



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.**

8f

**ACTION ITEM**

**Date of Meeting**

February 10, 2026

**DATE:** January 30, 2026

**TO:** Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

**FROM:** A. Bounjaktha, Managing Director, Economic Development Division  
Mian Rice, Director, Diversity in Contracting  
Emily Ho, Program Manager, Diversity in Contracting

**SUBJECT:** Interagency Agreement for Capacity Building Mentorship Program

**Amount of this request:** \$40,000

**Total estimated project cost:** \$40,000

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Request Commission authorization for Executive Director to execute an Interlocal Agreement (ILA), pursuant to chapter 39.34 RCW, with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, City of Seattle, and King County to implement the Capacity Building Mentorship Program for the purpose of strengthening the capacity of small businesses in construction and consulting projects.

Signing the agreement would allow WSDOT to administer funds to the program administrator and submit invoices to the Port and other parties for reimbursement. The Agreement's performance period commences on January 1, 2026, and is to be completed on December 30, 2027. The agreement will be for two years for a total cost of \$40,000 to the Port, which is 11% of the total contract amount of \$365,000.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Diversity in Contracting team at the Port has been in discussion with WSDOT and Sound Transit to join the relaunch of the Capacity Building Mentorship Program (CBMP), alongside the City of Seattle and King County who are also participating in the program relaunch.

The CBMP is a long-term effort to strengthen the capacity of small businesses in Washington by connecting them with larger firms engaged in government construction and consulting projects. It was originally launched in 2018 through a partnership between the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), and the Associated General Contractors of Washington (AGC). In 2019, the partnership grew to include Sound Transit. Since its launch, more than 130 proteges have participated in

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one of the program's seven cohorts, with over 88% of mentors and proteges in the most recent cohorts reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the program.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

Joining the Capacity Building Mentorship Program is an invaluable way for the Port to leverage and contribute to the collaborative efforts of our peer agencies to accomplish our shared goals of strengthening the capacity of the region's small businesses. It is a direct way to advance the Port's Century Agenda Goal of responsibly investing in the economic growth of the region and all its communities, as well as increasing the utilization of WMBE and DBE firms and eliminating disparity of access to opportunities.

### **DETAILS**

The Diversity in Contracting team at the Port has been in discussion with WSDOT and Sound Transit to join the relaunch of the program, alongside the City of Seattle and King County who are also participating in the program relaunch. All five government agencies share similar goals to increase small business capacity and ability to gain work, and seek to advance those goals by establishing specific protocols for developing, implementing, delivering, and expanding the Program.

The purpose of the Agreement between the five agencies is for WSDOT to act as a pass-through agency for CBMP administration funds, and to define the terms and conditions for work performed to support CBMP implementation.

### ***Scope of Work***

A competitively-selected consultant shall manage the CBMP Program in coordination with WSDOT, with input from program partners, and include the following elements:

- The Consultant will be the primary point of contact for all past and current Mentor and Protégé participants.
- The Consultant will fund and update the CBMP Website.
- The Consultant will develop and maintain an outreach strategy.
- The Consultant will assess potential program candidates.
- The Consultant will identify subcontractor and sub-consultant qualification levels and Tier levels before connecting them with the appropriate Mentor firm.
- The Consultant will coordinate virtual or in-person matchmaking engagements between yet-to-be-paired Mentors and Protégés.
- The Consultant will work with all Mentors and Protégés to develop program-approved Individual Development Plans and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

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- The Consultant will organize and lead program orientations, meet and greet sessions, and networking events for the participants.
- The Consultant will conduct regular program benchmark reviews and provide updates at bi-weekly meetings with CBMP representatives.
- The Consultant, with input from CBMP representatives, shall provide a report based on quarterly surveys or firm questionnaire findings.
- The Consultant, with support from CBMP representatives, shall reach out to program participants to address concerns.

***Period of Performance***

Subject to its other provisions, the Agreement's performance period shall commence on January 1, 2026, regardless of date of execution, and be completed on December 30, 2027, unless terminated sooner as provided in the Agreement or extended through a properly executed amendment.

***Costs***

The breakdown of payments between the Parties is as follows:

Party	Contribution: Not to exceed.
WSDOT	\$200,000.00
Sound Transit	\$75,000.00
King County	\$40,000.00
Port of Seattle	\$40,000.00
City of Seattle	\$10,000.00

Anticipated staffing commitments as follows:

Party	Anticipated Monthly Staffing Commitments
WSDOT	8 hours
Sound Transit	8 hours
City of Seattle	8 hours
King County	8 hours
Port of Seattle	8 hours

CBMP partnership aspirational benchmarks concerning financial contributions:

Party	Financial contribution (two years)	Contribution by percent	Benchmark Number of Mentor-protégé partnerships (two-year period)		
			60* pairs	50* pairs	40* pairs
WSDOT	\$200,000	55 percent	21*	16*	14*
Sound	\$75,000	20 percent	18*	15*	12*

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Transit					
City of Seattle	\$10,000	3 percent	3*	3*	2*
King County	\$40,000	11 percent	9*	8*	6*
Port of Seattle	\$40,000	11 percent	9*	8*	6*

\*dependent on mentor and protégé availability.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

The Capacity Building Mentorship Program (CBMP) is a long-term effort by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to strengthen the capacity of small businesses in Washington by connecting them with larger firms engaged in government construction and consulting projects. Since its inauguration, the Program has promoted building relationships and expanding contracting opportunities as the most effective way to strengthen the capacity of Small Businesses. Since its launch in 2018, more than 130 protégés have participated in this program in one of seven cohorts, with over 88% of mentors and proteges in the most recent cohorts reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the program.

The Program was originally launched in March 2018 through a partnership between WSDOT, the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), and the Associated General Contractors of Washington (AGC), with Thor Construction serving as program manager. In April 2019, it was relaunched as the Capacity Building Mentorship Program in partnership with Sound Transit, ACEC, AGC, and the Washington Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center.

On June 30, 2025, the WA MBDA Business Center closed. To ensure continuity, WSDOT hired CORE Strategists to manage the program during this period. WSDOT has selected a long-term CBMP program administrator, Apex Accelerators, that began work in January 2026.

***Differentiation from Port Business Accelerator Program***

Diversity in Contracting has organized its own mentorship program, the Port of Seattle Small Business Accelerator Mentorship Program, since 2021. This program occurs annually in the Fall wherein 11-15 select businesses in Port-related industries, are each paired with an industry mentor and experience a robust curriculum, primarily in-person, over the course of three months. The Program is known for the unique visibility and access it grants these businesses to the Port, by connecting them to key Port decision makers, and educating them on the Port's unique contracting opportunities and needs. It is also singular in its ability to establish meaningful relationships, and a sense of community among the cohort businesses and their

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mentors – allowing for frequent co-learning and resource-sharing within and across industries and which lasts well past the end of the program.

The Capacity Building Mentorship Program, with its approach to government contracting across multiple agencies, longer program duration, as well as its intent focus on the individual mentor-protégé relationships, will be an excellent complement to the existing Port Business Accelerator Program.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING**

- (1) CBMP Relaunch Interagency Agreement
- (2) Presentation

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

Not Applicable