



## Opportunities...

for **EDGE** certified firms to obtain work with ODOT's, Office of Real Estate.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is responsible for maintaining and improving the state's transportation system and spends more than two billion dollars each year in goods, services and capital improvements. The department strives for inclusion in its procurement and contracting processes by opening the doors of opportunity for more Ohioans to reflect the great diversity of our state.

### ODOT's Office of Real Estate

ODOT's Office of Real Estate acquires property necessary for the construction, improvement, service, and maintenance of both new and existing highways. This process is accomplished by ODOT employees and is supplemented by private sector Right of Way acquisition professionals serving on an as needed basis.

Occasionally, to meet workload demands, work is outsourced to firms or individuals prequalified to perform any or all of the following RAW disciplines: Project Management, Titles, Value Analysis, Appraisals, Appraisal Reviews, Relocation, Relocation Reviews, Negotiations, and Closings.

ODOT's Office of Real Estate desires to ensure that firms owned and controlled by minorities, women, and other socially and economically disadvantaged persons have the opportunity to grow and become self-sufficient in order to create a level playing field on which they can compete fairly for contracts and subcontracts in the transportation industry. Toward this initiative, Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) program goals will be contained in upcoming postings for RAW work at ODOT. **Office of Real Estate contact: (614) 466-7490.**

### PreQualification:

Consultant Prequalification Requirements and Procedures for RAW disciplines can be found starting on page 56 of the site shown below. Questions on this process should be referred to the individual identified on page 6.

Link: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/ProdMgt/Consultant/Consultant/Prequal.doc>

### Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity

#### 1. What does the acronym "EDGE" stand for?

Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity

#### 2. What is the purpose of the EDGE program?

EDGE is a small business assistance program for economically and socially disadvantaged business enterprises.

EDGE establishes goals for state agencies, boards and commissions in awarding contracts to certified EDGE-eligible businesses. EDGE applies to the procurement of goods and services, professional services, information technology services, construction, architecture or engineering.

#### 3. What are the benefits for EDGE participants?

The EDGE program offers the following three benefits to certified program participants:

A Contract Assistance Program with an established EDGE procurement goal or subcontracting goal for selected contracts. Waivers will be available for companies that, despite their best efforts, are not able to reach their participation goal.

A Mentor-Protégé Program that pairs larger companies as mentors to EDGE- certified businesses in a way that is commercially beneficial to both.

A Bond Guaranty Program that provides bonding or working capital to eligible companies.

#### 4. What businesses are eligible for EDGE certification?

EDGE certification eligibility criteria includes a demonstration of socially and economically disadvantaged business status as established by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services' Equal Opportunity Division.

Additionally, the business owner(s) must be a U.S. citizen and Ohio resident.

The company must have been in business at least one year prior to applying for certification as a EDGE. This requirement shall not apply to joint venture applicants.



The business must be at least 51 percent owned and controlled by EDGE-eligible owner(s). The EDGE owner(s) must have day-to-day control over the business and must exercise final authorization over any significant aspect of daily operation of the business, including operational, financial, management, human resources and policy decisions.

The business may be operated by an individual, partnership, corporation or joint venture.

#### 5. Can my business become certified if I am located in a "Qualified Census Tract"?

Yes, if your business is located in a qualified census tract no proof of social disadvantage is required.

#### 6. What areas of Ohio fall within the "Qualified Census Tract"?

A qualified census tract is based on median household income level, unemployment level and/or poverty level within the state as prescribed by Title 26 of the U.S. Code Section 42(d). To view areas of Ohio that qualify, visit:

<http://map.sba.gov/hubzone/hzqry.asp?state=OH>

#### 7. What is economically disadvantaged?

Economically disadvantaged individuals are those whose personal net worth does not exceed program thresholds. Maximum personal net worth at program entry is \$250,000, ranging up to \$750,000 following program admission.

#### How do you establish that you are economically disadvantaged?

Each proprietor, general and limited partner or each stockholder (claiming socially & economic disadvantage and representing 51% ownership and control of the company) must complete a "Personal Financial Statement" demonstrating that the personal net worth of the owner(s) is no greater than \$250,000 upon program entry and no greater than \$750,000 following program admission, excluding the owner("s) primary residence and any interest in the business under which certification is being requested.

#### 8. What is socially disadvantaged?

Socially disadvantaged individuals have been subject to societal prejudice or cultural bias because of their identities as members of groups, without regard to their individual qualities.

#### How do you establish that you are socially disadvantaged?

An applicant may establish social disadvantage in one of two ways:

1) By a business owner showing personal disadvantage due to color, ethnic origin, gender, physical disability, long-term residence in an environment isolated from the mainstream of American society or location in an area of high unemployment; OR

2) By the business owner showing that he or she is socially disadvantaged based on other similar reason to those listed above, which are not common to most small business owners. The social disadvantage must be chronic or substantial, not fleeting or insignificant.

**May a business participate in the EDGE program if none of the owners are socially disadvantaged?**

Yes, a business can be certified as socially disadvantaged if it is located in a qualified census tract. (Refer to item 6.)



**9. How do I apply for certification if I believe I'm eligible?**

Complete the EDGE certification application available from:

Ohio Department of Administrative Services  
Equal Opportunity Division  
EDGE Certification Office  
30 E. Broad St., 18th floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3414  
(614) 466-8380  
www.edge.ohio.gov

**10. How long may a business participate in the EDGE program?**

Generally participation may not exceed 10 years.

**11. How are program participants monitored for continued eligibility?**

Businesses are re-certified to participate in the

EDGE program every two years. Re-certification may include an onsite review and businesses will be required to submit various statements.

**12. What is the difference between the EDGE program and the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program?**

Both programs assist economically disadvantaged businesses. MBE certification is limited to members of four statutorily designated racial groups. MBE procurement involves sheltered market or set-aside contracts let by virtually all state agencies. EDGE certification is open to any Ohio-based small business that has been certified as socially and economically disadvantaged. EDGE procurement does not involve sheltered markets or set-aside contracts.



**13. What's the purpose of the EDGE Mentor-Protégé Program?**

The purpose is to increase opportunities for participating businesses to improve their operations, build business alliances, develop joint ventures and promote their businesses.

**14. Who is eligible to apply to be a protégé?**

Any EDGE-certified business that has been in operation for three years or more with proven management and increasing revenues is eligible to be a protégé. The applicant must be willing to complete a diagnostic evaluation of the company and be willing to commit to an 18-month relationship with the mentor corporation.

**15. Who should consider being a mentor?**

Established businesses dedicated to community and corporate leadership are encouraged to mentor an EDGE-certified company. Fostering such a relationship provides the mentor with the

opportunity to increase and diversify its supplier base. Mentors are provided with a supportive and interactive environment in which to work with other like-minded mentors dedicated to strengthening local business talent.

**16. What are the costs associated with being a mentor?**

There is no charge for applying or participating in the program. There may be incidental costs associated with providing developmental assistance to the protégé.

**17. Is the mentor required to provide any contracts to the protégé?**

No. Although the mentor is not required to provide any contracts to the protégé, two measures of success of the mentoring relationship is the protégé's increased business volume and future growth potential. Both mentor and protégé are encouraged to nurture a vendor relationship where it is mutually beneficial.

**18. What is the process for participating in the EDGE Mentor-Protégé Program?**

Mentor and protégé participants are selected through a competitive application process. Applications may be obtained online at: [www.das.ohio.gov/EDGE](http://www.das.ohio.gov/EDGE); or by contacting:

Ohio Department of Development  
Division of Minority Business Affairs  
EDGE Mentor-Protégé Program  
77 S. High St., 26th floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6130

**19. What procurement opportunities are covered under the EDGE program?**

EDGE goals apply to all categories of procurements – goods and services, professional services, information technology services, construction/ architectural and engineering.

**20. How will I know whether a particular bid opportunity has an EDGE goal?**

The EDGE goals will be included in the Invitation to Bid (ITB), Request for Proposal (RFP) or direct agency opportunity.

**21. What if I try to get an EDGE subconsultant for a project, but am unable to do so? May I still bid?**

The contractor may still submit a bid. If a contractor in good faith demonstrates due diligence in securing the services of EDGE subconsultants, but is unsuccessful, a waiver may be granted.

**EDGE eligibility**

An EDGE participant must be a small socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprise owned and controlled by U.S. citizens who are Ohio residents. A business enterprise may qualify if it is located in a qualified census tract (Census tracts qualify based on household income level, unemployment level and/or poverty level) or, if not located in a qualifying census tract, the business may qualify if the owner meets the following criteria.

**Socially disadvantaged criteria**

(Must meet one criterion below.)

Socially disadvantaged individuals are those who have at least one objective distinguishing feature that has significantly inhibited their business success, such as:

- race
- ethnic origin
- gender
- physical/mental disability
- long-term residency in an environment isolated from mainstream Ohio society
- other objective relevant reason(s)

**Economically disadvantaged criteria**

(Must meet both criteria below.)

Economically disadvantaged owners must meet the following thresholds:

- Personal net worth of each owner must not exceed \$250,000 at program entry.
- Personal net worth of each owner must not exceed \$750,000 during program participation

**Benefits of EDGE certification**

Certified EDGE program participants are eligible for:

- contract assistance
- financial and bonding assistance
- management and technical assistance
- protégé opportunities with industry mentors



Ohio Department of Transportation  
An Equal Opportunity Employer