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New York State Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise Mentor-Protégé Program

The New York State Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (“MWBE”) Mentor-Protégé Program aims to build the capacity of MWBE protégés to participate as subcontractors and suppliers on state contracts. Participating prime contractors provide their MWBE protégés with technical training and opportunities for on-the-job learning. The Mentor-Protégé program is administered by the Division of Minority and Women’s Business Development (“Division”), which approves and monitors mentor-protégé relationships.

Who may participate as a Mentor?

Any prime contractor that provides professional services to the State of New York is eligible to participate as a mentor to MWBEs in the Mentor-Protégé Program.

Who may participate as a Protégé?

Protégés must be certified, or eligible to be certified, by the Division as Minority or Women-owned Business Enterprises. Firms may seek certification with the Division in conjunction with seeking to participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program. Protégés must also employ at least one person who provides services to clients of the Protégé other than the Mentor, do business from a primary place of business that is not located in a residential structure, and not previously have been utilized as a subcontractor or supplier by their Mentor on a state contract.

What are the benefits of participating as a Mentor?

Prime contractors who participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program may be eligible to receive preferences when responding to requests for proposals issued by state agencies, credit towards achieving MWBE participation goals on state contracts, and public recognition for their corporate citizenship.

How do I apply to participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program?

Potential participants should send initial inquiries regarding the Mentor-Protégé Program to the Division at mwbebusinessdev@esd.ny.gov. Please include summary information regarding your firm and its capabilities. The Division will contact you to evaluate your eligibility to participate in the Mentor-Protégé Program, and to facilitate connections between Mentors and Protégés where appropriate.

After Mentors identify their Protégés, they must work with their Protégés to develop mentorship curricula which describe the term of the mentorship, the training that the Mentors anticipate providing to their Protégés, and the individuals who will be responsible for providing mentorship training. The Division will assist Mentors and Protégés to develop their mentorship agreements. Mentorship may commence upon approval by the Division of a final mentorship agreement.

What is the duration of a Mentor-Protégé relationship?

Mentors and Protégés will be able to establish the duration of their relationship based upon the nature of the training the Mentor will provide. The Division anticipates that most Mentor-Protégé relationships will last for at least one year.

What activities constitute mentorship?

Mentorship refers to industry-specific training and technical assistance provided by a Mentor to a Protégé, and must include some on-the-job training. Examples of mentorship training include, but are not limited to, assistance related to: training in technology applications and solutions, the interpretation of plans and specifications, the use and maintenance of equipment, the preparation of any quantifiable work product for a client, the use of the Mentor's proprietary products or processes, industry-specific marketing or business development, use of Mentor's facilities or equipment, project management assistance, and business plan development. Mentorship does not include generally applicable training in business skills, such as leadership or communication.

What should I do if I have additional questions?

Please contact the Division at mwbebusinessdev@esd.ny.gov.