



ENTERPRISE POLICY

POLICY TITLE

NUMBER

EFFECTIVE

Washington EDGE Pilot Program Policy

FPS.01.01

3/7/2025

APPLIES TO

The Department of Enterprise Services and public works contracting community.

CONTACT

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GOVERNANCE

Below are some, but not all governing requirements. Laws and rules may change over time and such changes may take precedence.

- [State law: Ch. 39.04 RCW Public Works](#)
- [State law: Ch. 39.06 Public Works – Registration, Licensing of Contractors](#)
- [State law: Ch. 39.10 RCW Alternative Public Works](#)
- [Governor's Executive Order: EO 22-01 Equity in Public Contracting](#)

FIRST ADOPTED

1/10/2025

LAST UPDATE

N/A

REVIEW BY DATE

1/10/2026

ADOPTED BY

Tara C. Smith, Director

Reason for policy

This policy establishes and sets requirements for the Encouraging Diversity, Growth, and Equity (EDGE) program.

The intent of the EDGE program is to remove barriers for small and diverse businesses in Washington state public works contracting. The program gives eligible small businesses access to special training, technical help, and opportunities to bid on EDGE reserved contracts.

State law allows for competitive contracting requirements to be waived in some circumstances.

[RCW 39.04.280\(1\)](#) allows public agencies to waive certain competitive bidding requirements when there are special market conditions.

Study finds certain businesses underrepresented in state contracts.

According to the [2019 State of Washington Disparity Study](#), small, minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses were significantly underrepresented in state contracts. The study found that discrimination in Washington's construction sector creates barriers for minority and women-owned businesses to access public works contracts. The study found significant racial disparities in start-up businesses in the state's construction industry, as well as differences in wages, income, and business earnings. The study also found evidence of ongoing discrimination against White women and minorities.

The study concluded that minorities and White women do not have equal access to contracting opportunities in Washington state. Most minority and women-owned businesses face challenges due to discrimination, leading to fewer opportunities, lower earnings, and difficulties in starting new businesses.

State law prohibits implementation of race- and gender- conscious programs. To address disparities found, the study recommended several actions to ensure fair access to state contracts, including creating a pilot program focused on race- and gender-neutral small businesses.

Definitions

Except for the definition of "Small business", this policy uses the same definitions listed in [RCW 39.04.010](#).

Washington EDGE (EDGE) means the small business program authorized by the Department of Enterprise Services and governed by this policy.

Client agency means a state agency receiving public works project management services from the Facility Professional Services (FPS) division of the Department of Enterprise Services.

Fiscal year means the 12-month period between July 1st of one year and June 30th of the following year. Note: Fiscal year is an informal way of referring to the Washington state financial year.

Authorized representative of the business means a person who has permission to apply to the EDGE program for the business.

Average annual business revenue means the sum of an EDGE business's gross revenue for every year during the specified period, divided by the number of years in the period.

In-state business means a business that has its principal office located in Washington.

Policy statement

The Department of Enterprise Services (DES) recognizes there are barriers that might keep small and diverse businesses from participating in public works contracting in Washington state. Through Washington EDGE, the state intends to reduce or remove those barriers to improve access for certain small and diverse businesses seeking to participate in public works contracting in Washington state.

Policy

EDGE business eligibility criteria

To qualify for EDGE, businesses must:

- Show that their average annual business revenue is no more than \$5 million over the last three years.

- Have no federal, state, or local debarments, suspensions, or revocations within the last two years.
- Have all necessary licenses, registrations, and permits required by state law to take part in public works contracting.
- Submit a complete application signed by the principal business owner or authorized representative of the business.
- Have a principal business owner that has at least three years of experience working in the construction industry.
- Have majority business owners who do not own multiple businesses that, combined, have average annual business revenue higher than \$5 million over the last three years.
- Have no conflicts of interest with other businesses owned by any owners of the applying firm.
- Be an in-state business.

Applying for the EDGE program

- The Department of Enterprise Services (DES) will accept applications year-round and review them at least twice a year.
- EDGE applicants must declare their application information is accurate. See the [Uniform Unsworn Declaration Act \(Chapter 5.50 RCW.\)](#)

EDGE acceptance requirements

A business may participate in the EDGE program once they have:

- Met all [eligibility criteria](#) described in this policy, and
- Received an acceptance letter from DES.

EDGE bidder status

An EDGE business may bid on an EDGE contract when on the bid date they:

- Have completed the EDGE Training Program.
- Continue to meet all eligibility requirements described in this policy.

EDGE space limitation

The assistant director of FPS may decide to limit the number of businesses that can join the EDGE program at any time if there are not enough resources for DES to manage the program effectively.

If limits are set:

- Participation in the program will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis for completed applications.
- If the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) receives any applications beyond the EDGE space limit, DES will keep those applications and process them first during the next application window in the order in which they were received.

EDGE reserved contract selection

Contracts selected by a review committee for EDGE bidding must meet the following criteria:

- Total contract value is estimated to be under \$1 million.
- The client agency, if applicable, agrees to use the EDGE program for this project.

EDGE reserved contract bidding

DES will use a competitive bid process for EDGE reserved contracts, limiting eligibility to bid to EDGE businesses. Achieving [EDGE bidder status](#) does not guarantee the business will win a contract.

The bidding process will include:

- A requirement that the bidder has completed the EDGE Training Program.
- A requirement that the prime contractor must do 60% of the work on the contract.
- Confirmation that the business still meets the [EDGE bidder status criteria](#) set forth in this policy.
- Experience requirements necessary to make sure the contractor can successfully complete the contracted work.

DES may cancel an EDGE contract and rebid the project outside the EDGE program if:

- DES receives only one or no responsible bids.
- The supervisor of engineering and architecture, or delegate, determines the bids are either too high or too low for the work.

EDGE training program

All applicants are required to complete the EDGE Training Program upon acceptance into the Washington EDGE Program. Completion of this training is mandatory to be eligible to bid on EDGE contracts. The training must be attended at least by the principal owner of the business.

The EDGE Training Program will:

- Require no more than 20 hours of training time including an in-person program orientation.
- Be a combination of in-person, hybrid, or virtual training.
- Be designed and updated by DES using participant feedback to improve the program over time.
- Be held, at minimum, once a year.

Limitations for EDGE businesses

These limits only apply to EDGE contracts. Public works contracts awarded to businesses through other processes do not count toward these limits.

EDGE businesses have the following yearly limitations:

- Businesses will not receive more than \$1.9 million in EDGE contracts as a prime contractor per fiscal year.
- If a change order is needed to finish a project, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) may approve the change order even if it causes the business to exceed the \$1.9 million limit.
- An EDGE business will not be awarded more than two EDGE contract awards per fiscal year.

EDGE businesses have the following lifetime limits:

- A business will not be awarded more than \$3.9 million in EDGE contracts.
- If a change order is needed to finish the project, DES may approve the change even if it causes the business to exceed the \$3.9 million limit.
- A business will not be awarded more than eight EDGE contracts.
- Sub-contracting on another firm’s EDGE contract will not count against any limits.

Duration of EDGE membership

EDGE memberships end:

- When an EDGE business no longer meets the EDGE business eligibility criteria described in this policy; or,
- The business has reached any of the [lifetime limits](#).
- When an EDGE business has requested, in writing, to end their participation in the EDGE program.

Business removal from EDGE program

DES may remove businesses from the EDGE program at any time if:

- The business provided false information in its EDGE application or bid documents.
- The business receives a debarment, suspension, or revocation from a federal, state, or local government agency.
- The business has not attended the EDGE training or bid on any EDGE projects for a period of more than two years.

If removed from the EDGE program for any reason, DES will notify the business in writing.

EDGE program pilot review period

DES will continuously review the EDGE program for improvements and may update this policy and its components no later than two and a half years after its adoption date.

Handbook

Participant program handbook (under development)

Standards

Participant training program (under development)

Participant records tracking and control (under development)

Forms

Washington EDGE application (under development)

Washington EDGE application addendum 1 – Owner Information (under development)

Washington EDGE application addendum 2 – Parent Company Information (under development)

Washington EDGE application owner's unsworn declaration (under development)

[Washington Edge application review checklist](#)

Post-training survey (under development)

Templates

Confirmation of application receipt (under development)

Notification of incomplete application (under development)

Notification of acceptance into the EDGE Program (under development)

Notification of removal from EDGE Program (under development)

Frequently asked questions

[Washington EDGE Program FAQ](#)

Related Information

[2019 Disparity Study](#)

[Register to receive public works bid opportunities](#)

[Statewide Small Works Roster](#)

[Public Works Business Diversity Program](#)

[Doing business with the Washington State Department of Transportation](#)

History

2/10/2025 – Removed notarized statements as an allowable method for applicants to legally state they are telling the truth.

1/10/2025 - Date first adopted.



Need a copy of a prior version of this policy? Email jack.zeigler@des.wa.gov