦
- Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprise (PDBE) certification requires applicants to submit a Disability Affidavit and an accompanying letter from a State of Texas certified medical doctor. The person with a disability will be required to meet the same criteria for certification as MWBE/SBE applicants.♦

The Certification Process

Program participation requires certification. The process takes approximately 90 days when we receive a complete application packet, and includes the following steps:

- Pre-certification Workshop
- Preliminary Screening of Application
- Desk Audit
- Financial Audit
- Field Audit ♦
- Committee Review
 - a. Certification (Firm is listed in Directory)
 - b. Tentative Denial (Firm may appeal)

♦ Not Required for SBE Certification



CITY OF HOUSTON
Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance

INS AND OUTS OF CITY CONTRACTING

Soliciting business from the City and/or its contractors can be a frustrating, non-productive experience if you do not learn the system. Remember, City certification does not guarantee City business. You still have to market your company to the individuals that count. These suggestions can help you secure those contracts.

- I. **Get a Vendor Number.** This puts you in the City's database, and helps to facilitate the payment process. Vendors can request a vendor number by going to <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>. Allow at least 5 working days and then call our Vendor Desk at (832) 393.8800 to follow up on your registration form and to obtain your assigned supplier number. Vendor numbers can also be obtained in person from the Strategic Purchasing Division, 901 Bagby, Room B-120, in the basement of City Hall, (832) 393.8800.
- II. **Look for Opportunities.** Do not wait for City contracting opportunities to come knocking on your door.
 - For Suppliers of Goods or Non-Professional Services:**
 - Call the Bid Hotline at (832) 393.8762 for the current listing of bid advertisements over \$25,000.
 - Go to the basement of City Hall, 901 Bagby, to view current Requests for Proposals and bids, and get a vendor number if you don't have one.
 - Check the Notice to Bidder section in each Friday's Houston Business Journal as well as the City's Strategic Purchasing Division's web site at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/> for prime and/or subcontracting opportunities. Tune in to the Municipal Access Channel on Comcast Cable TV for weekly bid advertisements.
 - Attend pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences to meet potential prime contractors. Schedule of pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences can be found on the City's Strategic Purchasing Division's web site at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>.
 - Network.
 - For Construction and Construction-Related Firms:**
 - Check the Notice to Bidder section in each Friday's Houston Chronicle and Houston Business Journal for prime and/or subcontracting opportunities.
 - Attend pre-bid conferences to meet potential prime contractors. Schedule of pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences can be found on the City's Strategic Purchasing Division's web site at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>.
 - Contact successful low bidders to show how you can help them meet the M/W/DBE/SBE and/or PDBE goal.
 - Network.
 - For Professional Service Providers:**
 - Find the City department(s) that utilize your service. Call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division at (713) 837-9000 for further assistance.
 - Architects and Engineers (A&E) should go to 611 Walker, 5th Floor, to pick up form PWE-100 for inclusion in the City's A&E database. You can also obtain it on the Internet at <http://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/pwe100htm>.
 - Contact the City department to let them know what you do and request to be included on the Request for Proposal (RFP) list.
 - Check the Houston Chronicle, the Houston Business Journal, and minority publications for Requests for Proposals.
 - Attend pre-proposal conferences to meet potential prime contractors.
 - Network.
- III. **When Bidding/Proposing, Make Sure Specifications Are Met.**
 - When Responding To A Bid or RFP, Be Sure To:**
 - Read everything.
 - Make certain that your goods or services meet City specifications.
 - Sign your bid.
 - Turn your bid/offer in on time. (No exceptions for late responses).
 - If you are unsuccessful, keep trying. Go to the City Secretary's Office (City Hall Annex, Public Level, 900 Bagby) to review the successful bidder's submission to be better prepared next time.
- IV. **Call the Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance Division for Assistance at (713) 837-9000 or visit our web site at www.houstontx.gov.** Be sure to download the City Contracting Guide, The Source, the Construction Industry Resource Guide, and the Sources of Assistance Business Resource Guide.