

BEPD POLICY

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to increase contracting opportunities with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for small business enterprises that are owned and operated by persons with disabilities and to gather information to guide future policy decisions aimed at minimizing barriers for these business owners.

Section 2. Definitions

- (a) “Disabled” or “person with a disability” means any individual who has a physical or mental condition that limits that individual’s movements, senses, or activities, especially one that is imposed or recognized by law.
- (b) “Business enterprise owned and operated by persons with disabilities” or “BEPD” means: both a small business enterprise and a participating business, including a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, joint venture or any other business or professional entity which is at least 51% directly and unconditionally owned by one or more disabled individuals, or in the case of a publicly held corporation, at least 51% of the stock which is owned by one or more disabled individuals, and whose control and management of the business including long-term goals for the company as well as day-to-day operations are controlled by one or more eligible disabled individuals; (2) certified as a Business Enterprise Owned and Operated by Persons with Disabilities by (i) the state of Illinois as the certifying agency or (ii) other certifying agency or assist agency whose certification process the District’s Diversity Administrator deems sufficiently dependable for the purposes of gathering data relating to BEPD businesses.
- (c) “Participating Business” means a business located within the counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry or Will in the State of Illinois or Lake County in the State of Indiana which has the majority of its regular full-time work force located in this region and/or a business which has been placed on the District’s vendor list and/or has bid or sought District contract(s) for construction or professional services work.
- (d) “Small Business Enterprise” (SBE) in this policy has the meaning consistent with Appendix D for construction contracts or Appendix A for professional services contracts, as applicable.

Section 3. Outreach and Data Collection

MWRD has a long history of engaging in outreach across all industries and business sectors to encourage interest by companies, especially SBEs, in contracting opportunities with the MWRD, including minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned business enterprises, in the award and performance of MWRD contracts. Recognizing that the disabled community would benefit from that same level of outreach, the MWRD will undertake the following actions:

- (a) Expand its contracting outreach programs by inviting BEPD organizations and enterprises to attend MWRD vendor fairs, events, meetings, and other MWRD-sponsored activities for the purpose of sharing its vast knowledge, experience, and resources with those business

enterprises while also fostering connections with other organizations that represent the BEPD community.

- (b) Notify qualified businesses about vendor registration, contract bid openings, Requests for Proposals, and certification procedures.
- (c) Engage in data collection relating to the BEPD business community operating in the MWRD's service area by using contract-related forms to allow business owners, including but not limited to prime contractors and subcontractors in construction contracts, to voluntarily identify as a BEPD.
- (d) Explore an appropriate certification process for BEPD vendors guided by the MWRD's certification process under Revised Appendix D.

Section 4. Compilation and Reporting of Data

For purposes of further developing a policy and program using BEPDs in MWRD contracting, the Board of Commissioners directs designated staff to undertake the following:

- (a) Track progress on all outreach efforts for a five (5) year period.
- (b) Track data regarding voluntarily identification of BEPD status on MWRD contracts for a five (5) year period.
- (c) Report to the Board of Commissioners annually on the level of participation in all outreach events and response to other outreach efforts and identify impediments to outreach participation.
- (d) Report to the Board of Commissioners annually on the results of data collection relative to the number of BEPDs that voluntarily identify their status on MWRD contracts and identify impediments to data collection.
- (e) After five (5) years of robust outreach and data collection, provide the Board of Commissioners with a comprehensive final report for the Board's consideration at a Study Session that discusses the compiled data.

Section 5. Effective Date

This policy is effective upon adoption.

Adopted by Order of the Board July 16, 2020