



MENTOR PROTEGE PROGRAM PULSE

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Earl Key Announces Mentor Protege Program

Washington State Department of Transportation, Office of Equal Opportunity Director Earl Key took the lead role explaining WSDOT's Mentor Protégé Program at the recent kickoff information session for prime contractors and consultants. "We want to foster a more competitive environment on our projects by building a broader base of State certified firms-that is, small, minority, veteran, women-owned and disadvantaged businesses-that are able to work on transportation related projects," said Key.

The objective of the gathering was to begin fostering relationships between WSDOT and its partners as the program moves forward. WSDOT plans to pair 30 or more prime contractors and consultants - with the same number of minority, women, or veteran sub-contractors and sub-consultant professionals. Prospective mentors were provided an overview of the framework of the program and what was expected of them.

"We want to establish mutually beneficial relationships between mentors and protégés, and we want mentors to provide technical assistance and help the smaller businesses grow and prosper," said Key.



Earl Key, OEO Director

Van Collins Promises American Council of Engineering Companies as a Resource

"We saw a need." That sums up the reason American Council of Engineering Companies' Companies president Van Collins formed its own Mentor/Protégé Committee. The committee is in the early stages of outreach and communication, and will soon have a framework to build on. ACEC is a nationwide organization of more than 600,000 engineers, architects, land surveyors and other specialists. Its mission is to strengthen the business environment for member firms through government advocacy, political action and business education.

There are 150 ACEC members in Washington state. Few are women. Fewer are minorities. ACEC leaders want to change that so working with WSDOT's Mentor Protégé Program is a natural fit. "Inclusion and participation are topics very much on the minds of many of our firms' top clients," Collins said. "We want to be responsive to clients and



Earl Key; Van Collins, ACEC; Ron Paananen, SR 520 (GEC)

to firms. And it has this natural energy that is present right now so it's something we want to move on. We have always had a good relationship with WSDOT and it makes sense for us to be involved and see how can we help." ACEC will look to Thor and the people they have been in contact with. The organization currently has member firms looking for protégés. ACEC plans to work with firms that want to grow, develop and prosper. Some ACEC member firms are presently involved in informal mentorship. Van Collins stated, "ACEC wants to mentor firm owners that want to make money, that ask themselves, 'how can I perform my work more efficiently.' That's where we can help. Growth and sophistication. We are a resource. We absolutely want to be a resource."

Want To Be Involved? Here are Some Guidelines

The protégé must be certified by the State's Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises and/or registered with Washington's Electronic Business Solution as a small or veteran-owned business. The protégé should be interested in working with WSDOT and work in transportation related industries. The protégé business must be located in Washington.

To be a mentors, each firm must have five years' experience on WSDOT highway, ferry, or construction projects as a contractor or .



Engaged Prime Contractors at Roundtable

consultant. Both the mentor and protégé sign a Memorandum of Understanding and agree to meet monthly. The mentor will help identify what the protégé needs and offer advice toward meeting mutual goals. The mentor will also provide training to increase the protégé's competitiveness. Both parties will regularly report to THOR Construction, WSDOT's consultant firm on the project, regarding the collaboration itself; the progress; and how the plan is going. These requirements are driven by WSDOT to ensure the success of the program. "It's about helping small businesses grow and making space for small businesses along with the primes," said Lea Hargett, Thor's vice-president. Hargett says programs such as this one are part of the change needed in this country. "This is our chance to make sure we are all doing our part. Everyone involved has to make a commitment to open new markets because historically opportunities have not been available." The Mentor Protégé Program participants will learn from one another and the guidelines are in place for a mutual and shared success.

Insights from Richard Copeland

Richard Copeland, THOR's founder and chairman of the board, has insights on the relevancy of the Mentor Protégé Program. "For DBE contractors to enter the main stream of the economy, they need a birds eye view of what success looks like, and to be mentored a by a successful business that has access to opportunity and capital, bonding is a way, on a large scale, to make that happen." THOR is one of the largest minority-owned construction companies in the nation. THOR is committed to maximizing opportunity and brings nearly four decades of success, knowledge and hands-on experience to the Mentor ProtegéProgram.



Richard Copeland, THOR Construction

**To apply for the Mentor
Protégé Program**

www.mentorprotegeprogram.info



Direct any inquiry to:

info@mentorprotegeprograms.info

Associated General Contractors Commits to Mentor Protégé Program

Associated General Contractors is in the Mentor Protégé Program for the long haul. “We’ll be very involved,” said AGC Executive Vice-President Dave D’Hondt. “This is a passion of mine. These kinds of programs have been done in this state and in other parts of the county without much success. But are going to bring something new to the table.”

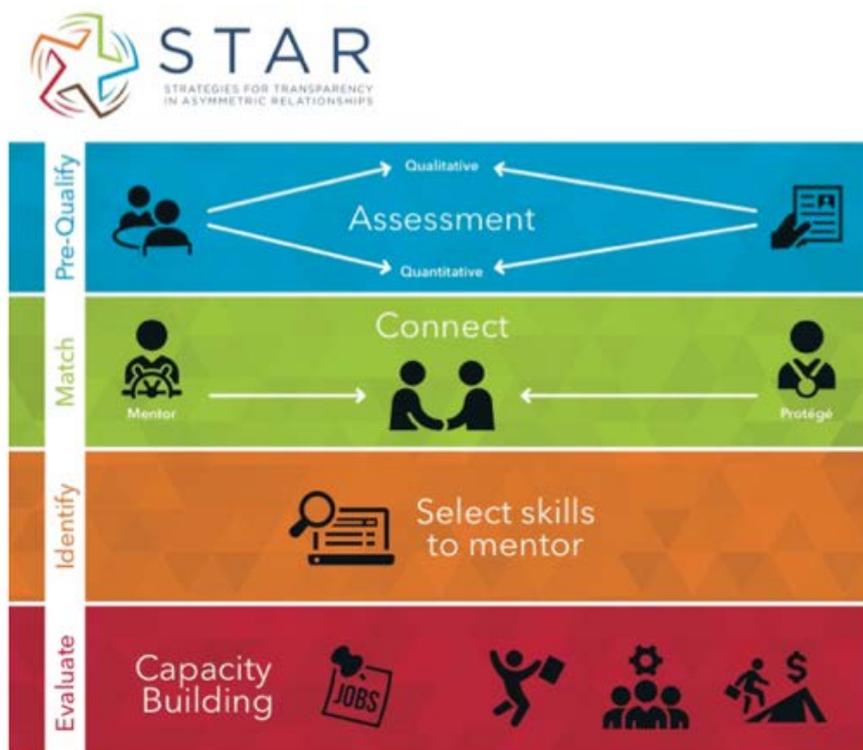
What’s new is that AGC wants to pair each protégé with several mentors. AGC wants the protégé to bid with all the plan holders. In this way, when an AGC prime wins the bid, the protégé has an opportunity. “It increases the chances of a good outcome. And we want mentors to pick protégés instead of being assigned protégés.” D’Hondt said. AGC is matching mentors to protégés and formalizing its already existing program. “We at AGC are excited about the program and we are working in all good faith to move the needle with DBE contractors in this state. We know that if it doesn’t move, the governor will institute mandatory goals. Regardless, we need to facilitate relationships between DBEs and primes and we are totally committed to the process.”

AGC’s Northern District Manager Liz Evans has spent the last couple of months working with members to identify mentors interested in participating in the program. “We want to support our members and build a more inclusive environment so we can support and grow our DBE community,” Evans said. In an effort to help DBEs achieve success, AGC’s Diversity Committee has already initiated several new benefits for certified DBEs. “We have lowered the price of our membership so they can have access to AGC,” Evans said. “We have new safety programs and networking opportunities so DBEs can participate in our industries. We want to do whatever we can do align with the program and promote DBE’s. AGC wants the Diversity Committee to be a layer of support when it comes to the Mentor Protégé Program.”

Charts from Presentation

The Mentor-Protege program is based on the STAR program from THOR Companies.

The Mentor/Protege Program uses thought leading methodology to fast-track business for both prime contractors and subcontractors. This happens by following four simple steps for both parties.





Lea Hargett, M-P Project Manager, Earl Key, Kara Williams, City of Seattle

Measuring our Success

To increase Minority, Small, Veteran and Women's Business Enterprise (MSVWBE) participation, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is implementing a Mentor Protege Program.

The intent of this program is to have a larger, more diverse pool of subcontractors working on WSDOT consulting and construction projects within the next year.

- 100 MSVWBE noting interest in participating
- 30-50 MSVWBE enrolled in the program to participate as proteges.
- 30-50 prime contractors and prime consultants enrolled in the program to participate as mentors.

The following metrics are targets by which the program's success will be evaluated:

- 80-100% of proteges have executed written Development Plans with their Mentors.
- 30-50% of proteges, in the construction industry, have expanded their North American Industrial Classification Systems (NAICS) Codes.

- 30-50% of proteges are on track to increase their annual income. This can be based on winning the contract, not actual dollars paid. This could include non-WSDOT owners as well.
- 30-50% of proteges are participating in their first contract or subcontract with WSDOT or new private sector contracts.
- 10-25% of construction proteges have increased their bonding capacity through the mentoring process.
- 10-25% of consulting proteges have gone from Safe Harbor to approved indirect Cost Rate.

Office of Economic Development Small Business Program Manager, Kara Williams says the City of Seattle has programs to support small businesses and her office is happy to work with this program.

In Review: Mentor Protege Program Prime Roundtable

Photos from the event (Clockwise from the top):

Top: Bobby Forch was an active participant in the discussion.

Bottom, right: Richard Copeland; Jackie Bayne, OEO

Bottom, left: Larry Watkinson and Earl Key, OEO

Middle, left: Stephanie Caldwell, Small Business

Program Manager, Absher; Regina Glenn,

Consultant

