



# RESOURCES GUIDE

FOR MINORITY-OWNED, WOMEN-OWNED,  
AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES



# Our Story

## Who We Are

The Small and Minority Business Resources Department (SMBR) was established by Austin's City Council in 1987 to administer the Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Procurement Programs for the City of Austin. Our mission is to promote access and equity on City of Austin contracts, providing economic opportunity to small, minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses.

## What We Do

SMBR is responsible for managing the certification and compliance of minority and women-owned firms for the City of Austin. We ensure that businesses that meet the eligibility criteria are certified as MBE/WBEs and stay in compliance with City of Austin Code of Ordinances.

## How We Help

We offer business certifications, personalized workshops and webinars, information on upcoming procurement opportunities, trade association memberships and access to small business resources.



# /SMBR Divisions



## Certification

The Certification division verifies that the MBE, WBE and/or DBE applicant owns, manages, and controls the day-to-day operations of the business. By reviewing completed applications and performing site audits, the division ensures that a business owner meets the qualifications of the MBE/WBE and DBE Procurement Programs. SMBR also has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State of Texas which allows SMBR to recommend qualified applicants for Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Certification.



## Compliance

The Compliance Division reviews, monitors and tracks certified vendor participation on City procurements throughout all phases of a project. Compliance also conducts site audits, reviews payment requests, facilitates performance and payment issues, and determines final compliance with the MBE/WBE program.



## Resources

The Resources Division provides information and assistance to Austin's certified minority and women-owned business community. Resources facilitates outreach events with external partners, communicates programmatic changes, and hosts workshops, forums, and informationals on topics of interest to the minority business community. It also manages contracts with local service providers that assist with outreach activities to help increase the number of minority firms certified with the City of Austin and the availability of firms participating on City projects.



# 2022 City of Austin Disparity Study

The [2022 City of Austin Disparity Study](#) by Colette Holt & Associates aimed to assess the city's engagement with Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MBEs/WBEs). Analyzing contracts from fiscal years 2013-2018, the completed study revealed that MBEs accounted for 9.6% and WBEs for 6.8% of the city's contract utilization. This indicates a combined M/WBE engagement of 16.4%, contrasting with an 83.6% rate for non-M/WBEs, highlighting significant disparities.

Key findings of the study confirmed that minority and women entrepreneurs continue to face systemic racial barriers, gender bias, and financial challenges. Recommendations for the city include adopting race-neutral measures, developing a procurement forecast, and implementing a mentor-protégé program, among others, to address these disparities and improve inclusivity in city contracting.

As we move forward, the City of Austin remains committed to revisiting and refining strategies and best practices to ensure the MBE/WBE program not only meets but exceeds its goals. Our aim is to create a business landscape where every enterprise, regardless of its owner's race or gender, can thrive and contribute to Austin's vibrant economy.

Small and Minority Business Resources Department  
City of Austin

# Getting Certified

MBE/WBE is a certification for businesses that are owned, controlled, and operated by an ethnic minority or woman. An MBE/WBE certification increases opportunities for individuals wanting to do business with the City of Austin. Ethnic Minorities include African American, Hispanic, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native Americans.

## MBE/WBE General Eligibility Checklist

- 51% owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s)
- Socially and Economically Disadvantaged individual(s) a part of one of the presumed groups (listed below):
  - Asian American
  - African American
  - Native American
  - Hispanic
  - Women
- Must manage and control the day-to-day operations.
- Are a small business as defined by the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Size Standard Guidelines.
- Personal Net Worth (PNW) must not exceed \$1,828,000 for MBE/WBE certification.
- Have a facility/office located within the State of Texas for at least 90 days.
- Must be a for-profit business.

## Types of Certifications

### MBE

#### MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Projects/Funding Source: City of Austin

Max PNW: 2,218,894

Site Audit: Special Circumstance

### WBE

#### WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Projects/Funding Source: City of Austin

Max PNW: 2,218,894

Site Audit: Special Circumstance

### DBE

#### DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Projects/Funding Source: State of Texas

Max PNW: 1,320,000

Site Audit: Federal Requirement

### ACDBE

#### AIRPORT CONCESSION DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE

Projects/Funding Source: Federal

Max PNW: 1,320,000

Site Audit: Federal Requirement

## Not Certified?

Join us at one of our monthly [Pre-Certification Workshops](#) to learn more about certification and see if it's right for you.



SCAN HERE



# Resources for Small Businesses

## City of Austin

### Austin Public Library

#### [A to Z Databases](#)

Directory and marketing database that includes 30 million businesses and 220 million residents.

#### [Small Business Reference Center](#)

The Small Business Reference Center offers information on small business and entrepreneurial subject areas.

### Capital Contracting Office

#### [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) Academy](#)

The CIP Partners Academy is a series of seminars designed for City staff, vendors, and other parties involved in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

### Economic Development

#### [Family Business Loan Program](#)

The Family Business Loan Program offers low-interest loans to qualified small businesses that are expanding and creating jobs

#### [SizeUp Austin](#)

SizeUp allows businesses to access data to help business make better decisions around competitive benchmarking, customers, suppliers, marketing, advertising, and demographics.

#### [Small Business Assistance](#)

Links to a variety of resources available through the Economic Development Department including steps to open a business, business coaching, and other training opportunities.

#### [Small Business Courses](#)

The Economic Development Department has partnered with Distance Learning Media to provide a catalog of courses featuring live and virtual presentations in four primary categories: Organizational Development, Marketing Strategy, Money Matters, and Human Resources.

### Financial Services/ Austin Finance Online

#### [Active Solicitations](#)

Active City of Austin solicitations for goods and services.

#### [How to Navigate Austin Finance Online](#)

This series of short videos provides instructions for registering as a vendor, navigating City of Austin systems, and developing successful bids.

#### [Upcoming Projects](#)

View a list of upcoming City of Austin projects and bid opportunities for goods and services.

#### [Small Business Resources Database](#)

Directory of small business resources offered by local, state, and federal governments and non-profit agencies.



# Resources for Small Businesses Business Funding

## [Action Opportunity Fund \(CDFI\)](#)

Action Opportunity Fund is a financial support system for small businesses that advances racial, gender, and economic justice for all.

## [Amber Grant](#)

The Amber Grant gives away at least \$30,000 every month.

## [BCL of Texas](#)

BCL of Texas supports Texans to acquire wealth-building assets, such as homeownership and entrepreneurship, with the financial tools and education necessary to build personal net worth.

## [Black Girl Ventures \(Crowdfunded Pitch Competitions\)](#)

Black Girl Ventures is to provide Black/Brown woman-identifying founders with access to community, capital, and capacity building in order to meet business milestones that lead to economic advancement through entrepreneurship.

## [Business Consortium Fund NMSDC \(CDFI\)](#)

BCL has loan programs and consulting services through strategic partners, including the NMSDC network of 23 affiliated regional councils.

## [Businesses Invest in Growth, Inc. \(CDFI\)](#)

This local nonprofit and micro-lender, BiGAUSTIN, provides a streamlined loan process that allows for rapid loan decisions.

## [Cartier Diversity Equity Inclusion Award \(Grant\)](#)

This award to encourage entrepreneurial solutions designed to close gaps of access, outcome or opportunity for communities that have been underrepresented or underserved. While the other regional and thematic awards of the Cartier Women's Initiative focus on supporting women, this pilot award is open to all genders.

## [Cartier Women's Initiative Award \(Grant\)](#)

this program is open to women-run and women-owned businesses from any country and sector that aim to have a strong and sustainable social and/or environmental impact.

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## [Center for Women Entrepreneurs - StartHER Grant Program](#)

The StartHER Grant Program helps women business owners—current or aspiring—to undertake new and innovative projects

## [Local Initiatives Support Corporation - Diverse Supplier Initiative Grants](#)

The Diverse Supplier Grant Initiative is a no-cost, unsecured financing program targeting diverse-owned businesses.

## [Center for Women Entrepreneurs - Veteran Woman Grant Program](#)

This grant program is aimed specifically at helping veterans and is open to women entrepreneurs throughout Texas.

## [Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation \(CDFI\)](#)

Support for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal Community and other under-served Native populations

## [Communities Unlimited, Inc. \(CDFI\)](#)

Communities Unlimited, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation founded in 1976 that connects people to solutions through human connections.

## [DreamSpring \(CDFI\)](#)

DreamSpring is an award-winning nonprofit organization that increases access to credit, makes loans, and provides a community of support to help entrepreneurs realize their dreams.

## [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation](#)

FDIC created this guide to provide information about financing for small businesses.

## [First Nations Development Institute \(Grant\)](#)

First Nations Development Institute improves economic conditions for Native Americans through direct financial grants, technical assistance & training, and advocacy & policy.

## [Grameen America, Inc.](#)

Grameen America is dedicated to helping low-income entrepreneurial women build businesses to enable financial mobility.

## [Hello Alice Grants Database](#)

Hello Alice is a free online platform that helps businesses launch and grow by providing knowledge, funding, networks, and peer-to-peer connections.

## [Just Community, LLC \(CDFI\)](#)

JUST invests in ambitious Black and Brown Texas female entrepreneurs to close the racial wealth gap.

## [Lendistry \(CDFI\)](#)

Lendistry is a minority-led small business lender. To support small businesses, we offer business loans, commercial real estate loans, and a path to the government and private programs.

## [LiftFund, Inc. \(CDFI\)](#)

LiftFund supports hard-working small business owners access money and resources they need to grow their business.

## [Local Initiatives Support Corporation Strategic Investments - Black Economic Development Fund \(Loans\)](#)

The Black Economic Development Fund (BEDF) is an impact investment fund built specifically to address economic challenges in the black community and to help close the racial wealth gap.

## [Minority Business Development Institute Capital Access Fund \(CDFI\)](#)

The fund will be utilized as necessary to both offer collateral to leverage bonding for the emerging contractor and to provide short-term bridge loans for project initiation costs such as mobilization, payroll, payments to subcontractors, and the purchase of supplies and equipment.

## [National Association for the Self Employed \(Grants\)](#)

Small business owners who join this organization are eligible to apply for \$4,000 grants.

## [National Community Reinvestment Coalition Community Development Fund \(CDFI\)](#)

The mission of the Fund is to help bridge the racial wealth divide by supporting entrepreneurship and affordable homeownership in America's underserved communities.

## [PeopleFund \(CDFI\)](#)

PeopleFund creates economic opportunity and financial stability for underserved people and communities by providing access to capital, education, and resources to build healthy small businesses.

## [Raza Development Fund, Inc. \(CDFI\)](#)

Raza Development Fund (RDF) is a Latino-led and focused Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and the country's premier lender to Latino and low-income serving organizations.

## [Texas Mezzanine Fund, Inc. \(CDFI\)](#)

Financing to growth-oriented businesses located in distressed and low/moderate-income communities or that provide jobs for low/moderate-income persons.

## [University United Methodist Church \(Microloans\)](#)

UUMC offers no-interest microloans of up to \$1,500 to help individuals grow or stabilize a small business in Travis and surrounding counties — and startups can apply.

## [US Small Business Administration \(Loans\)](#)

A variety of funding tools are available from the Small Business Administration.

## [Local Initiatives Support Corporation - Diverse Supplier Initiative Grants](#)

The Diverse Supplier Grant Initiative is a no-cost, unsecured financing program targeting diverse-owned businesses.



# Resources for Small Businesses

## Business Training and Education

### [BiG Austin - Women's BiZ Inc.](#)

BiGAustin's Women's BiZ Inc. program serves female entrepreneurs by providing education, consulting, round-table discussions, innovative networking opportunities, and lending programs.

### [Black Girl Ventures Emerging Leaders Fellowship](#)

Three-month leadership skills development program created specifically to expand the capacity of early-stage entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders to strengthen the ecosystems of Black/Brown women founders

### [Code2040](#)

Code2040 is a nonprofit activating, connecting, and mobilizing the largest racial equity community in tech to dismantle the structural barriers that prevent the full participation and leadership of Black and Latinx technologists in the innovation economy.

### [Economic Growth Business Incubator](#)

EGBI provides training, coaching, and support to aspiring and existing business owners who face barriers to growing a successful business.

### [First Nations Development Institute](#)

First Nations Development Institute improves economic conditions for Native Americans through direct financial grants, technical assistance & training, and advocacy & policy.

### [Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Online](#)

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women online is a free-to-access online business education program available to any woman around the world.

### [JP Morgan Chase & Co - Advancing Black Entrepreneurs](#)

Advancing Black Entrepreneurs is a collection of practical resources tailored to help Black business owners grow and scale their business.

### [Ladies Who Launch](#)

Nonprofit organization offering access to free educational resources, capital opportunities, networking with peers and experts, and an active, close community.

### [Main Street Relief](#)

Volunteers provide advice to all small business owners with fewer than 20 employees

### [Minority Business Development Agency](#)

Federal agency tasked with assisting minority owned businesses; provides training, counseling, and access to funding.

### [Minority Business Development Institute](#)

The Minority Business Development Institute (MBDI) is an innovative, community-based, non-profit organization born out of a passionate desire to "change the paradigm" of economic inequality for the minority, veteran and women contractor community.

### [National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc.](#)

NMSDC serves as a growth engine for NMSDC-certified minority businesses and creates opportunities to connect MBEs to hundreds of America's largest corporate members wishing to build relationships with trusted minority-owned companies.

### [SCORE](#)

For all business owners; webinar archives.

### [SCORE for Black Entrepreneurs](#)

### [SCORE](#)

For all business owners; webinar archives.

### [Small Business Development Centers](#)

Counseling and assistance for all small business owners.

### [Women's Business Enterprise-Southwest](#)

WBCS's mission is to increase the value of women-owned businesses by providing certification, education, advocacy, and mutually beneficial business opportunities for our members and affiliates.

### [Tory Burch Foundation](#)

The foundation empowers women and women entrepreneurs by providing access to capital, education, and digital resources. Launched in 2009 by Tory Burch, the iconic lifestyle entrepreneur, the Foundation offers grants to women of color, access to an affordable loan program in partnership with Bank of America, a fellowship program that includes digital education, access to interest-free loans via Kiva, a peer network, a business plan builder, events, webinars and informative articles for women who want to start, operate, and grow their businesses.

### [Texas Women's University - Center for Women Entrepreneurs](#)

AccelerateHER program; funding; grants for rural and vets.

### [University of Texas IC2 Institute - Readiness Training Program for HUBs](#)

The Readiness Training Program for HUBs is an innovative training program that enhances the competitiveness and capacity of minority and women-owned small businesses to bid on public sector contracts in the Austin region.

### [US Small Business Administration Women's Business Center](#)

Free and low cost training and counseling.

### [Walker's Legacy](#)

Walker's Legacy supports entrepreneurial Black and Brown women with the tools to level up their businesses and the business playing field.

### [Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#)

WBENC was founded in 1997 to develop a nationwide standard for women-owned business certification.

### [Women's Business Council Southwest](#)

The Women's Business Council - Southwest (WBCS) hosts a variety of networking, education, and procurement events in the Dallas and Austin areas

### [Women's Business Development Council E-Learning Library](#)

WBDC supports women business owners through workshops, one-on-one coaching, and training programs.



# Business Support Organizations

## A

Arab American Women's Business Council  
[www.aawbc.org](http://www.aawbc.org)

Asian American Contractors and Professionals Association - Texas  
<https://aacpatx.com>

Asian Business Association  
<https://abala.org>

Association of General Contractors of America - Austin Chapter  
[www.agcaustin.org](http://www.agcaustin.org)

Association of Professional Women in Construction - Texas  
[www.apwctexas.com](http://www.apwctexas.com)

Association of Women and Minority Contractors of Texas  
<https://txwamc.org>

Austin Black Contractors Association  
[www.abcatx.com/about.html](http://www.abcatx.com/about.html)

Austin Chamber of Commerce  
[www.austinchamber.com](http://www.austinchamber.com)

Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce  
<https://austinlgbtchamber.com>

Austin Young Chamber  
<https://austinyc.org>

Austin Urban Technology Movement  
[www.autmhq.org](http://www.autmhq.org)

Austin Women in Technology  
<https://awtaustin.org>

## B - N

Black Women in Business  
<https://blackwomeninbusiness.org>

Black Professional Alliance - Austin  
<https://blackprofessionalalliance.org>

Ellevate  
[www.ellevatenetwork.com](http://www.ellevatenetwork.com)

Greater Austin Association of Asian Engineers  
<https://gaaaetx.org>

Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce  
<https://austinasianchamber.org>

Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce  
[www.austinbcc.org](http://www.austinbcc.org)

Greater Austin Disability Chamber of Commerce  
<https://greateraustindisabilitychamberofcommerce.org>

Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
[www.gahcc.org](http://www.gahcc.org)

Hispanic Contractors Association de San Antonio  
[www.hcadesa.org](http://www.hcadesa.org)

Hispanic Women's Network of Texas  
[www.hwnt.org](http://www.hwnt.org)

Indian American Business Association & Chamber  
[www.iabausa.com](http://www.iabausa.com)

National Association of Minority Contractors  
<https://namcnational.org>

National Association of Minority Contractors Greater Austin  
[www.namcatx.org](http://www.namcatx.org)

National Association of Women Business Owners Austin  
<https://nawboatx.org>

National Association of Women in Construction  
[www.nawic.org](http://www.nawic.org)

National Black Chamber of Commerce  
[www.nationalbcc.org](http://www.nationalbcc.org)

National Black Contractors Association  
<https://nationalbca.org>

National Center for Indian American Enterprise Development  
[www.ncaied.org](http://www.ncaied.org)

National Hispanic Contractors Association  
<https://nahica.org>

National Organization of Minority Architects - Central Texas  
[www.nomacentraltx.org](http://www.nomacentraltx.org)

National Society of Black Engineers  
[www.nsbe.org](http://www.nsbe.org)

Native American Business Association  
[www.nativeamericanbusinessassociation.org](http://www.nativeamericanbusinessassociation.org)

Network of Asian American Organizations  
<https://naaotexas.org>

## S - Z

Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers - Austin  
<https://shpeaustin.com>

Society of Women Engineers - Austin  
<https://austin.swe.org>

Texas Association of African American Chamber of Commerce  
<https://taaacc.org>

Texas Association of Mexican American Chamber of Commerce  
<https://tamacc.org>

Texas Black Contractors Association  
<https://asweeney52.wixsite.com/texasbca>

Texas Women's Foundation  
<https://txwf.org>

Texas Women in Business - Austin  
[www.texaswomeninbusiness.org](http://www.texaswomeninbusiness.org)

United Black Contractors - Texas  
[www.unitedblackcontractors.com](http://www.unitedblackcontractors.com)

United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
[www.usbcc.com](http://www.usbcc.com)

United States Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce  
<http://uspaacc-sw.org>

US Hispanic Contractors Association de Austin  
[www.hispaniccontractorsassociation.org/](http://www.hispaniccontractorsassociation.org/)

Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce  
<https://vacoc.org>

Women of Austin  
<https://womenofaustincommunity.com>

Young Hispanic Professional Association of Austin  
[www.yhpa.org](http://www.yhpa.org)





# Bonding & Insurance Agencies

## Bonding

### Contractor Bonding Education and Mentoring Program

This free program is hosted by the National Association of Surety Bond Producers and the Surety and Fidelity Association of America. The goal is to help new and emerging construction businesses, particularly minority-owned and other under-represented businesses, learn how to qualify for surety bonds.

<https://learn.nasbp.org/SFAA-NASBP-ContractorBondingEd>

### Minority Business Development Institute

Overview of bonding process.

[www.minoritybdi.org/surety.shtml](http://www.minoritybdi.org/surety.shtml)

### National Association of Surety Bond Producers

National trade association of surety bond producers provides a search tool to connect with entities offering surety bonds. From this website, you can search for providers based on business location and access information about programs and best practices under the Resources tab.

[www.nasbp.org](http://www.nasbp.org)

### Surety and Fidelity Association of America

A nonprofit, nonpartisan trade association that represents all segments of the surety and fidelity industry.

<https://surety.org>

### Texas Department of Insurance

Information regarding the various types of bonds available and contact information for agents.

[www.tdi.texas.gov/commercial/pcbondsurety.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/commercial/pcbondsurety.html)

### US Small Business Administration

The SBA guarantees surety bonds for certain surety companies, which allows the companies to offer surety bonds to small businesses that might not meet the criteria for other sureties. To apply firms must meet the SBA definition of a small business, have a small contract (up to \$6.5 million for non-federal contracts), and pass the surety company's evaluation process regarding credit, capacity, and character.

[www.sba.gov/funding-programs/surety-bonds](http://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/surety-bonds)

### US Department of Transportation

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) Bonding Education Program (BEP) works with the SBA Surety Bond Program to help small businesses become bond ready.

[www.transportation.gov/osdbu/financial-assistance/bonding-education/bonding-education-program](http://www.transportation.gov/osdbu/financial-assistance/bonding-education/bonding-education-program)

## Insurance

### Texas Department of Insurance

Information about health, liability, and property insurance.

[www.tdi.texas.gov/business/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/business/index.html)

### US Small Business Administration

Overview of business insurance policies and guidance.

[www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/get-business-insurance](http://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/get-business-insurance)



# Frequently Asked Questions: Certification

**Q What is the cost of certification?**

**A** There are no fees payable to the City of Austin for certification.

**Q How long is the Certification review process?**

**A** The Certification review process for MBE/WBE firms can take up to 60 days once all information has been uploaded into the portal. For DBE/ACDBE firms, the process can take up to 90 days once all information has been uploaded into the portal.

**Q How long will my certification last?**

**A** MBE/WBE certifications have no expiration date and will remain certified until their eligibility is either removed based on graduating from the program, not meeting program requirements, or when a MBE/WBE requests a withdrawal from the program.

Disadvantaged and Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE/ACDBE) certifications have no expiration date, maintaining the certification(s) is contingent on an annual review submission along with a few required documents.

**Q What are the benefits of becoming certified?**

**A** Certification as an MBE/WBE provides greater exposure for work opportunities on City of Austin projects.

- Certified firms are listed on SMBR's Certified Firms Directory
- SMBR provides bidders/proposers an "Availability List" of certified firms for primes to solicit.
- Gives firms an opportunity to bid on City of Austin projects as part of a team.

**Q What happens after I become certified?**

**A** After certification, your business name is included on the City of Austin's SMBR department's website vendor database as a certified MBE/WBE. An availability list is generated from the database on specific services needed on a City of Austin project. If your company's services match a particular solicitation, you will receive a notice either by fax, email, or mail to submit a bid.

**Q Why are so many supporting documents required for certification?**

**A** The City of Austin requests the minimum documentation needed to determine if an owner is socially and/or economically disadvantaged. This information includes documents that will demonstrate ownership, management, and control. We will also need documentation that demonstrates the owner and/or owners' expertise and the Personal Net Worth (PNW).

**Q Will certification allow my firm to appear on availability lists?**

**A** Yes, your firm will be placed on Availability List whenever the scopes of work that you are certified under appear on a contract. To ensure that Prime Contractors and Prime Consultants can contact you, keep your email address and contact information current on [Vendor Connection](#) so that your company will not miss any opportunities to do business with the City or with a prime.

Keep in mind that Certification does not guarantee a contract with the City of Austin.

**Q Will you accept MBE/WBE or SBE certification from another agency?**

**A** The City of Austin only recognizes MBE, WBE, and Small Business Enterprise (SBE) certification from the SMBR Department for our locally funded projects.



# Frequently Asked Questions: Compliance

**Q** How do I know that I have been listed on a compliance plan?

**A** SMBR staff will contact you and let you know that you have been identified as a subcontractor or subconsultant on a Compliance Plan to confirm the anticipated scope of work and contract value. You can also contact the Prime Contractor to verify if your company has been selected. You may also review City Council agendas for contract award information.

**Q** What happens if I do not get paid?

**A** Contact SMBR without delay. SMBR will follow up with the appropriate City staff to determine if the City has made payments to the Contractor. If the prime has been paid by the City, then SMBR will research further by gathering additional information and coordinating meeting with all parties to determine non-payment issues.

DO NOT DELAY IN CONTACTING SMBR, the phone number is (512) 974-7600. If you are requesting a copy of a project Payment Bond or have questions regarding a claim, contact the Financial Services Department Capital Contracting. You may view Claim information here [link](#).

You can also review City of Austin payments on the [eCheckbook](#) function of Austin Finance Online. Keep in mind that this database is only updated once a week.

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**Q** What is a Letter of Intent?

**A** A document that is a signed agreement between a certified subcontractor and prime contractor to work on a project. The Letter of Intent also defines the contract amount and the services to be performed.

**Q** What is the purpose of a pre-bid conference?

**A** SMBR asks that you attend as many Pre-Bids and Pre-Proposals that you can while trying to grow your business. Pre-bid and Pre-Proposal meetings give you an opportunity to learn about the details of the project and to ask the Project Manager or the contract manager questions. As a business owner, be prepared to market your company. Having business cards and marketing materials available will assist with networking to engage in discussing your skills and experience to future Primes.

Mandatory Pre-Bid Conferences are a great networking opportunity, as every company that wishes to bid as a Prime Contractor must attend. Be sure to get a copy of the attendance sheet and contact those companies. Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal attendance sheets are available on Austin Finance Online (AFO) for each individual procurement solicitation [here](#).

**Q** What should I do if I am awarded a contract, but the City never orders the goods/services from my firm?

**A** Every contract the City issues has an identified Project Manager or Contract Manager, contacting that contact is your first and primary point of contact.

**Q** If my business was not selected for a contract, will I be told why our bid was rejected?

**A** Contact the Central Procurement Office and request a debrief. A debrief can occur once a contract has been awarded and executed by the City.

**Q** Can I view contracts the City has executed for goods and services?

**A** Please visit, [www.austintexas.gov/afo](http://www.austintexas.gov/afo).

**Q** Does the City of Austin have a policy on how quickly contractors are paid?

**A** The City follows State of Texas laws regarding payment.

**Q** What should I do if there are problems with my contract?

**A** See response above on question 1.



# Frequently Asked Questions: General

**Q Does SMBR provide supportive services to certified firms?**

**A** SMBR is in the process of creating a program of supportive services. Stay tuned for more information coming soon.

**Q What are commodity codes?**

**A** Commodity codes are standardized numerical codes used to identify goods and services. These codes are used by the City of Austin and other entities in their procurement systems. The City of Austin uses National Institute of Government Procurement (NIGP) codes.

**Q If my business was not selected for a contract, will I be told why our bid was rejected?**

**A** Contact the Central Procurement Office and request a debrief. A debrief can occur once a contract has been awarded and executed by the City.

**Q Where do I find NAICS and NIGP codes?**

**A** NAICS codes can be found here: [www.naics.com](http://www.naics.com).

The NIGP catalog is located at Periscope Holdings. This is the contractor the City uses to maintain the codes. NAICS codes are used to solicit federal projects, while NIGP codes are used for City of Austin solicitations.

**Q Are we required to get a DUNS account to be a certified firm?**

**A** No, you are not required to have a DUNS account to be certified.

**Q Does my business need additional insurance to do business with the City of Austin?**

**A** You might need to secure additional insurance depending on the contract depending on the contract requirements.

**Q How can I secure bonding for my business?**

**A** Bonding services are not available from the City of Austin. Firms will need to secure bonding via the private sector.

**Q Do I need a special license to do business with the City of Austin?**

**A** There is not a contractor license or general license required to do business with the City or to own a company. If the scope is specific to those that require professional licenses, one would need to have license, or employ someone with requisite license.

**Q Why do I keep receiving bid notices for goods or services that are not related to my business?**

**A** It is possible that the commodity codes for your business are incorrect. You should login to your vendor account to review the codes and to make updates as needed.

**Q How can my firm learn about upcoming contracts with the City of Austin?**

**A** Active solicitations can be found at [www.austintexas.gov/service/active-solicitations](http://www.austintexas.gov/service/active-solicitations). Upcoming projects can be found at [www.austintexas.gov/department/upcoming-projects](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/upcoming-projects).

**Q How can I meet City of Austin department staff that are responsible for purchasing goods and services?**

**A** The City of Austin hosts an annual Minority and Small Business Connections event where firms can meet representatives from various City of Austin Departments.

**Q Does the City of Austin help subcontractors meet prime contractors?**

**A** The SMBR department holds Meet the Prime sessions. Look for those to be advertised at [www.austintexas.gov/department/small-and-minority-business-resources-0](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/small-and-minority-business-resources-0).

**Q How can my company be a prime contractor?**

**A** If your firm is capable of handling the scope of work on a contract, you may bid or propose on a City of Austin contract as a prime contractor.



# **/CONTACT SMBR**



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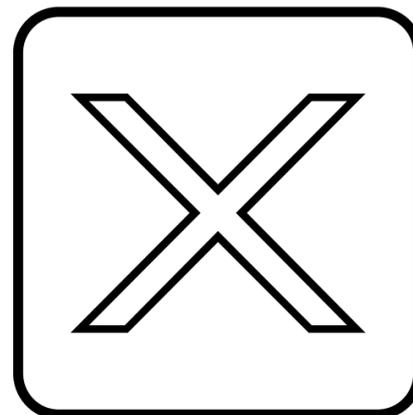
Website  
**www.austintexas.gov/smbr**



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# **/STAY CONNECTED**



**END**