



# **CONTRACTORS' HANDBOOK**

**A guide to doing business  
with the City of Los Angeles**

**City of Los Angeles  
Department of Public Works**



**September 2008**

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Doing Business with the City of Los Angeles**

### **Who and what is the City of Los Angeles?**

The City of Los Angeles is a vast network of 42 departments and more than 40,000 employees working to serve the stakeholders of the second largest city in America. The City provides essential services such as water, electricity, fire, police, and public infrastructure construction and maintenance. Many residents are surprised to learn that the City of Los Angeles also includes the Port of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and the Los Angeles World Airports (Los Angeles International, Van Nuys, Palmdale, and Ontario Airports).

The City of Los Angeles has a Mayor-Council form of government led by elected officials and appointed officers. A Mayor, City Controller, and City Attorney are elected by city residents every four years. Fifteen

City Councilmembers represent the local districts in the City's legislative body. The departments and bureaus are headed by general managers, boards or commissions appointed by the Mayor, and subject to confirmation by the City Council.

The city encompasses an area of more than 465 square miles, 7,366 miles of streets, a population of nearly four million, and thousands of publicly owned structures of various types.

### **Who and what isn't the City?**

The City of Los Angeles is one of many local government entities in Southern California. Some of these organizations, such as the County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and Los Angeles Community College District, may overlap geographically with the City of Los Angeles, but they are in fact separate, distinct entities with their own governmental bodies and contracting authorities. There are also a number of neighboring communities that are sometimes assumed to be part of the City of Los Angeles. These areas, such as Santa Monica, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Glendale, Inglewood, and Burbank, are full-fledged, independent cities.

Companies wishing to do business with multiple agencies should contact each one separately.

### **The City Wants to Do Business with You**

Just look around and you will see City employees filling potholes, operating transit lines, building fire stations, managing after school programs, and keeping the streets safe from crime. In providing these and other public services, the City of Los Angeles procures supplies and equipment and issues contracts for professional services and construction projects. In fact, these purchases total billions of dollars every year. That's billions of dollars that your business can compete for!

The City of Los Angeles encourages you to consider public contracting as a way to increase your revenues and grow your business. This guide has been prepared to serve as an introduction to the City contracting process and a reference for the future. You will also find contact information for City contracting staff and other resources.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Navigating the City:**

### **Who Awards What Contracts?**

#### **Contracts 101**

Competitive bidding is the primary method for obtaining solicitations. In general, solicitations will be requested through a document called a Request for Bid (RFB), Request for Proposal (RFP), or Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Interested businesses should respond to the document by following the instructions detailed therein.

Many City contracts will include opportunities for businesses to work as prime contractors (i.e., contracting directly with the City) or as subcontractors (i.e., contracting directly with the prime or another subcontractor to perform a distinct portion of the contract). Subcontracts enable smaller firms to participate in large City contracts such as construction projects.

Although the City's needs vary from day to day, contracts with the City of Los Angeles fall into one of three general categories: procurement, construction, and personal services.

#### **Procurement Contracts**

The Department of General Services (GSD) is the purchasing agent for all City Council controlled departments within the City. GSD's mission is to procure all supplies, equipment and materials in a cost-effective, efficient and timely manner. All qualified suppliers are afforded an equal opportunity to do business with the City of Los Angeles. Awards are made to the lowest, responsive and most responsible bidder meeting specifications, and on the basis of the lowest ultimate cost to the City. Purchases are made through both written bids (for purchases over \$1,000) and telephone bids. For more information about requirements and instructions for submitting a quote, visit [www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/sms.htm](http://www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/sms.htm).

#### **Construction Contracts**

The Department of Public Works, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA-LA), Community Development Department, Department of Recreation and Parks, Housing Authority, and Housing Department all award construction contracts. These

contract opportunities vary substantially and include building construction, sewer work, road repair, and street lighting, to name a few. Many construction contracts also include opportunities for both prime contractors and subcontractors. The scope, specifications, and requirements for each project will be detailed in the RFB. The primary factor in determining the award of construction contracts is the lowest responsible and responsive bid.

### ***Personal Services Contracts***

Almost all City departments award personal services contracts. These contracts encompass services such as legal, medical, marketing, food and beverage, and consulting. Like construction contracts, many personal services contracts offer opportunities for both prime contractors and subcontractors. In awarding personal services contracts, consideration is given to a number of factors including total cost, expertise, experience, and compliance with administrative requirements.

The Port of Los Angeles, Los Angeles World Airports, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power also award construction, procurement, and personal services contracts. For more information on

contracting with these specific departments, please refer to Chapter 5.

### **Administrative Requirements**

Businesses and vendors that contract with the City must comply with federal, state, and local laws and requirements. For example, the City of Los Angeles requires compliance with its Equal Benefits Ordinance and Living Wage Ordinance. However, not all types of contracts will require the same administrative obligations. The specific requirements for each contract will be listed in the RFP, RFQ, or RFB. For more information, visit the Bureau of Contract Administration's Web site at [bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm), or call (213) 847-1922.

### **Registering Your Business**

The City requires that every person engaged in any trade, occupation, profession or other means of livelihood in the City of Los Angeles obtain a Business Tax Registration Certificate (BTRC), and pay the required business tax. This may also apply to firms or contractors located outside city boundaries who perform work within city limits. Some exemptions are

available for some new and small businesses. For more information, contact the Office of Finance at [www.lacity.org/finance](http://www.lacity.org/finance) or (213) 473-5901.

## **Chapter 3**

### ***Knowledge is Power: Learn About Opportunities***

It is important that you know right away when a contracting opportunity with the City of Los Angeles is available to you. There are numerous ways to learn about bid openings with the City of Los Angeles. Be the first to find out!

#### **The Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network (LA BAVN)**

You'll find it all online, accessible from your office or home at [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org). You can check this site for contracting opportunities from all City departments any time of the day—over coffee at 8:00 a.m. or at 11:00 p.m. when you can't quite doze off yet.

Simply create a user account and select the industry codes that apply to your business. You will get automatic notifications via email when a bid of

potential interest to you becomes available. If interested, you can immediately print details about the bid opportunity. Also available to you is the database of registered BAVN users that include other firms that you may want to do business with. For questions about registering on LABAVN, contact [support@labavn.org](mailto:support@labavn.org).

#### **Other Departmental Web sites**

Many City departments also post bids on their own home pages. This information is available in Chapter 5.

#### **Publications**

If you're not so keen on electronic communication, you can still get bid information via the good old print medium. Projects originated by the Department of Public Works continue to be advertised in the following newspapers:

Metropolitan News-Enterprise  
Reed Construction Data  
McGraw Hill Construction Dodge  
Bid America



The Department of General Services also posts its open bids in the Metropolitan News-Enterprise and on L.A. CityView Channel 35.

### **Vendor Databases**

The different City departments maintain their own vendor rosters to notify interested parties of particular bids and upcoming networking events. Visit the different vendor counters and sign up! See Chapter 5 for addresses and contact information.

### **Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal Meetings**

Pre-bid and pre-proposal meetings provide the perfect opportunity for prime and subcontractors bidding on a project to learn about contractual requirements and project specifications. It is also a great venue to network and discuss opportunities to work with each other. Information about the time and location of pre-bid and pre-proposal meetings is available in the RFB/RFP/RFQ or [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org).

## Chapter 4

### ***Evening out the Playing Field: Certification***

The following are the types of business certifications issued by the City of Los Angeles:

1. Minority Business Enterprise or MBE
2. Women Business Enterprise or WBE
3. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise or DBE
4. Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise or ACDBE
5. Small, Local Business Enterprise or SLBE

Eligible businesses are encouraged to apply for all certifications that are applicable to them. The process is free and there are no requirements as to the length of time the business has been in operation.

Please note that these certifications are not mandatory and are not a prerequisite for participating in a contract with the City of Los Angeles.

### **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)**

The United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) has recognized that, historically, business owners that are socially and economically disadvantaged have not been able to fairly compete for contracts funded and let by its awarding agencies.

To promote nondiscrimination in the award and administration of its contracts, foster equal opportunity, and to keep the contracting process fair and accessible to all types of businesses, U.S. DOT released regulation 49 CFR Part 26: Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) in Department of Transportation Financial Assistance Programs. The DBE program was designed to provide opportunities for certified DBEs to “have a piece of the contracting pie.”

The DBE program is currently implemented in the state of California. The City of Los Angeles tracks DBE subcontractor participation in contracts that receive federal funding. For a firm interested in being a subcontractor on a U.S. DOT-funded City contract, DBE certification offers “a leg up” as prime contractors may be more inclined to work with them.

The City of Los Angeles is part of a statewide network of agencies called the California Unified Certification Program or CUCP. CUCP agencies offer one-stop certification services, issuing DBE or Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) designations that are recognized throughout the state.

### **Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise (MBE and WBE)**

Taking it a step further, the City of Los Angeles implemented its own Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise/Other Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE/OBE) Subcontractor Outreach Program through Mayoral Executive Directive 2001-26. This program requires that prime contractors bidding on City-funded contracts actively reach out to MBEs, WBEs and OBEs who can potentially perform subcontracting work. This applies to those City contracts estimated to cost more than \$100,000 and found to offer subcontracting opportunities.

The City processes MBE/WBE certifications and also recognizes MBE/WBE certifications by CalTrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO). In addition, the City will recognize MBE certifications

issued by the Southern California Minority Business Development Council. No certification is required for a firm to be considered an Other Business Enterprise (OBE) – it is merely a designation to recognize all firms not certified as MBEs or WBEs.

Certified firms become part of a statewide DBE/ACDBE directory and a local MBE/WBE database that are utilized by prime contractors and government agencies looking for local subcontractors. This provides free marketing exposure to certified businesses.

### **Small, Local Business Enterprise (SLBE)**

The City of Los Angeles Small, Local Business Enterprise Program increases opportunities for certified small and local firms to successfully bid on procurement contracts with the City. An SLBE-certified supplier or contractor is eligible to receive a 10 percent preference on competitive bids worth \$100,000 or less.

SLBE certification is applicable to firms bidding as the prime contractor on City contracts only.

**For More Information**

For detailed information about certification eligibility requirements and to view a list of frequently asked questions, visit [bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm), or call (213) 847-1922.

To apply, download an application form at [bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm), complete and submit to:

Department of Public Works  
Bureau of Contract Administration  
Centralized Certification Section  
1149 S. Broadway, Ste. 300, Los Angeles CA 90015

## Chapter 5

### **Getting Your Foot in the Door: City Departmental Contracting Resources & Contacts**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUREAU OF CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION**

The Bureau of Contract Administration (BCA) serves as an independent quality control and contract compliance agency responsible for providing assurance that all Public Works projects are constructed and administered in accordance with the plans, specifications, state and federal laws and safety provisions. This work includes monitoring and authorizing payments to the contractor for acceptable progress, certifying the quality of the finished product, and enforcing state and federal prevailing wage laws



for public works construction contracts. BCA also administers the MBE/WBE/OBE Subcontractor Outreach Program and provides certification of MBEs, WBEs, DBEs and Small, Local Business Enterprises (SLBEs).

For more information, please visit [bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm)

#### **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUREAU OF ENGINEERING**



The City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works continually requests bids for construction projects. RFBs will be available online at [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org), and the plans, specifications and special provisions for construction projects may be obtained from:

Bureau of Engineering  
Project Award and Control Division, Public Counter  
1149 S. Broadway, Suite B-30, Los Angeles, CA 90015  
(213) 473-4155

Three other important resources are available to you at [eng.lacity.org/contractors/contractors.htm](http://eng.lacity.org/contractors/contractors.htm). You will find the project award status list that is updated regularly; the plan holder's list that subcontractors can utilize to contact potential prime contractors; and a database of historical bid results that may be a useful reference on what makes a successful bid.

## **DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES**

The Los Angeles Department of General Services (GSD) is the purchasing agent for all City Council-controlled departments within the City.

GSD provides the following platforms through which suppliers can access contracting opportunities:

Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network (LABAVN): Free service provided by the City of Los Angeles that lists all City bid opportunities. You may visit the Web site at [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org).

GSD's Internet Site: This site gives suppliers access to bid information and bid documents at [www.lacity.org/textdata/gsddata/ssbidlist.txt](http://www.lacity.org/textdata/gsddata/ssbidlist.txt).

Metropolitan News-Enterprise: GSD advertises in this local newspaper bid opportunities that are more than \$100,000.

Supplier's Guide: This GSD Guide is available as a quick reference tool that provides general information to all suppliers interested in conducting business with the City of Los Angeles. This is available online at [www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/SuppliersGuide.pdf](http://www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/SuppliersGuide.pdf).

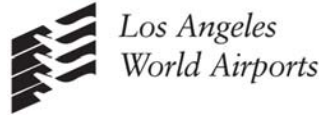
Visit Us: The GSD Supplier and Customer Relations Office maintains a computer database of current suppliers for specific commodities and services. In addition, it maintains current City of Los Angeles purchasing policies, procedures, bid opportunities and specific commodity group contacts. This office is located at:

Department of General Services  
Supply Services Division  
111 East First Street, Room 110, City Hall South  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

You may also call (213) 928-9500, or visit [www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/sms.htm](http://www.lacity.org/gsd/sms/sms.htm).

## LOS ANGELES WORLD AIRPORTS

Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) is a proprietary department of the City of Los Angeles that operates four airports including Los Angeles International, Ontario International, Van Nuys, and Palmdale Airports. LAWA procures over \$200 million in goods, services and materials to support passenger and cargo services annually.



All RFPs, RFBs and Special Bids are now available on [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org). You may also request a copy of any bid by calling the Purchasing Office at (310) 646-7391 or by faxing a request to (310) 646-9625 or (310) 646-7737. More information about LAWA purchasing and contracting procedures and opportunities is available online at [www.lawa.org/business.cfm](http://www.lawa.org/business.cfm).

Workshops on the contracting process and upcoming opportunities are offered monthly. "How to do Business with LAWA" training sessions take place on the first Wednesday of every month, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. For more information or to RSVP, please call (310) 417-6490.

The Small Business and Job Opportunities Center assists businesses that wish to sell their goods or services to LAWA. The Center is available to answer procurement questions and to meet procurement needs. To assist potential bidders, the Center offers lists of pre-qualified subcontractors and certified MBEs, WBEs and DBEs.

For more information, please visit or contact:

6151 Century Blvd., Ste. 1000, Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(310) 417-6490

LAWA's Purchasing Division buys materials, supplies, equipment, construction services, equipment rental services, repair and maintenance services, and oversees delivery of goods and services for LAWA. No appointment is needed to visit the Purchasing Office to speak with a buyer on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To arrange for a product demonstration, please make an appointment with the buyer. Demonstrations are welcome from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday or Friday.

Visit or call the Purchasing Department at:

7303 World Way West, Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(310) 646-7390

The Concessions Management Division administers concessions, including the food and beverage, specialty-retail, car rental, space rental and other passenger services. For more information, please call (310) 417-6476 or contact the Division by email at [laxconcessions@lawa.org](mailto:laxconcessions@lawa.org).

The Contract Services Division provides contract-related services to LAWA Divisions and the business community. Among other activities, Contract Services reviews RFPs, RFBs and RFQs, sets administrative requirements, and deems responsiveness. For specific information regarding bid requirements, policies, and procedures, please contact (310) 417-0409.

LAWA's Project Management Division manages the procurement process for the department's major construction projects. Most contracts in this division are for personal and professional services.

## PORT OF LOS ANGELES



The Port of Los Angeles is another proprietary department of the City of Los Angeles. The port has undertaken a group of major projects dedicated to container

terminal construction and other port enhancements to handle the world's largest ships in the new millennium. The Port also features restaurants, passenger services, transportation functions, entertainment centers and many other public resources. As such, the facility requires a wide variety of goods and services for successful operation.

Current contracting opportunities and information regarding the procurement process are available online at [www.labavn.org](http://www.labavn.org) and at [www.portoflosangeles.org/idx\\_business.asp](http://www.portoflosangeles.org/idx_business.asp).

Purchasing Division bid submissions must be submitted in hard copy, either by mail, courier or delivered in person to:

Port of Los Angeles  
Contracts and Purchasing Division  
500 Pier "A" Street, Wilmington, California 90744

Office hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and appointments are recommended. All buyers can be reached at (310) 732-3890.



## LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is the nation's largest municipally owned utility serving the water and electricity needs of the City of Los Angeles.



LADWP's Supply Chain Management (SCM) is comprised of purchasing operations, stores operations, contract management, contract compliance office, and supplier diversity management that procures, administers, and manages equipment, materials, and services that LADWP requires for its maintenance, operations, repair and construction programs.

Visiting Hours: The Vendor Liaison Center (VLC), located at 111 North Hope Street, Room L-43, is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Vendors wishing to meet with SCM utility buyers can schedule an appointment through the VLC. For a list of SCM Utility Buyers, please visit [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com), click on "Doing Business", and then "Corporate Purchasing Services".

Sales Contacts: The first sales contact should be with Purchasing Operations. The buyers acquaint vendors with procedures and direct them to the most concerned areas for their goods and services.

Vendor Database: SCM maintains a list of vendors for all classes of commodities and services regularly purchased by LADWP. To be placed on the vendor database, log on to [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com), click on "Doing Business" then "Purchasing Forms", or write to:

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power  
Director of Supply Chain Management, Room L-43  
PO Box 51111, Los Angeles, CA 90051

For additional SCM information, please contact LADWP at [www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp001370.jsp](http://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/cms/ladwp001370.jsp) or call the VLC at (213) 367-2252.

## LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA/LA)

The CRA/LA lets contracts for its construction, personal services, and procurement



needs. Bid Documents, Policies and Procedures, and RFPs/RFQs are available at:

[www.crala.net/internet-site/Jobs\\_Contracting/index.cfm](http://www.crala.net/internet-site/Jobs_Contracting/index.cfm).

To be part of CRA/LA's business directory, visit [www.crala.net/internet-site/Jobs\\_Contracting/doing\\_business.cfm](http://www.crala.net/internet-site/Jobs_Contracting/doing_business.cfm).

For more information, contact:  
CRA/LA Contracts & Purchasing Office  
(213) 977-1627  
[contracts@cra.lacity.org](mailto:contracts@cra.lacity.org)

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



RFPs are available at [www.lacity.org/CDD/home\\_bidsrfp.html](http://www.lacity.org/CDD/home_bidsrfp.html).

For general information about CDD, please visit [www.lacity.org/CDD/](http://www.lacity.org/CDD/).

## HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Construction, personal services, and procurement contracts are issued by the Housing Authority. For details about policies, required documents, and contracting opportunities, visit [www.hacla.org/business/home.htm](http://www.hacla.org/business/home.htm).

## LOS ANGELES HOUSING DEPARTMENT

Contracting information including RFPs, RFQs, Bids, and Notices of Funding Availability are posted online at:

[lahd.lacity.org/BidsRFPsRFQsNOFAsetc/tabid/127/Default.aspx](http://lahd.lacity.org/BidsRFPsRFQsNOFAsetc/tabid/127/Default.aspx).

## DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS



RFPs, Bid Results, Plan Holders Lists, and other valuable resources are available at [www.laparks.org/proposal.htm](http://www.laparks.org/proposal.htm).

## **CITY ATTORNEY**

The City contracts for outside legal services on an as-needed basis. RFPs can be viewed at [www.lacity.org/atty/attyrfpsrfqs.htm](http://www.lacity.org/atty/attyrfpsrfqs.htm).

## **LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

The CAO's Risk Management Division provides resources for assistance with contractor bonding and insurance. For more information, visit [www.lacity.org/cao/risk/index.htm](http://www.lacity.org/cao/risk/index.htm).

## **MINORITY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY CENTER**

The Los Angeles Minority Business Opportunity Center (LA MBOC) serves as a vital resource center for minority-owned businesses by facilitating one-on-one client relationships and providing an introduction to contracting, procurement, finance and general business opportunities. In particular it provides bid information



and referrals for bonding and insurance, certification assistance, financial assistance, and technical assistance. The LA MBOC is supported by an advisory board consisting of diverse representatives from public agencies, major corporations, financial institutions, and other organizations that have an interest in building resources and capacity for MBEs.

To become a client of the LA MBOC, visit [www.lamboc.org](http://www.lamboc.org), call (213) 978-0671, or fax your request to (213) 978-0690.



The City's Web site also offers a wealth of business resources. You will find information about contracting with the City, business incentives, taxes and insurance, and numerous other business related topics. To start, check out: [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org).

A Citywide directory of services is available by calling 3-1-1 or by visiting [www.lacity.org/dirsrvcs.htm](http://www.lacity.org/dirsrvcs.htm).

An updated list of City departmental contracting contacts is also available at [bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm).

## Chapter 6

### Beyond Los Angeles: Other Government Contracting Resources



Los Angeles County  
Home page: [www.lacounty.info/](http://www.lacounty.info/)  
Business Web site:  
[www.lacounty.info/doing\\_business/main\\_db.htm](http://www.lacounty.info/doing_business/main_db.htm)



State of California  
Home page: [www.ca.gov/](http://www.ca.gov/)  
Business Web site:  
[www.calbusiness.ca.gov/cedpdsell.asp](http://www.calbusiness.ca.gov/cedpdsell.asp)



Los Angeles Unified School District  
Home page:  
[www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net)



Metropolitan Water District  
Home page: [www.mwdh2o.com/](http://www.mwdh2o.com/)  
Business Web site:  
[www.mwdh2o.com/mwdh2o/pages/business/business01.html](http://www.mwdh2o.com/mwdh2o/pages/business/business01.html)



Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Home page: [www.metro.net/](http://www.metro.net/)  
Business Web site: [www.metro.net/doing\\_business/default.htm](http://www.metro.net/doing_business/default.htm)



Los Angeles Community College District

Home page: [www.laccd.edu/](http://www.laccd.edu/)

Business Web site:

[www.laccd.edu/business\\_opportunities/](http://www.laccd.edu/business_opportunities/)

For additional copies of this handbook, visit  
[bca.lacity.org/index.cfm](http://bca.lacity.org/index.cfm)



As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its program, services and activities.