

SUMMER 2010

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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 small businesses are the backbone of our economy. To strengthen these firms and expand opportunities, we're encouraging small businesses to take advantage of the Small Business Reserve (SBR) program. Through this program, small businesses are able to bid for state contracts without competing with larger, more established companies. Maryland statute requires 24 state agencies to award at least 10 percent of their total procurement dollars for goods, supplies, services, maintenance, construction, construction-related, architectural service and engineer service contracts to qualified small businesses.

Since only qualified small businesses may receive an

SBR contract or solicitation, the program offers the opportunity for small businesses to compete for state contracts on a level playing field. Those small businesses that win an SBR-only contract perform as the prime contractor.

To become eligible for SBR, small business owners can register online through a self-certification process. The Department of General Services maintains a profile of all registered firms which state agency procurement officers may access.

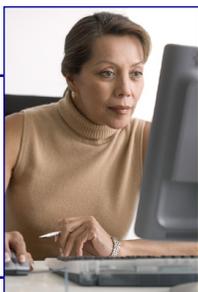
A small business does not have to be a minority business, although it is possible to be both. The SBR is race- and gender-neutral, so any firm that meets the size and revenue requirements is encouraged to participate.

Are you registered in Maryland's SBR program? If not, I strongly urge you to do so today. Our online, self-certification process is quick and easy. If you are already in the program, make sure your profile is up-to-date and your contact information is current.

As you work on building your business, Maryland's Small Business Reserve Program should definitely be one of the tools in your toolbox.

Sincerely,

Martin O'Malley
Governor



To register for Maryland's Small Business Reserve Program, click on the "Small Business Reserve" button at www.dgs.maryland.gov.



See pg. 4 for a complete list of SBR Designated Agencies



Important Legislative Changes Impact MBE Program



The Maryland General Assembly passed, and Governor O'Malley signed into law, several important changes to the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program this year.

First, *Procurement - Minority Business Enterprises - Certification Process* (HB250 and SB 130) requires the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) to create procedures to streamline MBE certification for firms already certified, through a comprehensive investigative process, by race-conscious affirmative action contracting programs run by the U.S. Small Business Administration and Maryland county governments. In a similar vein, *State Procurement - Minority Business Enterprises - Electronic Certification Process* (HB251 and SB131) requires OMBE to allow applicants to submit some portion of their certification application electronically. OMBE will work closely with the Board of Public Works over the next six months to create regulations to put both of these concepts into action.

In addition, *Procurement - Minority Business Enterprises - Review of Application for Certification and Notice to Applicant* (HB923 and SB546) requires OMBE, after October 1, 2010, to render a certification decision within 90 days of receiving a complete application. That deadline can be extended by MDOT once, for 60 days, upon written notification and explanation to the applicant.

Third, *Procurement - Minority Business Enterprise Program - Report* (SB849) requires state procurement units to include the total number and names of MBEs that performed

prime or subcontractor work in their annual MBE report. For each MBE identified in the report, all contract awards to that MBE must be listed.

Lastly, *Task Force on the Minority Business Enterprise Program and Equity Investment Capital* (HB222 and SB2) reestablished the Task Force on Equity Investment, an important statewide forum for researching and recommending ways to increase the flow of equity investment into Maryland's MBEs. OMBE participated in and staffed the Task Force until its legislatively mandated sunset in December 2009, and looks forward to playing a key role in concluding the Task Force's work this year.

MDOT Online Directory of Certified Firms

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) maintains the online Directory of Certified MBE and DBE firms. This listing provides 24/7 access to the most up-to-date data and is utilized by both the public and private sectors.

When was the last time you checked your directory listing?

It is important to make sure your listing is accurate and current at all times. If you have expanded your services since your initial certification, it may also be time to request an Expansion of Services.

Updates, corrections and expansion requests must be submitted in writing to MDOT's Office of Minority Business Enterprise. Contact us today at mbe@mdot.state.md.us or 410-865-1269 for assistance with your directory listing or an Expansion of Services request.





Marketing Tip: *Know Your Customers' Needs*



Knowing and understanding customer needs is the key to success for every business. In fact, the more you know about existing and potential customers, the more successful your sales and marketing efforts can be. If your business is relatively new, the first question to ask is the most important:

- *Who are your potential customers?*

Once you have that figured out, spend some time finding the answers to these questions:

- *What do they buy?*
- *Why do they buy it?*
- *When do they buy it?*
- *How do they buy it?*

Getting to know your customers requires interpersonal conversations that are genuine and open ended. Put aside what you think you know and ask the source directly. It can happen in the office, over lunch or on the golf course. Wherever it happens, be sure to let the customer do most of the talking. Your job is to listen and gather information. Many times, you'll get more than you bargained for and uncover an unexpected nugget of information that can help you position yourself above the competition. After all, your marketing efforts should always be centered on one primary concept: *Positioning your company as a solution to somebody else's problem.*

MBE Success Story: *ACT Personnel Services, Inc.*

Live and learn. That's how it's been for ACT Personnel Services, Inc., of Cumberland since becoming certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) in 2003. After nearly 15 years in business, the firm was encouraged to apply for certification by a potential business partner. That opportunity didn't become reality, but a year later the firm got a 5-year contract with a 10% minority participation goal.

"We participated as a subcontractor and were awarded \$300,000. It was a great first experience for us," said Manager Kerri Adams. "The relationships we developed led to other small pieces of work. We were very happy, but we wanted more."

So ACT Personnel began looking for opportunities to bid as a prime contractor, and in 2007 they got a small contract. "It was a great fit for us and we put hours and hours of work into it. Financially, though, we made more money performing as a sub," Ms. Adams stated.

In 2009, Ms. Adams attended a meeting at the State Highway Administration (SHA) regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) where she heard several prime contractors citing difficulties finding flaggers. A perfect fit for a staffing company, ACT



applied for and received an Expansion of Services so they could add the appropriate NAICS codes for flaggers. Adams notified local companies about her new service via postcards, email and conversations at Chamber of Commerce functions and civic events.

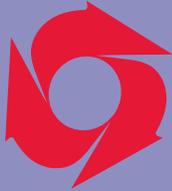
"The response was slow, but it grew into a larger scope of work because we did a great job and earned a good reputation as a sub," Adams stated. "Since then we've been asked to bid regularly and are running three to four jobs at a time. Learning the bidding process and the paperwork requirements took some time, but we had lots of help from SHA along the way,"

ACT Personnel Services now counts 20% of its business to government work. The company is on track to meet its 2010 goal of generating \$350,000 - \$400,000 in sales from this sector.



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Please call 410-865-1269
or TTY 410-865-1342.

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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 to join Maryland's gateway to bidding opportunities for commodity, construction, architect and engineering, facility maintenance, human services, information technology and related services. Listed below are a few current opportunities.

R00SO273976 - Family Child Care Nutrition Training Program

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is seeking a vendor to develop a nutrition-based training program to include the design and printing of a kit containing an Instructor's Guide, Participant Workbook and CDROM for the School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch. The program will be used to train family child care providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. *MBE goal: 25%*

W00SO267399 - Maryland State Police Quartermaster
Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) seeks a vendor to install and maintain an

Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) system that meets all federal guidelines for E9-1-1 Phase II and Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG91-1). Offerors must submit a purchase only Financial Proposal and a lease/purchase Financial Proposal. The contract will be awarded for approximately seven (7) years, a two (2) year base contract with five (5) one-year maintenance options. *MBE goal: 25%*

U10SO274192 - Purchase of 88,000 Pound Masted Container Handling Lift Truck (ARRA 10-07-110: Port of Baltimore Certified Clean Diesel Program)

The Maryland Environmental Service (MES) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified contractors to provide

a new or used (2008 year or newer) 'Masted Container' Handling Forklift including delivery requirements, set-up, and operation and maintenance training on the purchased equipment. *MBE goal: 22%; women sub-goal: 11%*

J07SO273783 - Access Control Fencing at Major Bridges

Maryland Transportation Authority seeks a vendor to furnish and install access control fencing (both security and chain link types) and W-Beam traffic barriers at the following locations: Thomas J. Hatem Bridge, Francis Scott Key Bridge, Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge and the Chesa-peake Bay Bridge. *MBE goal: 18%*

Small Business Reserve Designated Agencies

Department of Budget and Management

Department of Business and Economic Development

Department of Environment

Department of General Services

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Department of Housing and Community Development

Department of Human Resources

Department of Information Technology

Department of Juvenile Services

Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Department of Natural Resources

Department of State Police

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Department of Transportation

Maryland Port Administration

Maryland Insurance Administration

Maryland Stadium Authority

Maryland Transportation Authority

Morgan State University

State Department of Education

State Lottery Agency

State Retirement Agency

State Treasurer

University System of Maryland