

Procurement & Property Division Policy Memorandum

Subject: Vendor Outreach Program			Number: 19-02
Distribution: ARS: PAO's PPD FD	Date: Revised: 12/14/99 Revised PAO Responsibilities	This Replaces: N/A	

Background

This memorandum provides general guidelines to Headquarters personnel and Procurement Assistance Officers (PAOs) in supporting the Vendor Outreach Program through the participation of procurement officials in Vendor Outreach Sessions.

Policy Guidance

The Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the Under Secretary of the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to establish and support a Vendor Outreach Program. The Program consists of meetings between procurement officials and vendors to facilitate the presentation of capabilities; discussion of technical qualifications; and identification of potential contracting opportunities within ARS. The sessions are intended to facilitate increased contract awards to small business concerns. Enclosure 1 is a copy of the MOU.

A procurement official from ARS Headquarters will schedule the meetings and attend each of the monthly sessions. Program officials, however, will participate only if available, and as appropriate. At Headquarters, participation will be rotated through the buying activities of the Procurement and Property Division, Facilities Division, and the Beltsville Area Office.

All sessions should be generic in nature. The specific contents of the session will address the vendor's capabilities, potential contracting opportunities, names, and addresses of our buying activities along with the types of products and services being acquired. As appropriate, the sessions will also address subcontracting opportunities with our large business prime contractors.

Vendors should be encouraged to (a) complete the Standard Form 129 Solicitation Mailing List Application (2 pages) and submit it to the PAO for inclusion on future bidders' mailing lists. Vendors should also be encouraged to register their firms on PRO-Net, the Procurement Marketing and Access Network, an electronic search engine for Contracting Officers which links to other procurement opportunities. The following REE documentation may be provided to each vendor as handouts, made available for onsite review, or provided as Internet addresses, as appropriate:

- o Brochure, Doing Business Together: Contracting with the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area of the Department of Agriculture
- o The current Procurement Forecast
- o Subcontracting Directory

REE fully supports the Small Business Program and the objectives of the MOU in facilitating a dialogue with small businesses to increase their participation in contract awards. As the Vendor Outreach Program becomes firmly established in the Areas, it will meet standards set out in the REE Outreach Plan and further the goals of the Procurement Preference Program (PPP). We anticipate the first Vendor Outreach sessions at the Area level will begin in December of 1999.

Enclosure 2 is a sample of the Vendor Outreach Schedule which should be used for scheduling appointments. At the conclusion of each session, the schedule should be retained to document items for the Civil Rights Report and the Procurement Outreach Plan.

Action Required
By REE PAO's

PAO's should continue their "vendor outreach" by informally meeting with those companies who request information on their Area's and the agency's procurement (and subcontracting) opportunities and to obtain information on these companies capabilities and technical qualifications. If it is feasible to direct them to specific business opportunities at one of their locations, then this type of activity is supportive of the REE efforts to promote its PPP.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between the

OFFICE OF SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS UTILIZATION

and

Research, Education, and Economics

I. PURPOSE

To establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) and Research, Education, and Economics (REE) to create a Vendor Outreach Program to begin June 1999. The program will allow agencies the opportunity to become more aware on a consistent basis of the diversity of resources available in the small business community to satisfy their requirements while at the same time allowing small businesses the opportunity to present and discuss their capabilities and to learn of potential contracting opportunities.

II. OBJECTIVES

- a. To sponsor a series of 3-hour, monthly outreach sessions to allow small businesses to meet regularly with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) program and procurement officials to present their technical qualifications.
- b. To enhance the USDA's subcontracting program by engaging its large prime contractors in dialogue with small businesses interested in subcontracting opportunities.
- c. To institutionalize small business participation in USDA's procurement activity.
- d. To minimize the cost for small businesses to market their services to USDA while maximizing their opportunity to meet with key USDA officials.

SCOPE

To provide a structured method for USDA's overall Outreach Vendor Program and allow agencies to adopt and play a greater role in their support of USDA's Small Business Program by increasing procurement opportunities to small businesses.

The MOU is applicable to OSDBU and all USDA agencies..

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. OSDBU shall:
 - 1. develop the promotional strategies to solicit small businesses to participate;
 - 2. establish uniform procedures for the administration of the program to include agency briefings and a standard time and place;
 - 3. be responsible for all logistical aspects of the program;
 - 4. provide documentation and information to enable vendors to make decisions to select the most appropriate agency(s) suitable to market their capabilities;
 - 5. be responsible for inviting special guests;
 - 6. design a survey instrument to measure program effectiveness; and
 - 7. recognize the agency with the greatest number of contract awards requiring from the Vendor Outreach Program.

- b. USDA agencies shall:
 - 1. appoint a resource person to coordinate its participation;
 - 2. have adequate representation at each scheduled session;
 - 3. schedule agency individual appointments upon request from small businesses;
 - 4. forward a copy of the final appointment schedule to OSDBU seven (7) days prior to each outreach session; and
 - 5. provide copies of any open solicitations and agency specific procurement information deemed necessary.

V. EXECUTION

OSDBU will develop the promotional strategies to solicit small businesses to participate; establish uniform procedures for the administration of the program to include agency briefings, a standard time and place; be responsible for all logistical aspects; provide documentation and information to enable vendors to make decisions in selecting the appropriate agency(s) suitable to market their capabilities; be responsible for inviting special guests; responsible for designing survey instruments to measure program effectiveness; and last, but not least, recognize the agency with greatest number of contract awards resulting from the Vendor Outreach Program. Feedback will be provided on all program sessions and briefings held as needed to provide for open discussion on any current legislation or necessary information.

The agency(s) will be responsible for their participation at scheduled sessions; the agency will manage requests for appointments from small businesses; and upon completion of final appointments, a copy of the schedule shall be forwarded to OSDBU seven (7) days prior to each outreach session to be compiled into one master schedule for all agencies. The agency is also responsible for providing copies of any open solicitations and agency specific procurement information deemed necessary.

VI. MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

OSDBU will use FY 1999 as the base year to measure contract awards to small, small disadvantaged and women-owned businesses as a result of the Vendor Outreach Program.

VII. TERM

Vendor Outreach Program to be held every second Wednesday of the month beginning June 9, 1999. The MOU will become effective on the date of acceptance by the Director, OSDBU and will remain in effect indefinitely.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

This MOU may be amended at any time in writing by mutual agreement between OSDBU's Director and appropriate agency head.

IX. TERMINATION

This MOU may be terminated by mutual agreement between OSDBU and the appropriate agency head at anytime.

X. ADMINISTRATION

The point of contact for MOU administrative matters is:

Stella Hughes
OSDBU
202-720-7117

XI. ACCEPTANCE

The undersigned hereby accepts the terms of this MOU:

For OSDBU:

For REE:

/s/ Sharron Harris

6/11/99

/s/ I. Miley Gonzalez

6/11/99

SHARRON HARRIS
Director, OSDBU

Date

I. M. GONZALEZ
Under Secretary, REE

Date

VENDOR OUTREACH SCHEDULE
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

_____Area Office

COMPANY NAME

CONTACT PERSON

TELEPHONE NO.

8:00			
8:15			
8:30			
8:45			
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