

Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) Vision 2020 Projects – Phase II Outreach and Inclusion Initiative

Overview

Columbus Metropolitan Library is continuing its aspirational building plan with a second phase that will rebuild or renovate four additional branches identified as most in need of transformation. This will result in nearly \$80 million of additional library facility investments.

CML aspires to continue and expand its outreach and inclusion program, which goes beyond percentage goals to more actively address root causes that have limited minority participation on construction projects in the past. In this phase, the program will apply to professional services and facility construction.

Outreach and inclusion programs have been made necessary on public construction projects due to barriers in the bidding and construction process, which have resulted in a lack of participation by Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) in the design and construction industry. Much of this lack of participation is due to the way that design and construction projects bid and award work; a process that creates a self-reinforcing business cycle.

Businesses that have difficulty competing for work and/or limited up-front capital are challenged to develop the skilled staff needed to compete on the next project, and so the cycle repeats. This repetition reinforces the shortage of skilled trades and limits participation by such businesses. Real inclusion is difficult to achieve and requires thoughtful measures and extra effort to make progress against the difficult root issues that prevent inclusion in the building design and construction process.

We seek to ensure meaningful involvement of all interested businesses to actively participate in the design and construction process, including job creation in the field. As with the Phase I inclusion program, the end goal is to create a level of involvement in CML projects that mirrors the makeup and diversity of the central Ohio region, and that includes the involvement of local businesses in the creation of new public facilities for their communities and neighborhoods. It should be noted that the use of a construction manager at risk (CMaR) delivery model once again will have a significant and positive impact on the ability to fully consider all aspects of construction bid proposals.

This inclusion plan was developed to ensure that local residents served by CML have the opportunity to take full advantage of the contracting opportunities in a highly competitive market. This plan will help provide a structure that allows MBEs and WBEs to successfully navigate the contracting opportunities and lead to greater workforce diversification on these projects.

CML believes that historically underutilized businesses and the people served by the library should share in the prosperity generated by the projects and be a part of the engine for economic development. CML is committed to actively promoting the goals of this plan to design professionals and contractors engaged in the project.

Goals

It is the intent of this document to serve as a framework and model for inclusiveness and community building by maximizing inclusion through all stages of contracting. The most important goal is to build resources for the future. The State of Ohio Construction Compliance Participation Goals are 6.9% for woman (statewide), and 10% for minorities (Columbus). We will attempt to meet the State's goals throughout all stages of this process and seek to exceed those goals where possible. The intent is to address the structural barriers to inclusiveness, not just focus on percentages. Similarly, we will attempt to meet the same percentage goals for design/professional service contracts awarded prior to the start of construction. For both design and construction contracts, CML's aspiration goal is 20% of the total value of all contracts awarded to MBE and WBE firms, collectively.

Strategies to Meet Goals

Design

Prime architectural firms that seek to perform design services on Phase II 2020 Projects are expected to embrace CML's diversity and inclusive goals and to make good faith efforts to achieve these goals as if they are their own. Each prime architect will be expected to demonstrate good faith efforts to provide CML a diverse and inclusive project team that may include MBE/WBE subcontractors to help achieve these goals. CML will consider the diversity of the project team, and the effort to meet CML's diversity and inclusion goals, when selecting the most qualified firm for each project.

Prequalification

CML will work with the CMaR to review construction contractor prequalification requirements for flexibility and appropriate modification for contracts under a specific amount (i.e., \$500,000) or type of work. CML will conduct information sessions specifically on prequalification requirements and what is expected, including any exceptions (see information sessions below). Under the CMaR delivery model, CML will have input on and approval of bidder pre-qualification requirements to be used in bidder pre-qualification.

Bid Strategies

CML expects the CMaR to provide adequate advance notice and program status updates to the minority contracting community so that they can be prepared in advance of the bidding window. In addition, CML expects the CMaR to strategically break out bid packages to allow for MBE and WBE firms the opportunity to bid on smaller bid packages when possible. CML encourages partnerships between large primes and small subcontractors in order to engage as many members of the community on our projects as possible.

Selection of Contractors

The CML outreach team will review each potential awardee's subcontractor utilization plan prior to award to eliminate front companies, pass-throughs, or companies that otherwise thwart the intent to be inclusive and to provide input for determining the best value bid.

Prompt Pay/Bonding/Insurance

CML will continue the current system to pay invoices no later than 30 days from receipt of invoice with the ability to pay disadvantaged contractors 15 days from receipt of invoice. The CMaR is expected to conduct training sessions as needed on how to complete pay applications so that every awarded contractor has the opportunity to participate.

Advertisements

CML and the CMaR will utilize strategic advertisement opportunities to notify minority and women contractors and subcontractors, as well as those seeking employment in the construction field, of bidding and work opportunities.

Information Sessions

The CMaR will conduct information sessions for potential bidders and awardees to help improve project communication and improve relationships with the small business community. The CMaR will encourage networking between large prime contractors and the small business community.

Summary

No plan is able to describe every aspect of an outreach and inclusion strategy, but this is an opportunity to build on CML's Phase I efforts to improve the business climate and provide resources to support local business. Columbus Metropolitan Library is committed to inclusion, and will actively build upon the many successes and lessons learned in Phase I in order to achieve an effective and viable Phase II outreach and inclusion program.