

(EPRISENGL, 10/20/22)

## **DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES:**

### **1.0 Policy:**

The Arizona Department of Transportation (hereinafter the Department) has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in accordance with the regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), 49 CFR Part 26. The Department has received Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation and as a condition of receiving this assistance, the Department has signed an assurance that it will comply with 49 CFR Part 26.

It is the policy of the Department to ensure that DBEs, as defined in Part 26, have an equal opportunity to receive and participate in USDOT-assisted contracts. It is also the policy of the Department:

1. To ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of USDOT-assisted contracts;
2. To create a level playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly for USDOT-assisted contracts;
3. To ensure that the DBE program is narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law;
4. To ensure that only firms that fully meet 49 CFR Part 26 eligibility standards are counted as DBEs;
5. To help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in USDOT-assisted contracts,
6. To assist in the development of firms that can compete successfully in the market place outside the DBE program; and
7. To promote the use of DBEs in all types of federally-assisted contracts and procurement activities.

It is also the policy of the Department to facilitate and encourage participation of Small Business Concerns (SBCs), as defined herein, in USDOT-assisted contracts. The Department encourages contractors to take reasonable steps to eliminate obstacles to SBCs' participation and to utilize SBCs in performing contracts.

### **2.0 Assurances of Non-Discrimination:**

The contractor, subrecipient, or subcontractor shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin in the performance of this contract. The contractor shall carry out applicable requirements of 49 CFR Part 26 in the award and administration of USDOT-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 state deems appropriate, which may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Withholding monthly progress payments;
- (2) Assessing sanctions; and/or
- (3) Disqualifying the contractor from future bidding as non-responsible.

The contractor, subrecipient, or subcontractor shall ensure that all subcontract agreements contain this non-discrimination assurance.

### **3.0 Definitions:**

- (A) Commercially Useful Function (CUF):** Commercially Useful Function is defined fully in 49 CFR 26.55 which definition is incorporated herein by reference.
- (B) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE):** a for-profit small business concern which meets both of the following requirements:
- (1) Is at least 51 percent owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or, in the case of any publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more such individuals; and,
  - (2) Whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.
- (C) Joint Check:** a two-party check between a subcontractor, DBE and/or non-DBE, a prime contractor and the regular dealer of material supplies.
- (D) Joint Venture:** an association of a DBE firm and one or more other firms to carry out a single, for-profit business enterprise, for which 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.
- (E) NAICS Code:** The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the US business economy.
- (F) Non-DBE:** any firm that is not a DBE.
- (G) Race Conscious:** a measure or program is one that is focused specifically on assisting only DBEs, including women-owned DBEs.
- (H) Race Neutral:** a 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.
- (I) Small Business Concern:** a business that meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) Operates as a for-profit business
- (2) Operates a place of business primarily within the U.S., or makes a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials, or labor;
- (3) Is independently owned and operated;
- (4) Is not dominant in its field on a national basis; and
- (5) Does not have annual gross receipts that exceed the Small Business Administration size standards average annual income criteria for its primary North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code.

**(J) Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals:** any individual who is a citizen (or lawfully admitted permanent resident) of the United States and who is:

- (1) Any individual who is found to be a socially and economically disadvantaged individual on a case-by-case basis.
- (2) Any individual in the following groups, members of which are rebuttably presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged:
  - (i) "Black Americans," which includes persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa;
  - (ii) "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;
  - (iii) "Native Americans," which includes persons who are enrolled members of a federally or State recognized Indian tribe, Alaskan Natives or Native Hawaiians;
  - (iv) "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), the Republic of the Northern Marianas Islands, Macao, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, or Hong Kong;
  - (v) "Subcontinent Asian Americans," which includes persons whose origins are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands, Nepal or Sri Lanka;
  - (vi) Women;

- (vii) Any additional groups whose members are designated as socially and economically disadvantaged by the Small Business Administration (SBA), at such time as the SBA designation becomes effective.

#### **4.0 Working with DBEs:**

The Department works with DBEs and assists them in their efforts to participate in the highway construction program. All bidders should contact the Department's Business Engagement and Compliance Office (BECO) by phone, through email, or at the address shown below, for assistance in their efforts to use DBEs in the highway construction program of the Department. BECO contact information is as follows:

Arizona Department of Transportation  
Business Engagement and Compliance Office  
1801 W. Jefferson St., Ste. 101, Mail Drop 154A  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
Phone (602) 712-7761  
FAX (602) 712-8429  
Email: [contractorcompliance@azdot.gov](mailto:contractorcompliance@azdot.gov)  
Website: [www.azdot.gov/bec](http://www.azdot.gov/bec)

#### **4.01 Mentor-Protégé Program:**

The Department has established a Mentor- Protégé program as an initiative to encourage and develop disadvantaged businesses in the highway construction industry. The program encourages prime contractors to provide certain types of assistance to certified DBE subcontractors. ADOT encourages contractors and certified DBE subcontractors to engage in a Mentor-Protégé agreement under certain conditions. Such an agreement must be mutually beneficial to both parties and to ADOT in fulfilling requirements of 49 CFR Part 23. For guidance regarding this program refer to the Mentor-Protégé Program Guidelines available on the BECO website.

The Mentor-Protégé program is intended to increase legitimate DBE activities. The program does not diminish the DBE rules or regulations, and participants may not circumvent these rules.

#### **5.0 Applicability:**

The Department has established an overall annual goal for DBE participation on Federal-aid contracts. The Department intends for the goal to be met with a combination of race conscious efforts and race neutral efforts. Race conscious participation occurs where the contractor uses a percentage of DBEs, as defined herein, to meet the contract-specified goal. Race neutral efforts are those that are, or can be, used to assist all small businesses or increase opportunities for all small businesses. The regulation, 49 CFR 26, describes race neutral participation as when a DBE wins a prime contract through customary competitive procurement procedures or is awarded a subcontract on a prime contract that does not carry a DBE contract goal.

The provisions are applicable to all bidders including DBE bidders.

## **6.0 Certification and Registration:**

### **6.01 DBE Certification:**

Certification as a DBE shall be predicated on:

- (1) The completion and execution of an application for certification as a "Disadvantaged Business Enterprise".
- (2) The submission of documents pertaining to the firm(s) as stated in the application(s), including but not limited to a statement of social disadvantage and a personal financial statement.
- (3) The submission of any additional information which the Department or the applicable Arizona Unified Certification (UCP) agency may require to determine the firm's eligibility to participate in the DBE program.
- (4) The information obtained during the on-site visits to the offices of the firm and to active job-sites.

Applications for certification may be filed online with the Department or the applicable UCP agency at any time through the Arizona Unified Transportation Registration and Certification System (AZ UTRACS) website at <http://www.azutracs.com>.

DBE firms and firms seeking DBE certification shall cooperate fully with requests for information relevant to the certification process. Failure or refusal to provide such information is a ground for denial or removal of certification.

ADOT is a member of the AZ Unified Certification Program (AZUCP). Only DBE firms that are certified by the AZUCP are eligible for credit on ADOT projects. A list of DBE firms certified by AZUCP is available on the internet at <http://www.azutracs.com/>. The list will indicate contact information and specialty for each DBE firm, and may be sorted in a variety of ways. However, ADOT does not guarantee the accuracy and/or completeness of this information, nor does ADOT represent that any licenses or registrations are appropriate for the work to be done.

The Department's certification of a DBE is not a representation of qualifications and/or abilities only that the firm has met the criteria for DBE certification as outlined in 49 CFR Part 26. The contractor bears all risks of ensuring that DBE firms selected by the contractor are able to perform the work.

### **6.02 SBC Registration:**

To comply with 49 CFR Part 26.39 ADOT's DBE Program incorporates contracting requirements to facilitate participation by Small Business Concerns (SBCs) in federally assisted contracts. SBCs are for-profit businesses registered to do business in Arizona that meet the Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards for average annual revenue criteria for its primary North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code.

While the SBC component of the DBE program does not require utilization goals on projects, ADOT encourages contractors to utilize small businesses that are registered in AZ UTRACS on their contracts, in addition to DBEs meeting the certification requirement. The contractor may use the AZ UTRACS website to search for certified DBEs and registered SBCs that can be used on the contract. However, SBCs that are not DBEs will not be counted toward DBE participation.

SBCs can register online at the AZ UTRACS website. The Department's registration of SBCs is not a representation of qualifications and/or abilities. The contractor bears all risks of ensuring that SBC firms selected by the contractor are able to perform the work.

## **7.0 DBE Financial Institutions:**

The Department thoroughly investigates the full extent of services offered by financial institutions owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals in its service area and makes reasonable efforts to use these institutions. The Department encourages prime contractors to use such institutions on USDOT assisted contracts. However, use of DBE financial institutions will not be counted toward DBE participation.

The Department encourages prime contractors to research the Federal Reserve Board website at [www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov) to identify minority-owned banks in Arizona derived from the Consolidated Reports of Condition and Income filed quarterly by banks (FFIEC 031 and 041) and from other information on the Board's National Information Center database.

## **8.0 Time is of the Essence:**

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE IN RESPECT TO THE DBE PROVISIONS.

## **9.0 Computation of Time:**

In computing any period of time described in this DBE special provision, such as calendar days, 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 or State holiday, the period extends to the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal or State holiday. In circumstances where the Department's offices are closed for all or part of the last day, the period extends to the next day on which the Department's offices are open.

## **10.0 Contractor and Subcontractor Requirements:**

### **10.01 General:**

The contractor shall establish a DBE program that will ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of contracts and subcontracts.

Agreements between the bidder and a DBE in which the DBE promises not to provide subcontracting quotations to other bidders are prohibited.

### **10.02 DBE Liaison:**

The contractor shall designate a DBE Liaison responsible for the administration of the contractor's DBE program. The name of the designated DBE Liaison shall be included in the DBE Intended Participation Affidavit Summary.

#### **11.0 Bidders/Proposers List and AZ UTRACS Registration Requirement:**

Under Title 49 CFR of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 26.11, DOTs are required to collect certain information from all contractors and subcontractors who seek to work on federally-assisted contracts in order to set overall and contract DBE goals. ADOT collects this information through a Bidders/Proposers List when firms register their companies on the Arizona Unified Transportation Registration and Certification System (AZ UTRACS) web portal at <http://www.azutracs.com/> a centralized database for companies that seek to do business with ADOT. This information will be maintained as confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law.

Prime contractors and all subcontractors, including DBEs, must be registered in AZUTRACS. Bidders may verify that their firm and each subcontractors is registered using the AZ UTRACS website.

Bidders may obtain additional information at the AZ UTRACS website or by contacting BECO.

Bidders shall create the Bidders/Proposers List in the AZ UTRACS by selecting all subcontractors, service providers, manufacturers and suppliers that expressed interest or submitted bids, proposals or quotes for this contract. The Bidders/Proposers List form must be complete and must include the names for all subcontractors, service providers, manufacturers and suppliers regardless of the bidders' intentions to use those firms on the project.

All bidders must complete the Bidders/Proposers List online at AZ UTRACS whether they are the apparent low bidder or not. A confirmation email will be generated by the system. The bidders shall submit to BECO a copy of the email confirmation no later than 4:00 p.m. on the fifth calendar day following the bid opening. Faxed copies are acceptable.

FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE REQUIRED BIDDERS/PROPOSERS LIST CONFIRMATION EMAIL TO BECO BY THE STATED TIME AND IN THE MANNER HEREIN SPECIFIED SHALL BE CAUSE FOR THE BIDDER BEING DEEMED INELIGIBLE FOR AWARD OF THE CONTRACT.

#### **12.0 DBE Goals:**

The Department has not established contract goals for DBE participation in this contract. Contractors are still encouraged to employ reasonable means to obtain DBE participation. Contractors must retain records in accordance with these DBE specifications. The contractor is notified that this record keeping is important to the Department so that it can track DBE participation where only race neutral efforts are employed.

#### **13.0 Payment Reporting:**

The contractor shall report on a monthly basis indicating the amounts paid to all subcontractors, of all tiers, working on the project. Reporting shall be in accordance with Subsection 109.06(B)(5) of the specifications.

#### **14.0 Crediting DBE Participation:**

##### **14.01 General Requirements:**

To count toward DBE participation, the DBE firm must be certified in each NAICS code applicable to the kind of work the firm will perform on the contract. NAICS for each DBE can be found on the AZ UTRACS under the Firm Directory. General descriptions of all NAICS codes can be found at [www.naics.com](http://www.naics.com).

The entire amount of a contract that is performed by the DBE's own forces, including the cost of supplies and materials purchased by the DBE for the work on the contract and equipment leased by the DBE will be credited toward DBE participation. Supplies and equipment the DBE subcontractor purchases or leases from the prime contractor or its affiliate will not be credited toward DBE participation.

The contractor bears the responsibility to determine whether the DBE possesses the proper contractor's license(s) to perform the work.

The Department's certification is not a representation of a DBE's qualifications and/or abilities. The contractor bears all risks that the DBE may not be able to perform its work for any reason.

A DBE may participate as a prime contractor, subcontractor, joint venture partner with either a prime contractor or a subcontractor, or as a vendor of materials or supplies. A DBE joint venture partner shall be responsible for a clearly defined portion of the work to be performed, in addition to meeting the requirements for ownership and control.

The dollar amount of work to be accomplished by DBEs, including partial amount of a lump sum or other similar item, shall be on the basis of subcontract, purchase order, hourly rate, rate per ton, etc., as agreed to between parties.

With the exception of bond premiums, all work must be attributed to specific bid items. Where work applies to several items, the DBE contracting arrangement must specify unit price and amount attributable to each bid item. DBE credit for any individual item of work performed by the DBE shall be the lesser of the amount to be paid to the DBE or the prime contractor's bid price. If the amount bid by the DBE on any item exceeds the prime contractor's bid amount, the prime contractor may not obtain credit by attributing the excess to other items.

Where more than one DBE is engaged to perform parts of an item (for example, supply and installation), the total amount payable to the DBEs will not be considered in excess of the prime contractor's bid amount for that item.



Bond premiums may be stated separately, so long as the arrangement between the prime contractor and the DBE provides for separate payment not to exceed the price charged by the bonding company.

DBE credit may be obtained only for specific work done for the project, supply of equipment specifically for physical work on the project, or supply of materials to be incorporated in the work. DBE credit will not be allowed for costs such as overhead items, capital expenditures (for example, purchase of equipment), and office items.

If a DBE performs part of an item (for example, installation of materials purchased by a Non-DBE), the DBE credit shall not exceed the lesser of (1) the DBE's contract or (2) the prime contractor's bid for the item, less a reasonable deduction for the portion performed by the Non-DBE.

When a DBE performs as a partner in a joint venture, only that portion of the total dollar value of the contract which is clearly and distinctly performed by the DBE's own forces can be credited.

The contractor may credit second-tier subcontracts issued to DBEs by non-DBE subcontractors. Any second-tier subcontract to a DBE must meet the requirements of a first-tier DBE subcontract.

A prime contractor may credit the entire amount of that portion of a construction contract that is performed by the DBE's own forces. The cost of supplies and materials obtained by the DBE for the work of the contract can be included so long as that cost is reasonable. Leased equipment may also be included. No credit is permitted for supplies purchased or equipment leased from the prime contractor or its affiliate(s).

When a DBE subcontracts a part of the work of its contract to another firm, the value of the subcontract may be credited towards DBE participation only if the DBE's subcontractor is itself a DBE and performs the work with its own forces. Work that a DBE subcontracts to a non-DBE firm does not count towards DBE participation.

A prime contractor may credit 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 USDOT-assisted contract, provided the fees are reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.

#### **14.02 Effect of Loss of DBE Eligibility:**

If a DBE is deemed ineligible (decertified) or suspended by the Department in accordance with 49 CFR 26.87 and 26.88, the DBE may not be considered to count toward DBE participation on a new contract, but may be considered to count toward DBE participation under a subcontract that was executed before the DBE suspension or decertification is effective.

When a DBE firm or a DBE prime contractor loses its DBE eligibility and a subcontract or contract has not been executed before a decertification notice is issued to the DBE firm by its certifying agency, the ineligible firm does not count toward DBE participation. When a subcontract is executed with the DBE firm before the Department notified the firm of its ineligibility, the contractor may continue to receive DBE participation credit for the firm's work on the contract.

#### **14.03 Notifying the Contractor of DBE Certification Status:**

Each DBE contract of any tier shall require any DBE subcontractor or supplier that is either decertified or certified during the term of the contract to immediately notify the contractor and all parties to the DBE contract in writing, with the date of decertification or certification. The contractor shall require that this provision be incorporated in any contract of any tier in which a DBE is a participant.

#### **14.04 Police Officers:**

DBE credit will not be permitted for procuring DPS officers. For projects on which officers from other agencies are supplied, DBE credit will be given only for the broker fees charged, and will not include amounts paid to the officers. The broker fees must be reasonable.

#### **14.05 Commercially Useful Function:**

A prime contractor can credit expenditures to a DBE subcontractor only if the DBE performs a commercially useful function (CUF) on the contract.

A DBE performs a CUF when it is responsible for execution of the work of a contract and carries out its responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work involved. To perform a commercially useful function, the DBE must also be responsible, with respect to materials and supplies on the contract, for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering the material, and installing (where applicable) and paying for the material itself that it uses on the project. To determine whether a DBE is performing a commercially useful function, the Department will evaluate 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 actually performing and the DBE credit claimed for its performance of the work, and other relevant factors.

A DBE will not be considered to perform a commercially useful function if its role is limited to that of an extra participant in a transaction, contract, or project through which funds are passed in order to obtain the appearance of DBE participation. In determining whether a DBE is such an extra participant, the Department will examine similar transactions, particularly those in which DBEs do not participate.

If a DBE does not perform or exercise responsibility for at least 30 percent of the total cost of its contract with its own work force, or if the DBE subcontracts a greater portion of the work of a contract than would be expected on the basis of normal industry practice for the type of work involved, the Department will presume that the DBE is not performing a commercially useful function.

When a DBE is presumed not to be performing a commercially useful function as provided above, the DBE may present evidence to rebut this presumption. The Department will determine if the firm is performing a CUF given the type of work involved and normal industry practices.

The Department will notify the contractor, in writing, if it determines that the contractor's DBE subcontractor is not performing a CUF. The contractor will be notified within seven calendar days of the Department's decision.

Decisions on CUF may be appealed to the State Engineer. The appeal must be in writing and personally delivered or sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the State Engineer. The appeal must be received by the State Engineer no later than seven calendar days after the decision of BECO. BECO's decision remains in effect unless and until the State Engineer reverses or modifies BECO's decision. The State Engineer will promptly consider any appeals under this subsection and notify the contractor of the State Engineer's findings and decisions. Decisions on CUF matters are not appealable to USDOT.

The Department will conduct project site visits on the contract to confirm that DBEs are performing a CUF. The contractor shall cooperate during the site visits and the Department's staff will make every effort not to disrupt work on the project.

#### **14.06      Trucking:**

The Department will use the following factors in determining whether a DBE trucking company is performing a commercially useful function. The DBE must be responsible for the management and supervision of the entire trucking operation for which it is responsible on a particular contract.

The DBE must itself own and operate at least one fully licensed, insured, and operational truck used on the contract on every day that credit is to be given for trucking.

The contractor will receive credit for the total value of transportation services provided by the DBE using trucks it owns, insures and operates, and using drivers it employs.

The DBE may lease trucks from another DBE firm, including an owner-operator who is certified as a DBE. The DBE who leases trucks from another DBE receives credit for the total value of the transportation services.

The DBE may also lease trucks from a non-DBE firm, including an owner-operator. The DBE who leases trucks with drivers from a non-DBE is entitled to credit for the total value of the transportation services provided by non-DBE leased trucks with drivers not to exceed the value of transportation services on the contract provided by DBE-owned trucks or leased trucks with DBE employee drivers. Additional participation by non-DBE owned trucks with drivers receives credit only for the fee or commission paid to the DBE as a result of the lease agreement.

Example: DBE Firm X uses two of its own trucks on contract. It leases two trucks from DBE Firm Y and six trucks from non-DBE firm Z. DBE credit would be awarded for the total value of transportation services provided by Firm X and Firm Y, and may also be awarded for the total value of transportation services provided by four of the six trucks provided by Firm Z. In all, full credit would be allowed for the participation of eight trucks. DBE credit could be awarded only for the fees or commissions pertaining to the remaining trucks Firm X receives as a result of the lease with Firm Z.

The DBE may lease trucks without drivers from a non-DBE truck leasing company. If the DBE leases trucks from a non-DBE leasing company and uses its own employees as drivers, it is entitled to credit for the total value of these hauling services.

Example: DBE Firm X uses two of its own trucks on a contract. It leases three additional trucks from non-DBE Firm Z. Firm X uses its own employees to drive the trucks leased from Firm Z. DBE credit would be awarded for the total value of the transportation services provided by all five trucks.

For purposes of this section, a lease must indicate that the DBE has exclusive use of and control over the truck. This does not preclude the leased truck from working for others during the term of the lease with the consent of the DBE, so long as the lease gives the DBE absolute priority for use of the leased truck. Leased trucks must display the name and identification number of the DBE. DBE participation will be allowed only for those lease costs related to the time each truck is devoted to the project.

DBE credit for supplying paving grade asphalt and other asphalt products will only be permitted for standard industry hauling costs, and only if the DBE is owner or lessee of the equipment and trucks. Leases for trucks must be long term (extending for a fixed time period and not related to time for contract performance) and must include all attendant responsibilities such as insurance, titling, hazardous waste requirements, and payment of drivers.

#### **14.07 Materials and Supplies:**

The Department will credit expenditures with DBEs for material and supplies as follows. If the materials or supplies are obtained from a DBE manufacturer, 100 percent of the cost of the materials or supplies is credited. A manufacturer is defined as a firm that operates or maintains a factory or establishment that produces, on the premises, the materials, supplies, articles, or equipment required under the contract, and of the general character described by the specifications.

If the materials or supplies are purchased from a DBE regular dealer, 60 percent of the cost of the materials or supplies is credited. A DBE regular dealer is defined as a firm that owns, operates, or maintains a store or warehouse or other establishment in which the materials, supplies, articles, or equipment of the general character described by the specifications and required under the contract are bought, kept in stock, and regularly sold or leased to the public in the usual course of business. To be a regular dealer, the firm must be an established, regular business that engages, as its principal business and under its own name, in the purchase and sale or lease of the products in question. A firm may be a DBE

regular dealer in such bulk items as petroleum products, steel, cement, stone or asphalt without owning, operating, or maintaining a place of business, as provided above, if the person both owns and operates distribution equipment for the products. Any supplementing of regular dealers' own distribution equipment shall be by a long-term lease agreement, and not on an ad-hoc or contract-by-contract basis. Packagers, brokers, manufacturers' representatives, or other persons who arrange or expedite transactions are not regular dealers within the meaning of this paragraph and the paragraph above.

With respect to materials or supplies purchased from a DBE which is neither a manufacturer nor a regular dealer, the Department will credit the entire amount of the fees or commissions charged by the DBE 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 participation, provided the fees are determined to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services. The cost of the materials and supplies themselves may not be counted toward DBE participation.

The Department will credit expenditures with DBEs for material and supplies (e.g. whether a firm is acting as a regular dealer or a transaction expediter) towards the DBE participation on a contract-by-contract basis. The fact that a DBE firm qualifies under a classification (manufacturer, regular dealer or supplier) for one contract does not mean it will qualify for the same classification on another contract.

## **15.0 Joint Checks:**

### **15.01 Requirements:**

A DBE subcontractor and a material supplier (or equipment supplier) may request permission for the use of joint checks for payments from the prime contractor to the DBE subcontractor and the supplier. Joint checks may be issued only if all the conditions in this subsection are met.

1. The DBE subcontractor must be independent from the prime contractor and the supplier, and must perform a commercially useful function. The DBE subcontractor must be responsible for negotiating the price of the material, determining quality and quantity, ordering the materials, installing (where applicable), and paying for the material. The DBE subcontractor may not be utilized as an extra participant in a transaction, contract, or project in order to obtain the appearance of DBE participation.
2. The use of joint checks will be allowed only if the prime contractor, DBE subcontractor, and material supplier establish that the use of joint checks in similar transactions is a commonly recognized business practice in the industry, particularly with respect to similar transactions in which DBE's do not participate.
3. A material or supply contract may not bear an excessive ratio relative to the DBE subcontractor's normal capacity.
4. There may not be any exclusive arrangement between one prime and one DBE in the use of joint checks that may bring into question whether the DBE is independent of the prime contractor.

5. Any arrangement for joint checks must be in writing, and for a specific term (for example, one year, or a specified number of months) that does not exceed a reasonable time to establish a suitable credit line with the supplier.
6. The prime contractor may act solely as the payer of the joint check, and may not have responsibility for establishing the terms of the agreement between the DBE subcontractor and the supplier.
7. The DBE must be responsible for receiving the check from the prime contractor and delivering the check to the supplier.
8. The prime contractor cannot require the DBE subcontractor to use a specific supplier, and the prime contractor may not participate in the negotiation of unit prices between the DBE subcontractor and the supplier.

#### **15.02 Procedure and Compliance:**

1. The Business Engagement and Compliance Office must approve the agreement for the use of joint checks in writing before any joint checks are issued. The prime contractor shall submit a DBE joint check request form, available from the BECO website, along with the joint check agreement, to BECO through email within seven calendar days from the time the subcontract is executed.
2. After obtaining authorization for the use of joint checks, the prime contractor, the DBE, and the supplier must retain documentation to allow for efficient monitoring of the agreement.
3. Copies of canceled checks must be submitted, with the payment information for the period in which the joint check was issued, electronically through email to BECO, and made available for review at the time of the onsite CUF review. The prime contractor, DBE, and supplier each have an independent duty to report to the Department in the case of any change from the approved joint check arrangement.
4. Any failure to comply will be considered by the Department to be a material breach of this contract and will subject the prime contractor, DBE, and supplier to contract remedies and, in the case of serious violations, a potential for termination of the contract, reduction or loss of prequalification, debarment, or other remedies which may prevent future participation by the offending party.

#### **16.0 Certification of Final DBE Payments:**

DBE participation on the contract is measured by actual payments made to the DBEs. The contractor shall submit the "Certification of Final DBE Payments" form for each DBE firm working on the contract. This form shall be signed by the contractor and the relevant DBE, and submitted to the Engineer no later than 30 days after the DBE completes its work.

The contractor will not be released from the obligations of the contract until the "Certification of Final DBE Payments" forms are received and deemed acceptable by the Engineer and BECO.

#### **17.0 False, Fraudulent, or Dishonest Conduct:**

In addition to any other remedies or actions, the Department will bring to the attention of the US Department of Transportation any appearance of false, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct

in connection with the DBE program, so that USDOT can take steps such as referral to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution, referral to the USDOT Inspector General for possible initiation of suspension and debarment proceedings against the offending parties or application of "Program Fraud and Civil Penalties" rules provided in 49 CFR Part 31.