



Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Creating opportunities for all in state purchasing and contracting



Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion. Just as diversity enriches our communities and workplaces, it also enriches the purchasing process and the work we do on behalf of the state. And inclusion ensures that everyone has a seat at the table, helping us reach the best outcomes.

It's up to us to put the commitment into action, ensuring all Minnesotans have access to the public procurement process.

Creating broader access and helping historically under-represented groups compete for opportunities isn't just about social responsibility. It also helps us do things better and reach our goals. Embracing diversity and inclusion can help:

- Provide more options for products and pricing, ensuring your agency gets the best value
- Encourage more competition, revealing opportunities for innovation and efficiency
- Create stronger relationships and engagement among the communities you serve
- Foster economic development and help reduce economic disparities

The Basics

The State's commitment to diversity and inclusion is supported by Admin's Small Business Program. The program requires that state agencies:

- Grant a **six percent** preference to eligible Targeted Group (TG), Economically Disadvantaged (ED), and Veteran-Owned (VO) vendors on purchases and contracts;
- Send solicitations to **at least** one eligible TG, ED, or VO vendor, at all price levels;
- Ensure contractors meet goals related to hiring of diverse sub-contractors.

What You Can Do

Beyond following the basic rules and requirements, there is much more you can do. Supporting diversity and inclusion through purchasing and contracting doesn't have to be burdensome either. Admin is here to help.

Here are some simple things you can do:

1. Take advantage of flexibility on low dollar transactions. What does that mean? It means:
 - For purchases under \$5,000, you can directly select a TG, ED, or VO business to complete the job.
 - And for purchases under \$25,000, you can decide which businesses will be invited to compete. In these cases, every business you identify could be a TG, ED, or VO vendor.

Certified Businesses

The following businesses may receive government certification in support of diverse and inclusive contracting:

Targeted Group small businesses owned and operated by:

- Women
- African-Americans
- Hispanic-Americans
- Asian-Americans
- Indigenous Americans
- People with Disabilities

Veteran-Owned small businesses owned and operated by those who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Economically Disadvantaged small businesses located in:

- [Low income counties](#)
- [Designated labor surplus areas](#)

2. When announcing opportunities, broaden your outreach to include diverse communities across Minnesota. For example:
 - Check out the [full directory of certified TG and ED businesses](#), available on Admin’s Materials Management website. You can search by company, keyword, or commodity, and the list can also be downloaded in full in plain text or Excel format. You can search for VO businesses on [VetBiz.gov](#).
 - Advertise opportunities in a wide variety of venues, including community-based media outlets.
 - When attending or exhibiting at trade shows, promote your agency’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. You can also join Admin in attending or exhibiting at shows intended for small businesses.
3. Create Request for Proposal (RFP) and Request for Bid (RFB) documents that will open opportunities to all businesses. To do this:
 - Use plain language in your RFP and RFB documents so all businesses can understand and participate;
 - Avoid overly rigid or prescriptive requirements that favor established, long-time vendors;
 - Include evaluation criteria that grant points based on diversity and inclusion.
4. Allow at least 21 days – or more – for businesses to respond to your solicitations. Businesses with fewer resources may need more time to prepare their response.
5. Unbundle a large, complex purchase or contract into a series of smaller ones. Breaking the work into parts can give more companies the opportunity to respond, in particular helping smaller businesses compete.
 - A small TG, ED, or VO business might be well positioned to complete one part of your project or purchase, but might not be equipped to do everything you’re looking for.
 - Note that unbundling should not be used as a method to dodge requirements related to delegated purchasing authority.

We’re Here to Help

If you need more information or assistance, you can always contact Admin’s Materials Management team:

- By phone at 651-296-2600
- By email at mmdhelp.line@state.mn.us
- Online at mn.gov/admin/mmd