IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

DBE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

IN THIS ISSUE:

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Maintaining Cash Flow
During the Off-Season

■ *By Project Solutions Inc. Team*

Winter can be a challenging time for construction businesses. With colder temperatures, shorter daylight hours, and unpredictable weather, outdoor construction projects can slow down or even come to a halt. For small businesses that rely on consistent work, the winter season can feel like a lean period. However, with the right strategies and a bit of creativity, it's possible to keep operations running smoothly, generate revenue, and even set the stage for a successful year ahead.

Pivoting to Indoor Projects

While winter may freeze certain aspects of construction, it creates new opportunities indoors. Small construction businesses can thrive in the winter months by specializing in home and commercial renovations, which are not as impacted by weather. In fact, many homeowners view the winter as the perfect time to tackle indoor projects. Kitchens, bathrooms, basements, and attics are popular areas for remodeling during the colder months. These types of projects are less likely to be delayed by weather, and homeowners are often looking for ways to improve their living spaces while they're stuck inside.

Renovation projects aren't limited to residential spaces, either. Many commercial properties, such as retail stores, offices, and schools, tend to schedule renovations during slower periods to minimize disruptions. Winter is an ideal time for small construction businesses to target these commercial clients, offering services that can enhance both the functionality and aesthetics of a business space.

Furthermore, winter is the season for repairs. Homeowners often face issues like frozen pipes, roof leaks, and heating system malfunctions. Offering emergency repair services can help keep a business busy, as people are eager to fix issues before they escalate into larger, costlier problems. Even though the work might be more reactive than proactive, providing quick and reliable service during the winter months can help maintain cash flow and customer loyalty.

Expanding Service Offerings

To ensure continued revenue during the winter, small construction businesses should think about expanding their service offerings. Diversifying beyond traditional construction can open up new revenue streams and keep the business relevant when weather conditions make certain types of work impossible. Winterizing homes and commercial properties is a natural extension of a construction business.

Many customers are looking for ways to make their homes more energy-efficient during the colder months, whether that means adding insulation, sealing gaps in windows and doors, or installing better weatherproofing systems. By offering winterization services, small construction businesses can tap into a market that's especially in demand when temperatures drop. Additionally, these services can lead to larger projects, such as energy-efficient renovations or upgrades.

In many regions, snow and ice are inevitable during the winter. Small construction businesses can capitalize on this by offering snow removal services. Whether it's clearing driveways for homeowners or salting walkways for businesses, snow and ice management can be a lucrative venture for companies that are equipped to handle the cold. Snow removal is often a task that people will pay a premium for, especially when winter storms are particularly harsh. Having the proper equipment, such as snowplows, salt spreaders, and snow blowers, can allow a business to offer these services to both residential and commercial clients.

Building and Nurturing Relationships

Winter isn't just about executing projects; it's also an opportunity to focus on relationships and build a strong reputation. One of the most powerful tools small construction businesses have is word-of-mouth marketing. Staying in touch with past clients and offering them additional services can keep work flowing during slower months. For example, checking in on past projects to ensure everything is in working order or offering winter maintenance packages can build goodwill and encourage clients to return.

In addition to maintaining relationships with existing clients, the winter months are a great time to network and seek out new business. Many local governments and municipalities have ongoing projects that require construction services year-round. By seeking out government contracts or bidding on municipal projects, small businesses can secure steady work throughout the winter months. Networking with developers, real estate agents, and other contractors can also help a business tap into new opportunities that might not have been available during busier times of the year.

Offering referral incentives is another way to keep the business bustling during the winter. Clients who refer friends or family members for new projects should be rewarded with discounts or small gifts, incentivizing them to spread the word about your services. This creates a cycle where satisfied clients bring in new customers, which, in turn, helps sustain revenue throughout the winter months.

Flexible Pricing and Payment Plans

Winter can be a financially tight time for many, and some clients may hesitate to commit to construction projects due to concerns about cost. To encourage customers to proceed with work during the slower season, small businesses can offer more competitive pricing. Offering discounts or promotional deals on indoor services, like remodeling or repairs, can incentivize homeowners to take the leap and get started with projects they might otherwise postpone until spring.

Another way to make services more accessible during the winter months is by offering flexible payment options. For instance, businesses can set up installment payment plans or offer financing to help clients manage larger projects. By making it easier for customers to afford services, small businesses can keep work coming in, even when clients are feeling financially cautious.

Keeping Employees Engaged and Motivated

Winter can also be a challenging time for employees, particularly in construction, where work is often weather-dependent. To keep employees engaged, it's essential for business owners to offer opportunities for training and professional development. Winter provides a natural lull in activity, and this downtime can be put to good use by providing employees with additional skills or certifications. Not only does this benefit the business by expanding its capabilities, but it also helps employees feel more invested in their work. Maintaining open lines of communication with employees and offering incentives can also help keep morale high during slower months. Whether it's organizing team-building events, offering performance bonuses, or simply ensuring that work schedules are manageable, keeping the workforce motivated is crucial for maintaining productivity when business picks up again.

Exploring New Markets and Niches

Winter can also be an opportunity for small construction businesses to diversify and explore new markets. For example, a company that typically focuses on residential construction may want to target commercial or government contracts during the off-season. Alternatively, focusing on niche areas such as eco-friendly or energy-efficient construction can set a business apart and attract customers who want to reduce their environmental impact during the winter months.

By branching out into new areas, small businesses can tap into new revenue streams that will help buffer against the seasonal slowdowns that winter brings.

Though winter presents significant challenges for small construction businesses, it also offers ample opportunities to remain profitable. By planning ahead, diversifying services, nurturing relationships, and staying flexible with pricing, small businesses can weather the colder months with success. Whether focusing on indoor projects, offering snow removal services, or exploring new markets, there are plenty of ways to keep work coming in and ensure that revenue continues to flow. With the right approach, winter can become a productive season, laying the foundation for a prosperous year ahead.

UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

December 9

Creating Successful Employees
Idaho Small Business Development Center Webinar
Tue., Dec. 9, 2025 | 10:00 A.M. MT | Cost: No Cost
Learn More>

December 9

The 3 Marketing Strategies That Actually Work: Advertising, Content Creation & Direct Marketing
SCORE Webinar
Tue., Dec. 9, 2025 | 11:00 A.M. MT | Cost: No Cost
Learn More>

December 10

Managing the OSHA 300 Log: Correctly Describing and Recording Incidents
OH&S Webinar
Wed., Dec. 10, 2025 | Noon MT | Cost: No Cost
Learn More>

December 16

External Q&A Session:
Conducting Labor Interviews for Contractors and Subcontractors Workforce
ITD Webinar
Tue., Dec. 16, 2025 | 1:00 P.M. MT
Cost: No Cost

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Video ID: 114 734 433 9
More info

For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

December 17

Starting a Business in Idaho
North Idaho Small Business Development Center Webinar
Wed., Dec. 17, 2025 | 8:00 A.M. MT | Cost: No Cost
Learn More>

Building Relationships with Prime Contractors

- Why It's Important and How to Do It Effectively

■ *By Project Solutions Inc. Team*

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) play a critical role within the contracting industry because they bring unique perspectives, drive innovation, and contribute to a more competitive market. However, breaking into large-scale projects and securing sustainable work can be challenging and without strong relationships with Prime Contractors, extremely difficult. Establishing and maintaining these relationships is crucial for DBEs looking to expand their opportunities, increase revenue, and contribute meaningfully to major public and private sector projects.

Why Building Relationships with Prime Contractors Matters

For DBEs, forming strong relationships with Prime Contractors is more than just networking — it is a strategic business necessity. These relationships open doors to larger projects and new markets, providing opportunities for growth and increased revenue. By collaborating with Prime Contractors, DBEs can access valuable resources, expertise, and networks that enhance their competitiveness. Additionally, strong partnerships help DBEs meet regulatory requirements and secure a steady stream of contracts, ensuring long-term business sustainability. Here are some benefits DBEs can gain by these partnerships:

- **Economic Impact:** DBEs contribute significantly to the economy by creating jobs and fostering innovation. By partnering with Prime Contractors, DBEs can access larger projects and markets, leading to increased revenue and business growth.

- **Innovation and Efficiency:** Diverse teams bring different perspectives and ideas, leading to more innovative and efficient project outcomes. This collaboration can result in better problem-solving and project execution.

- **Increased Business Opportunities:** By forming solid relationships with Primes, DBEs increase their chances of being invited to bid on projects and form strategic alliances that lead to long-term work.

- **Access to Larger Contracts** – Many government and corporate contracts require DBE participation. Prime Contractors seek qualified DBEs to meet these requirements, making collaboration a win-win situation.

- **Mentorship and Capacity Building** – Prime Contractors can provide guidance, mentorship, and technical assistance, helping DBEs enhance their capabilities and gain valuable industry insights.

Prime Contractors often have access to resources, expertise, and networks that DBEs may lack. By collaborating, DBEs can leverage these assets to enhance their capabilities and competitiveness.

- **Enhanced Credibility and Reputation** – Working with reputable Prime Contractors helps DBEs build credibility. By consistently demonstrating reliability, quality, and professionalism in their work, DBEs can build a strong reputation with Prime Contractors. This trustworthiness not only enhances their chances of securing future contracts but also helps build long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

- **Financial Stability** – By consistently securing contracts through Prime relationships, DBEs can maintain steady cash flow and invest in business growth and development.

How to Do it Effectively

Understanding the importance of these relationships is essential and DBEs must take proactive steps to build and nurture them effectively. These key strategies will help DBEs foster meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with Prime Contractors:

Research and Identify the Right Prime Contractors DBEs should start by identifying Prime Contractors that align with their industry, values, and long-term business goals. This can be done by

- Reviewing government and corporate bid opportunities that require DBE participation.
- Researching Prime Contractors with a track record of working with DBEs.
- Analyze Competitors: Look at similar companies already working with Prime Contractors. Understanding their operations and partnerships can provide insights into potential opportunities for your business.
- Identify Key Players: Research the key players in your industry and their subcontracting needs. This can help you target the right Prime Contractors who are likely to need your services.

Utilize DBE Certification and Market Your Business Effectively

- Once certified, DBEs should actively market their businesses by:
- Creating a professional capability statement outlining core competencies, past performance, and differentiators.
- Developing a compelling online presence with a professional website and presence on platforms like LinkedIn. Follow Prime Contractors, engage with their content, and connect with their representatives to stay informed about opportunities.
- Engaging in outreach efforts such as email campaigns, networking events, and industry forums.

Attend Pre-Bid Meetings and Networking Events
One of the best ways to connect with Prime Contractors is by attending pre-bid meetings, procurement fairs, and matchmaking events hosted by government agencies and industry associations. These events offer DBEs direct access to decision-makers, providing opportunities to:

- Introduce their business and capabilities.
- Learn about upcoming project opportunities.
- Establish direct contacts with procurement officers and Prime Contractor representatives.

Build a Strong Reputation Through Performance

Prime Contractors are more likely to work with DBEs that have a proven track record of delivering quality work on time and within budget. To establish a strong reputation:

- Ensure compliance with project specifications and industry standards.
- Demonstrate reliability, professionalism, and adaptability.
- Request testimonials and references from past clients to showcase successful project completion.

Foster Relationships Beyond the Initial Contract

Building long-term relationships requires ongoing effort. After securing work with a Prime Contractor, DBEs should:

- Maintain open communication and provide progress updates.
- Be proactive in problem-solving and demonstrating added value.
- Express interest in future opportunities and seek feedback on performance.

Collaborate and Partner Strategically
Instead of viewing relationships with Prime Contractors as purely transactional, DBEs should seek to build strategic partnerships that create mutual benefits. This may include:

- Forming joint ventures or teaming agreements to bid on larger projects.
- Offering specialized skills or expertise that complement the Prime Contractor's capabilities.
- Demonstrating a willingness to adapt and expand service offerings based on project needs.

Stay Informed About Industry Trends and Opportunities

The construction and contracting industry is constantly evolving, with new regulations, technologies, and best practices emerging regularly. DBEs that stay informed and adapt to industry changes can offer valuable insights and innovative solutions to Prime Contractors. To stay informed, try:

- Subscribing to industry publications and attending relevant training sessions.
- Engaging with trade associations and advocacy groups.
- Participating in professional development programs to enhance skills and expertise.

While DBE certification is a valuable asset, it is not a guarantee of success. Building and maintaining strong relationships with Prime Contractors requires hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence. DBEs must go beyond their certification by consistently delivering high-quality work, demonstrating reliability, and maintaining professionalism in all interactions. By doing so, they can build a solid reputation and foster long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships that drive business growth and sustainability. Ultimately, the key to success lies in trust, performance, and strategic collaboration. By consistently demonstrating value and reliability, DBEs can position themselves as indispensable partners to Prime Contractors, which will help expand their opportunities, increase revenue, and contribute meaningfully to major public and private sector projects.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

IFR: Waiting on Further Guidance from USDOT

ITD is awaiting more guidance from USDOT before we begin to evaluate DBE recertifications. ITD will be only reviewing firms that were certified in Idaho as their home JOC. All firms that are interstate will need to be reevaluated by their home JOC and after that has been completed then they can reapply as an interstate firm with ITD. When we have more information, we will be sending it out to everyone through our B2Gnow system. Stay tuned for updates as we get them.

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL NARRATIVE WORKSHOP

In Response

to the Interim Final Rule (IFR) released on October 3, we have put together a workshop to assist DBEs with writing Personal Narratives that are required as part of the reevaluation process.

Workshop Topics:

- How the Interim Final Rule (IFR) changes DBE certification requirements
- How to reflect on and articulate key personal or professional challenges
- Techniques for identifying and describing impactful life experiences
- How to structure a compelling personal narrative with clarity and purpose
- Ways to connect personal experiences to broader patterns of disadvantage or bias
- Strategies for assessing and communicating the impact of those experiences
- Tips for organizing supporting documentation to strengthen your story

This workshop is provided to you at no cost through Supportive Services of the ITD DBE Program.

Register now!

Choose the date & time that work best for your schedule!

Wed. Dec 10
9:30 a.m. MT

Register Here

Thurs. Dec 11
3:00 p.m. MT

Register Here

Training provided by:
Project Solutions Inc.
celebrating 25 years