INSTRUCTIONS FOR PURCHASERS

The Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Language below is required for Large Procurements, defined as those with estimated annual value greater than $250,000. When conducting a Large Procurement, use the language below. For Large Procurements, bidders are required to complete the SDP Plan form and make a minimum SDP commitment of 1%. The SDP Plan must account for at least 25% of the total evaluation points available, with the majority of points assigned to the bidder's SDP commitment. For further information, including determining program applicability, writing evaluation criteria, and managing SDP throughout the life of your procurement, please review the Supplier Diversity Office's Diverse and Small Business Program Policies for Goods and Services Procurements and the Best Value Evaluation of SDP Plan Forms: A Guide for Strategic Sourcing Teams. You can also contact the Supplier Diversity Office at sdp@mass.gov.

Please delete these instructions before RFR publication.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP)

Program Background. The Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP), established pursuant to Executive Order 599, supports meaningful business relationships between awarded vendors and diverse businesses and non-profit organizations ("SDP Partners") certified or recognized by the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO).

Financial Commitment Requirements. All Bidders responding to this solicitation are required to make a significant financial commitment ("SDP Commitment") to partner with one or more SDO-certified or recognized diverse business(es) or non-profit organization(s). This SDP Commitment represents a percentage of the vendor's contract sales that will be spent with SDP Partner(s). The minimum acceptable SDP Commitment is 1%. Bidders will be awarded additional evaluation points for higher SDP Commitments.

If a contract is awarded, the Total SDP Commitment will become a contractual requirement. The vendor is expected to meet this commitment each Massachusetts fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for the duration of the contract.

To be eligible for a contract award, a Bidder must submit an SDP Commitment that meets the requirements described above. This requirement applies to all Bidders, including those that are certified as diverse businesses.

Each Vendor is responsible for planning and managing its SDP partnerships and spending to ensure that it meets its annual SDP Commitment. While the SDO is available to provide program guidance and resources,the responsibility for meeting the SDP Commitment remains with the Vendor.

Eligible SDP Partner Certification Categories
SDP Partners must be businesses 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)
- Veteran Non-Profit Organization (V/NPO)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)

Ways to Partner with SDP Businesses

Vendors have flexibility in how they work with SDP Partners. Eligible business-to-business relationships include:

- **Subcontracting:** The SDP Partner provides products and/or services related to the contract. These relationships often, but not always, include a formal written agreement between the Vendor and the SDP Partner.

- **Ancillary Products and Services**: The Vendor purchases products or services from an SDP Partner to support its general business or operational needs. These purchases do not need to be related to the Commonwealth contract. Examples include office supplies, business cards, and promotional items. Both recurring and one-time purchases may qualify.

Only the types of business-to-business relationships described above are eligible under this contract. If a Vendor proposes subcontracting, the arrangement must also comply with any subcontracting requirements included in this RFR.

Program Flexibility

The SDP is designed to give Vendors flexibility in developing partnerships that work for their businesses. In particular:

- SDP Partners are **not** required to be subcontractors.
- SDP Partners do not have to be in Massachusetts.
- SDP Partners **may be changed or added** during the contract term, as long as they continue to meet their SDP Commitment.

SDP Plan Form Requirements

All Bidders must complete the SDP Plan Form included in this solicitation and submit it with their bid response. The form must include the Bidder's proposed SDP Commitment (at least 1%) and identify one or more SDP Partners the Bidder plans to work with to meet that commitment.

An SDP Partner must be a separate business or organization. A Bidder may not identify itself, its affiliate, or its subsidiary as an SDP Partner. Similarly, a Vendor that is certified by the SDO or another recognized certification organization may not count spending within its own organization—or with its subsidiaries or affiliates—toward its SDP Commitment.

Bidders may propose SDP Partners that are:

- **Already Certified or recognized by the SDO**. These partners appear in the SDO Directory of Certified Businesses or in the SBA Small Business Search directory. 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.

- **Not yet certified or recognized by the SDO.** Bidders may identify a proposed SDP Partner that has not yet received SDO certification or recognition. However, the Bidder is responsible for ensuring that the proposed partner obtains the appropriate certification or recognition prior to the end of the fiscal year. There is no guarantee that a proposed SDP Partner will be certified. If proposed SDP Partners do not receive SDO supplier diversity certification or recognition, the Vendor must find alternative SDP Partners to meet their SDP Commitment.

Supplier Diversity Practices and Additional Initiatives
Bidders are encouraged to share information about their broader supplier diversity practices. For example, a Bidder may provide contact information for the individual or team responsible for developing and maintaining supplier diversity relationships and may include its written supplier diversity policy.

Bidders are also encouraged to highlight additional ways they support, engage, or collaborate with diverse businesses. Examples include:

- Participating in mentor-protégé relationships in which employees provide training, guidance, or business support to diverse businesses;
- Providing technical or financial assistance to diverse businesses; and
- Offering voluntary assistance programs in which employees provide operational support to diverse businesses.

Please note that workforce diversity initiatives will not be considered as part of the SDP.

Evaluation of SDP Forms
The Commonwealth values meaningful supplier diversity commitments and encourages Bidders to develop strong SDP Plans. At least 25% of the total available evaluation points for this solicitation will be allocated to the evaluation of the SDP Plan Form.

SDP Spending Reports and Compliance
After contract award, Vendors report their SDP spend at least quarterly to demonstrate progress toward their SDP Commitment. Vendors must follow report submission instructions from the issuing department and the SDO.

To count toward a Vendor's SDP Commitment, spending must be with an eligible SDP Partner listed in the SDO Directory of Certified Businesses or in SBA Small Business Search (VOSB or SDVOSB only). Spending with Partners outside of these directories will not count toward meeting a Vendor's SDP Commitment.

SDP Spending Verification
To help confirm reported SDP spending, the SDO and the contracting department may contact SDP Partners and ask them to verify the amounts reported as paid to them by the Vendor.

Program Resources and Assistance
The SDO is available to help Bidders understand the SDP, develop their SDP Plans, and identify potential SDP Partners. For resources and additional information, please visit www.mass.gov/sdp, or contact the SDP Help Desk at sdp@mass.gov.