

CHAPTER 1.07 EQUITY IN CONTRACTING

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1.07.010 Policy and purpose.

It is the policy of the City of Tacoma that citizens be afforded an opportunity for full participation in our free enterprise system and that historically underutilized business enterprises shall have an equitable opportunity to participate in the performance of City contracts. The City finds that in its contracting for supplies, services and public works, there has been historical underutilization of small and minority-owned businesses located in certain geographically and economically disfavored locations and that this underutilization has had a deleterious impact on the economic well-being of the City. The purpose of this chapter is to remedy the effects of such underutilization through use of narrowly tailored contracting requirements to increase opportunities for historically underutilized businesses to participate in City contracts. It is the goal of this chapter to facilitate a substantial procurement, education, and mentorship program designed to promote equitable participation by historically underutilized businesses in the provision of supplies, services, and public works to the City. It is not the purpose of this chapter to provide any person or entity with any right, privilege, or claim, not shared by the public, generally, and this chapter shall not be construed to do so. This chapter is adopted in accordance with Chapter 35.22 RCW and RCW 49.60.400.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.020 Definitions.

Terms used in this chapter shall have the following meanings unless defined elsewhere in the Tacoma Municipal Code (“TMC”), or unless the context in which they are used clearly indicates a different meaning.

- A. “Bid” means an offer submitted by a Respondent to furnish Supplies, Services, and/or Public Works in conformity with the Specifications and any other written terms and conditions included in a City request for such offer.
- B. “Bidder” means an entity or individual who submits a Bid, Proposal or Quote. See also “Respondent.”
- C. “City” means all Departments, Divisions and agencies of the City of Tacoma.
- D. “Contract” means any type of legally binding agreement regardless of form or title that governs the terms and conditions for procurement of Public Works and Improvements and/or Non-Public Works and Improvements Supplies and Services. Contracts include the terms and conditions found in Specifications, Bidder or Respondent Submittals, and purchase orders issued by the City. A “Contract” as used in this chapter shall include an agreement between the City and a non-profit entity to perform construction-related services for Public Works. A “Contract” does not include: (1) awards made by the City with federal/state grant or City general funds monies to a non-profit entity where the City offers assistance, guidance, or supervision on a project or program, and the recipient of the grant awards uses the grant moneys to provide services to the community; (2) sales transactions where the City sells its personal or real property; (3) a loan transaction where the City is acting as a debtor or a creditor; (4) lease, franchise; (5) agreements to use City real property (such as Licenses, Permits and Easements) and, (6) banking and other financial or investment services.
- E. “Contractor” means any Person that presents a Submittal to the City, enters into a Contract with the City, and/or performs all or any part of a Contract awarded by the City, for the provision of Public Works, or Non-Public Works and Improvements, Supplies or Services.

F. “Goals” means the annual level of participation by MWBEs and SBEs in City Contracts as established in this chapter, the Program Regulations, or as necessary to comply with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws and regulations. Goals for individual Contracts may be adjusted as provided for in this chapter and shall not be construed as a minimum for any particular Contract or for any particular geographical area.

G. “MWBE Certified business” (or “MWBEs”) means a business that meets the criteria set forth in Section 1.07.050 of this chapter and has been certified as meeting that criteria by the Community and Economic Development Department Program Manager.

H. “SBE Certified Business” (or “SBEs”) means a business that meets the criteria set forth in Section 1.07.050 of this chapter and has been certified as meeting that criteria by the Community and Economic Development Department-SBE Program Manager.

I. “SBE Program Manager” means the individual appointed, from time to time, by the City’s Community and Economic Development Director to administer the Program Regulations.

J. “Program Regulations” shall mean the written regulations and procedures adopted pursuant to this chapter for procurement of Supplies, Services and Public Works.

K. “Non-Public Works and Improvements” means all competitively solicited procurement of Supplies and/or Services by the City not solicited as Public Works.

L. “Person” means individuals, companies, corporations, partnerships, associations, cooperatives, any other legally recognized business entity, legal representative, trustee, or receivers.

M. “Proposal” means a written offer to furnish Supplies or Services in response to a Request for Proposals. This term may be further defined in the Purchasing Policy Manual and/or in competitive solicitations issued by the City.

N. “Public Works (or “Public Works and Improvements”)” means all work, construction, alteration, repair, or improvement other than ordinary maintenance, executed at the cost of the City, or that is by law a lien or charge on any property therein. This term includes all Supplies, materials, tools, and equipment to be furnished in accordance with the Contract for such work, construction, alteration, repair, or improvement.

O. “Quote” means a competitively solicited written offer to furnish Supplies or Services by a method of procurement that is less formalized than a Bid or a Proposal. This term may be further defined in the Purchasing Policy Manual.

P. “Respondent” means any entity or Person, other than a City employee, that provides a Submittal in response to a request for Bids, Request for Proposals, Request for Qualifications, request for quotes or other request for information, as such terms are defined in Section 1.06.251 TMC. This term includes any such entity or Person whether designated as a supplier, seller, vendor, proposer, Bidder, Contractor, consultant, merchant, or service provider that; (1) assumes a contractual responsibility to the City for provision of Supplies, Services, and/or Public Works; (2) is recognized by its industry as a provider of such Supplies, Services, and/or Public works; (3) has facilities similar to those commonly used by Persons engaged in the same or similar business; and/or (4) distributes, delivers, sells, or services a product or performs a Commercially Useful Function.

Q. “Services” means non-Public Works and Improvements services and includes professional services, personal services, and purchased services, as such terms are defined in Section 1.06.251 TMC and/or the City’s Purchasing Policy Manual.

R. “Submittal” means Bids, Proposals, Quotes, qualifications or other information submitted in response to requests for Bids, Requests for Proposals, Requests for Qualifications, requests for Quotations, or other City requests for information, as such terms are defined in Section 1.06.251 TMC.

S. “Supplies” means materials, Supplies, and other products that are procured by the City through a competitive process for either Public Works procurement or Non-Public Works and Improvements procurement unless an approved waiver has been granted by the appropriate authority.

T. “Tacoma Public Utilities Service Area” means any ZIP code in which Tacoma Public Utilities maintains infrastructure or provides retail services.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 28274 Ex. A; passed Dec. 16, 2014; Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.030 Discrimination prohibited.

A. No person that is engaged in the construction of public works for the City, engaged in the furnishing of laborers or craftspeople for public works of the City, or is engaged for compensation in the provision of non-public works and improvements supplies and/or services to the City, shall discriminate against any other person on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, or the presence of

any sensory, mental or physical disability in employment. Such discrimination includes the unfair treatment or denial of normal privileges to a person as manifested in employment upgrades, demotions, transfers, layoffs, termination, rates of pay, recruitment of employees, or advertisement for employment.

B. The violation of the terms of RCW 49.60 or Chapter 1.29 TMC by any person that is engaged in the construction of public works for the City, is engaged in the furnishing of laborers or craftspeople for public works of the City, or is engaged for compensation in the provision of non-public works and improvements supplies and/or services shall result in the rebuttable presumption that the terms of this chapter have also been violated. Such violation may result in termination of any City contract the violator may have with the City and/or the violator's ineligibility for further City Contracts.

(Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.040 Program administration.

A. The Community and Economic Development Director, or their designated Program Manager, shall be responsible for administering this chapter and obtaining compliance with respect to contracts entered into by the City and/or its contractors. It shall be the duty of the Director to pursue the objectives of this chapter by conference, conciliation, persuasion, investigation, or enforcement action, as may be necessary under the circumstances. The Director is authorized to implement an administrative and compliance program to meet these responsibilities and objectives.

B. The Director is hereby authorized to adopt and to amend administrative rules and regulations known as the Program Regulations, to properly implement and administer the provisions of this chapter. The Program Regulations shall be in conformance with City of Tacoma policies and state and federal laws and be designed to encourage achievement of the MWBE and SBE goals set forth herein. The Program Regulations shall become effective following public notice and an opportunity to comment by the public.

C. The Program Regulations adopted pursuant to this section are for the administrative and procedural guidance of the officers and employees of the City and are further expressions of the public policy of the City. The Program Regulations, when adopted, shall not confer an independent cause of action or claim for relief cognizable in the courts of the state of Washington or the United States of America to any third parties, and such provisions shall not be used as the basis for a lawsuit in any court of competent jurisdiction challenging the award of any contract by the City.

(Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 28110 Ex. B; passed Dec. 4, 2012; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.050 Certification.

A. The Program Manager shall approve a business as a Certified Business if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The business is certified as a SBE, MBE, WBE, or MWBE through the state of Washington's Office of Minority & Women Business Enterprises; and
2. The company can demonstrate that it also meets at least one of the following additional requirements:
 - a. The personal residence of the owner is located within the City of Tacoma or Tacoma Public Utilities Service Area, or
 - b. The company's business offices are located in any county of the Tacoma Public Utilities Service Area or any county adjacent to Pierce County, or
 - c. When the work is performed outside of Pierce County, the company's business offices may be located in an adjacent county in which the work is performed, or
 - d. Such additional information as the Program Manager or designee may require.

When another governmental entity has an equivalent business classification process, the City may enter into an interlocal cooperative agreement for mutual recognition of certifications.

B. Appeals. The applicant may appeal any certification determination by the Program Manager under this chapter to the Director. The appeal must be made in writing and must set forth the specific reasons for the appeal. The Director shall make a decision on the appeal request within a reasonable time, which decision shall be final unless further appeal is made to the Hearing Examiner. In that event, the Hearing Examiner Rules of Procedure for Hearings, Chapter 1.23 TMC, shall be applicable to that appeal proceeding.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 28274 Ex. A; passed Dec. 16, 2014; Ord. 28147 Ex. A; passed May 7, 2013; Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 28110 Ex. B; passed Dec. 4, 2012; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.060 Program requirements.

A. The program shall meet the following requirements:

1. Establishment of Annual Goals. The Program Regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter shall state reasonably achievable cumulative annual goals for utilization of MWBEs and SBEs in the provision of supplies, services, and public works procured by the City. Cumulative annual goals for the participation of MWBEs and SBEs in City contracts shall be based on the number of qualified MWBEs and SBEs operating within the Tacoma Public Utilities Service Area. The dollar value of all contracts awarded by the City to MWBEs and SBEs in the procurement of supplies, services, and public works shall be counted toward the accomplishment of the applicable goal.

2. Application of Annual Goals to Contracts. The Program Manager shall consult with City departments/divisions to establish department/division specific goals for competitively solicited contracts in accordance with this chapter and the Program Regulations.

B. Waivers. City departments/divisions or the Program Manager may request to waive one or more of the requirements of this chapter as they apply to a particular contract or contracts. Waivers may be granted in any one or more of the following circumstances:

1. Emergency: The supplies, services and/or public works must be provided with such immediacy that neither the City nor the contractor can comply with the requirements herein. Such emergency and waiver must be documented by the department/division awarding the contract.

2. Not Practicable: Compliance with the requirements of this chapter would impose an unwarranted economic burden or risk to the City after consideration of existing budgetary approvals.

3. Sole source: The supplies, services, and/or public works are available from only one source, and subcontracting possibilities do not reasonably exist as determined by the finance purchasing manager.

4. Government purchasing. The City is a party to or included in a federal, state or inter-local government purchasing agreement as approved by the finance purchasing manager.

5. Lack of certified contractors: An insufficient number of qualified contractors exist to create utilization opportunities.

6. Best interests of the City: Waiver of goals is in the best interests of the City due to unforeseen circumstances, provided that said circumstances are set forth in writing by the requestor.

C. Review of Waivers. A waiver determination by the finance purchasing manager may be reviewed by the Board of Contracts and Awards (C&A Board). The C&A Board may also review a request to reduce or waive the utilization requirements based on Not Practicable or Best Interests of the City circumstances. The C&A Board shall determine whether compliance with such requirements would impose unwarranted economic burden on, or risk to, the City of Tacoma as compared with the degree to which the purposes and policies of this chapter would be furthered by requiring compliance. If the determination of the C&A Board does not resolve the matter, a final determination shall be made by the City Council or Public Utility Board, as the case may be.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.070 Evaluation of submittals.

A. All submittals for a supplies, services, or public works and improvements contracts shall be evaluated for attainment of the MWBE and SBE requirements established for that contract in accordance with this chapter and the Program Regulations.

B. The determination of MWBE and SBE usage and the calculation of MWBE or SBE requirements per this section shall include the following considerations:

1. General. The dollar value of the contract awarded by the City to a MWBE or SBE in the procurement of supplies, services, or public works shall be counted toward achievement of the respective goal.

2. Supplies. A public works and improvements contractor may receive credit toward attainment of the MWBE and/or SBE requirement(s) for expenditures for supplies obtained from an MWBE or SBE; provided such MWBE or SBE assumes the actual and contractual responsibility for delivering the supplies with its resources. The contractor may also receive credit toward attainment of the MWBE or SBE goal for the amount of the commission paid to a MWBE or SBE resulting from a supplies contract with the City; provided the MWBE or SBE performs a commercially useful function in the process.

3. Services and Public Works subcontracts. Any bid by a certified MWBE and/or SBE or a bidder that utilizes a certified MWBE and/or SBE shall receive credit toward requirement attainment based on the percentage of MWBE and/or SBE usage demonstrated in the bid. A contractor that utilizes an MWBE and/or SBE subcontractor to provide services or public works

shall receive a credit toward the contractor's attainment of the respective requirement based on the value of the subcontract with that firm.

4. Brokers, Fronts, or Similar Pass-Through Arrangements. MWBEs and/or SBEs acting as brokers, fronts, or similar pass-through arrangements (as such terms are defined in the Program Regulations) shall not count toward the requirement attainment unless the activity reflects normal industry practices and the broker performs a commercially useful function.

C. Evaluation of competitively solicited submittals for public works and improvements and for services when a requirement has been established for the contract to be awarded shall be as follows:

1. When contract award is based on price. The lowest priced bid submitted by a responsive and responsible bidder will be reviewed to determine if it meets the requirement. An MWBE and/or SBE firm may self-count utilization on such bids if they will perform the work for the scope the requirement is based upon.

a. If the low bidder meets the requirements, the bid shall be presumed the lowest and best responsible bid for contract award.

b. any bidder that does not meet the MWBE and/or SBE requirements shall be considered a non-responsible bidder unless the bidder receives a waiver from the Program Manager or C&A Board.

2. When contract award is based on qualifications or other performance criteria in addition to price. Solicitations shall utilize a scoring system that promotes participation by certified contractors. The Program Regulations may establish further requirements and procedures for final selection and contract award, including:

a. Evaluation of solicitations for Architectural and Engineering (A&E) services;

b. Evaluation and selection of submittals in response to requests for proposals; and

c. Selection of contractors from pre-qualified roster(s).

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.080 Contract compliance.

A. The contractor awarded a contract based on MWBE or SBE participation shall, during the term of the contract, comply with the requirements established in said contract. To ensure compliance with this requirement following contract award, the following provisions apply:

1. Any substitutions for or failure to utilize MWBE or SBEs projected to be used must be approved in advance by the Program Manager. Substitution of one MWBE or SBE with another shall be allowed where there has been a refusal to execute necessary agreements by the original MWBE or SBE, a default on agreements previously made or other reasonable excuse; provided that the substitution does not increase the dollar amount of the bid.

2. Where it is shown that no other MWBE or SBE is available as a substitute and that failure to secure participation by the MWBE or SBE identified in the solicitation is not the fault of the respondent, substitution with a non-MWBE or non-SBE shall be allowed; provided, that, the substitution does not increase the dollar amount of the bid.

3. If the Program Manager determines that the contractor has not reasonably and actively pursued the use of replacement MWBEs or SBEs, such contractor shall be deemed to be in non-compliance.

B. Record Keeping. All contracts shall require contractors to maintain relevant records and information necessary to document compliance with this chapter and the contractor's utilization of MWBEs or SBEs, and shall include the right of the City to inspect such records.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019; Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013; Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.090 Program monitoring.

A. An Advisory Committee shall monitor compliance with all provisions of this chapter and the related Regulations. The Program Manager shall establish procedures to collect data and monitor the effect of the provisions of this chapter to assure, insofar as is practical, that the remedies set forth herein do not disproportionately favor one or more racial, gender, ethnic, or other protected groups, and that the remedies do not remain in effect beyond the point that they are required to eliminate the effects of under utilization in City contracting, unless such provisions are supported by a Disparity Study. The Program Manager shall have the authority to obtain from City departments/divisions, respondents, and contractors such relevant records, documents, and other information as is reasonably necessary to determine compliance.

B. The Program Manager shall submit an annual report to the Community and Economic Development Director, Director of Utilities, and the City Manager detailing performance of the program. The report shall document MWBE and SBE utilization

levels, waivers, proposed modifications to the program, and such other matters as may be specified in the Program Regulations.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019: Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013: Ord. 28110 Ex. B; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.100 Enforcement.

The Director, or designee, may investigate the employment practices of contractors to determine whether or not the requirements of this chapter have been violated. Such investigation shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures established in the Program Regulations.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019: Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013: Ord. 28110 Ex. B; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.110 Remedies.

A. Upon receipt of a determination of contractor violation by the Program Manager, the City Manager or Director of Utilities, as appropriate, may take the following actions, singly or together, as appropriate:

1. Forfeit the contractor's bid bond and/or performance bond;
2. Publish notice of the contractor's noncompliance;
3. Cancel, terminate, or suspend the contractor's contract, or portion thereof;
4. Withhold funds due contractor until compliance is achieved; and/or
5. Recommend appropriate action including, but not limited to, disqualification of eligibility for future contract awards by the City (debarment) per Section 1.06.279 TMC;

B. Prior to exercise of any of the foregoing remedies, the City shall provide written notice to the contractor specifying the violation and the City's intent to exercise such remedy or remedies. The notice shall provide that each specified remedy becomes effective within ten business days of receipt unless the contractor appeals said action to the Hearing Examiner pursuant to Chapter 1.23 TMC.

C. When non-compliance with this chapter or the Program Regulations has occurred, the Program Manager and the department/division responsible for enforcement of the contract may allow continuation of the contract upon the contractor's development of a plan for compliance acceptable to the Director.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019: Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013: Ord. 28110 Ex. B; passed Dec. 4, 2012: Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.120 Unlawful acts.

It shall be unlawful for any Person to willfully prevent or attempt to prevent, by intimidation, threats, coercion, or otherwise, any Person from complying with the provisions of this chapter.

(Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.130 Severability.

If any section of this chapter or its application to any Person or circumstance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then the remaining sections of this chapter, or the application of the provisions to other Persons or circumstances, shall not be affected.

(Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)

1.07.140 Review of program.

This chapter shall be in effect through and until December 31, 2024, unless the City Council shall determine at an earlier date that the requirements of this chapter are no longer necessary. If this chapter has not been repealed by July 1, 2024, the City Council shall determine by the end of that year whether substantial effects or lack of opportunity of MWBEs and/or SBEs remain true in the relevant market and whether, and for how long, some or all of the requirements of this chapter should remain in effect.

(Ord. 28625 Ex. A; passed Nov. 5, 2019: Ord. 28274 Ex. A; passed Dec. 16, 2014: Ord. 28141 Ex. A; passed Mar. 26, 2013: Ord. 27867 Ex. A; passed Dec. 15, 2009)