

Utilities and Transportation Commission 2012 Minority and Women's Business Enterprise Plan

The purpose and intent of the Minority and Women's Business Enterprise program (RCW 39.19 and WAC 326) is to provide the maximum practicable opportunity for increased participation by minority, women, and socially and economically disadvantaged-owned and controlled businesses in public works and the process by which goods and services are procured by state agencies and educational institutions from the private-sector.

The legislature identified that minority and women-owned businesses are significantly under-represented and have been denied equitable competitive opportunities in contracting. This program is to mitigate societal discrimination and other factors in participating in public works and in providing goods and services and to delineate a policy that an increased level of participation by minority and women-owned and controlled businesses is desirable at all levels of state government.

The minority and women-owned business program is administered by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE).

Statement of Commitment from the Commission

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) is committed to providing opportunities in the commission's procurement process for minority and women-owned businesses. We believe it is our obligation to implement processes which give minority and women's businesses every opportunity to become suppliers of purchased goods and services.

To achieve our goals, the commission has changed the way we purchase goods and services. Greater attention is given to individual purchases and more effort lent to soliciting business from minority and women-owned businesses. We will view each purchase as a chance to improve minority and women-owned participation by reviewing the list of businesses provided by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to determine if an OMWBE vendor is available to provide the goods or service at a competitive price.

We believe increased minority and women-owned business participation is a worthwhile endeavor, and we continue to devote the effort necessary to meet our annual goals.

Mission of the plan

The plan will share information with employees to encourage the use of minority and women-owned businesses where possible and feasible, especially with those employees who have purchasing authorization. Additionally, the commission routinely reviews purchasing methods, training needs and rededicates efforts to provide opportunities to minority and women-owned businesses where possible.

Goals of the plan

The goals of the plan assist the commission in continued participation with purchasing goods and services from minority and women-owned businesses. The commission establishes annual goals and genuine opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses to compete.

Authority and responsibility to implement and monitor the plan

- Executive Management:
The Executive Director will review the Plan and achievement of the goals.
- Finance Manager:
The Finance Manager will be responsible for the following:
 - Prepare the OMWBE Plan and present it to the Director's Group and the Senior Management Team.
 - Share information with staff and management.
 - Monitor reports to ensure accuracy. Provide corrections to OMWBE and share information with the Office of Financial Management if there is a problem with a statewide vendor.
 - Monitor compliance with the plan and evaluate how the commission is performing in meeting our OMWBE goals.
 - Encourage minority and women-owned businesses to become certified with the OMWBE.
- Contracting and Accounting Transactions: Finance Manager – Financial Analyst:
The Finance Manager's role is to ensure Requests for Proposals (RFPs) make every effort to solicit responses from minority and women-owned businesses, and to train accounting staff to report data accurately to the state accounting system.

The Financial Analyst's role is to ensure proper reporting of minority and women-owned business participation, to report exclusions, as appropriate, and to request exemptions for purchases which do not meet minority and women-owned businesses criteria.
- Procurement: Supply Officer
The Supply Officer's role is to research purchase requests to see if they can be met by a minority or women-owned business from the approved list.

Strategic approach to ensure increased participation of minority and women-owned firm's

The commission makes few major discretionary purchases. Most of our major purchases are through utilizing their mandatory or convenience contracts. The commission will evaluate non-mandatory contracts that would increase purchases of products or services from minority or women-owned businesses.

Commission staff have been trained to use Department of Enterprise Services Washington Electronic Business Solutions (WEBS) for purchasing products and services. The commission posts Request for Proposals (RFPs) or Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQs) on WEBS and uses the system to search for minority and women-owned businesses which can provide the products or services. Purchasing staff may contact our representative at OMWBE to identify potential vendors for our use.

Finally, the commission will ensure complete and accurate reporting of minority and women-owned business data through training and careful input of data into the Office of Financial Management's Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS).

Commission Staff Training

The Finance Manager is responsible to ensure that staff members are aware of the plan's goals and the methods designed to achieve those goals and that staff members are properly trained to use the systems and tools to help achieve or exceed established goals. This applies to:

- Purchasing staff. They have the best opportunity to solicit minority and women-owned business participation for purchasing goods.
- Contracting staff. They have the best opportunity to solicit minority and women-owned business participation for purchasing services.
- Accounting staff. They have primary responsibility for accurately reporting minority and women-owned participation.

Training:

- An OMWBE representative has provided information about the program and the value of it to the state. OMWBE continues to update and provide access to the approved list of vendors.
- An OMWBE representative has provided detailed reporting in AFRS so staff can report minority and women-owned purchases accurately in AFRS.
- A Department of Enterprise Services representative has trained staff on how to use their WEBS system.

Annual Goals

The commission will review historical data on contracting/procurement achievement and opportunities, compile data, and forecast goals based on real opportunities. The OMWBE annual overall goals for participation by certified firms in the public works, other contracting, and procurement of each state agency and education institution as set for in WAC 326.30.030 are:

	MBE	WBE
Construction/Public Works	10%	6%
Architect/Engineering	10%	6%
Purchased Goods	8%	4%
Purchased Services	10%	4%
Professional Services	10%	4%

In July of each year, the commission will evaluate the previous year's performance and in consultation with the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises establish new goals.

The commission's annual goals

As stated before, the commission makes very few major discretionary purchases. Most of our major purchases are from the Department of Enterprise Services mandatory contracts. However, we will try to increase participation in the following areas:

Type of Purchase	Approximate annual value
Purchased Goods and Services from Minority-owned businesses	\$15,000
Purchased Goods and Services from Woman-owned businesses	\$15,000

In fiscal year 2011 the commission purchased from women-owned vendors, 3.65% of our purchased goods. The commission purchased in services 16.31% from minority-owned businesses. Efforts will be also be made to encourage our other vendors to seek opportunities to partner with women and minority-owned business on the approved OMWBE list.

Procedure for setting individual contract goals

- The commission will seek assistance from OMWBE to identify minority-owned vendors for services and products.
- The commission will continue to use the Department of Enterprise Services WEBS system for posting bids.
- The commission will continue to use the Department of Enterprise Services WEBS system for searching for approved minority and women-owned businesses.

Monitor and ensure compliance by prime contractors and vendors in their relationships with subcontractor process.

The commission rarely lets contracts that involve subcontracting. All commission contracts will contain a requirement for the contractor to provide the necessary compliance information

Reporting subcontractor information

The commission will report the required subcontractor information through AFRS. AFRS will be the reporting tool used to submit this information to OMWBE.

Maintaining records

All contracts, purchase orders and expenditures are maintained in the Finance Office. The records will be maintained according to the records retention schedule.

Reporting expenditure's to OMWBE

The commission will report expenditure data to OMWBE through AFRS. This data will be transmitted by the Office of Financial Management to OMWBE. Any data that is reported incorrectly will be reported to the OMWBE staff for correction. Follow up will be made with staff to ensure accurate reporting in the future. Additionally, the Office of Financial Management will be contacted when statewide vendor data is inaccurate.

Resolving disputes and investigating complaints

Complaints received as a result of an action taken by the commission regarding the solicitation or purchase of goods or services by a minority or women-owned business will be forwarded to the Finance Manager for informal resolution. The commission will look to the OMWBE office to provide technical assistance and program guidance as needed. Any complaint that cannot be resolved at this level will be forwarded to the commission's Executive Director for formal resolution.

Reviewing and revising contracting and procurement documents, policies, and practices.

The commission will review and revise contracts and procurement documents, policies, and practice which hinder or create barriers to successful implementation of the plan.

Monitoring progress and adjust its strategy as necessary.

The Finance Manager will review the plan and goals on a quarterly basis. The Executive Director will be updated every six months regarding our progress towards established goals.