



Asian Contractor Association (ACA)
4201 Ed Bluestein Blvd.
#2100
Austin, TX 787
Tel: 512-926-5400
www.acta-austin.com

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ACA Newsletter

Asian Contractor Association Recognized Second Year in a Row for Community Contribution

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Asian Contractor Association Receives 2013 Austin Award

Austin Award Program Honors the Achievement

AUSTIN June 24, 2013 -- For the second consecutive year, Asian Contractor Association has been selected for the 2013 Austin Award in the Non-Profit Organization category by the Austin Award Program.

Each year, the Austin Award Program identifies companies that we believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and our community. These exceptional companies help make the Austin area a great place to live, work and play.

Nationwide, only 1 in 70 (1.4%) 2013 Award recipients qualified as Two-Time Award Winners. Various sources of information were gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category. The 2013 Austin Award Program focuses on quality, not quantity. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the Austin Award Program and data provided by third parties.

About Austin Award Program

The Austin Award Program is an annual awards program honoring the achievements and accomplishments of local businesses throughout the Austin area. Recognition is given to those companies that have shown the ability to use their best practices and implemented programs to generate competitive advantages and long-term value.

The Austin Award Program was established to recognize the best of local businesses in our community. Our organization works exclusively with local business owners, trade groups, professional associations and other business advertising and marketing groups. Our mission is to recognize the small business community's contributions to the U.S. economy.



New Proposed City's Consultant Evaluation Shifts Weight from MBE Compliance to Performance Criteria

Austin— In an effort to implement an evaluation process deemed “relevant and applicable” when selecting a prime consultant, the Contract Management Department has proposed a new process that examines all performance criteria equally dispersing existing concentration on documentation and MBE/WBE compliance.

At an information session hosted by the city Contract Management Department on June 24th at the Learning Resource Center, more than 50 representatives from consulting firms showed up to get the latest on the proposed “Enhanced Consultant Performance Evaluation process.”

The city has begun working on the proposed process since January of 2011. The draft proposal was at the promulgation stage to become city rules in May of 2012 when it was pulled for revisions after receiving additional feedback from city staff.

Since then, it has been a lengthy laboring task of collaboration among various procurement departments for eight months, said Rolando Fernandez, Assistant Director of Contract Management Department.

The proposed evaluation process is one of the 9 items that the city currently uses for its qualification-based selection process when selecting prime consulting firms.

The specific item #8 docketed as COA's Exp with Prime Firm, uses 7 questions totaling 11 points in the process being revamped. Three of the 7 questions are related to MBE/WBE compliance (see page 3 for current evaluation form).

Project managers thought the amount of time spent to consult staff at the Small and Minority Business Resources Department (SMBR) “excessive” for compliance information in order to answer these questions, Fernandez explained. The new process condenses the three questions into one accounting for 45% of the questions affected and reduces the total points from 11 to 10.

The new proposed process also combines three questions on deliverables into one, and switches focus on documentation to evaluation of work-related performance including payment promptness to their subcontractors. New evaluation items proposed include: Timeless of Performance, Quality of Work Performed, Invoicing and Payment, Regulatory and Permitting Compliance. The only item unchanged relates to Budget and Cost Control.

Fernandez further stressed that the lengthy process was necessary to make sure the changes “make sense.” The team that put together the changes derived has solicited input from a number of sources including project managers, who emphasized the importance on quality of work, deliverables, and compliance; council members also requested to factor in elements of PSD—probation, suspension, debarment during the evaluation process, according to Fernandez.

To provide further details of the changes, Rick Wilson, Program Consultant of the Contract Management Department, explained that the new process requires mandatory

completion of evaluation by project managers at the end of each project phase from preliminary design, design to bid/award phase. Current process places evaluation only at the end of the project and does not consider PSD elements. The scores consultants receive in their evaluation are stored for five years for referencing and are removed from the database afterwards under current process, while the proposed process will archive and retain the scores permanently, according to Wilson.

All the criteria will be tied into PSD records kept by the purchasing department to make sure that all elements of a consultant's performance are critical to the results, Wilson reaffirmed.

A new column is also created for project managers to write down their comments to explain the points they assess in their evaluation. It also requires signature respectively from the project manager, project manager supervisor, and the project sponsor to demonstrate accountability. Consultants will also be evaluated per contract rather than CIPID code that the current process goes by.

The city is expected to post the proposed process to the public in July to allow public comments before finalizing the new process.

Rosie Truelove, Director of Contract Management Department, also present at the information session, said that she was proud of the revisions. The new process is not designed to be punitive in mind but to find a way to accurately reflect a consultant's work performance and later translate that reflection into project evaluation. She hopes that it is a good process, not one to keep score of the PSDs, but to maintain a good working relationship with contractors.

To see the full presentation and documents of the newly drafted evaluation form, please go to the city's website through the following link. <http://austintexas.gov/page/vendor-information-session-documents>



CONSULTANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

FINAL SCORE

CONSULTANT FIRM

CONSULTANT CONTACT PERSON & EMAIL ADDRESS

CONSULTANT ADDRESS (STREET, CITY, STATE, ZIP)

CONTRACT CT/DO No.

ROTATION LIST ? Yes NAME OF ROTATION LIST

PROJECT NAME

CIP I.D NUMBER

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT MANAGER

EVALUATION PERIOD PHASE Preliminary

PHASE END DATE _____

EVALUATION DATE _____

		YES	NO	N/A
1	The apparent low construction base bid at bid opening, unless withdrawn, was not more than 5% above the Consultant's construction estimate. (This question evaluates the Consultant's ability to design a project that can be constructed within the Fixed Construction Budget as established in the Professional Services Agreement or authorized amendments. Only answerable at end of Construction Phase. Other phases N/A.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The Consultant's construction documents did not contain errors or omissions that resulted in a claim against the Consultant's professional liability insurance. (This question evaluates the accuracy of Consultant documents to the extent that additional delays and costs are not incurred by the City based on the original design intent and user needs. Only applies to Construction Phase - other phases N/A.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The Consultant submitted deliverables (i.e., Preliminary Report, Contract Documents and Submittals) required by and within the schedule established in contract or as amended in writing by the Project Manager. (This question evaluates the Consultant's ability to plan their work and meet schedules as outlined in the contract or otherwise amended. All phases should have "yes" or "no" answer.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The Consultant's deliverables (e.g., preliminary report, drawings, permits, etc.) met the criteria and requirements established in the contract. (This question evaluates the Consultant's ability to perform the basic services as outlined in the contract. A project should have met programmatic requirements as well as completeness requirements. All phases should have "yes" or "no" answer.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	The Consultant submitted monthly invoices and made payment to subconsultants within ten working days after receiving payment from the City. (Will need SMBR input on this unless Project Manager received direct complaint.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	The Consultant provided contracting opportunities, if any for small businesses in accordance with the contract provisions and amendments. (Call/email SMBR for input on this question.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	The Consultant complied with City ordinances on substitutions/additions/deletions of subconsultants. (Call/email SMBR for input on this question.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If any answer is 'NO', provide explanation on reverse side (attach additional pages as necessary)

COMMENTS

SCORING

11 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals 7

10 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals 6

9 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals 5

8 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals 4

7 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals 3

0 Points if number of 'Yes' and N/A' answers equals <3

Thank you for your evaluation.

PLEASE RETURN FINAL EVALUATION TO:

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, CM DIVISION

505 BARTON SPRINGS RD., SUITE 1045

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704

Asian Business Owners Gather to Learn About Government Contracting Opportunities with the City of Austin

Austin— More than 30 Asian business owners and individuals who were interested in starting their own businesses met on April 18th to learn about how to do business with the city of Austin. In an information session held by Asian Contractor Association (ACA), participants were given an overview of the city's annual budget and expenditures as well as information on how to start, grow, and sustain a business.

ACA conducts regular information sessions to reach out to the Asian business community in an effort to encourage Asian entrepreneurs to participate in the city's MBE/WBE procurement program. The program aims to help minority vendors to sell to the city their goods and services.

In her presentation, Aletta Banks, Executive Director of ACA, provided a brief background of the city ordinance establishing the legality of the program, which also sets specific participation goals for women-owned and minority-owned businesses in city projects. She also compared the total amount the city budgeted for 2011 and the amount paid to minority and women vendors.

Last year, the city allocated 34% of its 3.1 billion annual budget to buy commodities, such as office supplies, fuel, asphalt, library books; 33% for contractual services, such as rent, electricity, and contracted services; 32% for personnel expenses, such as wages, health insurance, overtime, retirement, and taxes; and 1% for other expenditures such as vehicles and equipment. The data from the city's financial report show a total of \$65,301,320 paid to minority contractors in the year 2011, with \$36,133,682 in construction, \$4,490,709 in commodity, \$14,192,798 in professional services (architecture, engineering, land surveying) and \$10,484,130 for other services. A total amount of \$30,585,166 was paid to women-owned businesses in the same year.

The presentation also invited ACA Board Director LiLi to give an overview of the SME Toolkit, a website designed by IBM for worldwide under-served businesses to help them learn and implement additional business management practices. The website covers subjects such as accounting and finance, business planning, human resources, international business, legal and insurance, marketing and sales, operations and technology.

The meeting was followed by a Q&A session where a number of participants raised questions regarding how to be certified as a minority vendors and how their businesses can be of service to the city. One of the participants, Shu-ming Tsai, hailed the session a great success and said she looked forward to the next meeting to learn more about the certification process.

Photos clockwise: Participants from the Asian business community, ACA Board Director LiLi, ACA Executive Director Aletta Banks, ACA Vice Chairman

