

Establishing Policy as the Business Manager for State Government

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If you're hoping to do business with the State of California, the Department of General Services (DGS) is the main entity with which you will want to connect. This department serves as the business manager for state government in California. The California DGS helps to better serve the public by providing a variety of services to state agencies through procurement and acquisition solutions, real estate management and design, environmentally friendly transportation, professional printing, design and web services, administrative hearings, legal services, building standards, oversight of structural safety, fire/life safety and accessibility for the design and construction of K-12 public schools and community colleges, and funding for school construction.

Tanya Little is the Business Development Program Manager for the California DGS. Her role is to help develop relationships between the DGS and various business groups in the state, particularly those groups that may be under represented in the list of businesses providing goods and services to various state departments.

When it comes to policies related to the interaction of private businesses and the State of California, the DGS is responsible for updating any regulations which are affected by bills that are passed through the state legislature. In April, 2013, the DGS published updates to regulations related to Disabled Veteran Owned Enterprises (DVOE). They are now updating small business regulations.

The changes to regulations implemented for DVOE, and now small businesses, are a result of bills passed in the legislature between 2005 and 2012. The changes, in general, deal with streamlining the application processes for these contractors,

clarifying language to avoid confusion, and strengthening penalties for fraudulent activity related to obtaining certification. One of the biggest benefactors of the changes will be DVOE businesses. The largest number of changes deal with providing consistency between DVOE regulations and small business regulations. Since approximately 75% of DVOE businesses also fit the small business criteria, this will simplify the certification process for them.



Establishing policy and implementing policy are two different steps in the process. Current recommended changes to small business regulations will be implemented in policies passed in bills dating as far back as 2005. Tanya Little, Business Development Program Manager for the California Department of General Services, spoke with DyNAMC about these proposed changes.



One of the other streamlining effects of these regulation changes is in relation to creating consistency between state certification requirements and those of other entities, such as counties, cities, and special districts. The development of a unified certification application was proposed to eliminate disparity in the certification process across government entities.

Understanding the current regulations and determining what your company needs to do to fulfill the mandates is an important first step in doing business with any California government department.

Little encourages certified small businesses, wishing to do business with the state, to start with small contracts ranging between \$5,000 and \$249,000. Many contracts falling within this range are not advertised. Departments are encouraged to use a streamlined process called the SB/DVBE Option for these purchases. The state buyer only needs to obtain two quotes from two different certified small businesses or two certified DVBEs to award these types of contracts.

"Small business owners should research state departments, similar to how one would if he/she were going to be interviewed

for a job," Little offers DyNAMC readers. "Identify the specific products and services your business offers. Your goal is to earn the state's confidence in your ability to deliver the quality and quantity of your offerings. Next, search the state's database to learn about your competition. You want to determine how much effort it will take on your part to land a contract." Little goes on to say, "The third step is to identify one or two departments that have a need for your products and services. Contact those departments to determine when they intend to purchase the products or services you have identified. Ask them to consider you the next time they need a quote."

Little strongly encourages attending outreach network events hosted by the DGS throughout the year. A schedule of events for 2015, and their locations, is available for download on their

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website. She also states that DGS Advocates provide guidance to certified small businesses wishing to market to the state.

"Business owners can meet some of our advocates face-to-face when they attend any of the events we are holding in their area," Little explains to DyNAMC. "By getting their face out there and letting the department get to know them, an advocate is more likely to remember them and give them a call."

If you'd like to learn more about doing business with the state before obtaining certification, visit Little's web page. It can be found in the Quick Links section of the DGS Home page at www.dgs.ca.gov. Little is also interested in hearing about your success stories in landing contracts with state departments. You can email Tanya Little at Business.Development@dgs.ca.gov.