



Small Business Education and Training Program Small Business Survey Results - 2007

Background

The Small Business Education and Training Program (SBETP) will offer a series of professional development courses that will be taught by industry experts, and will address a variety of topics, that will provide real world knowledge and a competitive edge for small and emerging businesses.

The workshop curriculum is being developed in consideration of sub-contracting opportunities on the new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge East Span. As part of the curriculum development, it was necessary to get feedback from the small business community, including their perspective about professional and business development needs.

In the summer of 2007, a survey was developed by the Toll Bridge Program Small Business Manager (SBM) to get input from the small business community regarding the SBETP proposed curriculum and related issues.

Survey Participants

A total of 1061 surveys were sent to small business in northern California and the majority of these businesses are within the boundaries of District 4. Seventy-four surveys were distributed to small businesses at the Oakland Touchdown 1 outreach event held on March 29, 2007 and 987 surveys were sent to small businesses selected randomly from state and local business lists. The small businesses receiving the survey represented a cross-section of industry categories, as follows:

- Construction Services – 38%
- Professional Services – 35%
- Construction Support/Supplies – 7.4%
- Landscape Services – 5.6%
- Electrical – 3.8%
- Pavement – 2.3%
- Janitorial – 1.8%
- HVAC – 1.9%
- Painting – 1.1%
- Modular Furniture – 0.9%
- Construction Support Services/Carpet – 0.9%
- Trenching, Water – 0.7%
- Construction Support Services/Electric – 0.6%

Geographic Location of Survey Participants:

- Alameda – 59.75%
- Contra Costa – 9.06%
- San Francisco – 6.09%
- Sonoma – 5.34%
- Santa Clara – 4.47%
- Solano – 3.6%
- Marin -3.23%
- San Mateo – 2.61%
- Sacramento – 2.36%
- Napa – 1.61%
- Placer – 0.75%
- Nevada – 0.37%
- El Dorado – 0.25%
- Santa Cruz – 0.25%
- San Joaquin – 0.13%

Survey Results

A total of 76 surveys were completed and returned to the SBM, representing 7.2 % of the surveys distributed (typical survey response rates are between 5 – 10%, on average). Please note that survey participants were given the option to respond anonymously, therefore, a geographic breakdown of the responses is not included as part of the survey results. The survey results are as follows:

A. *Response by Industry Category:*

- Professional Services (miscellaneous and non-engineering) – 23%
- Construction Support/Supplies – 12%
- Construction Services/GEC – 11%
- Construction Services – 10%
- Professional Services/Engineering – 7%
- Electrical – 6%
- Janitorial – 4%
- Landscape Architecture – 4%
- Painting – 1%
- Unidentified – 22%

B. *Survey Participant Rankings of Proposed Training Workshops:*

- 1 – Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)
- 2 – Owner Controlled Insurance Program (OCIP)
- 3 – Bid Estimating
- 4 – Small Business Certification Process (State of California)
- 5 – Surety Bonding
- 6 – Billing Process/Payment Systems
- 7 – Business Accounting Systems

Additional training classes recommended:

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| *8 – Website Design and Management | 11 – Introduction to Working with Prime Contractors |
| *8 – General Contracting/Construction Overview | 12 – Strategic Planning for Small Businesses |
| 9 – Electronic Daily Diary | 13 – Schedule Development/Project Management Software |
| *10 – Web Based Marketing | 14 – Claims Mitigation and Resolution |
| *10 – Proposal Development/Marketing Techniques | 15 – Customized Marketing |

**Indicated equally ranked course preferences*

C. *Best Day/Time to Attend Proposed Training Workshops*

- Most preferred time of day to attend training workshops: Mornings (9:00 – 11:00 am)
- Most preferred day to attend training workshops: Wednesday

D. *Certification Status of Survey Participants*

- Percentage of survey participants *with* State of California certification – 70%
- Percentage of survey participants *without* State of California certification – 30%
- Percentage of small businesses that feel State certification *has* resulted in contracting opportunities – 35%
- Percentage of small businesses that feel State certification *has not* resulted in contracting opportunities – 65%

E. *Preferred Method To Find Out About Business Opportunities*

1. Bid notification Service
2. Professional Affiliations (excluding Chambers)
3. Networking Venues
4. Newsletters and Trade Magazines
5. Chamber Membership
6. Word of Mouth
7. Personal Marketing (relationships)
8. Builder's Exchange