



Less red tape for small firms

The paperwork required to become certified for state and local contracts is streamlined.

By Darrell Smith - Bee Staff Writer

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Small and minority subcontractors used to wading through waves of paperwork to become certified for state and local contracts can now climb onto a fast track, thanks to a pact signed Friday.

The agreement among the state Department of General Services, Sacramento County and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency will streamline the paperwork that makes small businesses eligible for contracts.

The pact goes into effect immediately, said General Services spokesman Eric Lamoureux. The state has 40 similar agreements with jurisdictions across California, he said.

"We want to fast track the ability for small businesses to get into the system," Lamoureux said. The deal would be reciprocal, officials said.

If a firm has state certification, for instance, by filling out a single form, the company can become certified with a county or city.

That just makes sense, said Rosario Marin, secretary of the State and Consumer Services Agency, who called the rapid certification "a dream of mine."

"Why should small businesses be in the business of filling out forms for a state entity? They have a job to do and it's not filling out forms," Marin said Friday at a signing ceremony at Department of General Services headquarters.

Long a frustration for small businesses, the paperwork needed for federal, state and local certification could take weeks, months or even years to obtain and complete, with multiple agencies requesting the same types of business and financial records from often overwhelmed mom-and-pops.

The cumbersome process discouraged participation by small businesses hoping to gain entry into the competitive contracting process. That's expected to change locally with the new agreement.

Louis Collins, chief executive officer of Engage, an integrated systems technology firm based in Sacramento, was glad to see a deal struck.

"As a small business, I don't have time to write to agencies. I'm investing time in running a small business," Collins said. "Use the information that's already out there. It's still a requirement to help these small businesses be successful."

Jim Boyd of JB Technologies of El Dorado Hills said the pact opens up opportunities and simplifies the process for contractors and governments alike.

"One form. ... Now, we can do business across the county, city and state," Boyd said. "This signing process eliminates duplication of efforts. Now we're sharing information."

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