



# DBE Program Plan

Revised March 2025

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## **Introduction to MDT**

### **Mission & Vision**

The mission of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is to plan, build, operate, and maintain a safe and resilient transportation infrastructure to move Montana forward. The department's guiding vision to accomplish this mission is that MDT will set the gold standard for a highly effective, innovative, and people-centric department of transportation.

The core values that guide all MDT employee behavior, actions and approach are:

- We are **B**usiness focused,
- We **U**nify the organization,
- We **I**nnovate at all levels,
- We **L**ead by example,
- We are **D**edicated to MDT,
- We **E**mpower our employees,
- We **R**espect each other, and
- We **S**erve Montana with pride.

Team MDT – We are **B.U.I.L.D.E.R.S.**

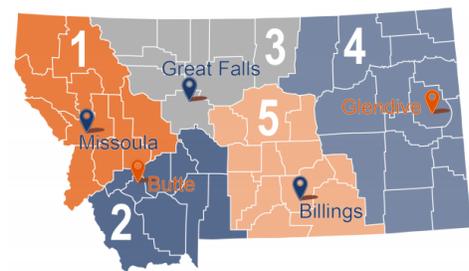
### **Organization**

MDT is responsible for the planning, design, maintenance, operation, and management of Montana's state-owned roadways, walkways, rest areas, airports, and numerous public-use facilities. The departmental structure helps staff at the state, regional, and local level efficiently deliver transportation improvements, comply with relevant rules and regulations, and maintain and operate transportation infrastructure to enable daily movement of goods and people across the state.

Each division within the agency provides a critical function toward meeting MDT's mission of ensuring Montana's transportation network continues to remain a quality resource for all users. As transportation funding changes on both the federal and state levels, efficient management of resources to address needs assures Montana's transportation network continues to support the growth of businesses, communities, and the Montana way of life. MDT's leaders, employees, and partners are focused on the future of our state and finding the best ways to move Montana forward, together.

Montana's geographic and demographic diversity means regions in Montana face different travel demands and transportation challenges. Larger, metropolitan areas with a need to expand urban roadways or manage congested intersection operations may vary from rural Montana's need to reduce roadway departure crashes or manage the movement of large trucks through small towns. To address these unique challenges, the state is split into five transportation districts, each managed by district administrators focused on the individual transportation needs within their jurisdiction.

As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) and its Operating Administrations (OA), MDT is committed to comply with the DBE Program requirements in 49 CFR Part 23 and 26 to deliver its federally assisted programs, services, and activities in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner. This Program Plan outlines MDT's approach for complying with DBE Program requirements.



**District 1 - Missoula**  
Phone: 406.523.5800

**District 2 - Butte**  
Phone: 406.494.9600

**District 3 - Great Falls**  
Phone: 406.454.5880

**District 4 - Glendive**  
Phone: 406.345.8200

**District 5 - Billings**  
Phone: 406.252.4138

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 49 CFR 26 SUBPART A

#### Objectives

##### 49 CFR 26.1

The objectives as indicated below are also found in the policy statement section of this program. This DBE Program Plan applies to all types of firms: contractors and consultants.

- a) To ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts in MDT's highway, transit, and airport financial assistance programs;
- b) To create a level playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly for DOT-assisted contracts;
- c) To ensure that the DBE Program is narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law;
- d) To ensure that only firms that fully meet 49 CFR Part 26 eligibility standards are permitted to participate as DBEs;
- e) To help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in DOT-assisted contracts;
- f) To promote the use of DBEs in all types of federally-assisted contracts and procurement activities conducted by recipients;
- g) To assist the development of firms that can compete successfully in the marketplace outside the DBE Program;
- h) To provide appropriate flexibility to recipients of Federal financial assistance in establishing and providing opportunities for DBEs.

#### Applicability

##### 49 CFR 26.3

As a recipient of Federal funds, MDT is required to administer a DBE program in compliance with all laws, regulations, Executive Orders, and guidance.

MDT receives the following federal funds:

- Federal airport funds authorized by 49 U.S.C. 47101, *et seq.*
  - Applies to MDT (for statewide planning), Lincoln Airport and Yellowstone Airport.
- Federal-aid highway funds authorized under Titles I (other than Part B) and V of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914, or Titles I, III, and V of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), [Pub. L. 105-178](#), 112 Stat. 107. Titles I, III, and V of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), [Pub. L. 109-59](#), 119 Stat. 1144; and Divisions A and B of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), [Pub. L. 112-141](#), 126 Stat. 405.; and
- Federal transit funds authorized by Titles I, III, V and VI of ISTEA, Pub. L. 102-240 or by Federal transit laws in Title 49, U.S. Code, or Titles I, III, and V of the TEA-21, [Pub. L. 105-178](#). Titles I, III, and V of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), [Pub. L. 109-59](#), 119 Stat. 1144; and Divisions A and B of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), [Pub. L. 112-141](#), 126 Stat. 405.

#### Definitions

##### 49 CFR 26.5

MDT adopted the definitions contained in 49 CFR 26.5 for this program. These definitions as well as those specific to MDT are located in Appendix D.

## **Non-Discrimination Requirements**

### 49 CFR 26.7

MDT will not exclude any person from participation in, deny any person the benefits of, or otherwise discriminate against anyone in connection with the award and performance of any contract covered by this part on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin.

In administering its DBE program, MDT will not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, use criteria or methods of administration that have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color, sex, or national origin.

## **Data Collection and Reporting Requirements**

### 49 CFR 26.11

#### *Reporting to DOT*

MDT will provide data about its DBE Program to the Department as directed by DOT and its operating administrations.

#### *Part a and b – Uniform Report*

MDT reports DBE participation on the Uniform Report of DBE Awards or Commitments and Payments as described in 49 CFR Part 26. MDT collects data from subrecipients to ensure accurate reporting and only counts contracting opportunities as awards. MDT submits reports on a semi-annual basis to FHWA and FTA (by June 1 and December 1) and an annual basis to FAA (December 1) through each Operating Administration's (OA) designated reporting system.

#### *Part c – Bidders List*

MDT will collect bidders list information as described in § 26.11(c)(2) and enter it into the system designated by DOT. The purpose of the bidders list is to compile as accurate data as possible about the universe of DBE and non-DBE contractors and subcontractors who seek to work on our federally assisted contracts for use in helping you set your overall goals, and to provide the Department with data for evaluating the extent to which the objectives of § 26.1 are being achieved.

MDT will obtain the following bidders list information about all DBE and non-DBEs who bid as prime contractors and subcontractors on each of our federally assisted contracts:

- Firm name
- Firm Address including Zip code
- Firm's status as a DBE or non-DBE
- Race and gender information for the firm's majority owner
- NAICS code applicable to each scope of work the firm sought to perform in its bid
- Age of the firm
- Annual gross receipts of the firm. The gross receipts can be obtained by asking each firm to indicate into what gross receipts bracket they fit (e.g. less than \$1 million; \$1-3 million; \$3-6 million; \$6-10 million, etc) rather than requesting an exact figure from the firm.

MDT will collect the data from all bidders for our federally assisted contracts by requiring the information in paragraph (c)(2) of this section to be submitted with their bids or initial responses to negotiated procurements.

MDT will enter this data in the Department's designated system no later than December 1 following the fiscal year in which the relevant contract was awarded.

In the case of a “design-build” contracting situation where subcontracts will be solicited throughout the contract period as defined in a DBE Performance Plan pursuant to § 26.53(e), MDT will enter the data no later than December 1 following the fiscal year in which the design-build contractor awards the relevant subcontract(s).

*Part d – Maintain Records*

MDT will retain indefinitely information that documents a DBE firm’s compliance with the requirements of this part. At a minimum, MDT retains the following records for DBE firms:

- A complete application package;
- All Declarations of Eligibility;
- Change notices; and
- On-site reviews.

To ensure confidentiality, these records are maintained in a secure electronic content management system. Other certification or compliance related records are retained for a minimum of three (3) years. Records may be retained for a longer period based on applicable MDT record retention requirements.

*Part e – Reporting*

MDT for the Montana UCP established pursuant to § 26.81 reports the following information to the United States Departmental Office of Civil Rights by January 1 of each year:

- The number and percentage of in-state and out-of-state DBE certifications by gender and ethnicity (Black American, Asian-Pacific American, Native American, Hispanic American, Subcontinent-Asian Americans, and non-minority);
- The number of DBE certification applications received from in-state and out-of-state firms and the number found eligible and ineligible;
- The number of decertified firms:
  - Total in-state and out-of-state firms decertified;
  - Names of in-state and out-of-state firms decertified because Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Owner (SEDO) exceeded the personal net worth cap; and
  - Names of in-state and out-of-state firms decertified for excess gross receipts beyond the relevant size standard.
- The number of in-state and out-of-state firms summarily suspended;
- The number of in-state and out-of-state applications received for an individualized determination of social and economic disadvantaged status; and
- The number of in-state and out-of-state firms certified whose owner(s) made an individualized showing of social and economic disadvantaged status.

**Assurances**

49 CFR 26.13

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.13(a), the following clause is placed in every financial assistance agreement with a DOT operating administration:

The Montana Department of Transportation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the award and performance of any DOT assisted contract or in the administration of its DBE Program or the requirements of 49 CFR part 26. The recipient shall take all necessary and reasonable steps under 49 CFR part 26 to ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT assisted contracts. The recipient’s DBE Program, as required by 49 CFR part 26 and as approved by DOT, is incorporated by reference in this agreement. Implementation of this program is a legal obligation and failure to carry out its terms shall be treated as a violation of this agreement. Upon notification to the Montana Department of Transportation of its failure to

carry out its approved program, the Department may impose sanction as provided for under part 26 and may, in appropriate cases, refer the matter for enforcement under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and/or the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986 (31 U.S.C. 3801 *et seq.*).

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.13(b), the following clause will be included in all DOT-assisted contracts between MDT and its contractors as well as every contract a subcontractor has with the prime:

The contractor, sub recipient or subcontractor shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the performance of this contract. The contractor shall carry out applicable requirements of 49 CFR part 26 in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts. Failure by the contractor to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this contract, which may result in the termination of this contract or such other remedy as the recipient deems appropriate.

A contractor's failure to comply with any provision of the DBE regulations will be considered a material contract breach.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

### **49 CFR 26 SUBPART B**

#### **DBE Program Updates**

49 CFR 26.21

MDT's DBE Program will be updated and approved by OAs when there have been significant changes to the current approved Plan. All MDT sub-recipients of federal funds must comply with and adopt MDT's DBE Plan and may not have a plan independent from MDT.

#### **Policy Statement**

49 CFR 26.23

MDT's Policy Statement is in Appendix A.

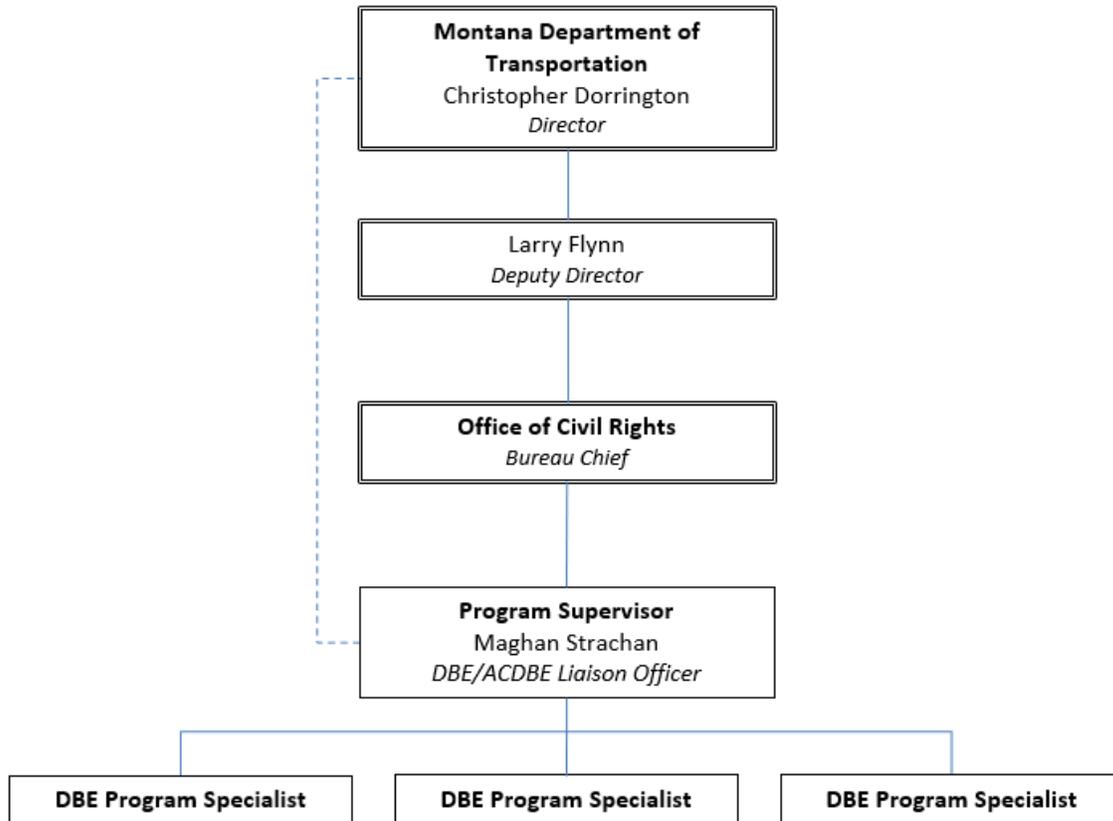
#### **DBE Liaison Officer (DBELO)**

49 CFR 26.25

MDT has designated the following individual to serve as DBELO:

*Maghan Strachan*  
*MDT Office of Civil Rights*  
*2701 Prospect Ave.*  
*PO Box 201001*  
*Helena, MT 59620-1001*  
[mastrachan@mt.gov](mailto:mastrachan@mt.gov)  
*406-444-0841*

In that capacity, the DBELO/OCR is responsible for implementing all aspects of the DBE program and ensuring that MDT complies with all provisions of 49 CFR Part 26. The DBELO/OCR has direct, independent access to the Director of MDT concerning DBE program matters. An organizational chart displaying the DBELO's position in the organization is found on the next page.



The DBELO/OCR is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the DBE program, in coordination with other affected Administrative Team members and program areas. The DBELO oversees a staff of three specialists to assist in the administration of the program. The DBE Program staff responsibilities include the following:

1. Gather and report statistical data and other information as required by DOT.
2. Review third party contracts and purchase requisitions for compliance with this program.
3. Work with affected program areas to set overall annual goals.
4. Ensure that bid notices and requests for proposals are available to DBEs in a timely manner.
5. Identify contracts and procurements so that DBE goals are included in solicitations (both race-neutral methods and contract specific goals attainment and identify ways to improve progress).
6. Analyze MDT's progress toward attainment and identify ways to improve progress.
7. Participate in pre-bid meetings.
8. Advise the Director on DBE matters and achievement of DBE goals.
9. Determine contractor compliance with good faith efforts.
10. Provide DBEs with information and assistance in preparing bids, obtaining bonding and insurance.
11. Plan and participate in DBE training seminars.
12. Certify DBEs according to the criteria set by DOT and act as liaison to the Uniform Certification Process in Montana.
13. Provide outreach to DBEs and community organizations to advise them of opportunities.
14. Maintain MDT's updated directory on certified DBEs.

### **DBE Financial Institutions**

49 CFR 26.27

It is the policy of MDT to investigate the full extent of services offered by financial institutions owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in the community, to make reasonable efforts to use these institutions, and to encourage prime contractors on DOT-assisted contracts to make use of these institutions.

To date we have identified two institutions within the state:

Eagle Bank  
80 Heritage Ln.  
Polson, MT 59860  
406.883.2940

Native American Bank, National Association  
125 North Public Square  
Browning, MT 59417  
800.307.9199

Information on the availability of such institutions can be obtained from the DBE Program Specialists or the Minority Depository Institutions list through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation at the following link [FDIC](#).

### **Prompt Payment**

49 CFR 26.29 MCA 28-2-2103(2)(a)

#### *Part a – Prompt Payment Clauses*

MDT requires that all subcontractors performing work on DOT-assisted contracts shall be promptly paid for work performed pursuant to their agreements, in accordance with all relevant federal, state, and local law. Prompt payment and return of retainage requirements also apply to lower-tier subcontractors.

For construction contracts, §28-2-2103(2)(a), MCA, states that prompt payment is 7 days from receipt of payment. Therefore, on all construction contracts, MDT includes a provision which states the following:

Submit payment information for all subcontractors and suppliers to the Department within the timeframes shown.

- Prime contractors with first tier subcontractors or suppliers within 7 calendar days of payment from MDT.
- Subcontractors with lower tier subcontractors or suppliers within 7 calendar days of payment from parent contractor.

MDT reviews subcontracts and ensures that subcontracts do not provide for a payment time frame longer than the law's mandated 7 days.

Prompt payment for consultant contracts falls under 49 CFR 26.29. The following language is included in all consultant contracts:

Consultant must pay all subconsultants within thirty (30) days from receipt of payment from MDT to Consultant for invoiced subconsultant services, Consultant shall pay subconsultants. Consultant shall pay subconsultants for satisfactory performance of their subcontracts. Identify any payments that have been withheld from subconsultants.

*Part b – Retention*

MDT follows 49 CFR 26.29(b)(1) for retainage, which states:

You may decline to hold retainage from prime contractors and prohibit prime contractors from holding retainage from subcontractors.

MDT does not hold retainage from prime contractors and has the following contract clause prohibiting prime contractors from withholding retainage from subcontractors:

In accordance with MCA 28-2-2110, retainage may not be withheld from subcontractors. For sub-recipient contracts, MDT provides the above language for the sub-recipient to ensure prompt payment of subcontractors and suppliers. The sub-recipient reports subcontractor and supplier payments to MDT.

For every airport construction project funded under FAA Federal grant assistance programs, MDT includes the applicable clause from FAA Advisory Circular 150/5370-10 (Section 90-06) pertaining to the selected retainage method. The applicable clause will be included verbatim. However, Montana State prompt payment laws provide for payment in seven days, so any reference to “30 days” will be revised accordingly.

*Part c – Acceptance of Work*

MDT Construction Project Managers and staff verify work performed, whether done by the prime or subcontractor on all construction projects. Daily, MDT tracks work performed per the specifications. Monthly, the completed work items are reviewed and paid.

For consultants, MDT Project Managers review monthly invoices submitted by consultants, which includes invoices for subconsultant work. If items billed on the invoice are completed, MDT pays the invoice.

*Part d – Monitoring and Enforcement*

Prime contractors and subcontractors (if they have lower tier subcontractors) must report payments to MDT. If the contractor intends to withhold payment, it must notify the project owner. The contractor may not withhold payment from a subcontractor for work that it has received payment for. MDT has an escalation process to determine appropriate contract sanctions for late payments.

*Part e – Additional Mechanisms*

As previously set forth in the Assurances Section, a contractor’s failure to comply with any provision of the DBE regulations will be considered a material contract breach. Sanctions can include withholding payments and advising subcontractors of the availability of the payment and performance bond.

*FAA Funded Projects Only*

Pursuant to Sec. 157 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, all complaints related to prompt payment will be reported in a format acceptable to the FAA, including the nature and origin of the complaint and its resolutions.

**Directory**

49 CFR 26.31

MDT is the UCP for Montana and maintains a directory identifying all firms eligible to participate as DBEs. The directory lists the firm’s name, address, phone number, email, website if available, and the type of work the firm has been certified to perform as a DBE by using the most specific NAICS code available to describe each type of work.

The Directory is available on MDT's website:

<https://app.mdt.mt.gov/dbe/dbe/search>

The directory includes a prominently displayed disclaimer that states the information within the directory is not a guarantee of the DBE's capacity and ability to perform work.

### **Overconcentration**

49 CFR 26.33

MDT has not identified that overconcentration exists in the types of work that DBEs perform. MDT will forward any allegations or determinations of overconcentration to the OA for consultation.

### **Business Development Programs**

49 CFR 26.35

MDT has a business development program in accordance with 49 CFR 26.35 to assist firms in gaining the ability to compete successfully in the marketplace outside the DBE program.

The business development program (included in Appendix B) is explained in the DBE Supportive Services Statement of Work. For more information on the business development program or other supportive service programs, please contact:

[mdtdbeprogram@mt.gov](mailto:mdtdbeprogram@mt.gov)

### **Monitoring and Enforcement Mechanisms**

49 CFR 26.37

#### *Part a – Monitoring Prime Contractors and Sub-recipient Compliance*

MDT maintains UCP agreements with sub-recipients to ensure they include the necessary assurances and are following MDT's DBE Program requirements. MDT conducts training with sub-recipients and works closely with them to ensure implementation of the DBE Program. Contract requirements and this DBE Program Plan provide guidance and rules for prime contractor compliance.

#### *Part b – CUF Reports*

MDT Engineering Project Managers and sub-recipients (or delegated field staff) prepare a Commercially Useful Function (CUF) report for each DBE on a project to ensure that work committed to DBEs at contract award or subsequently (e.g., as the result of modification to the contract) is actually performed by the DBEs to which the work was committed. See Appendix C for MDT's CUF report. Regardless of whether race-neutral or race-conscious measures are used on a contract, field staff conduct on-site monitoring through the CUF reviews on all DBE firms on each contract. Field staff are instructed to complete a CUF report when a DBE is initially on a project. If there are issues with performance or there is a change in work type, field staff complete another CUF report. After field staff prepare the report, they send the information to the DBE Program for review. The DBE Program works closely with field staff. MDT and/or OCR work to resolve any identified issues. The reports are stored in DBE files as well as the project files.

#### *Part c – DBE Attainments*

MDT maintains data that compares DBE commitments to DBE subcontracts and then generates reports that compare payments to subcontract amounts.

#### Goal attainment

MDT tracks annual goal attainment, DBE commitments, and DBE subcontracts monthly.

Although MDT is currently solely race neutral, the tracking allows for the breakdown of race conscious and race neutral measures. If MDT implements race conscious measures, the monthly report will also include a review of race conscious and race neutral splits and use that data in setting future project specific goals.

#### Payment Tracking

Payments are monitored through MDT's prompt payment review process. MDT generates reports that compare the expected subcontractor payment amount (based on work items paid on an estimate that are part of the subcontract) to actual payment amounts and discrepancies are highlighted and reviewed with the prompt payment committee.

#### Tracking of Federal Funding Amounts

The Uniform Report reviews federal and state funding splits from MDT's systems and only includes project amounts based on the federal share of the project.

### **Small Business Participation**

#### 49 CFR 26.39

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.39, MDT fosters small business participation through several means, which include:

- Ensuring a reasonable number of prime contracts are of a size that small businesses, including DBEs, can reasonably perform. Some of the smaller contracts include safety improvement contracts and Transportation Alternative projects.
- Having prime contractors provide subcontracting opportunities of a size that small businesses, including DBEs, can reasonably perform, rather than self-performing all the work involved. To encourage this, MDT sets aspirational project specific goals. The goals provide information to contractors on what DBE availability is for a project but does not impose any penalties if that goal is not met.
- Provide training to small businesses, including DBEs, to increase their capacity and improve overall business practices so they can succeed in the marketplace.
- Reviewing payments for all subcontractors to ensure they are paid promptly.

## **GOALS, GOOD FAITH EFFORTS, AND COUNTING**

### 49 CFR 26 SUBPART C

#### **Overall Goals**

#### 49 CFR 26.45

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.45(f), MDT will submit its overall goal to DOT by August 1 at three-year intervals, based on the schedule established by FHWA, FTA, and FAA as indicated below. When setting its three-year DBE goal, MDT hosts public meetings to consult with minority, women, and general contractor groups, community organizations, transit providers, and other officials or organizations which could be expected to have information concerning the availability of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged businesses. effects of discrimination, and effectiveness of MDT and industry efforts to establish a level-playing field. MDT factors the provided feedback into the goal calculation prior to submitting to each operating agency. A full description of the methodology to calculate the overall goal and the goal calculations can be found on MDT's DBE website:

<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/programinfo.shtml>

FHWA: August 1, 2025; and every three years thereafter.

FTA: August 1, 2026; and every three years thereafter.

FAA Lincoln Airport: August 1, 2026; and every three years thereafter.

FAA MDT & Yellowstone Airport: Due August 1, 2024; and every three years thereafter.

### **Shortfall Analysis**

49 CFR 26.47(c)

Monthly, MDT monitors DBE participation towards the overall goal based on awards and commitments. After the Uniform Report due December 1<sup>st</sup> is submitted, MDT will evaluate whether the awards and commitments on the Uniform Report met the overall goal for the fiscal year. If the overall goal was not met, MDT analyzes the reasons for the shortfall and prepares a report to the appropriate OA within 90 days of the end of the fiscal year. The shortfall analysis will include such things as a review of projects awarded to see if the types of projects differed from those anticipated when the overall goal was established and the effectiveness of race neutral measures.

### **Transit Vehicle Manufacturer (TVM)**

**49 CFR 26.49**

Each transit vehicle manufacturer, as a condition of being authorized to bid or propose on FTA-assisted transit vehicle procurements, must certify that it has complied with the requirements of this section. If non-TVM vehicles are purchased, or DBE TVMs are not available, MDT will include the contract in its triennial DBE goal. Within 30 days of contract award, MDT's Transit Section reports the name of the TVM that was the successful bidder and the federal share of the contractual commitment at that time to FTA.

### **Methods to Achieve Overall Goals**

49 CFR 26.51

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.51, MDT will meet the maximum feasible portion of the overall goal by using race-neutral means of facilitating DBE participation. As noted in the Goal Methodologies, MDT proposes to meet the overall goals for FHWA, FTA, and FAA solely through race neutral means.

MDT sets aspirational project specific goals. MDT utilizes information from the Disparity Study to determine the aspirational project specific goal. The data for businesses (DBE or non-DBE) includes types of work they can perform and locations throughout the state where they are willing to work. This data is compared to each upcoming project location and scope of work. MDT then calculates the weighted average of DBE availability for the project.

If the overall goal is not being met and MDT needs to implement race conscious goals, MDT will go through the same process to establish a project specific goal, except the project specific goal will only be the amount estimated that needs to be met through race conscious measures. As explained in the section on Monitoring DBE attainments, the monthly report will also include a review of race conscious and race neutral splits. That data will be used in setting future project specific goals to ensure the maximum feasible portion of the overall goal is met through race neutral means.

### **Good Faith Efforts Procedures**

49 CFR 26.53

Currently, MDT is operating a solely race neutral program. If the overall DBE goal is not met and MDT implements race conscious measures, the following sections document MDT's procedures for reviewing good faith efforts.

#### *Parts a and b – Demonstration of Good Faith Efforts*

When there is a project specific goal, bidders have an obligation to make good faith efforts to meet the contract goal. The bidder can demonstrate that it has done so by 1) meeting the contract goal or 2) documenting good faith efforts were made.

All bidders must indicate DBE utilization with their bid. This includes name and address of DBE firm, work type to be performed, and the dollar amount of the DBE commitment. If the apparent low bidder (or the apparent best value bidder if alternative delivery) did not meet the project specific goal, they have until 5:00 pm the day of bid opening to provide evidence of good faith effort to MDT.

*Part c – Good Faith Effort Review*

The Office of Civil Rights is responsible for reviewing good faith effort documentation. When reviewing the documentation, the Office of Civil Rights considers guidance for good faith efforts in Appendix A to Part 26, Title 49 as well as criteria listed in Appendix E of this Program Plan. The Office of Civil Rights makes an initial recommendation on good faith efforts and presents to the DBE Participation Review Committee, which includes one member from the following offices/divisions: Civil Rights, Highways & Engineering, and Legal. The Committee makes the final decision and Highways & Engineering notifies the bidder.

*Part d – Reconsideration*

If the apparent successful bidder/offeror failed to meet good faith efforts, the DBE Participation Review Committee notifies them of the opportunity for administrative reconsideration. If the bidder seeks administrative reconsideration, it must notify MDT the following business day that the bidder was notified of failure to make good faith effort.

If administrative reconsideration is requested, to ensure separation of functions, Director Dorrington or designee will act as the reconsideration official. The bidder may have a meeting (virtually or in-person), submit written documentation, or both, to discuss whether it made adequate good faith efforts. The bidder must submit all written documentation and/or participate in a reconsideration meeting within 2 business days of its request for administrative reconsideration. The decision will be provided in writing and explain the basis for the decision; the decision is final.

The members of both the DBE Participation Review Committee and the administrative reconsideration decision maker will be trained on all laws, regulations, and guidance necessary to come to a fair and accurate decision.

*Part f – Termination or Substitution of DBEs*

MDT requires the prime contractor to notify the DBE Program immediately of the DBE's inability or unwillingness to perform on a contract.

As specified in 49 CFR 26.53(f), good cause determinations for terminating a DBE on a contract, are:

- The listed DBE subcontractor fails or refuses to execute a written contract;
- The listed DBE subcontractor fails or refuses to perform the work of its subcontract in a way consistent with normal industry standards. Provided, however, that good cause does not exist if the failure or refusal of the DBE subcontractor to perform its work on the subcontract results from the bad faith or discriminatory action of the prime contractor;
- The listed DBE subcontractor fails or refuses to meet the prime contractor's reasonable, nondiscriminatory bond requirements.
- The listed DBE subcontractor becomes bankrupt, insolvent, or exhibits credit unworthiness;
- The listed DBE subcontractor is ineligible to work on public works projects because of suspension and debarment proceedings pursuant 2 CFR Parts 180, 215 and 1,200 or applicable state law;
- You have determined that the listed DBE subcontractor is not a responsible contractor;
- The listed DBE subcontractor voluntarily withdraws from the project and provides to you written notice of its withdrawal;
- The listed DBE is ineligible to receive DBE credit for the type of work required;

- A DBE owner dies or becomes disabled with the result that the listed DBE contractor is unable to complete its work on the contract;
- Other documented good cause that you determine compels the termination of the DBE subcontractor. Provided, that good cause does not exist if the prime contractor seeks to terminate a DBE it relied upon to obtain the contract so that the prime contractor can self-perform the work for which the DBE contractor was engaged or so that the prime contractor can substitute another DBE or non-DBE contractor after contract award.

If the prime contractor seeks to terminate a DBE subcontractor on a project with race conscious goals, they must notify the DBE subcontractor in writing, with a copy to the MDT DBE Program and the MDT Project Manager. The request must give the DBE subcontractor notice of the prime contractor's intent to terminate and the reason. The request must give the DBE 5 calendar days to respond to the notice and provide any reasons, if any, why it objects to the proposed termination and why the prime contractor's request to terminate should not be approved. If required in a particular case as a matter of public necessity (e.g., safety), the prime contractor may provide a response period shorter than five days.

The DBE Program will make the final determination and notify the prime contractor in writing of the decision. The decision is final with no right of appeal, formal or informal.

*Part g – Substitution of a DBE*

When a DBE subcontractor is terminated as provided in the previous section or fails to complete its work on the contract for any reason, the prime contractor must make good faith efforts to find another DBE subcontractor to substitute for the original DBE. The prime contractor must make good faith efforts to find another DBE to perform at least the same amount of work under the contract as the DBE that was terminated, to the extent needed to meet the project specific goal. The contractor must document its good faith efforts. When the prime contractor proposes a substitution for the terminated DBE subcontractor and it does not meet the project specific goal, the prime contractor must provide good faith effort documentation to the MDT DBE Program within 7 calendar days of their request. This may be extended for an additional 7 days if necessary, at the request of the contractor. MDT will follow the same procedures outlined in Part c above when reviewing good faith effort documentation, making determinations, and notifying the prime contractor.

If a contractor eliminates, reduces, or attempts to eliminate or reduce a DBE's performance, without the consent of MDT, MDT and/or FHWA may impose sanctions. Contracts with project specific goals will include the following provisions:

- A. the contractor shall utilize the specific DBEs listed to perform the work and supply the materials for which each is listed unless the contractor obtains your written consent as provided 49 CFR 26.53(f); and
- B. unless MDT's consent is provided, the contractor shall not be entitled to any payment for work or material unless it is performed or supplied by the listed DBE.

If change orders to a contract significantly change the scope of work and affect the project specific goal, MDT construction will work with the DBE program prior to approval of the change order. MDT will consider if the additional work can be performed by DBEs or if removal of work may result in terminations of DBEs. MDT will follow the same good faith effort procedures for DBE utilization or termination as previously described in this part.

*Part i – DBE is a Prime Contractor*

Good faith efforts are reviewed in the same manner when the bidder on a contract with project specific goals is a DBE. The work committed to be performed by the DBEs own forces as a prime contractor as well as any work committed to be performed by DBE subcontractors and suppliers counts towards meeting the project specific goal. Any commitments to non-DBE subcontractors are not included towards the goal.

*Part j – Subcontracts*

MDT requires the prime contractor make available all subcontracts. The subcontractor shall ensure that all subcontracts or an agreement with DBEs to supply labor or materials require that the subcontract and all lower tier subcontractors perform in accordance with this part's provisions.

**Counting DBE Participation**

49 CFR 26.55

*Part a – DBE Credit*

When a DBE participates in a contract, MDT counts only the value of the work actually performed by the DBE toward DBE goals. Work performed by DBEs is verified through CUF reports as described previously under 49 CFR 26.37(b). CUFs are evaluated on a project by project basis. If work performed matches the subcontracted work, MDT counts DBE participation as follows:

- (1) MDT counts the entire amount of that portion of a contract that is performed by the DBE's own forces, including the cost of supplies and materials obtained by the DBE for the work of the contract and supplies purchased or equipment leased by the DBE. If supplies or equipment are purchased or leased from the prime contractor or its affiliate, MDT does not count those amounts towards DBE goals.
- (2) MDT counts the entire amount of fees or commissions charged by a DBE firm for providing a bona fide service, such as professional, technical, consultant, or managerial services, or for providing bonds or insurance specifically required for the performance of a DOT-assisted contract, toward DBE goals, provided the fee is determined to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.
- (3) When a DBE subcontracts part of the work of its contract to another firm, MDT only counts the value of the subcontracted work toward DBE goals if the DBE's subcontractor is itself a DBE. MDT does not count work that a DBE subcontracts to a non-DBE firm toward DBE goals.

For FAA-funded projects only, firms that exceed the business size standard in § 26.65(b) will remain eligible for DBE certification and may be counted for DBE credit toward overall and contract goals on FAA-funded projects as long as they do not exceed the small business size standard, as adjusted by the United States Small Business Administration, for the NAICS code(s) in which they are certified.

*Part b – Joint Ventures*

When a DBE performs as a participant in a joint venture, MDT counts a portion of the total dollar value of the contract equal to the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract that the DBE performs with its own forces toward DBE goals.

*Part c – Commercially Useful Function (CUF)*

As previously described in 49 CFR 26.37(b), MDT field staff prepare CUF reports and send to the DBE Program for review. The DBE Program is responsible for making the CUF determination. The determination is based on an evaluation of:

- the amount of work subcontracted
- industry practices
- whether the amount the firm is to be paid under the contract is commensurate with the work it is performing, and the DBE credit claimed for its performance of the work, and
- other relevant factors.

If a DBE does not perform or exercise responsibility for the portion of work that a contract would be expected based on normal industry practice for the type of work or acts as a pass through or extra participant, then MDT will presume the DBE is not performing a CUF. If the DBE Program presumes that a DBE is not performing a CUF, MDT will notify the DBE and the prime contractor of this determination. The DBE must present evidence to rebut the presumption. If the evidence does not support that the DBE is performing a CUF, then the DBE subcontract amount will not count towards the goal. The DBE firm can provide a written notice to appeal the CUF determination to the DBE Program. At that point, the MDT Director will designate a decision-maker for the final CUF determination who was independent from the original decision and is knowledgeable about the DBE certification requirements and 49 CFR 26. The OA may review CUF decisions; however, CUF determinations are not administratively appealable to USDOT.

*Part d – Trucking*

MDT counts participation from trucking firms for the total value of transportation services for vehicles owned or leased by DBE firms if they are performing a CUF. MDT tracks trucking participation through subcontracts and CUF reports prepared by the MDT field staff. If the DBE firm leases trucks from a non-DBE firm and uses non-DBE drivers, MDT counts credit up to the value of transportation services provided by the DBE's own trucks. If the DBE uses their own employees in trucks leased from non-DBE firms, MDT counts full credit for the value of the transportation services.

*Part e – Materials or Supplies*

MDT counts expenditures with DBEs for materials and supplies toward DBE goals as follows:

- If the materials or supplies are obtained from a DBE manufacturer, MDT counts 100 percent of the cost of the materials or supplies toward DBE goals.
- If the materials or supplies are purchased from a DBE regular dealer, MDT counts 60 percent of the cost of the materials or supplies toward DBE goals.
- If the materials or supplies are purchased from a DBE distributor that neither maintains sufficient inventory nor uses its own distribution equipment for the products in question, 40 percent of the cost of materials or supplies (including transportation costs) is counted.
- With respect to materials or supplies purchased from a DBE which is not a manufacturer, a regular dealer, or a distributor, MDT counts the entire amount of fees or commissions charged for assistance in the procurement of the materials and supplies, or fees or transportation charges for the delivery of materials or supplies required on a job site, toward DBE goals, provided the fees are reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services. The portion of the cost of the materials and supplies themselves do not count toward DBE goals.
- MDT determines the amount of credit awarded to a firm for the provisions of materials and supplies (e.g., whether a firm is acting as a regular dealer or a transaction expeditor) on a contract-by-contract basis.

*Part f – DBE credit if not certified at time of award*

If a firm is not currently certified as a DBE at the time of contract execution, MDT does not count participation toward DBE goals. MDT does count payments made to a DBE towards the overall goal after they have become certified in accordance with the standards of subpart D.

*Part g – DBE credits if no longer certified*

MDT does not count the dollar value of work performed under a contract with a firm after it has ceased to be certified toward your overall goal. Payments up until the DBE is no longer certified are counted towards the overall goal.

*Part h – Credit for payment*

MDT does not count the participation of a DBE subcontractor toward a contractor's final compliance with its DBE obligations on a contract until the amount being counted has actually been paid to the DBE. MDT confirms this through its prompt payment monitoring procedures.

## **CERTIFICATION STANDARDS**

### **49 CFR 26 SUBPART D**

#### **Burdens of Proof/Group Membership**

49 CFR 26.61 & 49 CFR 26.63

In determining whether to certify a firm as eligible to participate as a DBE, MDT applies the standards of this subpart:

- The applicant seeking certification has the burden of demonstrating to MDT, by a preponderance of the evidence, that it meets the requirements of this subpart concerning group membership or individual disadvantage, business size, ownership, and control.
- MDT rebuttably presumes that citizens of the United States (or lawfully admitted permanent residents) who are women, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans, or other minorities found to be disadvantaged by the SBA, are socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. MDT requires applicants to submit a signed statement that each presumptively disadvantaged owner is, in fact, socially and economically disadvantaged. Applicants also have the obligation to provide MDT information concerning their economic disadvantage. Per USDOT's 2014 Final Rule, an individual must be an enrolled member of a Federally or State of Montana recognized Indian tribe to receive the presumption of social disadvantage as a Native American. As such, the owner may provide Indian tribal roll cards, a letter from a community group, education institution, religious leader, or government agency corroborating that the individual is a member of the claimed group.
- Individuals who are not presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged, and individuals concerning whom the presumption of disadvantage has been rebutted, have the burden of proving to MDT, by a preponderance of the evidence, that they are socially and economically disadvantaged.
- MDT makes determinations concerning whether applicants have met their burden of demonstrating group membership, ownership, control, and social and economic disadvantage (where disadvantage must be demonstrated on an individual basis) by considering all the facts in the record, viewed as a whole.

If, after reviewing the signed statement of membership in a presumptively disadvantaged group, and MDT has a well-founded reason to question the individual's claim of membership in that group, MDT requires the applicant to present additional evidence that he or she is a member of the group.

MDT provides the applicant a written explanation of reasons for questioning his or her group membership and a written request for additional evidence. MDT takes special care to ensure that a disproportionate burden on members of any particular designated group is not imposed. MDT requires documentation proving the person has held himself out to be a member of the group over a long period of time prior to application for certification and whether the person is regarded as a member of the group by the relevant community.

If MDT determines that an individual claiming to be a member of a group presumed to be disadvantaged is not a member of a designated disadvantaged group, the individual must then demonstrate social and economic disadvantage on an individual basis.

MDT's decisions concerning membership in a designated group are subject to the certification appeals procedure.

**Business Size**

49 CFR 26.65

An applicant including its affiliates must be an existing for-profit small business, as defined by Small Business Administration (SBA) standards. MDT applies current SBA business size standard(s) found in 13 CFR part 121 appropriate to the type(s) of work the firm seeks to perform in DOT-assisted contracts, including the primary industry classification of the applicant.

**Social and Economic Disadvantage and Personal Net Worth**

49 CFR 26.67 and 49 CFR 26.68

To ensure the use of the proper Personal Net Worth (PNW) form, MDT will provide a link to the form along with the application on its website and will provide the form with all requests for applications. MDT will also inform potential applicants that the use of the USDOT PNW form is mandatory for all applicants and must be signed.

In reviewing the PNW, MDT will ensure appropriate supporting documentation is provided. Where necessary to accurately determine an individual's personal net worth, MDT may, on a case-by-case basis, require additional financial information from the owner of an applicant firm (e.g., information concerning the assets of the owner's spouse, where needed to clarify whether assets have been transferred to the spouse or when the owner's spouse is involved in the operation of the company). Requests for additional information shall not be unduly burdensome or intrusive.

In determining an individual's net worth, MDT will observe the following requirements:

- A. Exclude an individual's ownership interest in the applicant firm.
- B. Exclude the individual's equity in his or her primary residence (except any portion of such equity that is attributable to excessive withdrawals from the applicant firm). The equity is the market value of the residence less any mortgages and home equity loan balances. Recipients must ensure that home equity loan balances are included in the equity calculation and not as a separate liability on the individual's personal net worth form. Exclusions for net worth purposes are not exclusions for asset valuation or access to capital and credit purposes.
- C. Do not use a contingent liability to reduce an individual's net worth.
- D. Exclude assets held in vested pension plans, Individual Retirement Accounts, 401(k) accounts, or other retirement savings.

An individual's presumption of economic disadvantage may be rebutted in two ways:

- 1. If the statement of personal net worth and supporting documentation that an individual submits shows that the individual's personal net worth exceeds the limit specified in this part, the individual's presumption of economic disadvantage is rebutted.
- 2. If the statement of personal net worth and supporting documentation that an individual submits demonstrates that the individual is able to accumulate substantial wealth, the individual's presumption of economic disadvantage is rebutted.

If a presumption of economic disadvantage falls under option 2 or if there is a reasonable basis to believe than an individual who is a member of one of the designated groups is not, in fact, socially and/or economically disadvantaged, MDT may start a proceeding to determine whether the presumption should be regarded as rebutted with respect to that individual. MDT's proceeding procedures follow those listed in the section on Removal of a DBE's eligibility (49 CFR 26.87). MDT may require the individual to produce information relevant to the determination of his or her disadvantage.

Assets are attributed to an individual claiming disadvantaged status in which the individual has transferred to an immediate family member, to a trust a beneficiary of which is an immediate family member, or to the applicant firm for less than fair market value, within two years prior to a concern's application for participation in the DBE program or within two years of recipient's review of the firm's annual affidavit, unless the individual claiming disadvantaged status can demonstrate that the transfer is to or on behalf of an immediate family member for that individual's education, medical expenses, or some other form of essential support. Any assets transferred by that individual to an immediate family member that are consistent with the customary recognition of special occasions, such as birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, and retirements are not attributed to an individual claiming disadvantaged status.

Firms owned and controlled by individuals who are not presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged (including individuals whose presumed disadvantage has been rebutted) may apply for DBE certification. MDT makes a case-by-case determination of whether each individual whose ownership and control are relied upon for DBE certification is socially and economically disadvantaged. In such a proceeding, the applicant firm has the burden of demonstrating to MDT, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the individuals who own and control it are socially and economically disadvantaged. An individual whose personal net worth exceeds the limit shall not be deemed to be economically disadvantaged.

### **Ownership**

49 CFR 26.69

In order to determine ownership, MDT will collect:

#### **Partnerships or Joint Ventures**

- Original and any amended Partnership or Joint Venture Agreements

#### **Corporation or LLC**

- Official Articles of Incorporation (signed by the state official)
- Both sides of all corporate stock certificates and firm's stock transfer ledger
- Shareholder's Agreements
- Minutes of all stockholders and board of directors' meetings
- Corporate by-laws and any amendments
- Corporate bank resolution and bank signature cards
- Official Certificate of Formation and Operating Agreement with any amendments (for LLCs)

MDT will review this documentation to ensure a firm is at least 51 percent owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

(1) In the case of a corporation, such individuals must own at least 51 percent of each class of voting stock outstanding and 51 percent of the aggregate of all stock outstanding.

(2) In the case of a partnership, 51 percent of each class of partnership interest must be owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Such ownership must be reflected in the firm's partnership agreement.

(3) In the case of a limited liability company, at least 51 percent of each class of member interest must be owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.

### **Control**

49 CFR 26.71

In determining whether socially and economically disadvantaged owners control a firm, MDT will consider all the facts in the records viewed. MDT will evaluate independence, formal and informal restrictions which limit discretion of socially and economically disadvantaged owners, direction of management and policies of the firm, and understanding of managerial and technical competence and experience directly related to the type of business in which the firm is engaged by the socially and economically disadvantaged owners.

### **NAICS Codes**

49 CFR 26.73

MDT is committed to assigning the NAICS code that most narrowly describes the work the disadvantaged owner is able to control and the work that the firm performs or intends to perform on federally-assisted contracts. MDT will review each requested NAICS and work with each firm to ensure the code is suitable. Multiple NAICS codes may be assigned where appropriate. The MDT DBE Directory will list each firm's NAICS and a work type description.

## **CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

49 CFR 26 SUBPART E

MDT's DBE Certification Information, Instructions, and Forms can be found on the website at: <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/dbe.shtml>

For information about the certification process or to apply for certification, firms can contact the DBE Program:

[MDTDBEProgram@mt.gov](mailto:MDTDBEProgram@mt.gov)

### **Unified Certification Programs**

49 CFR 26.81

MDT administers the Montana Unified Certification Program (UCP). The UCP will meet all of the requirements of this section. MDT's UCP approval is in Appendix F or at the link below:

[MDT UCP Approval](#)

### **Procedures for Certification Decisions**

49 CFR 26.83

MDT is the sole UCP in Montana and will process all DBE applications. Onsite visits will be conducted at the firm's principal place of business (or virtually in accordance with DOT's guidance) with two DBE Program Specialists. MDT will interview the principal officers and review their résumés and/or work histories. MDT will also perform an on-site visit to job sites if there are such sites on which the firm is working at the time of the eligibility investigation in the state. No fee will be charged to DBE applicants.

MDT will advise each applicant within 30 calendar days from receipt of the application whether the application is complete and suitable for evaluation and, if not, what additional information or action is required. MDT will make a final decision of DBE certification within 90 calendar days of receiving a complete application from the firm. MDT may extend this time period once, for no more than an additional 30 days, upon written notice to the firm, explaining fully and specifically the reasons for the extension.

Once a DBE is certified, it shall remain certified until and unless MDT has removed its certification, in whole or in part, through the procedures of §26.87, except as provided in §26.67(b)(1).

DBEs must inform MDT in writing of any change in circumstances affecting its ability to meet size, disadvantaged status, ownership, or control requirements of this part or any material change in the information provided in its application form. If such changes are reported, supporting documentation will be requested. If appropriate in light of changed circumstances, MDT will conduct a new on-site review.

DBEs must provide to MDT, every year on the anniversary of the date of certification, a Declaration of Eligibility (DOE) and documentation of gross receipts.

Based on the [Official Questions and Answers](#) of the DBE Program Regulations, MDT will update on-site reviews over 3 years old to ensure they reflect the current status of the DBE firm.

### **Interstate Certification**

49 CFR 26.85

MDT will not mandate new applications for firms certified in their home states. MDT will require all out-of-state applicants to provide:

- (1) A cover letter that specifies that the DBE is applying for interstate certification, identifies all UCPs in which the DBE is certified (including the UCP that originally certified it)
- (2) An electronic image of the UCP directory of the original UCP that shows the DBE certification; and
- (3) A new DOE.

Within ten business days of receiving an out-of-state application, MDT will add the business to its Directory.

### **Decision Letters**

49 CFR 26.86

When a firm is denied DBE certification, MDT will provide the firm a written explanation of the reasons for the denial, specifically referencing the evidence in the record that supports each reason for the denial. The letter will inform the firm of their right to appeal. All documents and other information on which the denial is based will be made available to the applicant, on request.

When a firm is denied certification, twelve months must elapse before the firm may reapply to MDT for certification. The time period for reapplication begins to run on the date the explanation is sent to the firm.

An applicant for DBE certification may withdraw its application before a decision has been issued on the application. The applicant can resubmit the application at any time (the waiting period does not apply). However, the reapplication will be placed at the “end of the line,” behind other applications that have been made since the firm's previous application was withdrawn.

MDT will post all denials to United States Departmental Office of Civil Rights web-based database.

### **Decertification**

49 CFR 26.87

In the event MDT proposes to remove a DBE's certification, we will follow procedures consistent with 49 CFR 26.87.

MDT DBE Program will address third party ineligibility complaints, or recipient-initiated disclosures of possible ineligibility by reviewing records concerning the firm, any material provided by the firm and the complainant, and other available information. Within 7 business days of receiving the complaint, MDT Office of Civil Rights will contact the complainant. MDT may also request additional information from the firm or conduct any other investigation that we deem necessary. MDT accepts anonymous complaints on a case-by-case basis.

If MDT determines, based on this review, that there is reasonable cause to believe that the firm is ineligible, MDT provides a written proposal notice to the firm, setting forth the reasons for the determination. All statements of reasons for findings on the issue of reasonable cause will specifically reference the evidence in the record on which each reason is based. If the reasonable cause is due to a third-party complaint and determined it does not exist, MDT notifies the complainant and the firm in writing of this determination and the reasons for it.

When MDT notifies a firm that there is reasonable cause to remove its eligibility, MDT gives the firm an opportunity for an informal hearing, at which time the firm may respond to the reasons for the proposal to remove its eligibility in person and provide information and arguments concerning why it should remain certified. MDT maintains a complete recorded transcript of the hearing. The firm may also elect to present information and arguments in writing, without going to a hearing. In such a situation, MDT bears the same burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the firm does not meet the certification standards, as MDT would during a hearing.

If an informal hearing is requested, to ensure separation of functions, the MDT Civil Rights Bureau Chief will serve as the decision-maker for the decertification proceedings. The Civil Rights Bureau Chief is independent from eligibility decisions and is knowledgeable about the DBE certification requirements and 49 CFR 26.

A firm remains an eligible DBE during the pendency of MDT's proceeding to remove its eligibility. A firm becomes ineligible when MDT provides the firm written notice of the decision and the reasons for it, including specific references to the evidence in the record that supports each reason for the decision. The notice informs the firm of the consequences of MDT's decision and of the availability of an appeal to the US Department of Transportation under §26.89.

Any firm or complainant may appeal MDT's decision in a certification matter to US Department of Transportation. The appeal must be sent to: [DBEAppeals@dot.gov](mailto:DBEAppeals@dot.gov).

### **Suspension of Certification**

49 CFR 26.88

MDT will follow procedures consistent with § 26.88 regarding the suspension of a DBE's certification.

MDT will mandatorily and immediately suspend a DBE's certification when MDT has clear and credible evidence of the DBE's or its SEDO's involvement in fraud or other serious criminal activity, or when directed to suspend the firm by the Operating Administration with oversight responsibility.

MDT may elect to suspend a DBE's certification when MDT has clear and credible evidence that the DBE's continued certification poses a substantial threat to program integrity, or when an owner upon whom the firm relies for eligibility does not timely file the declaration and gross receipts documentation that § 26.83(j) requires.

MDT will notify the firm, by email, of its summary suspension notice (SSN) on a business day during regular business hours. The SSN will explain the action, the reason for it, the consequences, and the evidence on which MDT relies. Elective SSNs will not cite more than one

reason for the action. Mandatory SSNs may state multiple reasons. Regardless of whether it is elective or mandatory, the SSN will demand that the DBE show cause why it should remain certified and provide the time and date of a virtual show-cause hearing at which the firm may present information and arguments concerning why MDT should lift the suspension. The SSN will also advise that the DBE may provide written information and arguments lieu of or in addition to attending the hearing.

After sending the SSN to the suspended firm, MDT will follow all procedures required under §§ 26.88(d)(2)-(6).

### **Certification Appeals**

49 CFR 26.89

Any firm or complainant may appeal MDT's decision in a certification matter to USDOT. Appeals must be sent to: [DBEAppeals@dot.gov](mailto:DBEAppeals@dot.gov)

For further information about how the USDOT handles Appeals please visit their site at: <https://www.transportation.gov/dbeappeal>

### **Certification Appeal Decisions**

49 CFR 26.91

If the USDOT determines that MDT erroneously certified a firm, MDT will remove the firm's eligibility on receipt of the determination, without further proceedings. Effective on the date of MDT's receipt of USDOT's determination, the consequences of a removal of eligibility set forth in §26.87(j) take effect.

If USDOT determines that MDT erroneously failed to find reasonable cause to remove the firm's eligibility, MDT will expeditiously commence a proceeding to determine whether the firm's eligibility should be removed, as provided in §26.87.

If USDOT determines that MDT erroneously declined to certify or removed the eligibility of the firm, MDT will certify the firm, effective on the date of MDT's receipt of the written notice of USDOT's determination.

If USDOT determines that MDT erroneously determined that the presumption of social and economic disadvantage either should or should not be deemed rebutted, MDT will take appropriate corrective action as determined by the USDOT.

If USDOT affirms MDT's determination, no further action will be taken.

## **COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

### **49 CFR 26 SUBPART F**

#### **Information, Confidentiality, Cooperation, and Intimidation or Retaliation**

49 CFR 26.109

In accordance with 49 CFR 26.109, we will safeguard information that may be regarded as confidential business information, consistent with Federal, state, and local law unless MDT has written consent from the firm that submitted the information.

# Appendix A – MDT Policy Statement



Christopher Dorrington, Director

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## MDT’s Policy Statement for ACDBE and DBE Programs

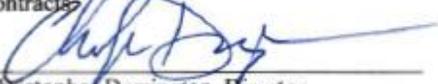
The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has established an Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) program in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), 49 CFR Part 23 and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26. MDT receives Federal financial assistance from the DOT, and as a condition of receiving this assistance, MDT has signed an assurance that it will comply with 49 CFR Parts 23 and 26.

It is the policy of MDT to ensure that ACDBEs and DBEs, as defined in Parts 23 and 26, have an equal opportunity to receive and participate in DOT–assisted contracts and concession opportunities. It is also our policy:

- a) To ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT-assisted contracts and opportunities for concessions in MDT’s highway, transit, and airport financial assistance programs;
- b) To create a level playing field on which ACDBEs can compete fairly for opportunities for concessions and DBEs can compete fairly for DOT-assisted contracts;
- c) To ensure that the ACDBE and DBE Programs are narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law;
- d) To ensure that only firms that fully meet 49 CFR Parts 23 and 26 eligibility standards are permitted to participate as ACDBEs and DBEs;
- e) To help remove barriers to the participation of ACDBEs in opportunities for concessions at our airports and DBEs in DOT-assisted contracts;
- f) To promote the use of ACDBEs and DBEs in all types of federally-assisted contracts and procurement activities conducted by recipients;
- g) To assist the development of firms that can compete successfully in the marketplace outside the ACDBE and DBE Programs;
- h) To provide appropriate flexibility to recipients of Federal financial assistance in establishing and providing opportunities for ACDBEs and DBEs.

Maghan Strachan, Civil Rights Program Supervisor, has been designated as the ACDBE Liaison Officer (ACDBELO) and DBE Liaison Officer (DBELO). In that capacity, Ms. Strachan is responsible for implementing all aspects of the ACDBE and DBE Programs. Implementation of the ACDBE and DBE Programs is accorded the same priority as compliance with all other legal obligations incurred by MDT in its financial assistance agreements with the DOT.

The Director, Administrative Team, and Office of Civil Rights have disseminated this policy statement to the Transportation Commission, the Aeronautics Board, and applicable staff and facilitates distribution to ACDBE/DBE and non-ACDBE/-DBE communities that perform work for MDT on DOT-assisted contracts.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Dorrington, Director

4/30/24  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Maghan Strachan, ACDBELO and DBELO

7/30/24  
Date

## **Appendix B – Supportive Services Business Development Program**

MDT has implemented a Business Development Program (BDP) to assist DBEs in gaining the ability to compete in their business industry. Program participation is divided into two stages; (1) a developmental stage and (2) a transitional stage in accordance with Appendix C to 49 CFR 26. The MDT DBE Program advertises the BDP on its website and encourages firms that fit the criteria for the BDP to apply. Unless a firm has graduated from a stage or continues to not meet the minimum requirements for the Program, they will be accepted as a BDP participant. For a firm to enter or remain eligible for program participation;

- a. Each firm must meet and continue to meet all eligibility criteria described in 49 CFR 26.
- b. Each firm must meet the requirements of the Business Development Program stage they are enrolled in.

### **Developmental Stage**

The developmental stage is designed for new or existing DBE firms that have not worked or have done little highway-related work for MDT and are looking to expand into that market. Firms that complete the developmental stage will gain knowledge and skills that increase their chances of obtaining contracts in the highway-related industry.

Each participant must meet with MDT DBE Program's business plan specialist to either create or update their business plan, including forecasts for contract awards for the upcoming year. Based on the business plan, MDT DBE Program will facilitate at least 3 trainings that the firm must attend to complete the program. One required training would be to meet with the MDT staff that most closely relate to their line of work to learn how to do business with MDT. The remaining trainings would be established based on the needs of the firm and could include trainings on topics such as financials, certified payrolls, bidding/estimating, bonding, other topic specific trainings with partners such as Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), etc.

An updated business plan and forecasts as well as a minimum of three trainings will be required annually for a DBE firm to remain in the BDP Developmental stage. Once MDT DBE Program determines that the firms' goals of the Developmental stage have been achieved, the firm will be notified in writing of its completion. The firm can then choose to enroll in the Transitional stage.

### **Transitional Stage**

If a DBE firm is successfully competing for contracts at MDT and is looking to expand to other contracting industries, they can enter the transitional stage of the BDP. It is designed to prepare the participant for successfully competing in their business industry. The MDT DBE Program will meet with the DBE firm to develop a transition management plan that will include specific details, goals and relevant action items to continue building on the progress of the DBE firm. The MDT DBE Program will facilitate at least 3 meetings or trainings based on items identified in the transition management plan to provide the firm the knowledge and skills to succeed outside the DBE Program. MDT DBE Program will work in conjunction with the DBE firm to assure this is updated annually and applies to the specific needs of the DBE firm. Once MDT DBE Program determines that the firms' goals of the Transitional stage have been achieved, the firm will be notified in writing of its completion. Each firm will have 45 days to appeal the decision that it has completed the Transitional Stage and may be re-instated based on the facts of the appeal.

## Appendix C – Commercially Useful Function Report



Montana Department of Transportation  
Office of Civil Rights  
DBE Commercially Useful Function (CUF) Report



Date  Review Conducted By  EPM   
 Contract Number  Project Name  Prime Contractor   
 DBE Firm  DBE Foreman

1. Work Type  2. Approximate Percent Complete

3. Will the work type performed by this DBE change throughout the course of the project?  Yes  No

\*Note: If work type changes, a new CUF Report must be completed.

4. Does the DBE have their own employees and direct their work?  Yes  No

5. Are any of the DBE's employees on any other contractor's payroll?  Yes  No

If yes, whose?

6. Who does the DBE foreman/superintendent report to?

7. List the names and crafts of the DBE's crew as observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

DBE Employee	Craft	
		-
		-
		-

Add Row

8. Does the equipment used have the DBE's name and/or logo on it?  Yes  No

9. Does the DBE own the equipment used on the project?  Yes  No

10. Has any other contractor performed work that was to be performed by the DBE?  Yes  No

11. Has the DBE owner been present on the job site?  Yes  No

12. If any of your selected answers are in a shaded box, please provide explanation. Also, provide any other comments or concerns:

A CUF Report is required when:

- A DBE is initially on a project
- There is an issue with performance
- There is a change in work type (e.g. striping to fencing)

Return to MDT Office of Civil Rights DBE Program:

MDT Office of Civil Rights  
Attn: DBE Program  
PO Box 201001  
Helena MT 59620

[mdtdbeprogram@mt.gov](mailto:mdtdbeprogram@mt.gov)

## Appendix D – Definitions

**Affiliation** has the same meaning the term has in the Small Business Administration (SBA) regulations, 13 CFR part 121. Except as otherwise provided in 13 CFR part 121, concerns are affiliates of each other when, either directly or indirectly:

- One concern controls or has the power to control the other; or
- A third party or parties controls or has the power to control both; or
- An identity of interest between or among parties exists such that affiliation may be found.

In determining whether affiliation exists, it is necessary to consider all appropriate factors, including common ownership, common management, and contractual relationships. Affiliates must be considered together in determining whether a concern meets small business size criteria and the statutory cap on the participation of firms in the DBE program.

**Alaska Native** means a citizen of the United States who is a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaskan Indian (including Tsimshian Indians not enrolled in the Metlaktla Indian Community), Eskimo, or Aleut blood, or a combination of those bloodlines. The term includes, in the absence of proof of a minimum blood quantum, any citizen whom a Native village or Native group regards as an Alaska Native if their father or mother is regarded as an Alaska Native.

**Alaska Native Corporation** (ANC) means any Regional Corporation, Village Corporation, Urban Corporation, or Group Corporation organized under the laws of the State of Alaska in accordance with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1601, *et seq.*).

**Assets** mean all the property of a person available for paying debts or for distribution, including one's respective share of jointly held assets. This includes, but is not limited to, cash on hand and in banks, savings accounts, IRA or other retirement accounts, accounts receivable, life insurance, stocks and bonds, real estate, and personal property.

**Business, business concern or business enterprise** means an entity organized for profit with a place of business located in the United States, and which operates primarily within the United States or which makes a significant contribution to the United States economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials, or labor.

**Compliance** means that a recipient has correctly implemented the requirements of this part.

**Contingent Liability** means a liability that depends on the occurrence of a future and uncertain event. This includes, but is not limited to, guaranty for debts owed by the applicant concern, legal claims and judgments, and provisions for federal income tax.

**Contract** means a legally binding relationship obligating a seller to furnish supplies or services (including, but not limited to, construction and professional services) and the buyer to pay for them. For purposes of this part, a lease is considered to be a contract.

**Contractor** means one who participates, through a contract or subcontract (at any tier), in a DOT-assisted highway, transit, or airport program.

**Days** mean calendar days. In computing any period of time described in this part, the day from which the period begins to run is not counted, and when the last day of the period is a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the period extends to the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday. Similarly, in circumstances where the recipient's offices are closed for all or part of the last day, the period extends to the next day on which the agency is open.

**Department or DOT** means the U.S. Department of Transportation, including the Office of the Secretary, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

**Disadvantaged Business Enterprise or DBE** means a for-profit small business concern that is:

- At least 51 percent owned by one or more individuals who are both socially and economically disadvantaged or, in the case of a corporation, in which 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more such individuals; and
- Whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.

**DOT-assisted contract** means any contract between a recipient and a contractor (at any tier) funded in whole or in part with DOT financial assistance, including letters of credit or loan guarantees, except a contract solely for the purchase of land.

**FTA Tier I recipient** means an FTA recipient to whom this part applies that will award prime contracts (excluding transit vehicle purchases) the cumulative total value of which exceeds \$670,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year.

**FTA Tier II recipient** means an FTA recipient to whom this part applies who will award prime contracts (excluding transit vehicle purchases) the cumulative total value of which does not exceed \$670,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year.

**Good faith efforts** mean efforts to achieve a DBE goal or other requirement of this part which, by their scope, intensity, and appropriateness to the objective, can reasonably be expected to fulfill the program requirement.

**Immediate family member** means father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, and domestic partner and civil unions recognized under State law.

**Indian Tribe or Native American Tribe** means any federally or State-recognized Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group of Indians (Native Americans), or an ANC.

**Joint venture** means an association of a DBE firm and one or more other firms to carry out a single, for-profit business enterprise, for which the parties combine their property, capital, efforts, skills and knowledge, and in which the DBE is responsible for a distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the contract and whose share in the capital contribution, control, management, risks, and profits of the joint venture are commensurate with its ownership interest.

**Liabilities** mean financial or pecuniary obligations. This includes, but is not limited to, accounts payable, notes payable to bank or others, installment accounts, mortgages on real estate, and unpaid taxes.

**Native Hawaiian** means any individual whose ancestors were natives, prior to 1778, of the area which now comprises the State of Hawaii.

**Native Hawaiian Organization** means any community service organization serving Native Hawaiians in the State of Hawaii which is a not-for-profit organization chartered by the State of Hawaii, is controlled by Native Hawaiians, and whose business activities will principally benefit such Native Hawaiians.

**Noncompliance** means that a recipient has not correctly implemented the requirements of this part.

**Notice of decision or NOD** means determination that denies a firm's application or decertifies a DBE.

**Notice of intent or NOI** means recipients letter informing a DBE of a suspension or proposed decertification.

**Office of Civil Rights or OCR** means the Office of Civil Rights at the Montana Department of Transportation.

**Operating Administration or OA** means any of the following parts of DOT: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The "Administrator" of an operating administration includes his or her designees.

**Personal net worth or PNW** means the net value of an individual's reportable assets and liabilities, per the calculation rules in § 26.68.

**Primary industry classification** means the most current North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) designation which best describes the primary business of a firm. The NAICS is described in the North American Industry Classification Manual—United States, which is available on the Internet at the U.S. Census Bureau Web site: [www.census.gov/naics/](http://www.census.gov/naics/).

**Primary recipient** means a recipient which receives DOT financial assistance and passes some or all of it on to another recipient.

**Principal place of business** means the business location where the individuals who manage the firm's day-to-day operations spend most working hours. If the offices from which management is directed and where the business records are kept are in different locations, the recipient will determine the principal place of business. The term does not include construction trailers or other temporary construction sites.

**Program** means any undertaking on a recipient's part to use DOT financial assistance, authorized by the laws to which this part applies.

**Race-conscious** measure or program is one that is focused specifically on assisting only DBEs, including women-owned DBEs.

**Race-neutral** measure or program is one that is, or can be, used to assist all small businesses. For the purposes of this part, *race-neutral* includes gender-neutrality.

**Recipient** is any entity, public or private, to which DOT financial assistance is extended, whether directly or through another recipient, through the programs of the FAA, FHWA, or FTA, or who has applied for such assistance.

**Secretary** means the Secretary of Transportation or the Secretary's designee.

**Set-aside** means a contracting practice restricting eligibility for the competitive award of a contract solely to DBE firms.

**Small Business Administration** or **SBA** means the United States Small Business Administration.

**SBA certified firm** refers to firms that have a current, valid certification from or recognized by the SBA under the 8(a) BD or SDB programs.

**Small business concern** means, with respect to firms seeking to participate as DBEs in DOT-assisted contracts, a small business concern as defined pursuant to section 3 of the Small Business Act and Small Business Administration regulations implementing it (13 CFR part 121) that also does not exceed the cap on average annual gross receipts specified in §26.65(b).

**Socially and economically disadvantaged individual** means any individual who is a citizen (or lawfully admitted permanent resident) of the United States and who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of his or her identity as a member of groups and without regard to his or her individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond the individual's control.

- Any individual who a recipient finds to be a socially and economically disadvantaged individual on a case-by-case basis. An individual must demonstrate that he or she has held himself or herself out, as a member of a designated group if you require it.
- Any individual in the following groups, members of which are rebuttably presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged:
  - “Black Americans,” which includes persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa;
  - “Hispanic Americans,” which includes persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, or other Spanish or Portuguese culture or origin, regardless of race;
  - “Native Americans,” which includes persons who are enrolled members of a federally or State recognized Indian tribe, Alaska Natives, or Native Hawaiians;
  - “Asian-Pacific Americans,” which includes persons whose origins are from Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia (Kampuchea), Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (Republic of Palau), Republic of the Northern Marianas Islands, Samoa, Macao, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, or Hong Kong;
  - “Subcontinent Asian Americans,” which includes persons whose origins are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands, Nepal or Sri Lanka;
  - Women;
  - Any additional groups whose members are designated as socially and economically disadvantaged by the SBA, at such time as the SBA designation becomes effective.
- Being born in a particular country does not, standing alone, mean that a person is necessarily a member of one of the groups listed in this definition.

**Spouse** means a married person, including a person in a domestic partnership or a civil union recognized under State law.

**Transit vehicle manufacturer** means any manufacturer whose primary business purpose is to manufacture vehicles specifically built for mass transportation. Such vehicles include, but are not limited to: buses, rail cars, trolleys, ferries, and vehicles manufactured specifically for paratransit purposes. Businesses that perform retrofitting or post-production alterations to vehicles so that such vehicles may be used for public transportation purposes are also considered TVMs. Businesses that manufacture, mass-produce, or distribute vehicles solely for personal use are not considered TVMs.

***Tribally-owned concern*** means any concern at least 51 percent owned by an Indian tribe as defined in this section.

***Unified Certification Program*** or ***UCP*** refers to the agreement, whereas Montana Department of Transportation was approved to be the certifying agency for Montana.

***Unsworn declaration*** means an unsworn statement, dated and in writing, subscribed as true under penalty of perjury.

***You*** refers to a recipient, unless a statement in the text of this part or the context requires otherwise (i.e., 'You must do XYZ' means that recipients must do XYZ).

## Appendix E – Criteria to Determine Good Faith Efforts

In addition to Appendix A to CFR Title 49, Part 26, “Guidance Concerning Good Faith Efforts,” MDT will use the following criteria to judge if a bidder who has not met the DBE Utilization Goal has demonstrated sufficient Good Faith Effort to be eligible for award of the contract. It is not intended to be a mandatory checklist, nor is it intended to be exclusive or exhaustive. Other factors or types of efforts may be relevant in appropriate cases. A determination whether a bidder has made sufficient good faith efforts is, by its very nature, a judgment call.

### 1. NOTIFICATION

- Has the bidder notified all active certified DBEs, who have the capability to perform the specific work of the contract, listed in the Department’s most current DBE Directory at least 5 business days prior to bid opening?
- Has the bidder used the DBE Quote Request available at: <https://app.mdt.mt.gov/dbeqt/>?
- Has the bidder provided the DBEs no less than 5 business days to respond to the bidder?
- Has the bidder completely and accurately logged each contact with a DBE firm?
- Has the bidder followed-up initial notifications by contacting all certified DBEs, who have the capability to perform the specific work of the contract, to determine whether or not they will be bidding, and documented the follow-up contact?
- Has the bidder provided interested DBEs with adequate information about plans, specifications, and requirements of the contract in a timely manner?

### 2. IDENTIFYING WORK

- Has the bidder selected portions of the work to be performed by DBEs in order to increase the likelihood that the DBE goals will be achieved?
- Has the bidder broken out contact work items into economically feasible units to facilitate DBE participation?
- Has the bidder selected for DBE participation work items the bidder might otherwise perform with its own work forces?

### 3. DBE ASSISTANCE

- Has the bidder made efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining bonding, lines of credit, or insurance as required by the Department or the bidder?
- Has the bidder made efforts to assist interested DBEs in obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or related assistance or services?

### 4. NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH

It is the bidder’s responsibility to make a portion of the work available to DBE subcontractors and suppliers and to select those portions of the work or material needs consistent with the available DBE subcontractors and suppliers, so as to facilitate DBE participation.

A bidder using good business judgment would consider a number of factors in evaluating subcontractors, including DBE subcontractors, and would take a firm’s price and capabilities as well as contract goals into consideration. The fact that there may be some additional costs involved in finding and using DBEs is not in itself sufficient reason for a

bidder's failure to meet the contract DBE goal, as long as such costs are reasonable. However, bidders are not required to accept higher quotes from DBEs if the price difference is excessive or unreasonable.

A variety of business factors may affect whether the difference between bids is reasonable or not, including but not limited to the following:

- The bidder's prior experiences with a subcontractor.
- The number of bidders on an item.
- The subcontractor's experience and capabilities for performing the work.
- The degree that the work is routine or complex.
- The degree that the work has time constraints.

In addition to evaluating the foregoing business factors, the Department may consider other factors in determining whether a bidder made a good faith, including but not limited to:

- Whether the bidder rejected a reasonable bid to self-perform the work
- Whether other bidders met the contract goal
- The bidder's prior history utilizing DBEs
- Whether the bidder attended Pre-Bid Networking events

5. AFTER AWARD OF CONTRACT

Items 1 through 4 will be utilized to evaluate any request from the Contractor after award for a reduction in the DBE Utilization Goal due to the default or decertification of a DBE and the Contractor's subsequent inability to obtain additional DBE participation. For further information regarding DBE default or decertification and considerations for a reduction in the DBE Utilization goal, refer to 49 CFR §26.53 f. 1-4.

## Appendix F – UCP Approval



U.S. Department of  
Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

General Counsel

400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

JAN 17 2003

Vicky A. Koch, Chief  
Civil Rights Bureau  
Montana Department of Transportation  
2701 Prospect Avenue  
PO Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Dear Ms. Koch:

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has reviewed the Unified Certification Program (UCP) you submitted to us on behalf of the Montana Department of Transportation and other recipients of DOT financial assistance in Montana. The certification component of your DBE program, which is made part of the UCP, successfully accommodated the comments that DOT staff had provided to you.

Consequently, I am pleased to approve the Montana UCP as provided by the Department's disadvantaged business enterprise regulations (49 CFR §26.81(a)(4)). Please remember that any inconsistency or ambiguity in the UCP agreement shall be resolved by giving precedence to the following in this order: 49 CFR 23 and 26, USDOT Directives, DBE Program as approved by DOT and applicable Montana regulations.

We look forward to working with you as you implement the UCP, which should significantly reduce burdens on small businesses seeking to participate in the DBE program in Montana.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk K. Van Tine".

Kirk K. Van Tine  
General Counsel