

Caltrans Reaches Out to Vendors

SB 1 Opens Opportunities for Small, Disadvantaged, Veteran-Owned Firms

Caltrans is actively courting small businesses, disadvantaged business enterprises, and disabled veteran business enterprises to bid on available contracts, and is using various outreach methods to get the word out.

Dozens of workshops, meetings and training sessions have been held throughout the state, and many more are scheduled. This extensive effort will help meet mandates of Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017.

The law requires the Department to develop a plan by January 2020 to increase by up to 100 percent the dollar value of contracts awarded to small businesses, disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs), and disabled veteran business enterprises (DVBES). In fiscal year 2016-17, small businesses were awarded almost \$500 million in Caltrans contracts, DBEs received \$264.5 million, while DVBES won \$47 million in contracts.

To meet the 2020 goal, [Caltrans' Office of Business and Economic Opportunity](#) (OBOE) is presenting "Doing Business with Caltrans: Getting Started" workshops, and providing training for prime contractors and subcontractors statewide.

The OBOE webpage features a calendar of events, as well as links to SB 1 information, mentoring and networking opportunities, certification requirements, the DBE database and educational materials.

The office is reaching out to DBEs that have not been awarded Caltrans contracts before, and is sponsoring programs that increase apprenticeship opportunities for women and minorities in the ironworker and cement mason trades. The goal is to expand representation of these individuals in the labor force, and increase their participation in Caltrans' contracts.

There will also be procurement fairs held around the state that provide a forum for small businesses to meet face-to-face with Caltrans buyers and contract managers, and learn about upcoming opportunities



Caltrans photo by Scott Lorenzo


Workshops such as this one in 2017 are one way that Caltrans tries to attract businesses interested in landing state contracts.

to sell goods and services to Caltrans.

Caltrans also is preparing a series of videos targeted for small and disadvantaged businesses that seek contracts with the state. The video spots will be posted on the OBOE webpage, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Even before SB 1, Caltrans has been committed to increasing the dollar amount of contracts and procurements awarded to the wider business community.

In its 2015-2020 Strategic Management Plan, the Department pledged to award at least 25 percent of its contract and procurement dollars to small businesses as part of its overall performance goals for the organization.

Caltrans far exceeded that target in 2015-16, with small businesses winning 46 percent of all contracts and procurements offered. That rate declined to 28.7 percent in 2016-17, but still beat the Strategic Management Plan's 2020 goal. In the category of disadvantaged business, Caltrans met the 5 percent contract/procurements awards target in 2015-2016 and achieved a 3.3 percent rate in 2016-2017. 

Sources: Anna M. Silva, Office Chief, Training and Outreach Branch, Office of Business and Economic Opportunity; Office of External Affairs