

reCAP

SMUD Community Advisory Panel Report

February 2010

CAP Plans Survey re: Barriers to Contracting with SMUD

The SMUD Community Advisory Panel (CAP) is planning a survey of member organizations in an effort to understand why more small businesses do not bid on SMUD Requests for Proposal and other contracts. The survey will ask questions designed to identify the barriers that prevent local small businesses from bidding.

The results of the survey will be used by CAP's Education Subcommittee in creating a curriculum for a workshop to teach small businesses how to respond to Request for Proposals. The workshop will be a sequel to the popular "Doing Business With SMUD" lunch-and-learn workshops with a focus on the specifics of proposal writing.

SMUD has a goal of awarding 20 percent of total dollar contract amounts to qualified SEED (Supplier Education and Economic Development) vendors. Each CAP representative has a goal to increase the number of SEED-qualified businesses within its membership by 5 percent in 2010.

To qualify as a SEED vendor, a business must be certified as a Small Business or Microbusiness by the California Department of General Services and must have been a SMUD ratepayer for six months prior to the bid opening date. Once qualified, the SEED vendor receives preference on some types of SMUD contracts.

The SMUD Community Advisory Panel (CAP) consists of representatives from Sacramento-area chambers of commerce and other business organizations. The panel's mission is to raise small business awareness about contracting opportunities with SMUD; prepare local small businesses to compete for SMUD contracting opportunities; recommend and monitor improvements to SMUD's contracting processes and practices; collaborate with SMUD on the development of benchmarks of SMUD's success; and freely share its knowledge with other public/private partnerships.

Other current CAP projects being considered are developing a program to help businesses who have never bid on a SMUD contract and encouraging more "unbundling" of large-dollar SMUD contracts to give more small businesses an opportunity to bid.