

**EXHIBIT 15**

**DEVELOPER’S JOB TRAINING / SMALL BUSINESS MENTORING PLAN**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Small businesses are essential to economic competitiveness in the transportation industry. Therefore, the Developer has created a Small Business Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) to provide opportunities for small businesses to participate in public-private partnerships in the areas of design and construction.

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

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Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. (DBE) - Any business so certified in Accordance with 49 CFR Part 26.

Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) - Any business so certified by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) or by way of a certification memorandum of agreement the Statewide HUB Program has entered into with TxDOT and other local governments or nonprofit organizations.

Small Business Enterprise (SBE) - Any business certified as a DBE HUB or otherwise so certified by TxDOT.

Developer Mentor (Mentor) - Employees from the Developer.

Developer Protégé (Protégé) - DBE/ HUB/ SBE that sign an agreement with the Developer to participate in the Developer-Small Business MPP.

Session - A series of meetings for the Developer and Small Business Mentors and Protégés.

## 3. PROGRAM GOALS

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The Developer's Small Business MPP provides an opportunity to selected Small Business Enterprises to learn about the Developer's business opportunities and its business practices. Protégés will receive information to assist them in bidding and performing on the Developer's contracts by working directly with the Developer and appropriate subcontractors gaining valuable on-the-job training during a one (1) year mentoring period.

The Small Business MPP will offer participants the opportunity to enhance their business skills by focusing on fundamental construction business tenets:

1. Schedule and scheduling
  - a) Short-term and long-term scheduling
  - b) How to schedule
  - c) Progressing a schedule
  - d) Keeping on schedule
  - e) Identifying and applying appropriate resources
  - f) Schedule recovery
2. Creating a cost budget and measuring costs
  - a) Establishing a budget with appropriate cost codes
  - b) Monitoring the budget by conducting weekly review of cost reports
  - c) Anticipating necessary changes to the budget
  - d) Adjusting the budget
  - e) Identifying changed conditions
3. Measuring cash flow and profitability
  - a) Cash in vs. Cash out
  - b) Relationship of cash flow to profitability
4. Understanding the role of bonds and insurance
5. Clarifications to the contract documents, when requested by the Protégé
6. Human resources
7. Project safety

The Developer will introduce the Protégés to key Developer staff and to TxDOT's project staff and provide networking opportunities with those individuals. Developer Mentors, in collaboration with the Developer's staff, subcontractors, bonding agents, and other applicable parties, will meet with the Protégés during regularly scheduled meetings and will work individually with the Protégés as needed to achieve program goals. The Developer will publish Developer Bulletins that identify the firms participating in the MPP in order to improve awareness of the program and to achieve program goals.

#### **4. ELIGIBILITY**

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To be eligible for the program, the small business must have been certified by the State of Texas as a DBE, HUB, or SBE for at least one consecutive year and must perform a category of work or supply a type of material that adds value to the project (e.g., design services, concrete supplier, rebar tier).

Firms interested in participating in the program must submit a Small Business Mentor-Protégé application to the Developer. The Developer will offer participation in the program to each DBE, HUB, or SBE that has an active role in the project, and will endeavor to maintain a minimum of five (5) active participants at any one time during the design and construction phase of the project. A total of two (2) active participants will be mentored during the operation and maintenance period after Service Commencement. The actual number of Protégés participating in the program will depend on the total number of candidate firms working on the project that express interest in the program.

Once selected by the Developer, the Protégé must sign a Mentor-Protégé agreement (to be developed by Developer) to commit the necessary time and efforts needed for the successful training. This is a voluntary program and either party may withdraw at any time by providing written notice outlining the reason for withdrawal from the program (a courtesy copy will be provided to TxDOT). Upon completion of the one year program, the Developer will provide each Protégé with a Certificate of Completion.

#### **5. PUBLIC OUTREACH**

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The Developer has identified the following list of available resources to locate and solicit DBEs, HUBs, and SBES:

- I. Owner provided subcontractor listings
- II. Texas Unified Certification Program (TUCP) Directory, TxDOT's SBE Directory, or CPA's HUB Director;
- III. Procurement Marketing and Access Network (PRO-Net) of the Small Business Administration (SBA);
- IV. The Developer's Internal Vendor Database; created from letters of introduction, pre-qualification documents, and personal interviews with small, small disadvantaged, women-owned, HUB Zone, and service disabled veteran enterprise representatives;
- V. The Blue Book of Building and Construction, regional directories of building and construction vendors;

- VI. MBE Contractor Directory; compiled and maintained by the Associated General Contractors of America;
- VII. Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Specialist;
- VIII. National Directories
  - National Directory of Women-Owned Businesses
  - National Directory of Minority-Owned Business Firms
  - Smoke Signals
  - The Business Women's Network Directory
  - National Center of American Indian-Owned Businesses
- IX. Databases
  - Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
  - GSA's Office of Enterprise Development Vendor Profile Database
  - Databases Established by Various Government Agencies
- X. Publications
  - Small Business Resource Guide
  - Federal Acquisition Report
  - Washington Business Journal's Book of Lists
  - Minorities in Business Daily
  - Local Newspaper and Trade Publications
- XI. Trade and Professional Associations
  - National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO)
  - National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc.
  - National Association of Minority Contractors
  - National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development
  - National Business League
  - Latin American Management Association
  - The National Black Business Council, Inc.
  - Hispanic Business Professional Women Association

## **6. PROGRAM APPROACH AND TOPICS**

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The Developer Small Business MPP aims to provide effective mentoring to the DBEs/HUBs/SBEs that have already been selected as subcontractors for the project. The

Developer will make best efforts to mentor the Protégés while the Protégés are working on the project, attending project meetings, and participating in project discussions, allowing Protégés to gain an understanding of the conduct of project operations and receive one-on-one training opportunities. The intent of this approach is to provide actual project experience to the Protégés, and to assist them to successfully compete for prime contract and subcontract awards by improving their experience and reputation among developers and contractors.

Each Protégé will be invited to participate in project meetings through which the Protégé will gain practical experience related to project operations. Meeting topics may include planning strategies, schedule reviews, budgeting and cost tracking, subcontractor interface coordination, insurance, bonding, safety (including safety task assessments), celebratory events, and quality reviews. The various meetings are held either at the project office or at the particular field site, as applicable.

This approach will provide the Protégé with practical, hands-on project operations experience.

## **7. PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING**

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### **A. Protégé:**

The Protégés are responsible for complying with the Mentor-Protégé Agreement, as described below:

- Attend and be on-time for all meetings related to the Program.
- Perform assignments given by the Mentor.
- Hold the Developer, including its employees, or agents harmless from any claim, suit, action, or demand of Protégé or Protégé's creditors, or any other person arising out of the Mentor-Protégé Agreement.

### **B. Mentor**

A Developer Mentor is assigned to each Protégé and will perform the mentoring activities described in this Program plan. The Mentor is responsible to ensure that the Protégé receives and understands the information presented during the meetings. The Mentor will have regular contact with each Protégé to respond to any questions that the Protégés may have regarding the Program.

The Mentor will complete a monthly report for each Protégé that outlines topics covered, progress towards completion, and recommended future training. The Mentor will submit each monthly report to the Developer's DBE Liaison Manager and TxDOT by the 10th working day of the following month.