

**RECCOMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE
AUSTIN ENERGY'S WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM
FOR MINORITY WEATHERIZATION CONTRACTORS**

Late Backup

Overview

In September of 2010, twenty (28) City Certified minority contractors completed the Weatherization Training Program sponsored by **Austin Energy. Digital Workforce Academy** conducted the training. Currently, four (4) are participating in the program --- one as a prime and four as subcontractors.

Objective

The following recommendations are respectfully submitted in an effort to enhance M/WBE participation on Austin Energy Weatherization Program

Recommendations

- Improve AE / Weatherization Program administrative processes including the award and distribution of ongoing work assignments among contractors. There has and continues to be a disparity distribution of awards and assignments to contractors with no justification. A more "transparent" and strategic process that reflects equity and parity amongst available and qualified contractors (including M/WBEs) is consistent with Federal / State and City of Austin procurement guidelines.
- Establish specific program process benchmarks that provide fair and impartial impact to all contractors involved in the project. (i.e. Fixed determinable and consistent time lines in the processes once work is completed and when the auditor goes out to inspect the work to identify deficiencies. Once the deficiencies have been identified, both the weatherization contractor and the auditor should return to the site together and re-inspect the work to ensure completion
- Request For Proposals (RFPs) evaluation matrices should be published with the RFP and mirror the City of Austin current procurement practices in model departments who consistently achieve and/or exceed their MBE/DBE goals. The use of fair and "transparent" scoring methods by contractor evaluators should be immediately initiated and available under full disclosure.
- AE should pursue available funding sources and community training partners to support MBE/WBEs efforts to secure BPI and RESNET Certifications, including agreements with such entities such as ACC, Houston-Tillotson and the Texas Workforce Commission.

- Include M/WBE participation goals in all AE Weatherization Program solicitation and contractual documents. Beginning with their inclusion in all RFP documents and required vendor response / bid submissions.
- Remove or justify selection criteria that would restrict or create a barrier for M/WBEs to participate as a prime. For example the i.e. .number of houses required (75) to be completed, or time constraints in which to complete them.
- Remove the BPI and RESNET Certifications as criteria to be a prime or provide justification for its necessity.
- Evaluate and review everyone involved (prime and subcontractor) in the project is actually serving a commercially useful function that is prudent and necessary for the project.
- Improve the transparency and accountability of the project relative to M/WBE participation. Contract language should include that "if goals are not met, sanctions will be applied according to but not limited to removal from the project as well as restricting future participation. (Federal procurement practices allow for "disbarment" of non-performing contractors)

The AE Weatherization Program should immediately adopt and incorporate in its entirety all City of Austin M/WBE Ordinance rules and regulations and processes.

Additionally, incorporate effective strategies used by other City of Austin Departments in meeting and/or exceeding M/WBE Goals

- Use of Rotation Lists
- Use of Pre-Qualified Vendors List – with an Open Ended Updating of new qualified Vendors
- Use of "transparent" procurement processes and award augmentation criteria
- Use of fair/impartial scoring matrix for bid reviews and subsequent awards
- Fair and impartial project administrative processes subject to consistent review and updates as appropriate
- Consistent use of benchmarks to evaluate ongoing project progress towards its M/WBE goals by contractor.