

“10 Best State Agency MBE Practices”

As we prepare for the start of FY '08 here are “10 Best MBE Practices” to help your agency achieve our goals for greater inclusion of small and minority businesses in state contracting and procurement.

1. **Establish an MBE Management Team and hold quarterly planning meetings to outline a plan of action for how your agency will meet your MBE goal and to provide additional oversight/support for your agency's MBE program. (The Management Team should consist of the Agency Head or Deputy, MBE Liaison, Procurement Director, Program Managers, Budget Director, and Legal Counsel.)**
2. **Designate a full-time MBE Liaison** who reports to the Agency Secretary/Deputy. (as required in COMAR 21.11.03.05).
3. **In preparation for StateStat reporting agencies should begin developing monthly MBE reporting.** The data collected that will now be required monthly is identical in format to what agencies are reporting annually. (DGS, DHMH, DJS, DHR, DPSCS and MDOT will begin MBE StateStat reporting effective August 2007)
4. **Be reasonably aggressive when getting vendors to stretch to reach MBE goals.** This includes setting goals higher than 25% when warranted.
5. **Unbundle contracts.** This will allow your agency to create more opportunities for small businesses and since half of all state businesses are minority and woman-owned you also create more opportunities for MBEs. The Small Business Reserve (SBR) program provides a vehicle for ensuring unbundled contracts go to small businesses.
6. **Identify minority and small business prime contracting opportunities for category I, II and III small procurements and put in place a process for maximizing procurement card purchases with SBR and MBE vendors.** The Corporate Purchasing Card is one of the fastest growing procurement vehicles in state government and can provide a significant source of MBE and SBR participation.
7. **Increase your agency's direct outreach to minority business vendors for purchases below the BPW threshold (<200K), and post all of your agency's solicitation documents on eMaryland Marketplace** (including category III small procurements [between 10K and 25K]).
eMaryland Marketplace is the state's on-line listing of state procurement opportunities
8. **Ensure your agency performs monitoring and compliance, including the validation of prompt payments to MBEs.**
9. **Require your MBE Liaison and all agency employees involved in purchasing activities to receive procurement training, including MBE and SBR program training.**
10. **Regularly communicate these best practices and your expectations for MBE success within your agency.**