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SPRING
2022

EQUITY ESSENTIAL TO INTERSTATE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

PAGE 16

HILL INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WITH DBES IN NEW YORK REGION

PAGE 13

PANYNJ Recommits to Inclusion

PAGE 28

(from left) IBR program team members
André Baugh, Administrator Greg Johnson
and Lisa Keohokalole Schauer

*WSP USA Builds DBE
Relationships and
Capacity*

*Onyx Enterprise
Thriving
in Michigan*

Also in this issue

- Airport Car Rental Supplier Diversity
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- New DBE Fraud Cases

Hill International Details Key Considerations When Selecting Project Partners



Hill International Inc. (Hill), a project management and construction management firm

As part of a joint venture, Hill is providing construction management services to the Dormitory Authority State of New York for the design and construction of a new mixed-use academic building at SUNY Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City.

based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, manages multi-billion-dollar programs for public and private clients around the world. Hill often works with diverse firms owned by minorities and women to complete contracts and meet client's expectations. A major market for the firm is New York City, where Hill is completing major programs for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the New York City Department of Design and Construction. The firm uses these and other major programs as an opportunity to team with a variety of small business partners.

A significant component of building successful relationships with companies owned by minority, women, and service-disabled veterans is understanding what diverse business owners look for when teaming with a prime consultant on major programs. Leaders of Hill's New York City opportunities understand that considering partnering relationships from the viewpoint of their small business partners helps the firm perform more effectively for its clients

and helps build stronger relationships that are beneficial in the short term and for future business opportunities.

"We look for SBE, DBE, SDVOB, and MBE



James Bermudez PE, President of Invictus Engineering, PC

partners that bring specific skillsets to our teams, and also firms that can complement and reinforce our own skills," said Hill Vice President, Business Development Northeast, Mellanie Bennett-Monclova. "We're blessed with a deep pool of promising and qualified firms in New York, but we also look for intangibles: we want partners that match our values and are committed to the pursuit and the success of the project."

Partnering with minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), woman-owned business enterprises (WBEs), and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses (SDVOBs), brings a wealth of benefits to a project management team. These firms often bring specialized and local expertise in a management area larger firms may lack, such as in third-party permitting or real estate acquisition for public projects. Similarly, MBE/WBE/SDVOB firms often provide a local perspective on how a project may impact a community, as well as connections to influential stakeholders and key decision makers. These

connections can be invaluable in identifying obstacles before they can affect project progress and can help generate buy-in for projects as well.

Oftentimes the advantages small and diverse business partners bring surpass the challenges large firms face when seeking to meet the participation percentages expected by public agencies on their procurements. However, to truly succeed, MBE/WBE/SDVOB and other small business types also look for the right “fits” when considering which programs, projects and prime firms match their skillset, culture and long-term goals.

Invictus Engineering PC

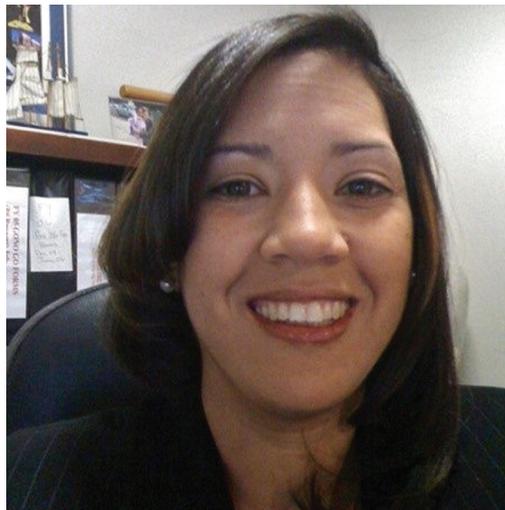
Hill International developed a successful partnership with Invictus Engineering while completing major infrastructure projects in the New York City area. Invictus, a certified MBE, SBE and SDVOB, provides construction management and inspection, project planning and controls, and consulting for projects in New York City and across the U.S. In business for more than 17 years, highlights of Invictus’ portfolio include helping to deliver the new Moynihan Station in Manhattan, the Pier 26 Redevelopment for the Hudson River Trust, and the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar Project in Sacramento, California. James Bermudez, PE, President of Invictus said the firm’s success is due to its commitment to its employees, its markets, and its clients; and that Invictus looks for prime partners that share this business ethos.

“We’re here for the long-term,” Bermudez said. “We don’t ‘try out’ a market, and we stick to our core competencies. When we’re looking to team with a larger firm, we want to see some overlap in our services, so we each understand what we need to do to deliver the work product, and so we know we agree that, as professional services firms, we are all about our people and our reputations.”

Bermudez said that red flags when considering a prime partner for Invictus include low rates/multipliers and shoestring staffs. “The bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is



**Integrated Strategic Resources COO
Jeffrey Vladyka, PE**



**Hill International Vice President of Business
Development Northeast Mellanie Bennett-Monclova**

forgotten. We will never work with a prime that, even mildly, believes that they’ll make up their costs on the next contract.”

Similarly, Bermudez looks for primes who are well-prepared for the solicitation: are they just “answering the mail” or is the solicitation really part of a coherent, strategic program? “Our history with a prime is important,” Bermudez said. “Have we had previous success with them? Or do we have a track record of teaming and not ultimately winning?” Bermudez explains that Invictus has a list of “Preferred Primes” who meet these criteria.

As for those primes who don’t seem like the right fit for Invictus? “We don’t have a list of primes we won’t team with, but we

know who they are – we politely decline when asked to join them on a pursuit.”

Bermudez said that, as a small business, Invictus counts on its prime partners in several ways. “Participation of the Project Manager and/or Project Executive during the proposal stage is great, as it shows a commitment to the pursuit that will carry over after the win. If the team leadership is absent, and if the prime just wants our paperwork to get their proposal submitted, it can mean trouble ahead,” Bermudez said. “We do not have a large administrative level, so we count on our prime partners to lead contract administration. This is especially important in New York where entities may require a lot of admin. Will the prime buckle under pressure if an owner is under financial duress or delays payment? If they do, Invictus can’t absorb that cost and survive.”

Integrated Strategic Resources (ISR), LLC.

Integrated Strategic Resources (ISR) is another of Hill’s successful business partners in the New York City area. ISR, founded in 2000 and headquartered in New York City with offices in Baltimore and New Jersey, is a certified DBE, SBE and WBE providing systems integration, radio frequency and wireless communications, network applications, electronic security, and rail transit operations analysis to such clients as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, NJ Transit, and Amtrak, among many others.

ISR COO Jeffrey W. Vladyka said he understands why primes come to ISR and echoed Bermudez in detailing ISR’s business philosophy. “This is a people business, and ISR provides professionals with the skills that fit each required role. We know our quality is in our people, and we look for partners that share that mindset.” Vladyka also said that he worked with Hill’s New York leadership previously during his career and knows the firm will treat ISR as a valued partner and not to check a box during the proposal process. That relationship, he said, is built on years of shared experience.

“At ISR we believe listening to our employees is key to our success,” Vladyka said. “We want to partner with firms that develop their workforce and value employee feedback like we do. Maybe it’s a cliché, but behind every timesheet is a family. That human component is what makes our company successful, and we believe it’s also what makes project teams successful. So, we look for those qualities when choosing our partners.” He added, “Over the years, jobs come and go, but loyalty and allegiance are long-term.”

Vladyka notes that ISR also carefully considers which primes to partner with on opportunities. He said: “The core services that ISR is recognized for are important to translate to the scope both identified in

the Request for Proposal (RFP) and in the prime’s acknowledgement of the contribution ISR can provide the team and ultimate client. That, along with clear and consistent contract terms, is always a part of teaming consideration.”

Success is the Goal

Bermudez said Invictus has been lucky in finding great prime partners: “We have had many positive experiences over the past 17 years, or we wouldn’t be around. The A/E and CM landscape New York City is as dynamic as it has been since I started in 1989, from much higher MWBE goals and enforcement to where funding is – or is likely – to shift. But I can’t imagine that the practices I described

above will change radically. In fact, I think it will place an even heavier burden on primes and subs to stay in tune with the rapidly adapting policy changes the owners will have to implement.”

Vladyka said ISR ultimately strives to deliver a successful project for the prime and knows that their relationships with prime partners is what has helped ISR grow over the decades. “Expansion isn’t the end-all, be-all for us,” he said. “First and foremost, we pride ourselves on delivering for our prime and their clients, and those successes provide our firm and our employees growth opportunities to use their talents as part of a successful project. Prime partners who understand that goal are the firms who, ultimately, help make all of us successful!”

Delivering Integrity. Delivering Innovation. Delivering Inclusion.

PM/CM provider Hill International is delivering the infrastructure of change with our DBE partners across the U.S.

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