

Mobile First

Initiative for the Mobile Area Business Community



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Local Business Enterprise Initiative for the Mobile Area Business Community

Mobile First intends to provide economic opportunity for Mobile area residents and businesses, stimulate economic development, and determine how all parties will direct business and how funds will be spent.

The intent is to encourage greater availability, capacity development, and contract participation in the Mobile area by local business enterprises in the city, county, and private sectors.

The guidelines outlined below are presented with the expectation that they will be implemented in bid specifications for public projects (to the extent permitted by law) and in requests for proposals and requests for qualifications for both public and privately financed projects, and will be applied in considering projects requesting statutory incentives from the City Industrial Development Board or the County Industrial Development Authority.

This approach is intended to further the region's compelling interest to stimulate economic development through the support and empowerment of the local community, ensure that it is neither an active nor passive participant in marketplace discrimination, and promote equal opportunity for all segments of the contracting community.

Aspirational Goals:

When making decisions regarding construction contracts, capital investment, service contracts, hiring needs, and general procurement, a good faith effort will be made to achieve the following local participation goals:

- I. Contract Goals**, including building contracts relating to construction projects and capital improvements
 - a. 50% minimum local business participation requirement for all professional services contracts >\$2 million.
 - b. All contracts and subcontracts awardees shall be equal opportunity employers.

II. Hiring Goals

- a. 60% participation of existing hires are to be local residents.
- b. 75% of all newly hired employees are to be local residents on projects >\$500,000 with the exception of headquarter or certain back-office operations that require the relocation of personnel.
- c. Construction Employment Standards require contractors and developers to use best faith efforts to hire local residents. For work performed at the construction site, this covenant establishes a goal of 50% of the work hours to be completed by Mobile area residents on a craft-by-craft basis. In addition, a minimum of 60% of all new hires on the project (on a craft-by-craft basis) must be Mobile area residents.
- d. Participation goals for minorities and women. On each contract for which the design team's estimated base value of the contract is \$1 million or more, the awarding entity shall set a goal of 15% minimum disadvantaged business enterprise participation.

Incentives:

On contracts being awarded through a bid process, a 5% minimum discount will be applied for a local business.

On contracts being awarded based on a point system, i.e., an RFP or RFQ, 5 preference points will be added for local business qualification on a 100-point scale.

Proportionate percentage discounts or preference points will be applied for businesses that have participation from local contractors, (i.e., Joint Ventures or supplier contracts).

Variables

- Based on the "Rule of Three", there must be at least three qualified businesses located in the Mobile area in the industry, trade, or profession that constitute a major category of work. If at least three local/small local business enterprises are not available, the requirement is waived.
- Local businesses will be given priority in the performance of emergency work.
- The aspirational goal is for at least 75% of emergency contract dollars to be spent with local firms. Of that amount, at least 50% must be spent with small local businesses.

Implementation:

- Each solicitation for contracts or purchase orders shall ensure that contracts will be awarded and administered in accordance with good faith and in the best interest of the overall good of the Mobile area workforce.
- For new contracts awarded, a Manpower Projection Plan should be created that describes the scope of work, the total projected, staffing projected number of new hires, the skill needed, and timeline.
- On construction contracts receiving statutory tax incentives, the awardee commits to a local community orientation meeting within 4 weeks of the contract award that will be organized by the Mobile Chamber.
- Contract awardees are expected to hire only qualified personnel to fill openings and are encouraged to consider opportunities for on-the-job training for qualified entry-level employees and to implement mentor programs.
- Mentors and or Joint Venture partners may receive additional evaluation points (for Mentor-Protégé GM/JV participation) toward the award of contracts during the evaluation of competitive offers.
- One year after the project is awarded, and also after the final occupancy of the project, the awardee shall furnish a report to the Mobile Chamber's Economic Development Department describing the progress of administering and implementing the requirements of this covenant.

Definitions:

Local Business: For purposes of this initiative, a local business is defined as an applicant that has a substantial local presence within a 50-mile radius from the City of Mobile, including employees who have been working out of a fixed office space that has been operational for at least twelve (12) months within the local area.

Local Resident: For purposes of this initiative, a local resident is defined as an individual who maintains their primary residence within a 50-mile radius of the City of Mobile.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises: For-profit small business concerns where socially and economically disadvantaged individuals own at least a 51% interest and also control management and daily business operations. African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific and Subcontinent Asian Americans, and women are presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Other individuals can also qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis.