

## NEW PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION LAW [SB 854] FACT SHEET

SB 854, a budget trailer bill that was signed into law on June 20, 2014, and became effective immediately, made several significant changes to laws pertaining to the administration and enforcement of prevailing wage requirements by the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). Among other things, SB 854 established a new public works contractor registration program to replace prior Compliance Monitoring Unit (CMU) and Labor Compliance Program (LCP) requirements for bond-funded and other specified public works projects. The fees collected through this new program will be used to fund all of DIR's public works activities, including compliance monitoring and enforcement, the determination of prevailing wage rates, public works coverage determinations, and hearing enforcement appeals.

### Essentials of public works contractor registration program:

- Contractors will be subject to a registration and annual renewal fee that has been set initially at \$300. The fee is non-refundable and applies to all contractors and subcontractors who intend to bid or perform work on public works projects (as defined under the Labor Code).
- Contractors will apply and pay the fee online and must meet minimum qualifications to be registered as eligible to bid and work on public works projects:
  - Must have workers' compensation coverage for any employees and only use subcontractors who are registered public works contractors.
  - Must have Contractors State License Board license if applicable to trade.
  - Must have no delinquent unpaid wage or penalty assessments owed to any employee or enforcement agency.
  - Must not be under federal or state debarment.
  - Must not be in prior violation of this registration requirement once it becomes effective. However, for the first violation in a 12 month period, a contractor may still qualify for registration by paying an additional penalty.
- The registration fee is not related to any project. It is more like a license that enables the registrant to bid on and perform public works.

- DIR will post a list of registered contractors and subcontractors on its website so that awarding bodies and contractors will be able to comply with requirements to only use registered contractors and subcontractors.
- Various protections are built in so that
  - A contractor won't be in violation for working on a private job that is later determined to be public work;
  - The inadvertent listing of an unregistered subcontractor on a bid won't necessarily invalidate that bid;
  - A contract with an unregistered contractor or subcontractor is subject to cancellation but is not void as to past work;
  - An unregistered contractor or subcontractor can be replaced with one who is registered;
  - A contractor whose registration lapses will have a 90 day grace period within which to pay a late fee and renew.
- Registrations will begin after July 1, 2014, once the registration system is ready to go online. The preferred method of payment will be by credit card.
- The requirement to list only registered contractors and subcontractors on bids becomes effective on March 1, 2015. The requirement to only use registered contractors and subcontractors on public works projects applies to all projects awarded on or after April 1, 2015.

Essentials of Public Works Enforcement Fund:

All contractor registration fees will go into the State Public Works Enforcement Fund and be used to fund the following items --

- administration of contractor registration requirement
- all DIR costs for administering and enforcing public works laws
- Labor Commissioner's enforcement of other Labor Code violations on monitored public works projects.

DIR will no longer charge awarding bodies for prevailing wage compliance monitoring and enforcement by the CMU. (*Note: DIR will continue to bill and collect fees from awarding agencies for CMU services provided through June 20, 2014.*)

Related changes in DIR's administration and enforcement of public works requirements:

- Requirements to use CMU or specified alternative (labor compliance program or project labor agreement) for state bond-funded and other specified projects have been eliminated and replaced by requirements that apply to all public works projects (as defined under the Labor Code).
- Awarding bodies are *now* required to submit PWC-100 (contract award notice) for all public works projects. (*This requirement previously applied to about 90% of all projects.*)
- Contractors and subcontractors on *all* public works projects will be required to submit certified payroll records (CPRs) to the Labor Commissioner unless excused from this requirement.
  - This requirement will be phased in as follows:
    - Applies immediately to public works projects that have already been under CMU monitoring, *i.e.* contractors on ongoing projects that have been submitting CPRs to the CMU will continue doing so
    - Will apply to any new projects awarded on or after April 1, 2015
    - May apply to other projects as determined by Labor Commissioner
    - Will apply to all public works projects, new or ongoing, on and after January 1, 2016
  - The Labor Commissioner may make exception to this requirement for
    - Projects covered by qualifying project labor agreement
    - Projects undertaken by one of four remaining awarding bodies with legacy LCPs (Caltrans, City of Los Angeles, County of Sacramento, and Los Angeles Unified School District), so long as those LCPs remain approved by DIR
  - CPRs will be furnished online (as is done currently for CMU). DIR intends to continue making improvements to this process, including creating a means for general contractors to have online access to the CPRs submitted by their subcontractors.
- Requirements for awarding bodies to adopt and enforce a DIR-approved LCP are now limited to: (1) public works projects awarded prior to January 1, 2012 that were under a preexisting LCP requirement; and (2) projects funded in whole or in part by Proposition 84.