

State of Oregon Department of Transportation
Disparity Study

Focus Group Guide

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Place: _____

Group: _____

Hello and thank you for coming to this focus group to provide input that will be used as a part of a comprehensive study of ODOT's procurement of services and products.

My name is _____ and I am a local subconsultant hired by MGT of America, Inc. We have been asked to gather opinions from business owners about the business climate in the State of Oregon. We are looking to obtain information on your experiences if any, when attempting to do business with ODOT. Please understand that participation in this focus group will not affect your current or future contracts with ODOT.

I thought we might begin with introductions. Why don't you start and we will work around the room (name, what kind of work you do, and anything else you'd like us to know about you).

We are very glad that you are all here and appreciate you taking time out of your busy day to participate in this meeting.

We are going to be taking notes throughout the session. In addition, we would like to record this session if there are no objections. Responses to this questionnaire will be held in strict confidence, and will not be distributed to any other firm or person with your firm's identity revealed. However, in the case of a court order, all documentation will be turned over to the court.

The Process

The recordings and notes of these focus groups will only be reviewed by _____ and MGT staff. We will use the information to summarize the discussions that took place during these focus groups. Individual names will not be identified nor will remarks or comments be attributed to a specific individual. Once all of the analysis for the focus groups is completed, the results will be aggregated and will be incorporated with other data from this phase of the study. These findings will be used in reviewing ODOT's procurement practices and the procurement environment of ODOT. We hope that everyone feels free to participate and to add as much insight as possible. We have ample time, so feel free to contribute to the discussion as we go along.

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A. Welcome and brief background about the purpose of focus groups (see above).

- Introductions – have each participant state:
 - Name
 - Company's primary line of business
 - Certification status (if applicable)
 - Years in business

**Be sure to note ethnic group, gender, and certification status (if applicable).
This can be noted on the sign-in sheet.**

B. Key Point to Discuss

- This is an open discussion involving all to participate. Goal is to have everyone participate in the discussion.
- Encourage participants to express thoughts and opinions freely.
- Stress that the intent is to focus on issues related to contracting (such as construction, construction related services – architecture, engineering, professional services, operational services, and goods) and the business climate in the State of Oregon.
- Individuals and participants will not be identified by name when providing feedback and findings to ODOT staff.

B. Facilitation Logistics

- **Facilitators:** The facilitator has primary responsibility for working with the group to solicit responses to questions.
- **Facilitation Time:** Approximately 1½ hours.
- **Major Issues** will be recorded by tape recorder (if there are no objections), personal notes, and flipchart pages.
- **Date, Time, and Location:** To be determined
- **Materials Needed:**
 1. Flip Chart or Easel Paper
 2. Focus Group Guide (attached)
 3. List of Participants (sign-in sheet to be provided)
 4. Markers
 5. Audio Recorder

C. Discussion

- **Establish Scope:** We are going to discuss several items at this point. Our primary goal is to discuss your (local area business owners) opinions about the business climate in the State of Oregon.

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1. Please discuss how you get information about ODOT procurement opportunities (such as, ODOT's website, govcontracts.com, networking/word-of-mouth, etc). Is this information helpful?
2. How could ODOT improve its procurement system to enable businesses to participate more effectively on ODOT federal and state funded projects? *Be sure to specify ODOT federally or state-funded projects.*
3. If you have been awarded a contract with ODOT, on a scale from 1 to 5 (*1 being Extremely Positive to 5 being Extremely Negative*), rate your experience in doing business with the ODOT as a contractor or subcontractor. *Be sure that the responses identify their experience (such as the name of the project, type of project, type of contractor (prime, subcontractor) etc.). Also, be sure that the respondent explains the reason for his/her rating.*
4. On a scale from 1 to 5 (*1 being Extremely Positive to 5 being Extremely Negative*), rate your experience in contracting with other local government agencies or the private sector. *Be sure that the responses identify their experience (such as the name of the entity, type of project, etc.). Also, be sure that the respondent explains the reason for his/her rating.*
5. In the past five years, how much of your contracts have come from ODOT federally- or state-funded projects? General Contractors? Other Public Entities? From your own networks?
6. What do you feel most interferes with your ability to do business with the ODOT on ODOT federal and ODOT state-funded projects (barriers of doing business, such as prequalification, licensing, labor agreements, financing, bond requirements, etc.)? *Be sure that they specify ODOT federally-funded projects or ODOT state-funded projects.*
7. What policies or practices do you think the ODOT should adopt to assist a company with doing more business with the ODOT (ODOT federally-funded projects) ODOT's state-funded projects)?
8. Please discuss your understanding of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). Do you feel the services provided by the ODOT through this Program to be helpful? Please explain.
9. Please provide your opinion on the DBE certification process. How could the DBE certification process for doing business with the ODOT be improved?
10. In the past five (5) years, what have been some of the important partnerships that you have had with contractors or subcontractors on public and private projects?
11. What business assistance services provided by the ODOT have you used? Did you find them helpful? Please explain.