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 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 used to meet the bidder's SDP commitment.

What is the required SDP form I need to submit?

For Goods and Services contracts, complete the **Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan Form,** and for Purchase of Service (POS) contracts, complete the **Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Form for Purchase of Service (POS). It is important you fill in the correct form.** Both forms provide step-by-step instructions on how to fill them in. Please refer to the RFR for additional details.

What is the SDP financial commitment?

Your SDP financial commitment is a percentage of your company's contract sales resulting from this solicitation that would be spent with the SDP Partner(s). For Purchase of Service (POS) contracts, this commitment is a fixed dollar amount, not a percentage. Refer to the Request for Response (RFR) for detailed information.

The Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan Form asks for a percentage commitment for subcontracting and for a percentage commitment for ancillary products and services. Are both required?

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. POS providers must commit a meaningful financial commitment.

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 this contract?
The SDP commitment is specific to sales under this contract for percentage commitments.

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 types of ancillary spend. 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, as long as they are SDO-certified or SDO recognized as described in the next question.

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 (LBGTBE)

Where can I find SDP partners?
Vendors may use the SDO Directory of Certified Businesses or the SBA Small Business Search directory to find partners. When using the SBA directory, please note that the SDO recognizes only the Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) certifications. Vendors can also contact the SDO at sdp@mass.gov to discuss partnership options.

Can I discuss my SDP plan with someone before I submit it with my bid?
Yes, you can contact the SDP Help Desk at 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?

While you can list a partner that is not yet SDO-certified, 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 does not receive SDO certification or recognition?

If a proposed SDP Partner does 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?

The SDO recommends quarterly reporting, but SDP spending information must be collected at least annually. All vendors, even with zero sales, are required to report SDP spending in the SDO Hub for Departmental Contracts, and in the Operational Services Division's Vendor Reporting Management (VRM) for statewide contracts. The SDO may contact contractors' SDP partners to verify the accuracy of reported payments.

Besides 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 a contractor doesn't meet their submitted commitment?

A contractor's SDP commitment is a term of the contract, and contractors are required to meet it. Please refer to the Terms and Conditions of the contract for more details. If contractors are having challenges meeting their SDP commitment, they are encouraged to contact the SDO at sdp@mass.gov to discuss partnership options prior to the end of the fiscal year.