

to be awarded in connection with projects, programs and activities funded in whole or in part through financial assistance under the Rail Acts, including contracts for professional and financial services, for the program period. The details shall include a description of the services or products which will be sought including estimated quantities, the location where the services are to be provided, the manner in which proposals will be solicited (e.g., cost plus fixed fee, fixed price), the manner in which contracts will be awarded (e.g., competitive or sole source). The plan shall also give details as to bidding procedures, and information as to other qualifications for doing business with the applicant, recipient or contractor. Upon request by the applicant, recipient or contractor, any information submitted to the Administrator shall be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law.

(2) The affirmative action program shall review the procurement practices of the applicant, recipient or contractor for the full year preceding the date of the submission of the affirmative action program and evaluate the utilization of MBE in its procurement activities. Such evaluation of utilization of MBEs shall include the following:

(i) An analysis of awards of contracts to MBEs during such year describing the nature of goods and services purchased and the dollar amount involved; and

(ii) A comparison of the percentage of awards of contracts to MBEs (by number of contracts and by total dollar amount involved) to the total procurement activity of the applicant, recipient or contractor for said year.

(3) The affirmative action program shall set forth in detail applicant's, recipient's or contractor's plan to insure that MBEs are afforded a fair and representative opportunity to do business with applicant, recipient or contractor (both in terms of number of contracts and dollar amount involved) for the program period. Such plan shall identify specific actions to be taken to:

(i) Designate a liaison officer who will administer the MBE program;

(ii) Provide for adequate and timely consideration of the availability and potential of MBEs in all procurement decisions;

(iii) Assure that MBEs will have an equitable opportunity to compete for contracts, by arranging solicitation time for the preparation of bids, quantities, specifications, and delivery schedules so as to facilitate the participation of MBEs and by assisting MBEs who are potential contractors in preparing bid materials and in obtaining and maintaining suitable bonding coverage in those instances where bonds are required;

(iv) Maintain records showing that the policies set forth in this part are being complied with;

(v) Submit quarterly reports of the records referred to in paragraph (c)(3)(iv) of this section in such form and manner as the Administrator may prescribe; and

(vi) Where appropriate because of prior underutilization of MBEs, establish specific goals and timetables to utilize MBEs in the performance of contracts awarded.

(d) *Successor organizations.* Where applicant, recipient or contractor is a successor organization, its affirmative action program shall review the hiring and procurement practices of its predecessor organization or organizations.

§ 265.14 Determining the MBE status of a business.

FRA or a recipient may, on the basis of available information, determine that a business is not an MBE within the meaning of this part. This determination shall be final, except as provided in § 265.14-1, for that contract and other contracts being let by that contracting agency at the time of the determination. Businesses may correct deficiencies in their ownership and control and apply as MBEs only for future contracts.

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§ 265.14-1 Appeals of determination of MBE status.

(a) *Filing.* Any firm who believes that it has been wrongly determined not to be an MBE under § 265.14 by the FRA or a recipient may file an appeal in writing with the Administrator. The appeal

§ 265.15

shall be filed no later than 30 days after the date of the determination. The Administrator may extend the time for filing or waive the time limit in the interest of justice, specifying in writing the reasons for so doing. Third parties who have reason to believe that a business has been wrongly denied or granted status as an MBE may advise the Administrator. This information is not considered an appeal pursuant to this section.

(b) *Decision to investigate.* The Administrator ensures that a prompt investigation is made of those cases with investigative merit (except those being reviewed on the merits by the Comptroller General), pursuant to prescribed DOT Title VI (49 CFR part 21) investigation procedures.

(c) *Status during the investigation.* The Administrator may deny the business in question eligibility to participate as an MBE in direct or FRA-assisted contracts let during the pendency of the investigation, after providing the business in question an opportunity to show cause by written statement to the Administrator why this should not occur.

(d) *Cooperation in investigation.* All parties shall cooperate fully with the investigation. Failure or refusal to furnish relevant information or other failure to cooperate is a violation of this part.

(e) *Determinations.* The Administrator will make one of the following determinations and so inform the business in writing of the reasons for the determination:

(1) The business is considered to be an MBE within the meaning of this part; or

(2) The business is not considered to be an MBE within the meaning of this part and is denied eligibility to participate as an MBE in any direct or FRA-assisted contract until a further determination is made by FRA that the business is an MBE within the meaning of this part.

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§ 265.15 Implementation and maintenance of affirmative action program.

The affirmative action program with respect to employment and procure-

49 CFR Ch. II (10-1-07 Edition)

ment practices shall set forth in detail applicant's recipient's or contractor's program to implement and maintain its recommended action program to insure that persons and businesses are not discriminated against because of race, color, national origin or sex, and that minorities and MBEs have equal employment and contractual opportunities with applicant, recipient or contractor. In developing its maintenance program for employment, applicants, recipients and contractors shall follow the applicable regulations of the Department of Labor implementing Executive Order 11246 at 41 CFR 60-2, subpart C, which provisions may also be helpful in implementing and maintaining applicant's recipient's or contractor's procurement program.

§ 265.17 Review of affirmative action program.

(a) Except as provided for contractors and subcontractors in § 265.11(b), each affirmative action program to be acceptable must have the written approval of the Administrator.

(b) The Administrator recognizes that there may be some exceptional situations where the requirements of § 265.13 through § 265.15 may not fulfill the affirmative action objectives sought or that those objectives may be better achieved through modified or different requirements. Accordingly, the applicant, recipient or contractor may request approval for modified or different requirements that embody the objectives of §§ 265.13 through 265.15. Such a request must include detailed showings that the particular situation is exceptional and that the modified or different proposals substantially comply with the objectives of this part. If the Administrator determines that the requirements for a detailed justification have been met, he may waive or modify these requirements or impose different requirements as he deems necessary to further the objectives sought herein.

Subpart C—Compliance

§ 265.19 Compliance information.

(a) Each recipient and contractor shall keep such records and submit to