

## **Supplier Diversity Program Frequently Asked Bid Questions**

In addition to including an SDP presentation into a bidders' conference, departments may use the COMMBUYS Q&A functionality to highlight and explain the SDP requirements of the bid. Please consider posting the following questions and answers during the bid Q&A period, to help potential bidders better understand the SDP.

### **What is the Supplier Diversity Program?**

Pursuant to Executive Order 599, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) requires all bidders to make a significant financial commitment to partnering with one or more businesses and non-profit organizations ("SDP Partners") certified or recognized by the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO).

### **What does the SDP require of my company at the time of bid?**

All Bidders must complete the SDP Plan Form included in this solicitation and attach it to their bid response. On the form, bidders must propose an SDP Commitment percentage and list one or more SDP Partner(s) that will be utilized to meet the bidder's SDP Commitment.

### **What is the SDP financial commitment?**

Your SDP financial commitment is the percentage of contract sales resulting from this solicitation that would be spent with the SDP Partner(s).

### **The form asks for a percentage commitment for subcontracting and for a percentage commitment for ancillary products and services. Are both required, or can we provide a total percentage commitment?**

Both ancillary and subcontracting commitment percentages are required to be entered on the form, even if one of the percentages is zero. The total % commitment is calculated based on the ancillary and subcontracting combined.

### **What is the minimum percentage I must commit?**

The minimum acceptable Total SDP Commitment is 1%. Bidders shall be awarded additional evaluation points for higher SDP Commitments.

### **If I am already certified as a diverse business, can I list my own company as an SDP partner?**

No. Your SDP partner may not be your own company, or its affiliate or subsidiary. It must be a different business.

### **Is the SDP commitment related to the percentage of all company sales or specific to sales under the blanket contract?**

It is specific to sales under the blanket contract.

### **Do I have to subcontract a portion of my contract to my SDP partner?**

No. Subcontracting is not required. Bidders are allowed to use SDP partners to purchase "ancillary products and services," which are products or services that meet the bidder's general business needs and are not directly related to the contract with the Commonwealth.

**We are a small company and don't have any suppliers. Can you give examples of ancillary spend?**  
Office supplies, business cards, and promotional items are very common. Both recurring and one-time expenses qualify.

**Can I change SDP partners during the life of the contract?**

Yes.

**Is my choice of SDP partners limited to Massachusetts-based companies?**

No. Your SDP partner(s) can be located anywhere in the United States, so long as they are SDO Certified or SDO Recognized.

**What type of certified businesses are acceptable SDP Partners?**

SDP Partners must be business enterprises and/or non-profit organizations certified or recognized by the SDO in one or more of the following certification categories:

- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Minority Non-Profit Organization (M/NPO)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Women Non-Profit Organization (W/NPO)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VBE)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)

**Where can I find SDP partners?**

The two primary sources for SDP partners are the [SDO Directory of Certified Businesses](#) or in [U.S. Small Business Administration's Veteran Small Business Certification \(VetCert\) Directory](#). See the Supplier Diversity Program section of the RFR for more information on partnerships acceptable at the time of bid.

**Can I discuss my SDP plan with someone before I submit it with my bid?**

Contractors seeking assistance in the development of their SDP Plans or identification of potential SDP Partners may visit the SDP webpage, [www.mass.gov/sdp](http://www.mass.gov/sdp), or contact the SDP Help Desk at [sdp@mass.gov](mailto:sdp@mass.gov). While the SDO will answer general questions about the program, it cannot advise on specific information to be included in your company's bid.

**Can I list a partner that is not yet certified or recognized by the SDO?**

Yes, but with two important notes. (1) The SDP partner must be certified by a state or regional organization recognized by the SDO. (2) Spending with such partners will not contribute to meeting the Contractor's SDP Commitment unless they apply for, and are granted, SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition prior to the end of the fiscal year.

**What if a proposed SDP partner that was not SDO certified or recognized does not receive SDO certification or recognition after my contract award?**

If proposed SDP Partners do not receive SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition, the Contractor must find alternative SDP Partners to meet the SDP Commitment.

**What does the SDP require of my company if my company is awarded a contract?**

All contractors are required to submit regular spending reports to their contracting agency showing that they have met their SDP commitment. SDP commitment compliance is measured on a Massachusetts fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). SDP reports are due within 45 days of the end of each quarter. The Supplier Diversity Office may contact contractors' SDP partners to verify the accuracy of payments reported.

**Beside financial commitment and SDP partners, what other information may be evaluated?**

It is **desirable** for Bidders to describe their business practices and any additional initiatives related to engaging, buying from and/or collaborating with diverse businesses. Including this information may increase a bidder's evaluation score, depending on the individual procurement.

**Are SDO-certified businesses awarded any evaluation points for being SDO-certified?**

No, SDO-certified bidders are not awarded any additional points for being SDO-certified.

**What happens if we don't meet the percentage commitment that we forecast?**

A contractor's SDP commitment is a term of the contract, and contractors are required to meet it. The Supplier Diversity Office offers training and assistance to contractors in identifying potential SDP partners. Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of the contract for more details.