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Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor



# The MBE Monitor

Integrity. Accountability. Opportunity.

*A Publication of the Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Minority Business Enterprise  
The Official Certification Agency for the State of Maryland*

## A Message From The Governor

Maryland's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia and the District of Columbia is proof that working together as partners can produce great results. In September 2008, along with my counterparts in the District of Columbia and Virginia, I signed a unique MOU that streamlines the application process for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and Airport Concession

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE) interested in participating on federally-funded contracts outside of their home state.

In order for these firms to bid on a federal transit, highway or airport project, they must be certified in the specific jurisdiction where the project is based. DBE and ACDBE firms already certified by their home state agency can apply for certification in the other jurisdictions through a more efficient process with minimal paperwork under this MOU's Modified Reciprocity Certification Program.

In the last two years, more than 450 Maryland certified DBEs and ACDBEs have sought certification with the participating jurisdictions. The process is simple where the firm sub-

mits the primary application along with five supporting documents, instead of the 20 or more pieces of supporting documentation required with a standard application. The streamlined process allows DBEs and ACDBEs to work more efficiently, while increasing the number of certified firms able to do work in the metropolitan area.

I encourage you to join the many Maryland firms that are already benefitting from this MOU by contacting the participating agencies and taking advantage of the Modified Reciprocity Certification Program.

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

### MOU Participating Agencies

Maryland  
Department of  
Transportation  
410-865-1269

Virginia Department of  
Minority Business  
Enterprise  
804-786-6585

District Department  
of Transportation  
202-673-6813

Washington  
Metropolitan Area  
Transit Authority  
202-962-2409

Metropolitan  
Washington Airports  
Authority  
703-417-8625



## Marketing Matters

### Make the Most out of Matchmaking Events

Some things never change. Developing new business relationships takes time and work in any economy. A great way to meet prospective customers is by attending business matchmaking events. Known as “speed dating” for the business world, matchmaking events can be a great alternative to cold calling. Don’t show up looking to find out what somebody else can do for you. Plan ahead and be prepared to answer what you can do for them. Here are a few helpful tips for making your next matchmaking session successful:



**Send the right person.** Expect to be asked questions about past performance and current capabilities. If you are not the best person to answer such questions, send somebody else.

**Dress appropriately.** Your personal appearance does matter. Regardless of your profession, dress for an interview, not the work site.

**Do your homework.** Have a good understanding of what the company/agency

does. Ignorance is not bliss – it’s bad business. You will not be remembered well if you don’t know anything about the prospective customer.

**Be on time.** Matchmaking events follow a formal schedule. Arriving late sends the wrong message, not to mention reducing the amount of time you get to spend with the prospect.

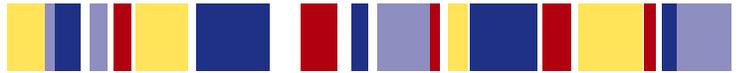
**Be prepared.** Have plenty of business cards, brochures, capability statements or other marketing materials to leave behind.

**Listen well.** If you want to figure out what problem you can solve for the prospect, let him/her do most of

the talking.

You’re not going to walk out of a matchmaking event with a contract. What you will get is powerful information to drive your next point of contact. Take what you learned and use it to build a new business relationship.

*View upcoming business development events at [http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/MBE\\_Program/caldisplay](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/MBE_Program/caldisplay).*



## 2011 PNW Cap Increase

The Maryland Department of Transportation announced an increase to the State’s Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program’s Personal Net Worth (PNW) cap. Effective January 1, 2011, the PNW cap will increase from \$1,504,858 to **\$1,530,652** for all MBE certification decisions rendered between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011. As required by Maryland law, the cap is adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index.

The PNW cap for the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program is not affected and remains \$750,000.

## Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy

Maryland’s General Assembly established a Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy in 2006. The policy makes it unlawful for any firm doing business with the State to discriminate and/or retaliate against any person that reports an act of discrimination. The policy states:

Maryland shall not enter into a contract with any business entity that has discriminated in the solicitation, selection, hiring or commercial treatment of vendors, suppliers, subcontractors or commercial customers on the basis of race, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any otherwise unlawful use of characteristics regarding the vendor’s, supplier’s or commercial customer’s employees or owners.

Every State-funded contract and subcontract includes a commercial nondiscrimination clause whereby all entities doing business with the State of Maryland agree to comply with the State’s Commercial Nondiscrimination Policy.

Furthermore, it is unlawful for a business entity that has entered into a contract with the State to retaliate or take any action that has a material negative effect against any person, business or other entity for: reporting any incident of discrimination; testifying as a witness at a hearing; or providing requested assistance to Commission staff in any investigation of an incident of discrimination.

If you have been a victim of commercial discrimination, contact the Maryland Commission on Human Relations at 410-767-8600 or file a complaint online at <http://www.mchr.state.md.us/CND.html>.



## MBE Success Story:

# RGM Incorporated

Rodney Matthews founded RGM Incorporated (Bethesda, MD) in 1992 and hit the ground running. His firm provides a range of services from presentation materials and website development to government staffing and Internet marketing. As his business grew, he began targeting large corporations.



taking small, affordable jobs and eventually my clients started asking if I could do more. That led me into staffing and opened up a new revenue source for my company.”

According to Matthews, you can’t be afraid to get in front of people, because handshakes are remembered and performance matters.

“I keep getting invited to come back because I build strong relationships and I deliver great

“They almost always asked if I was a certified MBE,” stated Matthews. “I didn’t even know what that was at the time.”

So he learned. He then obtained Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification for his firm in 1998.

“Certification gave me something to offer potential partners that they needed, so I leveraged my ability to help them meet minority participation goals.”

Yet, having the right certification was not enough.

“You have to learn what people do and how they do it,” Matthews advised. “You have to invest time in building relationships and you’ve got to hang in there throughout the process because it never happens fast.”

“I was a craftsman when I started, but I had to learn how to do sales,” Matthews said. “I proved myself by

service,” he said.

Today, RGM Incorporated is working on State and federal contracts with nationally-recognized firms. Performance as an MBE accounts for 25-30 percent of the company’s business.

So what does Matthews recommend to other MBEs? “Work hard at marketing yourself. Attend procurement events and pre-bid meeting. And go to the bookstore. Read everything you can on business and business development. Everything you need to learn is out there for you and YES, it is hard work” Matthews concluded.

*Editor’s Note: Matthews is also the founder of The Madison Design Group which provides graphic and web design, multi-media development and Internet services as an MBE/DBE.*

## Mentor-Protégé Relationships: MDOT Preparing to Launch New Program in 2011

Mentoring is a time-honored method of learning that requires conscious effort. Both parties enter into the relationship willingly, bringing with them defined expectations of what they hope to achieve and must commit time and effort to building the relationship.

By sharing their own personal experiences as seasoned professionals, mentors help less experienced protégés improve their ability to compete and perform in the business world. Mentors build mutually-beneficial relationships while enhancing technical skills and increasing exposure to work opportunities. For both partners, the experience can provide a great amount of personal satisfaction and pride

Maryland Transportation Secretary Beverley K. Swaim-Staley strongly believes in the value of mentor-protégé relationships. So much so, in fact, that she has asked the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) to spearhead an effort to create a Mentor-Protégé Program at the Maryland Department of Transportation to further the successful development of local minority- and women-owned businesses.

“I know from personal experience that mentoring is a great way to learn,” said Secretary Swaim-Staley. “I am committed to creating a mentor-protégé program because I firmly believe it will be instrumental in helping more MBE’s participate in valuable contracting opportunities in Maryland.”

MDOT’s Mentor-Protégé program is in the early stages of development. Watch for more information as the program takes shape in 2011.





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Email:  
[mbe@mdot.state.md.us](mailto:mbe@mdot.state.md.us)

## Procurement Opportunities

Take advantage of State and local government contracting opportunities by registering with **eMaryland Marketplace**. The free registration provides a means for businesses to receive e-mail notification of contracting opportunities in their specified areas of interest and expertise. For registration requirements, visit [www.emarylandmarketplace.com](http://www.emarylandmarketplace.com) to join Maryland's gateway to bidding opportunities for commodity, construction, architecture and engineering, facility maintenance, human services, information technology and related services. Listed below are a few current opportunities.

### **M00SO283159** - *External Quality Review of Managed Care Organizations*

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Health Services is seeking RFPs to provide mandated External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) functions which include conducting the annual Systems Performance Review (SPR) for all managed care organizations (MCOs) that contract with the State of Maryland Medicaid Program to provide health care services to Medicaid recipients.  
*MBE Goal: 20%*

### **BCGSO284218** - *Substance Abuse Outpatient Treatment*

Baltimore County is seeking a qualified vendor to provide substance abuse treatment programs to adult and adolescent residents. Baltimore County will issue awards to multiple vendors to ensure that services are available throughout the County.  
*MBE Goal: 15%*

### **BCGSO284216** - *Wellness And Recovery Centers*

Baltimore County is seeking a qualified vendor to operate Wellness and Recovery Centers primarily for persons

with serious and persistent mental illness at three locations in the County. Offers may propose to operate multiple sites.  
*MBE Goal: 15%*

### **BCSSO284205** - *Baltimore City Public Schools*

*Material Management*  
A three-year contract to provide pumps and electric motors maintenance and repair services at various Baltimore City Public Schools.  
*MBE goal: 37%*  
*Women sub-goal: 10%*  
*African American sub-goal: 27%*

## Outstanding Outreach



Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise program is growing! During FY2010, the number of certified firms increased 8.7 percent. Today, there are more than 5,000 firms in the online directory of Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms maintained by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

This growth is due in part to MDOT's Office of Minority Business Enterprise's (OMBE) active outreach program. OMBE staff conduct educational workshops, participate on panel discussions and in trade show events, and serve as guest speakers in classrooms. Our experts help small, minority and women business owners access the program's benefits so they can determine if MBE certification is right for them.

OMBE conducts a free application assistance workshop at MDOT Headquarters on the first Tuesday of every month, but most of our outreach efforts are performed away from the office. In fact, our staff members travel throughout the State participating in more than 100 events annually.

If you would like to schedule a presentation to learn more about the eligibility standards of MBE and DBE certification, contact our Outreach Supervisor Dennard Covington at 410-865-1245 or [dcovington@mdot.state.md.us](mailto:dcovington@mdot.state.md.us).