



## Mentor Protégé Program (MPP) Facts—External

1

### What was the purpose of the legacy DHS Mentor-Protégé Program (MPP)?

Under the authority of Federal Register (68 FR67871, December 4, 2003 (as amended at 71 FR 25775, May 2, 2006), [eCFR :: 48 CFR 3052.219-71 – DHS mentor-protégé program. \(HSAR 3052.219-71\)](#), the legacy DHS MPP's (2003-2023) primary goal was to motivate and encourage large business prime contractor firms to provide mutually beneficial developmental assistance to small business, veteran-owned small business, service-disabled veteran-owned small business, HUBZone small business, small disadvantaged business, and women-owned small business. As a secondary goal of the MPP, the DHS Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) also designed the program to improve the performance of contracts and subcontracts; foster the establishment of long-term business relationships between large prime contractors and small business subcontractors; and strengthen subcontracting opportunities and accomplishments through three incentives specifically for the large business, prime contractor (mentor) participant.



Homeland  
Security

Under the National Defense Authorization Act 2013, civilian federal agencies were required to adhere to an approval process through the Small Business Administration (SBA) under [13 CFR § 125.10 Mentor-Protégé programs of other agencies - Code of Federal Regulations \(ecfr.io\)](#) for creating or maintaining an existing MPP. Section 15 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657r(c)) contains an annual reporting requirement through SBA to Congress ([15 USC 657r: Mentor-protégé programs \(house.gov\)](#)).

## 2 When did the DHS MPP become codified under statutory authority and how is it different from the legacy DHS MPP?

As of December 22, 2022, Subtitle H of title VIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6.U.S.C 451 et seq) amended the DHS Mentor-Protégé Program into law. The official codified legislation, [6 USC 475a: Mentor-Protégé Program](#), adds Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Minority Institutions (MI) as an eligible protégé. It also ended the adherence to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013 ([eCFR: 13 CFR 125.10 – Mentor-Protégé programs of other agencies](#)), which required DHS to seek approval through SBA to continue its MPP every five years. DHS OSDDBU's reporting requirement is routed through the Secretary of DHS to Congress. It is important to note that the codified DHS MPP will continue to help eligible small businesses (protégés) gain capacity and win government contracts through partnerships with large business companies that will fill the mentor role.

## 3 Is there a difference between DHS' MPP and MPPs at other federal agencies?

Yes. There are significant differences between DHS and other federal MPPs. An example of the variation between DHS and the Small Business Administration's (SBA) MPPs is illustrated below.

DHS MPP	SBA MPP
6 USC 475a: DHS Mentor-Protégé Program (12/22)	Small Business Jobs Act 2010 and NDAA 2013 (FY13)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protégé's eligibility based on 19.001, 2.101, 20 U.S.C. § 1061, and 20 U.S.C. § 1067(q)(a)</li> <li>Mentor must be large</li> <li>Joint Venture (JV)</li> <li>Unlimited Mentor-Protégé Agreements (MPAs) for mentor or protégé</li> <li>Streamlined review/approval process</li> <li>Considered complimentary to SBA's MPP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protégé's eligibility based on NAICS Code</li> <li>Mentor may be large or small</li> <li>JV feature</li> <li>No more than three protégés per mentor</li> <li>Training module required.</li> <li>No duplicative MPA w/other federal MPPs</li> </ul>

For more information about existing federal MPPs, visit the following websites:

- [DHS Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [SBA Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Department of Defense Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Department of Transportation Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [NASA Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [Department of Energy Mentor-Protégé Program](#)
- [FAA Mentor-Protégé Program](#)

#### 4 Is the DHS OSDBU accepting applications?

Yes! DHS MPP relaunched on November 1, 2024. We are updating the website with more information on a continual basis. The legacy MPP model officially retires on September 30, 2025.

#### 5 Why are you phasing out the legacy MPP model and what does this mean for those mentor-protégé participants with an existing agreement prior to the March 1, 2023 cessation?

DHS wants to ensure all eligible businesses use the MPP as a department-wide acquisition tool so it is beneficial to both parties. We expanded upon its applicability by monitoring the electronic Subcontracting Reporting System (eSRS) for subcontracting reporting, building a dashboard to capture quantifiable data and adding an annual congressional reporting requirement.

All firms with an active agreement under the legacy DHS MPP were notified by email in April 2023 about their existing mentor-protégé agreement. The DHS MPP Managers provided these existing mentor-protégé participants with sample reporting templates to help them submit their data in a timely manner. Any such firm that did not have the template was instructed to contact [dhsmp@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:dhsmp@hq.dhs.gov).

DHS OSDBU is currently working on redefining some of the terminology used in the Homeland Security Acquisition Regulations (HSAR) and using plain language in the Homeland Security Acquisition Manual (HSAM).

#### 6 What happens if a mentor-protégé team ends their agreement prior to 2025 under the legacy MPP? Is there a penalty?

There is no penalty for voluntarily ending an agreement by the mentor or protégé. However, both parties must submit a report explaining the decision to do so and not furnishing the information may cause disqualification under the codified MPP. If a mentor-protégé team needs a sample template, they can contact the mentor-protégé program managers for a copy or download it from the website.

#### 7 What if the mentor or protégé decide to end the agreement because they did not consider it beneficial?

DHS OSDBU will request additional information in writing. There are checks and balances against undesired actions or consequences, which may result in a decision to deny the acceptance or approval of a future mentor-protégé agreement if it has been determined that such actions are in DHS' best interest. Any such notification will be in writing, signed by the OSDBU Director Designee, and forwarded to the mentor and protégé points of contact.

#### 8 Will DHS OSDBU allow extensions to an existing agreement? If no, is there an opportunity for a mentor-protégé team to be grandfathered into the new MPP?

No. DHS OSDBU will not extend an existing agreement beyond the agreement's expiration date. There is also no opportunity to be grandfathered into the codified MPP. Any mentor-protégé teams interested in participating must apply under its guidelines.

#### 9 Are you adding a joint venture feature to the codified MPP like the SBA MPP?

No. The SBA MPP will continue to be the only federal agency with a joint venture feature.

## 10 What about the DHS Acquisition Community? Are they aware of these upcoming changes? And how will it pertain to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or solicitations?

DHS OSDBU will post an announcement to its internal stakeholders and provide an opportunity for the Acquisition Community to give comments and feedback on an ongoing basis. We also plan to host virtual learning cafés and training sessions. DHS OSDBU will furnish an instructional worksheet document for contract specialists and contracting officers to help provide guidance on implementing MPP evaluation factors in DHS RFPs and/or solicitations. This information is not applicable to mentor-protégé agreements under the legacy MPP. Those agreements will adhere to the current policies under Homeland Security Acquisition Regulation (HSAR) 3052-219-71 and 3052.219-72.

## 11 What are the qualifications for a small business to take part as a protégé in the DHS MPP?

- Be a small business concern as defined in FAR 2.101, including its affiliates, that is independently owned and operated, not dominant in its field of operation, qualified as a small business under the criteria and size standards in [13 C.F.R. part 121](#) (see FAR [19.102](#)) and meets federal size standards in its primary NAICS code.
- Have a proposed mentor relationship prior to applying for the program.
- Ensure the profile in SAM.gov is up to date and accurate.
- Does not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors.

## 12 What are the qualifications for an HBCU/MI to take part as a protégé in the DHS MPP?

- Meet the definition of **Historically Black College or University** (the term “historically Black college or university” has the meaning given the term “part B institution” in 20 U.S.C. § 1061) or **Minority Serving Institution** (the term “minority-serving institution” means an institution of higher education described in 20 U.S.C. § 1067(q)(a)).
- Have a proposed mentor relationship prior to applying for the program.
- Ensure the profile in Sam.gov is up to date and accurate.
- Does not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors.

## 13 What are the qualifications for a large business to take part as a mentor in the DHS MPP?

- Qualify as an other-than-small business according to its NAICS codes<sup>1</sup>.
- Be capable of carrying out its responsibilities to assist the protégé firm under the proposed mentor-protégé agreement.
- Does not appear on the federal list of debarred or suspended contractors, and
- Can impart value to a protégé because of lessons learned and practical experience gained or through its knowledge of general business operations and government contracting.
- Must take part in at **least** three of the 10 monthly Vendor Outreach Sessions as a counselor and identify the dates of participation each fiscal year. **Nonparticipation will result in the termination of the agreement.**

## 14 What are some benefits of the codified DHS MPP for participating protégé businesses?

Protégé businesses can get valuable developmental assistance from their mentors in several areas, including:

- Guidance in internal business management systems, accounting, marketing, manufacturing and strategic planning.

<sup>1</sup> DHS may also consider a prospective mentor as eligible if the mentor is shown as an other-than-small business under the protégé’s primary NAICS code in SAM.gov.

- Financial assistance as equity investments, loans and bonding.
- Contract assistance navigating federal contract bidding, acquisition and procurement process.
- Education about international trade, strategic planning and finding markets.
- Business development, strategy and identifying contracting and partnership opportunities.
- General and administrative assistance, like human resource sharing or security clearance support.

### 15 What are some advantages of the DHS MPP for participating HBCU/MIs?

HBCUs/MIs can help reinforce the DHS' mission of providing a unique service to the government, which includes organizations such as national laboratories associated with federal agencies. An agreement through the MPP may include other underutilized areas such as:

- Expert systems engineering capabilities,
- Program test and evaluation planning and implementation capabilities,
- Expert strategic and tactical studies and analysis capabilities, or
- Other capabilities crucial to the agency mission.

### 16 Will DHS help me find a mentor or provide a listing of large businesses seeking a business relationship with a protégé?

We do not match or recommend companies. Mentor-protégé partnerships occur outside of the DHS MPP, meaning teams are established prior to applying and is not directly linked to a contract opportunity. For anyone seeking a mentor, it would be best to contact a large business with whom you have an established business relationship through prior subcontracting services or other teaming arrangements. If that is not an option, consider attending monthly [Small Business Vendor Outreach Sessions](#) for a 15-minute one-on-one introductory meeting with a large business DHS prime contractor (who participates as a counselor) to inquire about subcontracting opportunities or the DHS MPP.

### 17 If the mentor-protégé team has an existing agreement at another federal agency, can that agreement be transferred into the DHS MPP?

No, a mentor-protégé agreement cannot be transferred to another federal agency. Each federal mentor-protégé program has its own regulations, policies and procedures in support of their agency's mission.

### 18 What is the process and how long does it take to establish an agreement?

The application-agreement process below is considered standard.

- (1) Fill out and submit the application
- (2) Make necessary edits, if requested by the Mentor-Protégé Program Manager (MPPM).
- (3) Receive an email from the MPPM informing you the application is being routed to the designated approving official for signature as an agreement.
- (4) Obtain a congratulatory email notification with an attached copy of the signed agreement and approval letter from the MPPM.
- (5) Schedule a kick off meeting, which is optional/voluntary.

An application with no amendments can be approved by OSDDBU within 10-15 business days.

The timeline for an application requiring corrections will depend upon how quickly the revised version is resubmitted to OSDDBU for review and approval. On average, this process can take up to 45 business days. But if the revisions are considered minor, it can be approved sooner.

### 19 How can I learn more about the Program?

- Visit our website: <https://www.dhs.gov/osdbu/mentor-protege-program>
- Email for general MPP questions: [dhsmp@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:dhsmp@hq.dhs.gov)

## PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

1

### How did the codification revise the DHS MPP?

- Mentor-Protégé Program issued into law as of December 2022.
- Include HBCUs and MIs as protégés.
- Redefine mentor and protégé incentives (large business with HBCU/MI vs. large business to small business only)
- Incorporate clearer defined evaluation criteria guidelines in solicitations.

2

### How will DHS evaluate that a proposed mentor shows a moral character to qualify for the DHS MPP?

DHS may determine a prospective mentor does not possess moral character upon receipt of any credible information, showing that the applicant's mentor lacks business integrity. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Business credit reports for unpaid federal obligations and civil judgments affecting business integrity (e.g., fraud, breaches of trust, embezzlement, false claims and false statements).
- Any other materials from the applicant or third parties affecting character (including the firm's websites and other website information on the firm and the individuals involved in the firm).

3

### How will DHS evaluate the mentor-protégé agreement to determine that the protégé has significant experience?

The protégé must show, business management experience of at least one year performing or two years managing work in its primary NAICS code through work performed as a prime or subcontractor on federal, state, or commercial contracts, or through the owner..

If the protégé is an HBCU or MSI, DHS OSDBU will verify if they are registered in SAM.gov. We will then research existing DHS HBCU/MSI contracting initiatives for past performance or experience.

4

### Has DHS eliminated the requirement that a mentor-protégé must re-apply into the program after submitting a 36th month Lessons Learned Report?

No. If a mentor-protégé team wants to continue, they must reapply after they submit the 36th month report for review. However, a mentor-protégé team's failure to complete its reporting requirements may also result in termination and ineligibility. We will not grant an extension for an existing mentor-protégé agreement.

5

### How many days after its mentor-protégé agreement was declined can a protégé request reconsideration?

A mentor-protégé team can submit a new (or revised) mentor-protégé agreement to DHS at any point after 60 days from DHS' final decision declining a mentor-protégé relationship.