



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COMPLIANCE AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BUREAU
Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
2720 GUNTER PARK DRIVE WEST
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36109



Robert Bentley
GOVERNOR

John R. Cooper
TRANSPORTATION
DIRECTOR

Guidelines for Requests Supportive Services (SS) Proposals
Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Program

Submission

Proposals submitted in response to an ALDOT DBE/SS Program Request for Proposal (RFP) Announcement are to be sent via email to:

Huffmanjo@dot.state.al.us and meadowss@dot.state.al.us
or via U.S. mail to:

Mr. John L. Huffman
Compliance and Business Opportunities Bureau
Alabama Department of Transportation
DBE Unit
2720 Gunter Park Drive West
Montgomery, Al 36109

Important Note: Proposals are **ONLY** to be submitted to the ALDOT Compliance and Business Opportunities Bureau’s DBE Unit.

Deadlines

The deadline for receiving proposals as shown in the RFP Announcement has been established and extensions will not be granted. In order to be considered, proposals must be received by the ALDOT’s DBE Unit no later than the deadline of October 23, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Without exception, all proposals postmarked later than the preceding deadline date and time will be rejected.

To Prospective Proposal Applicants

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is giving notice that we are in need of Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the delivery of Supportive Services (SS) in the form of a Business Development Program (BDP) for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) within the state of Alabama. ALDOT has been allocated \$255,329 in federal funds to implement a DBE/SS Business Development Program. The time frame for program implementation will be defined as the performance period. Performance period will be a minimum of one year unless an extension is

approved by ALDOT. The RFP will be evaluated according to the criteria that is stated in the following guidelines. That contract will run for one year after its execution.

Electronic submissions of proposals are preferred, but submissions of a 10 page hardcopy are also allowed. Adherence to the 10 page limit is required and should be typewritten using 12 font in single spaced format. The 10 page limit does include attachments and/or exhibits, not the cover page. Each proposal submitted will be reviewed for content and conformance that is governed by 23 CFR 230, Subpart B. Proposals will also be reviewed and evaluated based on:

SECTION (1): DBE/SS Program Design

A. Commitment to Business Development Program (BDP) - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé

Accordingly, ALDOT proposes to provide Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Alabama Division and Headquarters Office of Civil Rights (HCR) for approval a Business Development Program (BDP)- Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé designed to aid designated ALDOT certified DBEs. Through the use of allocated funding in the amount of \$255,329.00 for the Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé Program will allow designated DBEs enrolled in the BDP to be assessed at their present level and provided specific training in deficient areas to be competitive within the heavy highway or other construction marketplace. In implementing its proposal ALDOT will commit in its FY 2015 SOW, to creating a Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé and provide the following implementation plan and schedule which outlines specific procedures to ensure its completion in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26, appendix C.

Implementation Plan and Schedule

The Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé will be operational by FY2016. ALDOT will determine after research and analysis if it will operate its Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé or a service provider will provide such services.

Criteria that enhances selected candidate's completion of the Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé are referenced in the following sentences.

- How will ALDOT identify a service provider to operate a Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé:
 - Service provider will be determined by who is selected as the winner from the RFP submission and operate the Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé as illustrated in the chart below.

Activity	Time Frame
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	Month one (1)
Initial Assessment	Months two (2) – three (3)
Vetting Period	Months three (3) – four (4)
Developmental Assistance of Assessed Protégé Weakness (Periodic Assessments)	Months five (5) – eleven (11)
Final Assessment	Month twelve (12)

- The anticipated selection process for identifying eligible DBEs are depicted in the chart below (months 2 – 3):
 - Must demonstrate potential for success
 - Must be a small business according to the size standards
 - Annual renewal status must be up-to-date

Activity	Time Frame
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	Month one (1)
Initial Assessment	Months two (2) – three (3)
Vetting Period	Months three (3) – four (4)
Developmental Assistance of Assessed Protégé Weakness (Periodic Assessments) and enrollment into specific training	Months five (5) – eleven (11)
Final Assessment	Month twelve (12)

- How and when the selected provider plans to analyze and evaluate each participating DBE’s business capacity; market potential; and strengths and weaknesses in the areas of financial, managerial, technical, and labor conditions are depicted in chart below:
 - DBEs will have a six month mid-evaluation to determine their strengths, weaknesses and growth potential. This process will prepare them for their targeted goals.
 - Will develop the matching of primes and DBE firms within the first six months and assess their weaknesses.

Activity	Time Frame
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	Month one (1)
Initial Assessment	Months two (2) – three (3)
Vetting Period	Months three (3) – four (4)
Developmental Assistance of Assessed Protégé Weakness (Periodic Assessments)	Months five (5) – eleven (11)
Final Assessment	Month twelve (12)

- How and when the selected provider will create specific, targeted goals for each participating DBE are depicted in the chart below:

Activity	Time Frame
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	Month one (1)
Initial Assessment	Months two (2) – three (3)
Vetting Period	Months three (3) – four (4)
Developmental Assistance of Assessed Protégé Weakness (Periodic Assessments)	Months five (5) – eleven (11)
Final Assessment	Month twelve (12)

- How the selected provider will combine resources or partner with other governmental or business entities such as Small Business Training Resource Centers (SBTRCs) experienced in developing innovative training techniques to establish Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé programs.
 - Through research and evaluation of established Mentor Protégé Programs which provides information on advanced training that aids the growth of targeted firms.
 - In cooperation with SBTRC representative to inform protégés on the aid which they can obtain through enrollment in these types of assistance programs.

B. Purpose Statement

ALDOT will utilize the \$255,329 in federal funding to enhance the growth and development of 16 DBE firms by administering a Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé to increase the capacity of participating DBE firms to successfully participate on heavy highway contracts. ALDOT’s Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé will focus on the faceted education, development and specific training to DBEs. Advanced tier training will be provided to those firms who have been assessed to have specific weaknesses from the areas of financial, estimating and bidding, managerial, technical and labor conditions. Additionally, ALDOT Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé will strive to achieve and provide education, interaction with individuals who aid protégés (DBEs) to

extract work opportunities from project lettings. Mentors will enhance protégé opportunities for obtaining contracts and success within the heavy highway construction industry.

C. Program Goals

The broad goal of the DBE/SS is to provide services and activities that are designed to increase the total number of active DBE firms participating in the highway construction program and to contribute to the growth and eventual self-sufficiency of individual minority businesses. ALDOT plans to implement the FY 2015 DBE/SS SOW by placing designated number of DBE firms (e.g. ten) into a phase of the BDP which will provide specific assistance to these firms. Recommended firms will be assessed on their continued need for additional assistance in areas which they had undergone exposure within a prior training level. A goal within this phase would be to designate firms completing this training and their final assessments as graduating ALDOT’s tiered BDP.

D. Result Oriented Objectives

Objective 1: By September 2015, establish procedures to initiate placement of designated firms into advanced tier training to help them compete in the marketplace outside the DBE program.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Identify prime contractors who will commit to participating in the program as mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 prime contractors will sign up to participate in the program • 16 DBE firms will sign up to participate in the program • 16 mentor-protégé relationships established
Identify DBEs certified 5 years or more to determine their level of progress within existing BDP	
Identify DBEs ready to progress from the FY 2014 BDP to the 2015 Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé	
Identify DBE firms participating in the FY2014 BDP that will commit to participating in the program as protégés	
Each firm will sign a formal agreement detailing the commitment, benefits, and expectations for firms participating in the program	

Objective 2: By October 2015, conduct an assessment of identified DBEs to determine their needs.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>Conduct a needs assessment of the DBE firms participating in the Business Development Program – Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé</p> <p>Conduct a detailed and comprehensive needs assessment on all the DBE firms participating in the Program</p> <p>Identify DBE firms who have common training needs and those which require specific training in an area which encompasses financial, estimating and bidding, managerial, technical and labor conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 DBE firms in the program that have completed a comprehensive needs assessment • 16 DBE firms that have identified their training needs

Objective 3: By January 2016, initiate the development of curriculum for training programs from assessments to provide targeted assistance to identified DBE firms in designated areas (e.g. financial management) deemed deficient.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>Develop partnership and strategies with surety firms, prime contractor associations and other stakeholders that will allow DBE firms to receive instruction to enhance assessed deficiencies (e.g. bonding capacity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 partnerships developed with surety firms • 16 DBE firms received assistance and completed bond and financial applications • 16 DBE firms with increased bonding capacity

Objective 4: By February 2016, ensure that training program curriculum are complete and ready to provide targeted assistance to identified firms to improve their capabilities in technical skills to increase the number of DBE firms bidding on Federal-aid highway projects.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<p>Provide DBE firms with advanced training curriculum in a specific area (e.g. bonding capacity estimating and bidding assistance) to improve their success rate in obtaining contracts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 DBE firms assisted • 16 firms assisted each with a minimum of 5 bids/quotes submitted on State Highway projects by the end of the contract • 16 DBE firms assisted with a least 60% being awarded subcontracts

Objective 5: By February 2016, schedule, coordinate and initiate advanced training sessions with identified DBE firms to enhance their technical expertise/credentials in areas such as financial management, estimating and bidding, marketing, small business management strategies, and relationship building.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Develop schedule and ensure that training sessions meet assessed DBE training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 participants attend training • 16 participants complete training

Objective 6: By February 2016, ensure that identified DBE firms create an individualized developmental plans from their assessments	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Assist DBE firms through the creation of a developmental plan to review and/or update areas (e.g. business plans, marketing plans, accounting practices, estimating and bidding, bonding capacity) identified within their assessments as deficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 firms assisted in reviewing/updating deficient areas (e.g. business plans) identified within their assessment • 16 firms assisted with management strategies • 16 firms have created a developmental plan

Objective 7: Service provider will conduct meetings as needed to ensure the success of the program.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a minimum 4 meetings will be held within the contract period

Objective 8: By August 2016, assessments will be conducted to ensure the success of the program and participants.	
Action Plan:	
ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Selected provider will conduct assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 initial assessments to be done on program participants by month 3 of the contract • 16 periodic assessments to be done on program participants months 5 - 11 of the contract • 16 final assessments to be done on program participants in month 12 of the contract

E. Scope of Work

i. Narrative with schedule/timeline for activity/services

Activity	Time Frame
Initial and periodic meetings with representatives from the Selected Provider, ALDOT, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design and progress	Month one (1)
Initial Assessment of program candidates	Months two (2) – three (3)
Vetting Period	Months three (3) – four (4)
Developmental Assistance of Assessed Protégé Weakness (Periodic Assessments)	Months five (5) – eleven (11)
Final Assessment	Month twelve (12)

The goal for FY 2015 will be achieved by developing each DBE firm participant's technical and business skills in accordance with 49 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 26, Appendix C through mentor protégé agreements approved by ALDOT. Success for protégés (DBEs) will center on attainment of goals or metrics which will be described in more detail in succeeding paragraphs.

In implementing its FY 2015 DBE/SS activity, Mentor Protégé agreements approved by the concerned operating administration (FHWA, Alabama Division and HCR) detail in specific terms, conditions, and responsibilities of firms designated to serve in each role. Accordingly, prime contractors with the following qualifications will serve as mentors in ALDOT's program. Mentor firms will be recruited and selected based on their demonstrated interest and capability to provide developmental assistance to DBEs (protégés). Protégé firms will be selected as candidates based on their assessed stage of business development and potential for growth.

Additional eligibility requirements for each designated Mentor and Protégé firm are outlined below.

A mentor firm must:

- Possess a minimum of five years of experience as a contractor on any DOT highway construction contracts.
- Be able to devote sufficient time to work actively with the designated protégé.
- Complete mentor application.

A protégé firm shall:

- Demonstrate potential for success.
- Be a small business according to the size standards.
- Be a certified DBE with ALDOT and in good standing (e.g. no decertification actions pending).
- Complete protégé application.

- Be able to maintain eligibility as a DBE firm through the duration of the Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé Program.
- Demonstrate ability and competence based on progress exhibited while completing program requirements during enrollment in entry to mid-tier training programs.

ALDOT realizes that relationship building with prime contractors is a key ingredient to DBE success in the highway construction industry. Therefore, ALDOT intends to utilize the Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé as a vehicle to build relationships between established companies (mentors) and DBEs (protégés) in order for the latter to benefit from the knowledge and experience of mentor firms. In establishing these relationships, ALDOT realizes that assistance or stipend contingent upon FHWA, Alabama Division approval may be required to offset prime contractor expenses when they use their employees to train DBE owners in areas noted as deficient within assessments. Additionally, ALDOT's Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé within this area through this training seeks to increase the capacity and quotes submitted by DBEs for work on DOT assisted highway projects.

ii. Project personnel, resources, and a synopsis of in-kind contributions, if any

ALDOT has one Equal Employment Opportunity Officer dedicated full-time to DBE/SS. Additionally, five positions assigned to ALDOT's DBE unit are responsible for DBE Certification. Also an individual has been hired as the program accountant to monitor the submission of invoices from all DBE/SS funded projects.

iii. Partnership

ALDOT intends to achieve the goals cited in the preceding paragraphs by initiating collaborative actions with the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization's (OSDBU) Small Business Transportation Resource Center (SBTRC) which has Alabama as its coverage area, selected supportive service provider, contractor associations (e.g. Alabama Road Builders Association, Alabama DBE Association), minority and women owned businesses, and academic institutions with requisite expertise. Also, small business development centers and ALDOT DBE/SS providers will be used to aid ALDOT in implementing its mentor protégé program.

F. Request for Proposal Process

- The Statement of Work (SOW) will be advertised upon receipt of the Notice to Proceed from FHWA Alabama Division Office.
- The SOW will be advertised for a minimum of three (3) weeks.
- The (SOW) will be advertised in the following manner:
 - ALDOT internet site <http://www.dot.state.al.us/>
 - Alabama Department of Finance Website <http://rfp.alabama.gov/PublicView.aspx>

- Newspaper advertisements on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday
 - Montgomery Advertiser
 - Huntsville Times
 - Birmingham News
 - Mobile Press-Register

Minority Newspapers listed below when possible based on publication and cutoff dates.

- Birmingham Times, weekly Thursday circulation
- Mobile Beacon, weekly Wednesday circulation
- Speakin' Out News, weekly Wednesday circulation
- Upon conclusion of advertising period the RFPs received will be evaluated, scored and rank ordered by a committee composed of ALDOT Compliance and Business Opportunities Bureau employees.
- The RFP selected by the committee (and all submissions) will be forwarded to FHWA Alabama Division office with cover letter on explanation for selection and rank order for review and concurrence, thereafter, forwarded to HCR, FHWA Washington, DC for approval and funding.
- After HCR, FHWA approval a contract will be drafted.
- Contract routing process:
 1. ALDOT Compliance and Business Opp. Bureau composes contract.
 2. Bureau Chief, ALDOT Compliance and Business Opp. Bureau reviews.
 3. ALDOT Legal Bureau reviews, signs and adds ALDOT contract ID number.
 4. Contract forwarded to service provider for review and signatures.
 5. Forwarded to ALDOT Director for signature.
 6. Forwarded ALDOT Finance Bureau and Contract Management Bureau for input into CPMS.

The ALDOT Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé requires funds in amount of \$255,329.00 to ensure the occurrence of the preceding activities. The budget has been created and will illustrate in the following paragraph line items designed to facilitate the accomplishment of program goals.

SECTION (2): Budget Summary

Line items within the attached budget are summarized in the following manner.

- a. **Personnel: (\$75,000)** Funding in the designated amount cited in the preceding budget is requested to cover the costs of salaries inclusive of fringe benefits which will be paid to individuals with direct responsibility for program management during the contract period of 12 months. Their duties will include such areas as project administration and reporting activities.
- b. **Fringe Benefits: (\$26,250)** Fringe Benefits for the salaries of the individuals referenced above is calculated at a rate of 35%.
- c. **Miscellaneous/Other (e.g., Office Supplies, Printing, etc.): (\$5,000)** Funding amount indicated was requested to cover the costs for printing surveys, plans and cover the costs of office materials (e.g. printer cartridges, pens, and paper).

- d. **Contractual Services (\$45,000)** Funding amount indicated will be used to cover the costs of anticipated contracts with individuals who can provide mentoring and technical assistance for the program.
- e. **Travel: (\$9,229.69)** Trips to DBE firms, meetings/conferences held at designated locations within the state and to Montgomery.
- f. **Stipends: (\$40,000)** Regulated payment to persons associated with training designated personnel within DBE firms for an identified and approved activity during the Business Development Program – Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé contract period. In establishing these relationships, ALDOT realizes that assistance or stipend contingent upon FHWA, Alabama Division approval may be required to offset prime contractor expenses when they use their employees to train DBE owners in areas noted as deficient within assessments.
- g. **Program Administrative Costs:** For budget estimating purposes only, a maximum indirect cost for a service provider will be 10% based on historical data. However, after a provider has been selected, the indirect cost must be reviewed, negotiated, and certified in accordance with 2 CFR Part 225. Therefore, the final indirect cost amount may be less than 10%. FHWA and ALDOT have agreed that 13.63% (\$34,801.34) will be the rate charged by ALDOT for program administration this fiscal year in accordance with 2 CFR 225.
- h. **Equipment:** All equipment purchased with federal funds utilized by contractors to carry out this program upon completion of the program shall be returned to ALDOT in accordance with 49 CFR Part 18.32.

SECTION (3): Evaluation, Monitoring and Oversight Plan

- ❖ Monitoring will be conducted on each phase of the timeline activities to occur will ensure effective administration of the program. Accordingly, the following activities will occur to provide oversight on the implementation of items identified within the scope of work. They are:
 - Conducting an initial meeting with representatives from the selected service provider, ALDOT, SBTRC, Contractor Association, and others to discuss program design. Collaborative decisions made at this meeting will aid the selection of quality candidates for the program and assign services to each based on assessed needs which can aid their growth. Derivatives based on support of participants at this meeting would foster assignments being made with firms who perform similar work types. Also, assignments being made with firms residing in the same distinct area or part of the state.
 - Assignments being made to allow the identified needs (see application) through the initial assessment of the protégé firm to be matched with the recognized skill sets of the mentor who will train on these topics (see scope of work chart months 2 -3).
 - Candidates considered for the mentor and protégé program will be approved by ALDOT.

- Analyzing and evaluating each protégé (DBE) selected to participate in the program business capacity; market potential; and strengths and weaknesses in the areas of financial, managerial, technical, and labor conditions are depicted in scope of chart (months 3 – 4).
- Conducting a six month mid-evaluation with protégés and mentors to determine their strengths, weaknesses and growth potential. This will prepare them for their targeted goals.
- ALDOT will develop, with the aid of its Legal Bureau, a document (e.g. agreement) which states the responsibilities of both mentor and protégé as participants in this program. The finalized agreement will be signed by all parties for official participation into the program. The finalized agreement will identify the assistance which will be rendered by the mentor based on needs assessments to the protégé for a defined period of time. The ALDOT Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé is limited to a period not to exceed twelve (12) months from the date in which it is signed. This proposal may have an option for a renewal of one (1) year, which will be based on funding available.
- Utilizing an approved developmental plan to enhance protégé business skills in areas where they have been assessed as deficient. Areas where developmental assistance to address deficiencies in business skills will be labeled as target goals.
- Installing measures to periodically monitor the achievement of stated goals during the duration of the ALDOT Mentor Protégé Program. The ALDOT Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé will monitor the completion of stated goals on a monthly basis and include at a minimum the following items in periodic updates or status reports (see scope of work chart months 5 -11). They are:
 - Narrative describing the DBE/SS activities that were performed for each week. The narrative should also include concerns and status of the program at that time.
 - Completion of forms (e.g. contact forms, sign in sheets) which document activities.
 - Narrative which describes steps taken to help protégé with their assessed needs (e.g. training in financial management, marketing best practices, access to contract opportunity through training in estimating and usage of technology).
- Installing the following performance measures, which list additional criteria that will be used to gauge at designated intervals (e.g. monthly) the successful attainment of goals for ALDOT Business Development Program - Advanced Tier Mentor Protégé (see scope of work chart months 5 – 11). They are:

- Satisfactory progress toward completing the plan (e.g. development plan) which cites activities (e.g. attendance at scheduled training sessions, usage of business related software) identified for completion by the protégé.
 - Improved skill sets of the protégé in specific areas of highway contracting.
 - Increased financial/bonding capacity by protégé.
 - Increased number of projects by protégé with contractors other than mentor.
 - Increased number of quotes for work submitted by protégé to ALDOT.
- ❖ Installing measures to conduct a final assessment of each protégé to determine if it has achieved targeted goals derived from their needs assessment (month 12).

SECTION (4): Reporting Requirements

Compile, review for accuracy and submit monthly reports on progress of program elements to ALDOT. Monthly report will identify in a weekly narrative format issues, concerns, and activities completed that impact the achievement of overall program objectives. Offeror selected to perform DBE Supportive Service as outlined in RFP will maintain a listing of accurate contract information (e.g. e-mail address, telephone numbers) for program participants and complete a final report within 30 days of its completion. Additionally, within the final report offeror will provide a summary report that consist of project tasks and accomplishments, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvement of the program.

EVALUATING PROPOSALS

Upon receipt, proposals will be evaluated based on adherence to criteria cited in the proceeding statements. Evaluation criteria categories will include the following:

- ✓ Timely submission of proposal
- ✓ Page limit
- ✓ Experience/Expertise
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Method of Performance
 - Program Design
 - Evaluation, Monitoring, and Oversight Plan
 - Reporting Requirements

Please call John Huffman at (334) 244 – 6261 or Shona Meadows at (334) 244 – 6270 or submit an email at the addresses provided if you have any questions regarding the RFP submission.

