

Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. **Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Policy**

Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. is a private non-profit that provides long-term services and supports, including mental health services, to older adults with the goal of assisting them to live successfully in the community. ESWA's clientele is diverse in ethnicity, culture, ability, sex, gender, age, and veteran status. In addition to having a diverse staff, the agency looks to contract and subcontract with businesses that share these same demographics in ownership and staffing to ensure that the specific needs of our consumers are met.

The agency's overall operations are further supported by a strong Board of Directors whose twenty members have various expertise/interest in matters affecting older adults and who represent a cross section of the community. At least 51% of the Board is required to be 60 years or older and 51% of the Board is nominated from candidates recommended by the local Councils on Aging.

Additionally, 65% of ESWA's Board is comprised of women which has prompted the agency to begin the application process to become a Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) Woman Non-Profit Organization (W/NPO) and to draft a Supplier Diversity Policy. ESWA's focus as it relates to supplier diversity is to promote an inclusive approach to procurement by actively seeking out and engaging with suppliers owned by veterans, women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups/companies that fall under the SDP certified categories to create a more equitable marketplace. This focus has been adopted by all departments across the agency including Purchase of Services (POS), IT, operations, agency purchasing, business development, and contracting/subcontracting for ancillary services.

To further support ESWA's goal of partnering with SDP certified companies, the organization has processes in place to market to these entities when putting contracts out to bid, evaluating submitted proposals, and to aide in contract award decision making. These strategies include:

- Using specific language within a Response for Proposal (RFP) which encourages diverse groups to apply (i.e. "SDP Certified Businesses are highly encouraged to apply").
- Utilizing specific forms of media that reach diverse groups to post Response for Proposals (RFPs) legal notices. Examples include the Center for Women and Enterprise, Small Business Administration, and Vocero Hispano Newspaper, Inc.
- When advertising an RFP in a newspaper specific to a particular culture, having the legal notice translated into that specific language.
- Including a place within the RFP for the applicant to identify themselves as an SDP certified business. Have also requested that the Executive Office of Elder Affairs expand the SDP categories on the state provided POS RFP paperwork to include all eight SDP categories.

- Utilization of a standard tool for staff to review all proposals submitted to support a fair and consistent review process.
- Summarization of Proposals/Applications by agency's Contracts Manager – Used to rank the applicants' proposals, aid in contract award decision making, while focusing in on qualified applicants who fall in Supplier Diversity Categories.
- Reviewing all entities that ESWA does business with annually and running them through the SDP databases to identify if any have become SDP certified within the fiscal year. Utilizing this information to update our SDP Form to submit with the agency's UFR.
- Surveying all companies that ESWA does business with to verify if they are 51% or more owned and controlled by a minority, female, veteran, disability, and/or LGBT owner while connecting these businesses with the SDO and encouraging them to complete the Certification Self-Assessment tool to verify if they may be eligible for SDO certification.
- When a contractor/subcontractor changes ownership, verifying the new owner's SDP status and directing them to the State's SDO website to verify potential eligibility, if appropriate.
- Provision of technical support and guidance to diverse contractors/subcontractors who may be newer to the Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) network and require additional guidance to successfully execute the contract and further build their business.

The diverse business categories included in the SDP are:

- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise or Nonprofit Organization (MBE or M/NPO)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise or Nonprofit Organization (WBE or W/NPO)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise or Nonprofit Organization (VBE or V/NPO)
- Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)
- Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
- LGBTQ+-Owned Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)

To be considered valid SDP participants, companies in the above categories must be listed in the Commonwealth's SDO Directory of Certified Businesses or the U.S. Small Business Administration's Veteran Small Business Certification (VetCert) Directory. ESWA will also evaluate diverse businesses with third-party certifications where they are subject to verification and standards similar to the Commonwealth's SDO Directory of Certified Businesses.

Pursuant to state policy, ESWA:

- Will seek to make a significant financial commitment to its business relationship(s) with one or more SDP Partner(s) as defined by the SDO;
- Submit a copy of the SDP Plan Form for POS with ESWA's yearly Uniform Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR).