

Background

Across the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM), billions of dollars are spent on cleanup work at sites that were part of the nation's nuclear development and weapons programs. The communities where these activities occurred were forever changed and experienced positive and negative impacts as a result of the government's presence.

The government has a responsibility to clean up these sites in a manner that is protective of human health and the environment. But the government also has a role to play in the future of these communities after cleanup activities are complete. As evidenced by DOE's admirable endeavors related to reindustrialization/property transfer, educational outreach programs, and other worthwhile community causes, DOE attempts to be a good partner in all of the affected communities with which it works.

It is in that spirit the EM Site Specific Advisory Board makes the below recommendation related to procurement.

Observations and Comments

There are examples across the complex where communities have benefitted from contractors that are contractually obligated to use a portion of their fee to reinvest in the affected communities. The requirements have included local procurement quotas; internships, scholarships and other educational outreach; charitable giving; and community development grants, among others.

Intent

The intent of this recommendation is for DOE contractors to have a central role in providing assistance to the communities where they work and live. The impacts of the actions by these contractors have not only resulted in positive community progress, but has built healthy relationships among DOE, contractors, and local stakeholders.

Recommendation

The EM SSAB recommends DOE include community investment clauses in ALL contracts related to cleanup work within EM projects. Regardless of the size of a contract, the EM SSAB believes all contractors have an obligation to serve (financially and otherwise) the communities that are impacted by their work.

Further, any subcontractors that perform work at these sites should be evaluated by how they contribute to the local communities and that interaction should be a consideration when subcontractors are chosen to perform work.

As you know, these contracts are highly competitive because they are lucrative for the companies that perform this work. The EM SSAB's desire is to not have overly burdensome or restrictive procedures put in place, but rather to encourage reinvestment into the communities that have shown tremendous loyalty and sacrifice to the mission over the years; by requiring contractors to provide a range of assistance to these host communities.

Summation

Whether it be a scholarship for a high school senior, goods being purchased from a local hardware store, a grant to a local arts project, or resources provided to a local food bank, these types of efforts can make a tremendous impact on a community.

DOE-EM can play a role in these good works by requiring these activities, and ones like them, through all future contracts at EM sites. In short, it is our expectation that DOE ensure contractors provide meaningful assistance and act as good neighbors while they are a part of our various communities.

As always, thank you for your consideration regarding our work.