



Frequently Asked Questions

CONTRACTING

1. How does the City of Los Angeles award contracts?

All contracting opportunities are posted on a free portal called the Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network, or LABAVN for short. City contracting is primarily by competitive bidding. Contracts are awarded to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder or to the proposal with the highest ranking after the evaluation process.

2. How can a subcontractor connect with a Prime Contractor?

A prime contractor (prime) is the contractor that has the direct contract with the owner of the project or job. Primes work directly with the City's contracting agency. The prime has the full responsibility for a project's completion as defined in the contract. The prime hires and manages its subcontractors therefore, a subcontractor's contract is with the prime contractor, not the City's contracting agency. Suggestions on how to connect with Primes: Visit their websites and connect with project managers; attend pre-bid meetings, inquire about their pre-qualification programs.

3. How can a subcontractor get information on opportunities that are under \$25,000 and don't require to be posted on LABAVN?

There is currently no mechanism for subcontractors to receive information on opportunities under \$25,000.

**4. How can a firm market and promote its products/services to specific City Departments?
Who can we contact?**

Each department will have contact information on their department's website. For a directory of City Department office and departments, visit <https://www.lacity.org/government/city-directory/city-directory>

5. Where can a firm get information about the terms and definitions of a Request for Proposal?

Terms and definitions found in the Request for Proposal (RFP) are unique to each RFP. Therefore, the contract administrators should be able to answer any questions you may have.. If you need more information regarding the difference between the types of opportunities within the City refer to the resources of the webinar Overview of Contracting with the City Video Recording: <https://bit.ly/June11AccessLARecording> PowerPoint Presentation: <https://bit.ly/June11AccessLAPresentation> You can also refer to the Contractor's Handbook <https://bca.lacity.org/Uploads/cca/Contractors%20Handbook.pdf> To get information on upcoming webinars and workshops, turn on your LABAVN New Event notification preferences.

6. Are there different types of RFPs? What is a bench contract?

In a Request for Proposals (RFP), cost is one of several selection criteria that proposers will be judged on, alongside other components (e.g., schedule, past performance, qualifications, experience, staffing, technical requirements, or project approach). An RFP gives you the best value proposal based on your evaluation criteria. An RFP is the most typical solicitation type for a personal services procurement.

Additionally, the City of Los Angeles can also issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). In an RFQ, the proposer is evaluated on items other than cost, and are then shortlisted based on qualifications to decide either: 1) who will be invited into an RFP process, or 2) who will be able to respond to subsequent Task Orders. In the City of Los Angeles, RFQs are frequently used to establish a bench of engineers, architects, or other highly specialized technical service providers. An RFQ is also used to gather information about vendors to determine if they are capable of performing certain types of services for the Department.

Task Orders are colloquially referred to as a mini-bids or bench contracts. RFQs are also used when multiple firms are being prequalified for a certain type of work and "stand-by" contracts are put in place with each of them. When a Pre-Qualified On-Call Contract (PQOC) is executed, one or more of the pre-qualified firms are later issued a Task Order for a specific project.

7. How do I prepare bids and proposals?

Read the RFP requirements and follow the specific instructions to the letter and submit before the deadline. For best practices and tips, refer to the Powerpoint on the Overview of Doing Business with the City. <https://bit.ly/June11AccessLAPresentation> . It is recommended to attend the pre bid and pre proposal meetings and ask questions.

8. Does the City of Los Angeles have requirements for MBE/ WBE?OUTREACH

Yes, the City's Business Inclusion Program (BIP) requires outreach to various types of certified firms, including MBE WBE. When BIP is required, anticipated levels of participation are set for each type of certified firm. Primes are then required to outreach to subcontractors through LABAVN.

9. How are pre-bid meetings conducted in a COVID-19 pandemic environment?

During the COVID-19 pandemic environment, most pre-bid meetings will be virtual. Contract administrators will provide details of the meetings on the LABAVN opportunity page or the related proposal document.

10. Does a firm need to register for a Business Tax Registration Certificate if it is not yet doing business with the City?

While a BTRC is not required by the Office of Finance if a firm is not yet engaging in business in the City or with the City as a vendor, a firm can register for a BTRC as it plans to engage in business in the City. For concerns about paying business tax: tax is generally owed if there is actual business activity within the City. There are a few exceptions as some business activities require a minimum tax to be paid. The minimum tax is required to be paid upon registration and every time a firm renews. Therefore, if a firm's business activity does not have a minimum/flat rate tax, the firm will most likely owe \$0 in business tax if they have zero business activity in the City of LA. If the business is located out of the city, they may not have to pay the minimum tax during the renewal period. However, if the firm is not awarded the contract but wants to keep the BTRC open, the firm will have to file a renewal each year. As long as they don't have business activity in LA and no minimum tax, they will not have to pay. Firms can go to the Office of Finance's FAQ page which explains who needs to register, <https://finance.lacity.org/business-registration-requirements-faq> If they are not liable for business tax because they do not and will physically engage in business in the City of LA, they will need to complete the Vendor Registration Form.

<https://finance.lacity.org/sites/g/files/wph1051/f/Vendor%20Registration%202%20Page%20Packet.pdf> If approved this form provides an exemption from business tax and they will not be required to pay taxes. The Office of Finance website does not address the requirements of obtaining a BTRC to register on LABAVN.ORG or other sites.

11. May foreign firms and/or out-of-state firms bid on City projects/contracts?

Foreign firms and out of state firms may bid on City of Los Angeles opportunities. Note that there will be federal and/or state limitations written in.

LABAVN

12. How do I navigate LABAVN to find contracting opportunities?

Please review the BAVN demo featured in the Accessing LA session 3 webinar posted on the Department of Public Works Facebook page. [bit.ly/July9AccessLAFacebook](https://www.facebook.com/AccessingLA)

13. Can LABAVN non-admin user get notifications?

Notifications are only sent to the designated administrator of the registered LABAVN firm. Since the administrator is the only one authorized to respond to requests and notifications or make update to the profile.

14. How is outreach on BAVN enforced?

All primes are required to complete the BIP online where it is required. If it is not completed, the Prime will be deemed non-responsive for the contract. City staff will review for completion to ensure that a prime has met all the outreach requirements.

15. Can a firm that has several locations have multiple BAVN profiles?

No, a company must state and register its headquarters. Every company should only have one profile.

16. Does it mean that I am a vendor for the City of Los Angeles if my firm is registered on LABAVN?

Registration and creating a profile on LABAVN, includes your firm in the database that receives notification on opportunities and prime contractors may contact you as part of their outreach requirements. This may open you to the opportunity to become a vendor and/or a subcontractor on contracting opportunities.

COMMODITIES/SUPPLIER

17. Where can I get information on commodities open for solicitation?

The General Services Department- Supply Services Division posts all solicitations for commodities, supplies, and equipment are posted on labavn.org. A supplier that wants to participate in bidding for commodity solicitations must register as a vendor at lavss.lacity.org. This is the City of Los Angeles Vendor Self-Service (LAVSS) portal where vendors can update their account information, submit bids and invoices, track payments, and get detailed information about a solicitation. For an FAQ regarding LAVSS, visit <http://bit.ly/LAVSSfaq>.

18. Do I need an account with LAVSS to view business opportunities?

No. You may view public information by going to the Public Access link on the home page of lavss.lacity.org. This page has a list of all solicitations (open, closing soon, recently published, recent amendments and recent awards). The Public Access page also has a link to FAQs. bit.ly/LAVSSpublicaccess

19. Does the City of LA have a preferred vendor list for commodities/supplies/goods?

All commodities of the City of Los Angeles are purchased through the General Services Department. There is no preferred vendor list. All products, commodities/supplies/goods are competitively bid out to the lowest bidder complying with specifications. For more information, visit: <https://gsd.lacity.org/services/supply-services/general-bidding-information>

20. What is the process of commodity bidding?

A commodities solicitation is advertised on LABAVN and LAVSS with details and due dates. Vendors have to submit their bids through their LAVSS account. All bids are analyzed, reviewed and evaluated based on solicitation's status and criteria then an award is made. To facilitate the process and avoid delays, the vendor community is advised to have all its compliance documents uploaded on LABAVN.

21. Does the City of LA honor Master Pricing Agreements?

Master Pricing Agreements are developed as part of a contract?

CERTIFICATION

22. How do I get certified by the City of Los Angeles?

Firms should first go to the BCA Certifications web page to determine which, if any, of the various Business Certification Programs they may be eligible for. The applicant firm prepares and submits a Business Enterprise (BE) Application package. Once a Business Enterprise Certification Application is received, it is logged in as "received" and put on a queue to be assigned to an analyst. An analyst will do an intake to ensure all required documents were included in order to review the file. Once the package is complete, a second analyst will conduct a desk audit to determine the applicant firm's eligibility for the BE certification. In the Federal DBE/ACDBE Programs, a mandatory site visit is conducted, virtually or telephonically. The final decision to approve or deny is then made. For more information and application forms, go to our Certification Program webpage at <https://bca.lacity.org/certification> For a Powerpoint presentation with more details visit: <https://bit.ly/July9AccessingLAPresentation>

23. May a firm apply for multiple certifications at the same time?

A firm may apply for certification or request verification for all programs that it is eligible for at the same time. At this time, only the Local Business Enterprise (LBE) certification can be applied for online through a firm's <https://www.labavn.org/> profile. All other programs require submission of a paper application and supporting documents. For printable application forms, visit <https://bca.lacity.org/certification-printable-forms>.

Go to this link <https://bit.ly/BCACertHandouts> for instructions on how to request verification of recognized certifications your firm already has. For questions about electronic submittal of applications, send an email to bca.certifications@lacity.org

24. What certification can a firm located outside LA County qualify for? What certifications from other agencies does the City of LA recognize?

In general, the City of LA only processes DBE, LBE, SLB, MBE, WBE applications of firms based in LA County. Applicant firms located outside of LA County can apply for SBE(Proprietary), DBE and/or ACDBE certifications. However, we do recognize certain certifications by other agencies of firms located within AND outside LA County or outside California. There is a list of recognized agencies and types of certifications that a non-LA County based firm may apply for in order to obtain certain BE certifications. If the recognized agency certification is approved, the firm can request the specific certification be added to the

company's LABAVN business profile. For a list of agencies and types of certifications the City of LA recognizes for certain of our certification, please refer to the Inter-Agency Recognition Chart. <https://bit.ly/BCACertHandouts>

25. How long does it take to get certified?

Processing time of certification applications depends on several factors: the type of certification program, the completeness of the application packet, the complexity of the file and the responsiveness of the applicant firm when the analyst requests additional required information. The processing time starts from when the application is assigned to an analyst. Once assigned, it could take between 30-90 days or as long as 4-5 months or more to complete the process, depending on the program. The DBE/ACDBE programs take the longest to process because a mandatory site visit/interview is required.

26. Besides the City of LA, what are the other agencies under the California Unified Certification Program (CUCP) that accept DBE applications?

Firms that are based in California can apply for DBE certification with the CUCP agency within the County where it is located. For a list of CUCP agencies, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/civil-rights/documents/dbe/cucp-roster-of-certifying-agencies.pdf> If the firm has its principal place of business outside California and is currently certified in their home state, please contact the California Department of Transportation at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/dbe-certification-information>.

27. Are all your certifications recognized by all City of LA departments? Do I need to get certified by each department?

The Bureau of Contract Administration (BCA) is the certifying body for the entire City. The City of LA has different certification programs. DBE, MBE, WBE, LBE and SLB certifications on LABAVN are recognized City-wide. The SBE-Proprietary Program is recognized ONLY by Proprietary Departments: Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), Department of Water & Power (DWP), and the Port of Los Angeles (POLA). For recognition as SBE by other non-Proprietary City Departments, a firm must be certified as Small Business (SB) by the State of California- Dept. of General Services (CA-DGS) or Small Local Business (SLB) by the City of Los Angeles. The firm must have a profile on LABAVN to get the recognitions. LAWA has specific recognitions such as Local Small Business Enterprise (which is different from Small Local Business) and soon an online certification process for Local-State Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (LAWA). Note: We do not issue certificates/letters for recognition. Verified recognitions are added to a firm's LABAVN profile.