



2021 Emerging Small Business Mentor-Protégé Program Guidance

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COLORADO
Department of Transportation





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1. Program Strategy

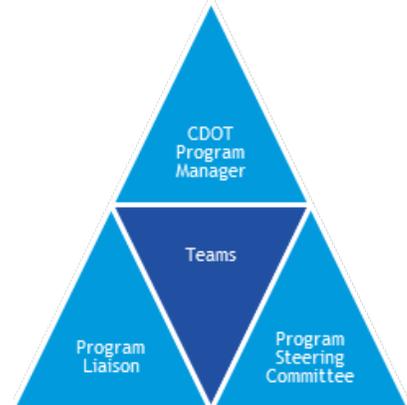
CDOT’s Emerging Small Business (ESB) Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP) is part of a holistic effort to develop the competitive capacity of small businesses in Colorado. By fostering professional collaborations between Emerging Small Businesses and more established firms, CDOT aims to ensure that ESBs seeking to build their capabilities in highway design and construction have the peer coaching and support needed for sustained success.

2. Program Oversight

The MPP is overseen by a collaborative team composed of a CDOT Program Manager, a consultant Team Liaison, and a Team Selection Committee.

CDOT Program Manager

The Program Manager provides strategic guidance for the program, ensuring that CDOT’s mission, goals, priorities, and policies are integrated with program delivery. The Program Manager oversees the Team Liaison activities and coordinates opportunities for Selection Committee input. The Program Manager is ultimately responsible for all programmatic materials, including frameworks and guidance, marketing and outreach items, websites, budget management, reporting, and requirements.



Team Liaison

The Team Liaison is the boots-on-the-ground liaison between CDOT and the Teams. This individual serves as a representative of the program but is a safe, neutral contact and point of support for the Teams, recognizing that CDOT is a client and therefore not always able to engage in problem-solving with Teams.

Responsibilities include:

- Participate in Team Selection, Kick-Off Event, Recognition Event, and Quarterly Selection Committee meetings
- Support Teams in completing the Protégé Needs Assessment in the Application
- Meet with each Team quarterly (and prior to the Selection Committee Meeting) to assess progress and offer feedback. Develop a summary report based on said meeting and deliver to CDOT Program Manager.
- Communicate with each Team regularly and as needed to ensure open dialogue and prompt identification of issues. Collaborate with CDOT to improve Team outcomes and address concerns.
- Provide one-on-one relationship management guidance as needed to the Protégé to ensure CDOT is apprised of any opportunities to remove barriers for ESBs.



Selection Committee

The Selection Committee provides guidance related to choosing teams to participate in the Program and evaluating their readiness for success. The Selection Committee may be convened at various times throughout the year to provide program input and offer industry-level insights.

Desired Composition:

- Transportation Industry Representation (3 Seats)
These may be either Associations or representatives from individual firms, provided those representatives are able to provide program- and industry-level input.
- CDOT Engineers (3 Seats)
- CDOT CRBRC Staff (1 Seat)
- CDOT Program Manager (1 Seat)
- Connect2DOT Program Coordinator (1 Seat)
- Team Liaison (1 Seat)

Expectations:

- Attendance at December Selection meeting (2hrs)
Review all applications prior to meeting
- Attendance at 4 program events annually (2-4 hrs each)
Kick-Off (Jan), Confab (May), Feedback Session, (Aug), Recognition (Oct)
- Timely review of information and provision of input
- Champion the program within your networks
- One- or two-year commitment

3. Annual Program Timeline

January	Kick-Off Event
May	Team Confab
August	Program Feedback Session
September	Applications Available for Next Year Program Participants;
October	Returning Team Proposed Goals and Needs Assessment Due; Graduate Panel Discussion
November	New Team Applications Due
December	Selection Committee Chooses Next Year’s Cohort

4. Program Structure

Teaming

CDOT’s MPP requires teams to self-select; CDOT does not pair Mentor and Protégé firms. Successful teams often have an existing relationship prior to entering the program, and CDOT recommends Protégés look to their existing networks for qualified Mentors. Most successful teams provide services that are complementary; an ability to pursue mutually beneficial work opportunities is a significant asset while in the program.





Eligibility, Application, and Selection

CDOT currently requires firms to meet the following requirements in order to be eligible for the MPP.

Mentors:

- Completed a minimum of 3 CDOT projects as a prime or sub or performed a minimum of \$3 million of work with CDOT
- Prequalified with CDOT
- Have skills and capacity to assist a Protégé business
- Have a commitment to assisting small and diverse firms in the transportation sector

Protégés:

- Have an active CDOT ESB certification
- Have been in business for at least 2 consecutive years
- Have a minimum of (2 full time employees (in addition to the owner), or have the intent to hire while in the program
- Successful past performance on transportation related construction or professional services contracts
- Actively pursuing heavy civil contracts

To apply, Teams must collaboratively complete the program application, which is drafted by the Program Manager each year and vetted by the Selection Committee. The application is designed to encourage the Team to intentionally consider where the most need and value to the Protégé lies and to use this information to set reasonable and achievable goals for their tenure in the program. Teams are also asked to describe their relationship and approach to achieving these goals, to help the Selection Committee evaluate the potential success of the Team if accepted into the MPP.

Team applications are evaluated by the Selection Committee based on three key factors, which are equally weighted:

1. Readiness of the Team to make progress against identified goals
2. Complementary nature of the services the Team provides
3. Commitment to fostering and developing small business capacity

In assessing these factors, CDOT may consider other pertinent details, including but not limited to:

- Degree of familiarity between the Mentor and Protégé
- Active or past DBE Certifications
- Past mentoring experience

Tenure

Teams may stay in the Program for one or two years, though participation in year two is contingent upon the Internal Evaluation (see Section 5 Metrics and Reporting for details) during year one.



To indicate intent to return for a second year, returning teams must submit their Proposed Goals to the Team Liaison according to the timeline set forth by the Selection Committee (typically end of October).

Voluntary Withdrawal

Teams may voluntarily withdraw from the program at any time. To do so, the Mentor and Protégé should mutually agree to terminate the partnership and both parties should notify the Team Liaison of the intent to voluntarily withdraw participation in the program as soon as possible after making the determination to withdraw.

Termination for Cause

CDOT may elect to terminate a Team's participation in the program if they violate the terms of the program or if the Mentor or Protégé no longer meet the eligibility requirements. The Program Manager will notify the Team in writing of the intent to terminate. The Team may request a meeting with the Program Manager to discuss the reasons for termination or appeal the decision within 30 days.

Team Reporting Responsibilities

While in the Program, Teams will meet quarterly with the Team Liaison, preferably in person, to discuss their progress, successes, and challenges. The Q4 Report will encompass a full progress assessment for the year. Upon leaving the Program, Teams will continue to receive short follow-up surveys twice a year for two years.

5. Metrics & Reporting

Quarterly Reporting

The Team Liaison will meet with each Team within 30 days of the end of each Quarter and prior to the Selection Committee Meeting to assess progress and offer feedback. These meetings will serve as the basis for a summary progress report to be delivered to the CDOT Program Manager.

Sample Questions:

- Describe progress made against each goal, including accomplishments, lessons, and opportunities.
- Have you hit your anticipated milestones for this quarter?
 - » Y - what has contributed to your success?
 - » N - what are the obstacles in your way?
- Do you have any adjustments to your Team Vision and Approach?
- What feedback do you have for CDOT so far?
- How likely are you to recommend participating in this program to a peer firm?

Quarterly Team Assessment

If a team does not demonstrate adequate progress against goals during either the first or second the quarter check-ins with the Program Liaison, the Program Liaison will discuss the concerns with CDOT and develop a plan to help the team get back on a path to achieving the goals set forth in the Application. If the team has still not demonstrated adequate progress by the time of the Q3 check-in, the Steering Committee may deem the team to be unready to pursue a second year in the program. In the event of this decision, the Steering Committee may also decide to adjust the team's eligibility for programmatic benefits and incentives accordingly.

Annual Reporting

The process for annual reporting depends on whether the Team is departing after one year (or less in the case of voluntary withdrawal) in the MPP or graduating from the MPP after two years of successful participation. However regardless of tenure, all Protégés will receive a follow up survey one year after leaving the MPP to assess the longitudinal impact of their participation.

One-Year Tenure

If a Team chooses to not continue in the MPP after one year, they must inform CDOT of that intent by a deadline determined by the Steering Committee (typically October). The Team must document continued work toward program goals through the end of the program (calendar) year, complete the final report survey, and meet with the Program Liaison within 30 days of leaving the MPP to debrief their experience in order to be eligible for program benefits.

Teams leaving the MPP after one year will be considered successful but will not be formally recognized as MPP graduates.

Sample Debrief Questions:

- Describe progress made against each goal, including accomplishments, lessons, and opportunities.
- What did you find successful about your participation in the MP Program? What was challenging?
- What suggestions do you have for CDOT?
- Did you take advantage of any Technical Assistance resources during the year? If so, please describe.
- What was the most valuable element of your participation in the program?
- What is the biggest reason your team chose not to continue in the program?

Two-Year Tenure

If a Team is interested in pursuing a second year in the MPP, they must inform CDOT of that intent by a deadline determined by the Steering Committee (typically October). The Team must submit a supplemental application to the Steering Committee documenting their current progress against that year's goals, and proposed goals and adjustments for the following year. Assuming a Team has received an Internal Pass from the Steering Committee, returning Teams will be approved for a second year of participation in the MPP.

Upon completion of Year Two, Teams have the same reporting requirements as those for a One-Year tenure. Assuming receipt of an Internal Pass, Graduating Teams will be recognized for their participation at an official CDOT function.

Programmatic Key Performance Indicators

CDOT will evaluate MPP success based on both quantitative and qualitative performance measures and will adjust those measures in response to stakeholder input and lessons learned each program year. In gathering quantitative data, CDOT will ask for background information about successes and challenges to better understand root causes of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and ways to improve the program.

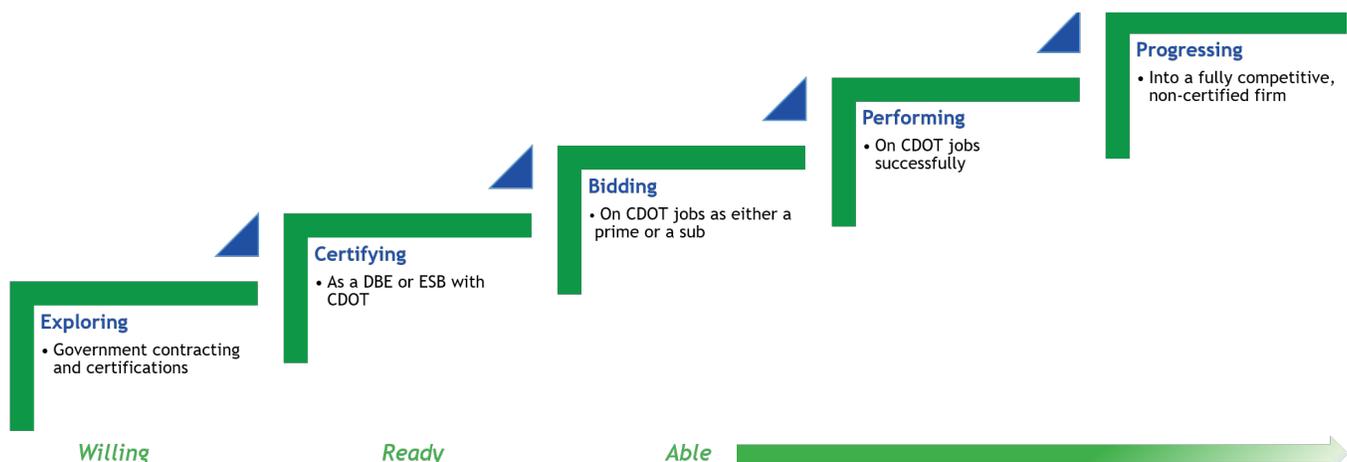
KPI data will be collected through various mechanisms, including the Team Application, Entry and Exit Surveys, and information provided to the Program Liaison.

Team KPIs

- Overall value to participants
- Net Promoter Score (i.e., ‘how likely are you to recommend participation in this program?’ Marketing standard for customer satisfaction.)
- Outcomes of Internal Evaluations
- Number One-Year to Two-Year Tenures
- Number of Teams per Cohort per Year
- Number of Protégés who go on to become Mentors
- Number of Team contracting pursuits (bids or proposals) while in the MPP and for one year after completion
- Qualitative progress against goals

Protégé KPIs

- Change in Number of Employees
- Change in Aggregate Bonding Capacity
- Change in Average Annual Gross Receipts
- CDOT Contract \$ Awarded while in the Program (and one year after)
- Number of ESBs who become Prime Contractors/Consultants with CDOT
- Change in Protégé Business Maturity (as determined by the Needs Assessment)
- Change in Capacity Ladder Rung (as determined by Steering Committee and available data)



Mentor KPIs

- Overall Success of Protégé's KPIs
- Change in Number of
 - » DBE/ESB Mentors
 - » Unique Mentors
 - » Graduating Mentors
 - » Returning/repeat Mentors

6. Benefits & Incentives for Program Participants

CDOT is always looking for ways to make participation in the MPP more valuable to both Mentors and Protégés, and programmatic benefits and incentives may change from year to year. At present, CDOT offers the following benefits to Teams, while in the MPP and for one year after (assuming successful completion of at least one year in the program).

- Preferential scoring on professional services (i.e., consultant) contracts while in the MPP (effective on contracts advertised after 1/1/2020)
- Two exclusive networking events per year with CDOT Executive Leadership, Regional Engineers, Commissioners, and Industry Leaders
- Formal recognition from CDOT upon graduation after two successful program years
- Exclusive access to a private email listserv with other program participants (current and past)
- Preferred entry into CDOT's ESB Bonding Assistance Program
- Registration for annual Transportation Summit (one registrant per firm)
- Website badge recognizing participation
- Recognition in the Connect2DOT Newsletter (reach: 4,000+)
- Reimbursement for training costs, up to \$5,000
 - » Expenses must be incurred and invoiced during the program (calendar) year

7. References

- State DOTs
 - » Alabama
 - » Arizona
 - » Ohio
 - » Minnesota
 - » South Carolina
- Congressional Research Service
- Wisconsin Transportation Research Report