



## NAMC UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

**Question: What are the barriers, from your perspective, in NAMC members being successful in getting work from general contractors?**

“From my perspective, I think helping our NAMC members become *certified as MBE/DBE* contractors is a start, then it is using that certification to market to local general contractors. Many local area contractors are looking to work with certified MBE/DBE subcontractors on large projects to meet project goals.”

“Not reading and *understanding the contract(s)*. I think often times our member are happy to get work but they forget about the small things like reading wording and catching harmful language in the contract.”

“Personally, after attending some of the courses, I would say they *aren't prepared for the scope, pace, bookkeeping*, that is needed to be a sub on a big project. Maybe it's just the contractors I encountered, but there was a general lack of understanding of what is needed in order to be successful at a much larger scale than they are operating at.”

Example: “A small, DBE certified landscaping contractor is hired to install irrigation and landscaping on a public works project. They do a great job with landscaping, and the general contractor wants them to do more work, such as performing concrete curb on the project, something the subcontractor has never done. The general contractor is willing to essentially give them more work because it helps the general fulfill the DBE goals on the project. The issue is that the subcontractor is really good at landscaping, but maybe not curb. Also, the subcontractor has committed its crews to going to work on another project. But excited about the opportunity, the subcontractor agrees to take on the curb despite not having the experience or the workforce available. In some instances, the subcontractor may be just fine taking on additional work that is outside their comfort zone. They are able to hire the right workers to perform the work. But in many instances, it causes *too much growth, too quickly*, and the subcontractor ends up losing money on the project or gets a bad reputation because they didn't perform it correctly.”

“Everyone wants to grow their business, but all contractors should be *intentional about how they grow their businesses*.”

“This game is all about *relationships*. Members need to make relationships with whom they are working with. Relationships, relationships, relationships!”

“We need *mentorship and education* to ensure that our MBE and DBE contractors can be successful on projects, so smaller contractors can gain the experience to grow their businesses



and perform more work. We should have workshops on *smart growth* too, so subcontractors don't get out over their skis before their ready."

"Some curriculum lines to consider: 1) training on how to bid with the major public agency *bidding processes*, like with Metro - every agency has its own process; 2) how to bid and work with large GCs-the training Erin did on how to work with Andersen was invaluable; 3) training for selected upcoming known public projects-agencies have multiyear capital construction programs and schedules, again like with Metro and Prosper."

"I understand that this is tough due to low bid, capacity, scopes... but are they examining what is driving the cost more than others? Members need to understand WHY they didn't get the work. Ask the question, who got it and what was the bid? Then evaluate their quotes to determine if their margin was too high, are they buying materials from Home Depot or a lumber mill? Did they understand the scope correctly, how much manpower do they have (do you have 8 guys, instead of the right size crew, perhaps 5) is it too much for the scope of work?"

"*Relationships* are key to any job. The changes in NAMC University courses seem more applicable to developing and growing member capacity... however, relationships with the GCs are what will get members the work. To be critical and direct, most lack understanding of how to bid, I often see certifications expiring, or not yet obtained. Operationally, members need to ensure that all components are in place in order to be ready to take on opportunities.

"Don't have the expectation that the courses will lead to a seat at the table. The process entails Building Blocks – over time. Opportunities will come over time and be a process in getting there. Members need to be committed for the long haul."

