



ROAD PROGRAM

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NTTA ROAD PROGRAM

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ROAD Program Overview

Program Overview

The North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) is committed to increasing the participation of disadvantaged/minority/women business enterprises (D/M/WBEs) in procurement contracts through the implementation of the Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity (ROAD) Program. The ROAD Program will help position D/M/WBE firms to increase their capabilities and compete for larger contracts.

This document details the goals, characteristics and guidelines for the ROAD Program. The NTTA Business Diversity Department (BDD) mission is to strengthen the Authority by the inclusion of disadvantaged, minority and women-owned business enterprises in the procurement of goods and services. The ROAD Program strengthens the NTTA's image in the private and public business sectors, positioning NTTA as a model agency for building diverse businesses and community partnerships.

ROAD Program objectives include:

- Increase D/M/WBE participation in contracting opportunities.
- Strengthen relationships with stakeholders, trade and advocacy organizations as well as the minority chambers of commerce throughout North Texas.
- Broaden its vendor base by removing barriers to obtaining contracts, thereby ensuring participation by the region's best and most competitive firms.
- Develop relationships with vendors who are experienced at partnering on large contracts.

The ROAD Program provides opportunities for new and emerging D/M/WBE firms to have expanded access to resources, a broader scope of services, deeper technical knowledge and improved business management and operations processes by partnering with larger, more established firms offering similar services. The program is designed to result in increased diverse participation in NTTA contracts by elevating the size and scope of projects on which D/M/WBE firms bid. An additional objective is to expose these successful partnerships to sister government agencies seeking increased D/M/WBE participation.

Developing viable relationships through the ROAD Program will facilitate NTTA's commitment to increasing diversity in procurement opportunities in order to create an equitable business environment to D/M/WBEs.

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Background and Best Practices

NTTA identified that in order to increase the participation of D/M/WBEs in their large contracts; it must put forth an effort to validate its commitment to successfully achieving its goals.

Transportation agencies around the country use mentor-protégé programs to put into practice results-driven programs. These established programs increase small or emerging contractor participation in transportation and service-related projects. Research indicates most programs emulate the Federal Government’s Small Business Administration program guidelines.

The following components are consistent with the aforementioned state agency programs.

- Programs focus on providing opportunities for new and emerging D/M/WBE firms to increase their business management, organization and professional skills via partnerships with established businesses, who provide similar services.
- All relationships are voluntary and initiated by a written agreement.
- An oversight committee monitors the program.
- Guidelines define the program’s scope and are measured quarterly.
- The mentor-protégé relationship averages one to two years for professional services and up to three years for construction and is usually driven by the life span or size of a shared project/contract.

The following states are listed as participants of, or in the process of developing, a mentor-protégé program.

State	Agency
California	Department of Transportation (DOT)
Delaware	DOT
District of Columbia	LADBE joint venture program
Georgia	Small business ‘Governors’ program
Illinois	DOT
Maryland	MBE program, including DOT and DBE
Massachusetts	Affirmative Market Program
North Carolina	DOT & Historically Underutilized Business
Ohio	DOT / EDGE
Texas	DOT
Virginia	MBE

Information provided by Insight – Center for Community Economic Development, website statistics for M/W/S/DBE Business Development Services.

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Program Objective – Improving Vendor Diversity

NTTA's goals for D/M/WBE participation are project-specific, based on scope and size. As NTTA drives toward its goal for meeting the regional demands for transportation, the development of a mentor-protégé program positions smaller and emerging North Texas firms to assist in meeting those needs.

The ROAD Program goals are to:

- Increase and diversify participation in NTTA contracts by enabling D/M/WBEs to build capacity and compete for larger contracts.
- Provide guidance to deepen industry and technical knowledge through best practices.
- Equip consultants to develop their services to become prime contractors.

The projected outcome for increased consultant capacity:

- Expand the consultant's scope and specialization of services and capabilities.
- Develop the consultant's bidding capabilities.
- Broaden the consultant's exposure to the processes, execution and management of larger, more complex contracts.
- Facilitate a strategic partnering of critical mass firms (large firms) with specialty firms (consultants).
- Leverage the knowledge base of in-house professionals at larger firms.
- Expand administrative and business-planning capabilities.
- Develop more robust account procedures and reporting.
- Create a dialog that includes coaching, innovation, guidance and best practices.

Participant Roles

The prime contractor (prime), who serves in the mentor role, and consultant (subcontractor), who serves in the protégé role will:

- Mutually agree on all terms and conditions of the work agreement/relationship.
- Commit to the ROAD Program for a minimum of two years.
- Complete confidential assessments to monitor ROAD Program progress.
- Collaborate by working towards shared goals.
- Expect to learn and grow from each other's experience.
- Abide by the agreed upon development plan.
- Set reasonable goals and milestones to measure progress.

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The Role of NTTA and the Business Diversity Advisory Council

NTTA will develop, implement and oversee the program and serve in the following capacities:

- Identify potential applicants through soliciting an application from interested and qualified firms.
- Select final participants.
- Remove obstacles limiting access and create opportunities for D/M/WBEs to increase their firm's capabilities.
- Review the prime/consultant relationship quarterly to determine whether participants are achieving goals.
- Approve any/all changes to a prime/consultant agreement in advance.
- Encourage and support teams formed as joint ventures for bidding purposes between the prime/consultant.
- Provide seminars, information exchange sessions and networking meetings where the consultants can interact directly with larger firms and develop business connections.
- Communicate ROAD Program progress to the Business Diversity Advisory Council (BDAC) and solicit support and counsel.
- Serve as an ombudsman to resolve complaints and problems between primes and consultants.

Business Diversity Department:

- The BDD will implement the program by providing administrative support, processing and evaluating applications from participants and recommending participants to the Oversight Committee.
- Additionally, the BDD will monitor the progress of the participants to ensure they align with the development plan. The department reports participant progress to the Board of Directors and the BDAC as needed.

Business Diversity Advisory Committee:

- The BDAC is comprised of area leaders with backgrounds in business diversity. Members of the BDAC use their expertise by identifying best practices in the field of business diversity and providing counsel to the BDD.

Oversight Committee:

- The Oversight Committee selects vendors for participation in the ROAD Program, approves final development plans prior to implementation and reviews the participant's quarterly reports.
- Members of the Oversight Committee may submit a proposed amendment to the ROAD Program operating guidelines.

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Core Program Curriculum

- Business development
- Business processes
- Marketing
- Operational processes and strategies
- Financial management/strategies
- Accounting
- Funding
- Bonding
- Insurance
- Human resource development
- Bid and proposal preparation
- Project management
- Long-term strategic development
- Industry relationship networking
- Technical assistance
- On-the-job training

Eligibility Requirements

Prime is required to:

- Possess at least three years experience as a prime contractor.
- Demonstrate a commitment to volunteer in assisting the D/M/WBE firm with all aspects of business development.
- Possess good business character.
- Not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors.
- Impart value to a consultant firm from lessons learned and practical experience gained or through its general knowledge of government contracting.

Consultant is required to:

- Possess at least two years experience in the transportation industry or related services.
- Be open to assistance in all aspects of the ROAD Program, including management, communication, technical, financial and business development.
- Be a certified D/M/WBE by an entity recognized by the NTTA at the time of submittal.
- While enrolled in the ROAD Program, consultants will be limited to working with one prime at a time.
- Possess good business character.
- Not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors.

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Operating Procedures and Guidelines

ARTICLE I EXISTENCE, DUTIES AND PURPOSES

Section 1 The NTTA's ROAD Program shall exist to increase the ability of D/M/WBEs to perform prime contract and subcontract work with the NTTA.

Section 2 The program shall operate through the BDD of NTTA.

Section 3 The program goals include:

- a. Increase and diversify NTTA contracts by enabling D/M/WBEs to build capacity and compete for larger contracts.
- b. Provide guidance to deepen industry and technical knowledge through best practices.
- c. Equip consultants to develop their services and become prime contractors (primes).

Section 4 The following guidelines shall apply to all participants in the program:

- a. The prime/consultant participates voluntarily.
- b. The prime/consultant relationship is established by a signed development plan outlining the parties' goals and expectations, including monitoring and reporting provisions, the duration of the relationship and the services and resources to be provided by the prime to the consultant. The plan shall be submitted to and approved by the BDD in conjunction with the Oversight Committee.
- c. The following criteria shall be met in the drafting and implementation of the development plan, to be completed jointly by the prime/consultant:
 1. Copies of the plan shall be retained by all parties.
 2. The plan shall clearly set forth the objectives of the parties involved.
 3. The plan shall describe measurable benchmarks to be reached by the consultant at successive stages of the plan.
- d. The plan shall provide guidelines for resources of the prime that will be utilized by the consultant. The plan shall allow provisions for the prime and the consultant to form a joint venture to bid on contracts subject to normal joint venture approval requirements.
- e. The plan may include training to be provided by the prime to the consultant.

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ARTICLE II. APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

Section 1 Participant Qualifications

- a. All parties wishing to participate in the ROAD Program shall complete the appropriate application and submit the required business plan. The completed application shall be accompanied by all supporting documentation required within the application form.
- b. The prime must have three years of experience as a contractor on highway construction/professional services, and agree to devote time to working with the consultant.
- c. The consultant must have at least two years experience in highway construction contracts or professional services. Consultant must be certified by an entity recognized by the NTTA at the time of application submittal.

Section 2 Participant Notification:

- a. The BDD shall notify all applicants whether they have been selected for the ROAD Program.
- b. Following notification of acceptance, the applicant must sign a ROAD Program two-party agreement between the prime and consultant facilitated by the NTTA. This plan shall constitute the applicant's certification that its principal has received, reviewed and agreed to abide by the rules and guidelines of the ROAD Program. This agreement also shall act as the applicants' formal enrollment in the ROAD Program. The agreement acts as NTTA's certification of the applicant suitability for participation in the program. This plan may be revoked by NTTA or either participant for cause as specified in the section of this document titled "Removal/Termination."

Section 3 Commencing Relationship

- a. All prime/consultant relationships will commence with the signing of a written ROAD Program development plan. The plan shall be submitted to the ROAD Program Oversight Committee for review and approval.

Section 4 Participant Roles:

- a. The prime will:
 1. Sign a development plan with the consultant.
 2. Attend regularly scheduled meetings with the consultant.

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3. Regularly review the consultant's business and implementation plans and other key indicators, such as cash flow, bonding, insurance, recently submitted bids, quotes and participation in construction/professional services.
 4. Identify key organizational problems and business challenges.
 5. Identify needs that can be met through one-on-one supportive services consultant assistance.
 6. Offer advice on best practices to achieve success during and after the program.
 7. Respond promptly to the consultant's request for assistance on significant business problems, not routine issues.
 8. Provide training in new construction/professional service skills to increase the consultant's competitiveness in their industry.
 9. Monitor the plan's progress and report to NTTA regarding progress of the relationship/plan, achievements, etc. in the manner required by the development plan.
- b. The consultant will:
1. Sign the development plan with the prime
 2. Attend regularly scheduled meetings with the prime and execute specific progress steps.
 3. Implement goals and objectives developed with the prime and accept reasonable suggestions to increase the management or operations of its business.
 4. Utilize the assistance of one-on-one supportive services consultants suggested by the prime or NTTA.
 5. Share information including:
 - ❖ Working capital
 - ❖ Capacity, including payroll
 - ❖ Total material and overhead expenses
 - ❖ Net profit
 - ❖ Lines of credit
 - ❖ Bonding aggregate limit or limit per project and current certificates for worker's compensation and general liability insurance
 6. Monitor the plan's progress and report to NTTA concerning the progress of the relationship/plan, achievements, etc. in the manner required by the development plan.

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- c. NTTA will:
 - 1. Implement, oversee and monitor the progress of the ROAD Program.
 - 2. Conduct an evaluation and assessment of potential primes and D/M/WBEs for program participation.
 - 3. Assist the parties in tailoring a development plan.
 - 4. Identify potential applicants and select final participants.
 - 5. Provide on-going monitoring and inspection of approved plans including, but not limited to, mandated quarterly and annual reports of progress toward meeting the approved plans' goals and objectives.

ARTICLE III REMOVAL/TERMINATION

- Section 1 The relationship may be terminated by either party independently or in conjunction with the Oversight Committee.
- Section 2 Any party requesting early termination of the relationship shall send a 30-day written notice of its intent to the other party and NTTA. Similarly, the ROAD Program Oversight Committee shall notify both parties in writing if it intends to end the relationship.
- Section 3 The relationship shall be deemed terminated effective on the date written notification is sent or received by the NTTA. This date shall be evidenced by postmark, date/time stamp of electronic mail, date of correspondence, etc.
- Section 4 The plan shall contain the aforementioned provision allowing termination either by one or all parties upon a 30-day notice to NTTA and by determinate that:
 - a. Either party has failed or is unable to meet its obligations outlined in the development plan.
 - b. The consultant is not progressing or is not likely to progress in accordance with the development plan.
 - c. The consultant has reached a satisfactory level of self-sufficiency to compete without utilizing the ROAD Program.
 - d. The relationship has continued for the maximum allowable period.

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ARTICLE IV OVERSIGHT AND REPORTING

Section 1 NTTA ROAD Program Oversight Roles:

- a. The BDD shall be the “working arm” of the ROAD Program
- b. The ROAD Program Oversight Committee makes decisions and policies relating to the program.

Section 2 Participant Reporting

- a. The BDD shall require the parties to submit quarterly and annual reports indicating the status of their progress toward each of the plan’s stated goals. The reports will indicate the steps taken during each quarter to further the plan. The reports also shall list all projects for which the ROAD Program team has received (or applied for) credit for using the consultant as a D/M/WBE subcontractor. The reports must be signed and dated by an authorized principal of each firm.
- b. The prime/consultant shall each submit an annual report regarding the program and accomplishments for the year. Both the prime/consultant shall indicate in their reports the status of each goal outlined in the ROAD Program, development plan, accomplishments and how the prime specifically assisted the consultant in reaching the stated goal/accomplishment.
- c. Failure to submit timely reports, or submission of incomplete reports, is possible grounds for dissolution of the relationship. If at any time, the BDD determine the guidelines of the program are not being adhered to by the parties, or satisfactory progress is not being made, the BDD in conjunction with the Oversight Committee reserves the right to revoke its approval of the relationship thereby invalidating the plan and/or any individual participant’s enrollment in the program.
- d. Reasonable progress will be expected, though this will vary according to each plan. A finding that the parties have failed to make reasonable progress toward goals stated in the plan shall be communicated with the parties, in writing.

Section 3 Evaluation Criteria:

- a. At the completion of the program, the Oversight Committee will evaluate the prime/consultant relationship including, but not limited to, the following criteria:

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1. Satisfactory progress toward the development plan's stated goals.
2. Improved knowledge of the consultant is specific aspects of highway contracting/professional services.
3. Increased number of projects with contractors other than the prime and/or increased bids submitted as a prime.

ARTICLE V ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

Section 1 General Guidelines

- a. The ROAD Program is not intended to diminish or circumvent existing D/M/WBE rules or regulations, but rather it is intended to improve legitimate activities. Abuse of this ROAD Program may be used as the basis for action against both the prime/consultant including, but not limited to, suspension or debarment.
- b. Except as indicated otherwise herein, all federal regulations and local, state and federal statutes, in addition to NTTA policies must be adhered to in the conduct of any prime/consultant relationship or activities.
- c. Program participants agree that interpretation of the guidelines or regulations shall be determined by the BDD. Parties may feel free (and in fact are encouraged) to seek interpretation from BDD of any provision, from the BDD, they find ambiguous or confusing.

ARTICLE VI RE-ENROLLMENT

Section 1 Once a consultant has commenced a relationship with a prime, they may not be eligible for re-enrollment as a consultant. Unless a prime participant is debarred from the ROAD Program by NTTA, primes may re-enroll in the ROAD Program with a different consultant with the approval of the BDD and the Oversight Committee.

ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Any member of the ROAD Program may recommend a proposed amendment to these Operating Procedures and Guidelines to the BDD. To be implemented, the amendment shall be approved by the Oversight Committee

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What Is the NTTA Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity (ROAD) program?

The NTTA's Relationships and Opportunities Advancing Diversity (ROAD) program is a mentor/protegé program that pairs Disadvantaged/Minority/Women Business enterprises (D/M/WBEs) with approved prime contractors that provide similar services. The program's goal is to increase and diversify participation in NTTA contracts by enabling D/M/WBEs to build capacity and compete for larger contracts.

2. What are the benefits of participating?

This is an exceptional networking opportunity while participants expand their capabilities and gain substantial experience. Consultants broaden their exposure to larger, more complex contracts, deepen industry and technical knowledge, expand their scope and specialization of services and capabilities, and gain access to resources previously unattainable.

3. Will I be able to choose the company with which I am paired?

No. NTTA will match prime contractors and consultants based on developmental need of both participants.

4. How long will the ROAD Program last?

The duration of the ROAD program is for two years.

5. What are the costs involved?

Participation in this ROAD program is strictly voluntary by both prime contractors and consultants. However, prime contractors/consultants may incur some administrative costs due to training and development purposes. These costs are to be agreed upon by primes and consultants. NTTA will not contribute towards agreed upon costs.

6. Who can I contact if I have a problem, a question and/or need additional information?

You may contact the NTTA's Business Diversity Department by email: businessdiversity@NTTA.org.

7. What should I do if I decide I no longer want to participate in the ROAD program?

If this should occur, the ROAD Program does have a termination process. Either party may terminate the prime contractor/consultant agreement with a 30-day advance notice, subject to certain provisions.