

Saratoga Ascend Supplier Diversity Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

As a woman and minority owned business, Saratoga Ascend fully understands the importance of promoting relationships, opportunities, and access to working with diverse populations for partner vendors and in serving customers.

Saratoga Ascend is committed to fostering an inclusive procurement process that provides equal opportunities for diverse businesses. We believe that integrating diverse suppliers into our ecosystem drives innovation, competitive pricing, excellence in serving diverse populations, and community economic growth.

This policy applies to all employees involved in the procurement of goods and services, as well as third-party contractors acting on behalf of Saratoga Ascend.

2. Definition of Diverse Suppliers

We recognize businesses that are at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by individuals from underrepresented groups, including but not limited to:

- **MBE:** Minority Business Enterprises (Ethnic minorities)
- **WBE:** Women Business Enterprises
- **LGBTQ+:** LGBTQ+ Business Enterprises
- **SDVOB:** Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses
- **HUBZone:** Small businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones

3. Our Commitments

To ensure the success of this program, Saratoga Ascend pledges to:

- **Active Sourcing:** Proactively seek out diverse suppliers during the Request for Proposal (RFP) and bidding processes.
- **Fair Evaluation:** Ensure that diverse suppliers are evaluated using the same objective criteria as all other vendors, without bias.
- **Eliminate Barriers:** Review our procurement requirements to ensure they don't unnecessarily exclude smaller, diverse firms (e.g., adjusting bonding requirements or payment terms where possible).
- **Mentorship:** Provide feedback to unsuccessful diverse bidders to help them improve their competitiveness for future opportunities.

4. Implementation & Tracking

We don't just want a policy on paper; we want results.
We will measure our success through:

- **Tier 1 Spending:** Direct spend with certified diverse suppliers.
- **Tier 2 Reporting:** Encouraging our primary (non-diverse) suppliers to report their own spend with diverse subcontractors.
- **Certification Verification:** Requiring proof of certification from recognized bodies (e.g., NMSDC, WBENC, NGLCC)

5. Accountability

The Head of Procurement is responsible for the oversight and annual reporting of our supplier diversity metrics to the executive leadership team.



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