
Understanding and Preparing a Utilization Plan

Presented by Reginald Lampkin
Supplier Diversity BEP/VBP Manager
Illinois Department of Innovation and
Technology (DoIT)

For BEP and VBP Compliance
(v25.1)

Utilization Plan Part I: Bidder/Offeree Signed Commitment

Purpose: To confirm that the bidder understands the BEP/VBP requirements and is committed to meeting the participation goals set in the solicitation.

Steps:

- o Identify the percentage of the contract that will be performed by BEP and/or VBP-certified vendors.
- o Indicate whether the bidder is self-performing or using subcontractors.
- o Fill in the contact details and sign the commitment.

Utilization Plan Part I: Bidder/Offeree Signed Commitment

The undersigned bidder/offeree submits this Utilization Plan (U-Plan) as part of its bid or offer in accordance with the requirements of bid solicitation number B-123456 the requirements of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and/or Veterans Business Program (VBP). The solicitation contains a goal that 30 % of the value of the contract will be performed by BEP certified vendors as defined by the Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI). The solicitation contains a goal that 3 % of the value of the contract will be performed by Veteran Business Program (VBP) certified vendors as defined by CEI.

The U-Plan consists of the following four parts, to be completed and returned as instructed in this Commitment. No alterations or substitutions of this U-Plan will be permitted. A U-Plan must be completed and submitted for any assigned BEP and/or VBP goal:

- Part I: Bidder/Offeree Signed Commitment
- Part II: Subcontractor Participation Agreement(s)
- Part III: Good Faith Effort (GFE) (Action Checklist, Contact Log and Supporting Documentation)
- Part IV: U-Plan Terms and Conditions (Terms and Conditions apply to all available checkbox options below.)

The undersigned bidder/offeree acknowledges that (1) the bidder/offeree has read, understands, and agrees to all BEP/VBP policies, rules and procedures as defined in the Terms and Conditions in Part IV of this U-Plan and (2) the bidder/offeree hereby affirms (select appropriate option(s) below):

- ☐ Bidder/offeree is a BEP/VBP certified firm registered in at least one of the solicitation's NIGP Code(s) and will fully meet the goal through self-performance. (If checked, submit this signed Part I Commitment only.)
- ☒ Bidder/offeree has identified BEP/VBP certified subcontractor(s) to fully meet the assigned BEP/VBP goal. Only BEP/VBP certified subcontractors registered in at least one of the NIGP Code(s) identified in the solicitation may be used to meet the BEP/VBP goal. Subcontractors that are dually BEP and VBP certified may only be counted towards either goal, not both. (If checked, complete and submit the signed Part I Commitment and signed Part II Subcontracting Participation Agreement(s) (PA). A signed PA must be submitted for each subcontractor.)
- ☐ Bidder/offeree cannot fully meet the goal but has submitted a Good Faith Effort (GFE) and hereby requests a waiver or reduction of the goal to _____%, (If checked, submit the signed Part I Commitment, completed Part III Good Faith Effort, and if requesting a reduction, the signed Part II Subcontractor Participation Agreement(s).)

Steps:

- Identify the percentage of the contract that will be performed by BEP and/or VBP-certified vendors.
- Indicate whether the bidder is self-performing or using subcontractors.
- Fill in the contact details and sign the commitment.

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understand that compliance with all tenets of the U-Plan is mandated, and this U-Plan will become a part of the contract, if awarded. Failure to carry out the requirements of this U-Plan is considered a material breach of the resulting contract, which may result in the termination of the contract or such other remedy as the Procuring Institution deems appropriate.

Bidder/offeror Name and d/b/a: Apex Integrated Solutions, Inc. (d/b/a ApexIS)

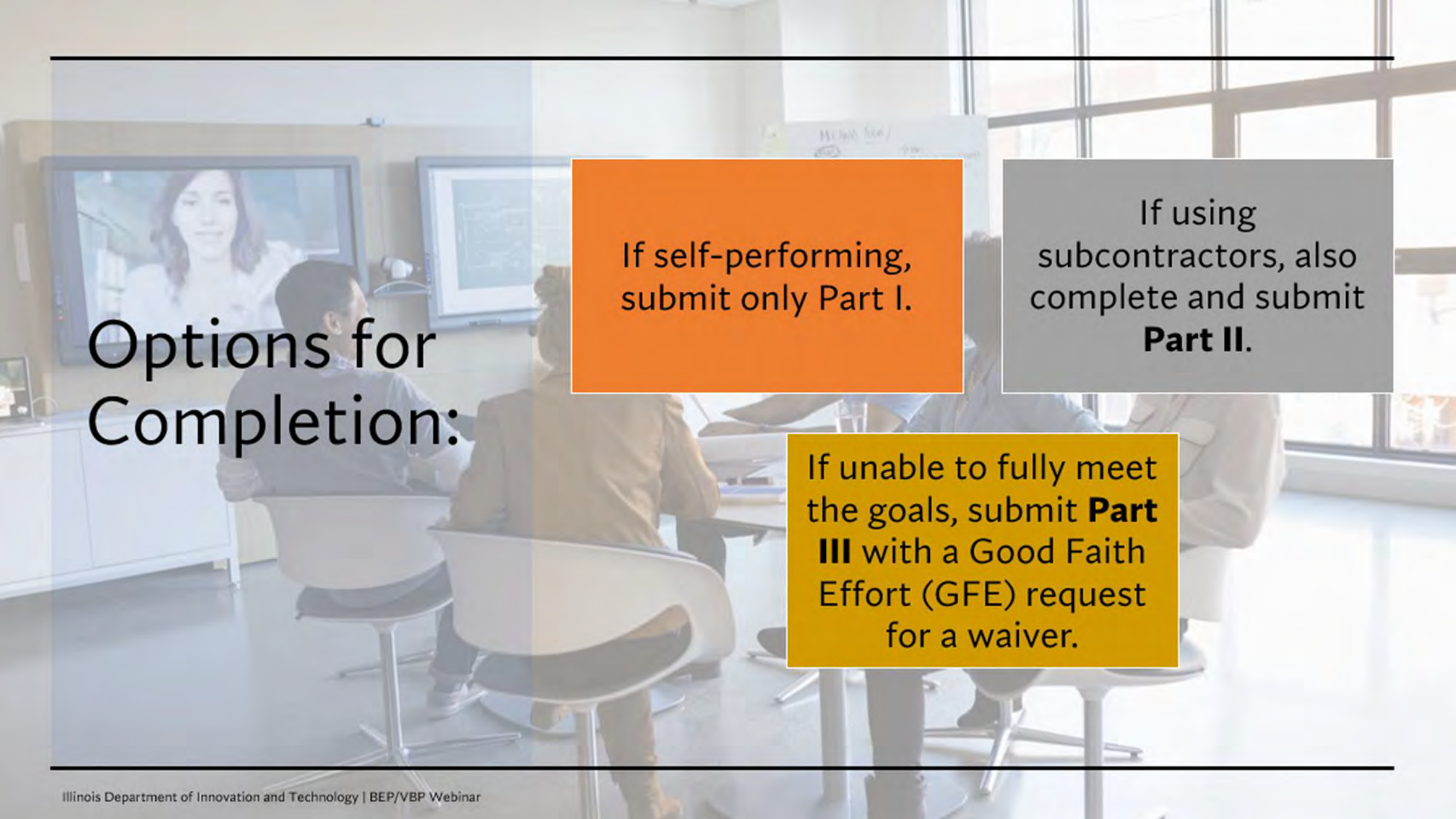
Signature: Jordan M. Taylor Print: Jordan M. Taylor

Title: Vice President, Contracts & Compliance Email Address: compliance@apexis.com

Telephone: (217) 555-8821 Date: October 21, 2025

Utilization Plan Part I: Bidder/Offeror Signed Commitment (cont...)

Purpose: *To confirm that the bidder understands the BEP/VBP requirements and is committed to meeting the participation goals set in the solicitation.*



Options for Completion:

If self-performing,
submit only **Part I**.

If using
subcontractors, also
complete and submit
Part II.

If unable to fully meet
the goals, submit **Part
III** with a Good Faith
Effort (GFE) request
for a waiver.

Utilization Plan Part II:
Subcontracting Participation Agreement

Part II: Subcontracting Participation Agreement

Purpose: To document agreements with BEP/VBP certified subcontractors who will help meet the contract goals.

Steps:

- o Provide detailed information about both the prime vendor and the BEP/VBP certified subcontractor(s).
- o Specify the scope of work, NIGP Code(s), and the percentage of the contract that will be handled by the subcontractor. (see: [How to Develop a Statement of Work](#))
- o Ensure both the bidder and subcontractor sign the agreement.
- o Each subcontractor must have their own signed agreement.

Instructions: The bidder/offeree is required to submit a separate, signed and fully completed Participation Agreement from each BEP certified vendor or VBP certified vendor. Once signed and submitted with the bid/offeree, this Participation Agreement, along with the other Parts of this U-Plan, will become a mandated part of the contract, if awarded. The bidder/offeree shall not prohibit or otherwise limit the BEP/VBP certified vendor(s) from providing subcontractor quotes to other potential bidders/offerees.

Solicitation Name: Infrastructure Support Services Solicitation Number: B-123456

Name of Prime vendor: Apex Integrated Solutions, Inc. (d/b/a ApexIS)
Address: 2000 Meridian Parkway, Suite 210
City: Springfield
State: IL Zip: 62704
Telephone: (217) 555-8821 Fax:
Email: compliance@apexis.com

Bidder/offeree's Contact responsible for compliance with this Participation Agreement:
Morgan Lee, Supplier Diversity Coordinator

Name of BEP/VBP Certified Vendor: BrightPath Data Consulting, LLC
Type of Certified Vendor: ☒ BEP ☐ VBP
Address: 7450 Westhaven Drive
City: Chicago
State: IL Zip: 60661
Telephone: (312) 555-0472 Fax:
Email: info@brightpathdata.com

BEP/VBP Vendor's Contact responsible for compliance with this Participation Agreement:
Colin Vance

Type of Agreement: ☒ Services ☐ Supplies ☐ Both Services and Supplies

(a) Proposed percentage of contract to be performed by the BEP/VBP Certified Vendor 30%
NOTE: The bidder/offeree must indicate the percentage of the estimated contract award that will be subcontracted to the certified BEP/VBP Vendor.

(b) Anticipated start date of the Certified BEP/VBP Vendor: 1/2/2026

Part II (c):

The dates should match the contract start and end dates.

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(c) This participation agreement shall have a term date from 1/2/26 to 1/1/31, with a period of 5 years and 0 months, including renewals, change orders or extensions to the underlying contract.

How To Develop a Statement of Work

Clarity is Key:

Detailed Description: Begin with a comprehensive breakdown of the subcontractor's responsibilities. Be explicit about the tasks they will perform, the materials they will provide, and the expected outcomes. Avoid vague language.

Here's a basic template:

- 1. Scope of Work for [Subcontractor Name] - [Project Name]
- 2. Subcontractor's Scope:
 - o [NIGP Code and Description]
 - o [Detailed list of tasks and responsibilities]
 - o [Materials to be provided by the subcontractor]
 - o [Reference to relevant drawings and specifications]
- 3. Deliverables:
 - o [List of specific, measurable deliverables]
 - o [Acceptance criteria for each deliverable]

Remember: A well-defined scope of work is crucial for successful subcontractor management. It helps prevent misunderstandings, ensures everyone is aligned on expectations, and minimizes the potential for disputes.

(d) Description of work to be performed or goods/equipment to be provided by the BEP/VBP certified vendor. This description must include identified National Institute for Public Procurement (NIGP) Code(s) in the solicitation documentation. All Participation Agreements shall be subject to Agency/PIHE approval. Any changes involving or affecting the identified BEP/VBP certified vendor, scope(s) of work and NIGP Code(s) will not be permitted without notification to the soliciting Agency/PIHE and BEP/VBP Compliance, in writing, and approval of the soliciting Agency/PIHE. (If more space is needed to fully describe BEP/VBP certified firm's proposed scope of work and/or payment schedule, attach additional sheets)

The BEP/VBP subcontractor must be certified in at least one of the NIGP Code(s) identified in the solicitation for goal credit.

Statement of Work: Enter specific NIGP Code(s) including a detailed description of work to be performed or goods/equipment to be provided by the BEP/VBP certified vendor.

Statement of work

This is an example of a detailed SOW that include the required details listed in Part II (d).

- *Required NIGP Codes*
- *Detailed Tasks/Deliverables*
- *Commercially Useful Function (CUF)*

BrightPath Data Consulting, LLC will perform specialized **data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, and reporting services** as a BEP-certified subcontractor under the IT Infrastructure Support Services contract. All services will be performed in compliance with State of Illinois IT security standards and Business Enterprise Program requirements.

Assigned NIGP Codes:

920-45 – Software Maintenance/Support Services (Including support for client software related to network, database, or data analytics systems)

918-29 – Computer Software Consulting (Including database analysis, programming, and implementation)

Detailed Tasks:

Network Performance Analytics (NIGP 920-45)

- Collect, clean, and analyze network data from statewide systems.
- Generate monthly uptime and performance reports supporting SLA compliance.

Data Migration Support (NIGP 918-29)

- Provide consulting for migration of legacy databases to virtual infrastructure.
- Ensure compliance with Illinois Information Security Policy.

Helpdesk Metrics Dashboard (NIGP 918-29)

- Build and maintain Power BI dashboards summarizing response times, ticket volumes, and efficiency.
- Automate data refresh schedules for State accessibility.

Training & Knowledge Transfer (NIGP 918-29)

- Conduct two sessions for State IT staff on analytics tool use and data governance.
- Provide instructional materials and job aids for sustainability.

- Complete SOW

- Match NIGP Codes to actual work

- Define clear, measurable deliverables

Summary and Best Practices

Important Notes:

The subcontractor must be certified under the appropriate NIGP Code(s) relevant to the contract.



Agreements become part of the contract and must be submitted with the bid.

Prime's Role in a BEP Goal Contract

If the prime vendor is **not BEP-certified**, they still have a **responsibility to meet or make Good Faith Efforts to meet** the BEP goal established for the solicitation.

They do this by **identifying and committing to BEP-certified subcontractors** in their **U-Plan (Part I & II)**.

Those subcontractors' **certification codes (NIGP)** must align with the **scope of work** they are performing.

Example: A non-BEP prime bidding on an IT contract with NIGP codes 918-29 and 920-45 must select BEP-certified subcontractors whose certifications include **those same or relevant codes** (e.g., IT consulting, software support).

What Counts Toward the BEP Goal



Only **the value of the work performed by BEP-certified subcontractors**, and **only for services under their certified NIGP codes**, counts toward the BEP goal.



If a BEP firm is hired to do work **outside** its certified codes, **that work will not count** toward the prime's BEP participation percentage.

Certification Timing Still Applies



Even though the **non-BEP prime** doesn't need BEP certification:



The **subcontractors** they list **must be certified** at the **time of bid submission**.



“Pending” BEP certification applications are **not acceptable** for meeting the goal.



CEI will confirm certification status and NIGP alignment from the **Certified Vendor Directory**.

If the Non-BEP Prime Cannot Meet the Goal

They must:

Complete **Section III (Good Faith Efforts)** of the U-Plan, and

Document **specific outreach and negotiations** with BEP-certified vendors (names, dates, communications).

This demonstrates compliance even when the full goal is not met.

Completing Section III of the U-Plan: Good Faith Efforts

A woman with blonde hair in a bun, wearing glasses and a blue long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a desk in an office. She is looking at a computer monitor. The desk is cluttered with various items, including a printer, a calculator, and some papers. The background shows other office desks and equipment. The image is dimmed to serve as a background for the text.

Good Faith Effort Procedures

If you cannot meet the participation goals:

Submit your U-Plan and Participation Agreements with a full or partial waiver request.



Demonstrate the steps taken to include BEP/VBP vendors and why it wasn't feasible.

Purpose of Section III



- SECTION III DOCUMENTS GOOD FAITH EFFORTS (GFE) WHEN BEP/VBP GOALS CANNOT BE FULLY MET.



- SHOWS REAL, DOCUMENTED ATTEMPTS TO ENGAGE BEP-CERTIFIED FIRMS.



- FAILURE TO SHOW ADEQUATE GFE MAY RESULT IN NON-COMPLIANCE OR BID REJECTION.

Utilization Plan Part I: Bidder/Offeror Signed Commitment- Good Faith Effort

Purpose: To confirm that the bidder is requesting a waiver or reduction of the goal. For this example, Apex is requesting a Waiver

Steps:

- o Identify the percentage of the contract that will be performed by BEP and/or VBP-certified vendors.
- o Select the third option
- o Fill in the contact details and sign the commitment.

Utilization Plan Part I: Bidder/Offeror Signed Commitment

The undersigned bidder/offeror submits this Utilization Plan (U-Plan) as part of its bid or offer in accordance with the requirements of bid solicitation number B-123456 the requirements of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and/or Veterans Business Program (VBP). The solicitation contains a goal that 30 % of the value of the contract will be performed by BEP certified vendors as defined by the Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI). The solicitation contains a goal that 5 % of the value of the contract will be performed by Veteran Business Program (VBP) certified vendors as defined by CEI.

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Part IV: U-Plan Terms and Conditions (Terms and Conditions apply to all available checkbox options below.)

The undersigned bidder/offeror acknowledges that (1) the bidder/offeror has read, understands, and agrees to all BEP/VBP policies, rules and procedures as defined in the Terms and Conditions in Part IV of this U-Plan and (2) the bidder/offeror hereby affirms (select appropriate option(s) below):

- ☐ Bidder/offeror is a BEP/VBP certified firm registered in at least one of the solicitation's NAICS Code(s) and will fully meet the goal through self-performance. (If checked, submit this signed Part I Commitment only.)
- ☐ Bidder/offeror has identified BEP/VBP certified subcontractor(s) to fully meet the assigned BEP/VBP goal. Only BEP/VBP certified subcontractors registered in at least one of the NAICS Code(s) identified in the solicitation may be used to meet the BEP/VBP goal. Subcontractors that are dually BEP and VBP certified may only be counted towards either goal, not both. (If checked, complete and submit the signed Part I Commitment and signed Part II Subcontracting Participation Agreement(s) (PA). A signed PA must be submitted for each subcontractor.)
- ☒ Bidder/offeror cannot fully meet the goal but has submitted a Good Faith Effort (GFE) and hereby requests a waiver or reduction of the goal to 0 %. (If checked, submit the signed Part I Commitment, completed Part III Good Faith Effort, and if requesting a reduction, the signed Part II Subcontractor Participation Agreement(s).)

Part III: Good Faith Efforts to Achieve Goal

Purpose: *If the vendor cannot meet the participation goals, this section is used to document all attempts to include BEP/VBP certified vendors.*

Steps:

- o Complete the **Action Checklist** on page 7-8 detailing efforts to find and engage BEP/VBP certified vendors.
- o Fill out the **Good Faith Effort Contact Log** to record all communications (emails, phone calls, etc.) with potential subcontractors.
- o Provide supporting documents, such as copies of emails, meeting notes, and follow-ups.

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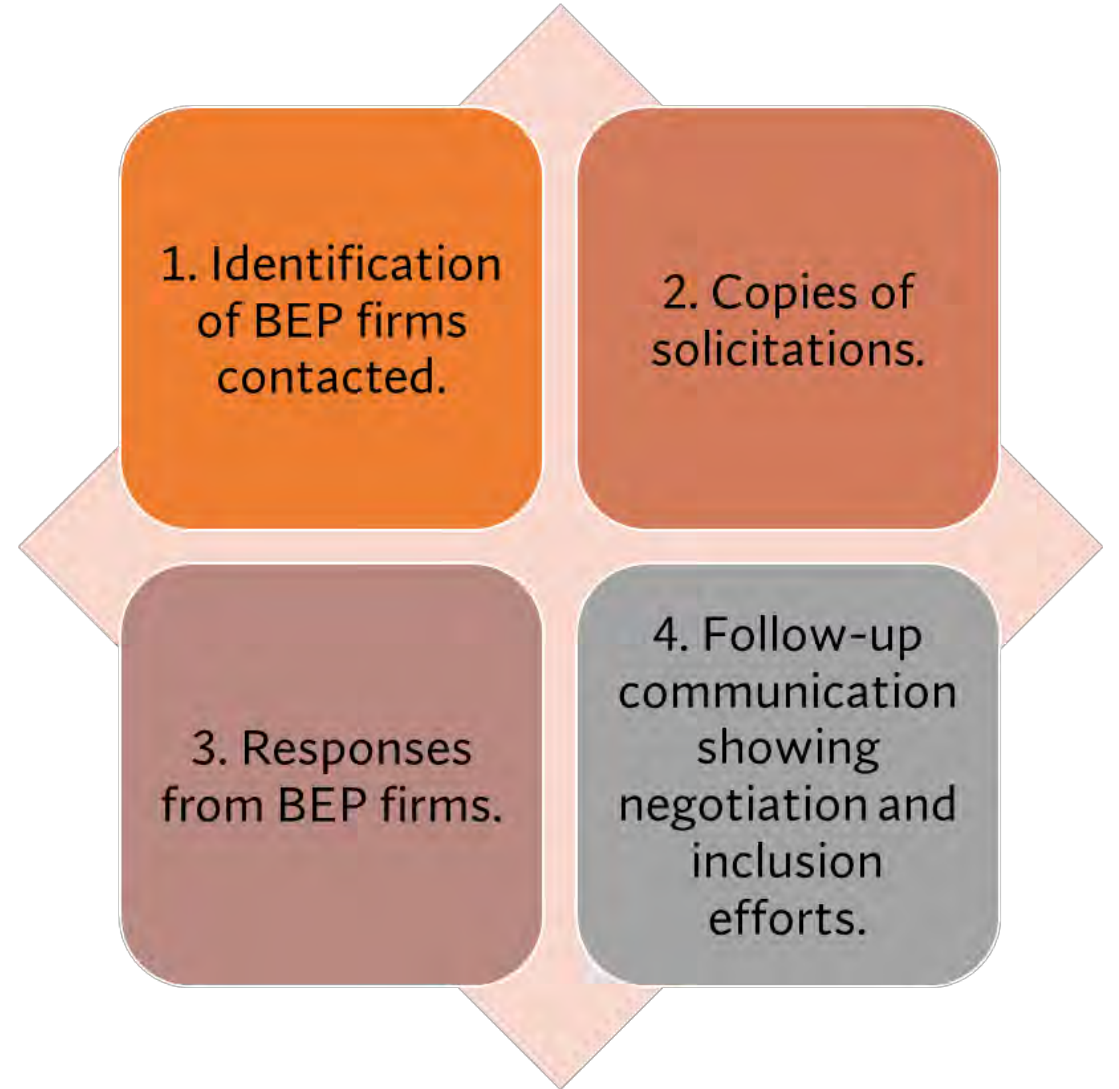
GOOD FAITH EFFORTS CONTACT LOG

SOLICITATION NAME: IT Infrastructure Support Services
SOLICITATION NUMBER: B-123456
NAME OF PRIME VENDOR: Apex Integrated Solutions, Inc. (d/b/a ApexIS)

PERIOD COVERED
11/12/25 to 11/12/25

Certified BEP/VBP Vendor Name	Name of Person Contacted	Date	Contact Method: Email, Fax, U.S. Postal Mail, Phone, Left Message	Narrative Scope of Work including Required NIGP Code(s)	Reason Agreement Was Not Reached	Follow-up Notes
QuantumEdge Technologies, LLC	Andre Collins	11/12/2025	acollins@quantumedge.tech	R05-45 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Declined to participate due to full project workload	
BrightWave Analytics, Inc.	Laura Kim	11/12/2025	lkim@brightwaveanalytics.com	R05-45 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Unable to meet the technical requirements for the	
NextPath Systems Group	Rahul Desai	11/12/2025	rdesai@nextpathsystems.com	R05-45 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Submitted a quote, but total proposed cost exceeded	
Vertex Cyber Defense Solutions	Jordan Lewis	11/12/2025	jlewis@vertexcyberdefense.com	Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, and report	Expressed interest but required a minimum labor	
SkyBridge IT Consulting, Inc.	Natalie Ortiz	11/12/2025	nortiz@skybridgeit.com	R15-09 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Declined after review of the available scope (system	
BlueLogic Software Design, LLC	Marcus Reed	11/12/2025	mreed@bluelogicsoft.com	R15-09 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Provided a proposal; however, the company could	
InnovaCore Digital Solutions	Tina Hu	11/12/2025	thu@innovacoredigital.com	R05-45 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Indicated lack of current resources for mobile app	
NorthPeak Data Systems	Samuel Okafor	11/12/2025	sokafor@northpeakdata.com	R15-09 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Won the Powerball Jackpot	hoping for a gift
EchoPoint Cloud Services, LLC	Kendra Vasquez	11/12/2025	kvasquez@echopointcloud.com	R15-09 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Initially interested, but withdrew due to insurance a	
CyberNova Consulting Group	David Nguyen	11/12/2025	dnguyen@cybernovaconsulting.com	R05-45 Data analysis, infrastructure monitoring, an	Qualified for cybersecurity audit tasks, but Prime an	

Key Elements Required in Section III



Checklist of Actions:

Use

Use the Illinois Supplier Diversity Management Portal to find certified vendors.

Contact

Contact vendors well in advance, allowing at least 10 business days for responses.

Offer

Offer subcontracting opportunities where feasible and negotiate in good faith.

Assist

Assist vendors in overcoming obstacles (e.g., bonding, supplies) to encourage participation.

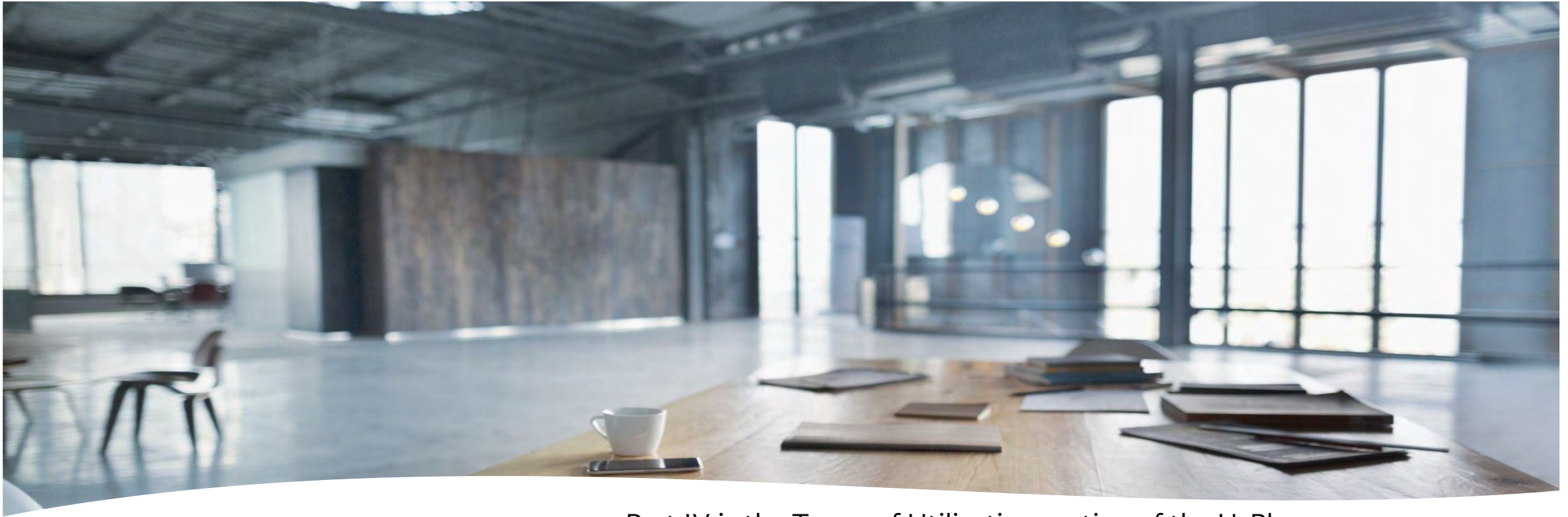
- Section III demonstrates diversity and compliance commitment.

- Documentation prevents bid disqualification.

- Be proactive, transparent, and specific.

- Create equitable opportunities for BEP firms.

Best Practices



Understanding Part IV of the U-Plan

- Part IV is the Terms of Utilization section of the U-Plan.
- It explains how BEP participation is verified, maintained, and protected.
- Once signed, it becomes a binding part of your contract.

Think of it as the rulebook for keeping your BEP credit secure.

Understanding Part IV of the U-Plan continued

Why Part IV Matters

- - Defines the rules for substitutions, payments, and reporting.
- - Ensures BEP subcontractors perform a Commercially Useful Function (CUF).
- - Protects both Primes and BEP firms by clarifying responsibilities.
- - Non-compliance can lead to loss of BEP credit, withheld payments, or breach of contract.
- Examples:
 - Subcontractor replaced – CEI must approve the substitution first.
 - Payment delays – Part IV defines reporting and verification procedures.
 - Scope changes – BEP commitments must be updated compliantly.

NIGP Code Revision Request Form

A non-self-performing prime vendor may request to use different NIGP codes to identify BEP/VBP firms that can perform a commercially useful function under the resulting contract, as defined in the U-Plan, through direct participation via the NIGP Code Revision Request Form (v.23.1).

If a BEP/VBP firm not certified in all the solicitation's NIGP codes wishes to self-perform, it must submit a revision request to the purchasing agency/PIHE using the NIGP Code Revision Request Form at least 7 calendar days before the bid opening date and obtain approval. Using the NIGP Code Revision Request Form, a self-performing certified BEP/VBP prime vendor not registered in all the codes originally listed in the solicitation may submit a revision request if it can perform a commercially useful function under the resulting contract through direct participation, as defined in the U-Plan.

NIGP Code Revision Request Form continued...

The agency must document its approval or disapproval on the NIGP Code Revision Request Form and send the completed form to the requesting vendor and CEI via the CEI.BEP.Compliance@illinois.gov email address at least 2 calendar days before the bid opening date. An agency cannot let that date pass without acting on a revision request.



Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion NIGP Code Revision Request Form

Per CEI Notice 2023.3, prime vendors without Business Enterprise Program (BEP) or Veteran Business Program (VBP) certifications must use certified BEP and/or VBP subcontractors registered in the solicitation's NIGP codes unless they obtain revision approval from the purchasing entity before the bid opening date. Self-performing certified BEP/VBP prime vendors must be registered in all of the solicitation's NIGP codes unless they obtain revision approval from the purchasing entity before the bid opening date.

Section I – General Information (to be completed by the requesting vendor)

Vendor Name:	
Purchasing Entity:	Select an item from the list.
Bulletin Reference Number:	
Solicitation Title:	
Solicitation Description:	
Current BEP Goal Percentage:	
Current VBP Goal Percentage:	

Section II – Vendor Justification (to be completed by the requesting vendor)

Are you certified in the BEP or VBP programs?
Select an item from the list.
Select the appropriate option:
Select an item from the list.
List the NIGP codes specified in the solicitation:
Which NIGP codes are you currently registered in?
Select the type of NIGP code revision:
Select an item from the list.
List the NIGP Codes that should be added. If this field is not applicable, enter "N/A".

NIGP Code Revisions Before Bid Opening

STEP	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
1	A purchasing entity decides to revise the NIGP codes before the bid opens.	Purchasing Entity
2	The BEP Compliance Unit recalculates the BEP goal based on new NIGP codes.	BEP Compliance Unit
3	The purchasing entity publishes a notification of the revised codes and goal percentage.	Purchasing Entity
4	If the bid opening date is less than 7 days away , the purchasing entity extends the deadline to allow vendors to comply.	Purchasing Entity
5	Vendors must use the revised NIGP codes in their Utilization Plan and Good Faith Effort documentation.	Prime Vendors & Subcontractors

Contract Compliance

Purpose: After a contract is awarded, maintaining compliance with the U-Plan and Participation Agreements is critical.

Guidelines:

Regularly report progress to the agency.

Any modification of subcontractors must be approved in writing.

Failure to comply with these guidelines can lead to contract termination.

Summary of Key Takeaways



Understanding the purpose and structure of the Utilization Plan (U-Plan)



Completing Part I – Bidder/Offeror Signed Commitment



Completing Part II – Subcontracting Participation Agreement



Writing a clear and detailed Statement of Work



Ensuring Commercially Useful Function (CUF) compliance



Documenting Good Faith Efforts when goals cannot be met



Understanding Part IV – Terms of Utilization and post-award compliance



Best practices for vendors to remain BEP/VBP compliant

Q&A / Thank You

Thank you for attending today's webinar.

We will open the floor for questions.