Business Diversity & Inclusion (BDI) Update

Jamila R. Davis, BDI Director
Board Retreat FY2023

Economic Development Framework

Mecklenburg County strives to provide equitable economic opportunity for all its residents.

Healthy Equitable Economy

- Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise Opportunities
- New & Existing Business Growth
- Small Business & Entrepreneurial Growth
- Strong Communities & Neighborhoods
- Workforce Development
- Tourism, Arts and Culture
**Mission:** To Increase Participation of Minorities, Women, and Small Businesses in Mecklenburg County Business Opportunities Through Outreach, Training, and Partnerships.

The Business Diversity & Inclusion (BDI) program assists MWSBE businesses through various support efforts:

- Outreach and Networking
- Support and Navigation through Certifications, Vendor Registrations, and Doing Business with Mecklenburg County
- Informationals for Purchasing, Procurement, Bidding, and Contracting
- Advocacy and Mediation (dispute resolution)
- Capacity Building Efforts
- One-on-one /Group Sessions
- Trainings and Workshops
- Information, Referrals, and Resource Sharing

The program also assists internal and external stakeholders in seeking MWSBE firms.

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**Business Diversity & Inclusion Staff**

- **Jamila Davis**
  Division Director
- **Lorena Gomez**
  Compliance Officer
- **John Walton**
  Compliance Officer
- **Ellie Festger**
  Compliance Officer
- **Monica Grier**
  Compliance Officer
- **Vacant**
  Program Officer

**Note:** The FY2022 Adopted Budget included $688,000 for 10 new positions in multiple departments to implement the recommendations of the recently completed disparity study aimed at expanding opportunities and access for minority contractors.
June 2019 - County engaged Griffin & Strong PC to conduct a comprehensive assessment of County MWSBE activities and provide recommendations for increasing utilization. Griffin & Strong also conducted a disparity study to determine overall equity of MWSBE utilization by the County.

**Policy & Procedure Assessment**
- Catalogue and assess current MWSBE policies and procedures enterprise-wide
- Verify current MWSBE utilization data
- Solicit community and vendor input on County MWSBE programs
- Benchmark national best practices
- Provide actionable recommendations to increase enterprise-wide MWSBE utilization

**Disparity Study**
- Collect and analyze County MWSBE usage and spending data
- Collect and analyze vendor availability data
- Conduct statistical analysis to determine if gaps between usage and availability
- Provide determination if basis exists for race or gender conscious purchasing programs

**Implementation Plan Objective**
Coordinate Enterprise efforts to implement recommendations from the Disparity Study and to document progress.

**Full Disparity Study Report:**
[OED.MeckNC.gov/BDI](http://OED.MeckNC.gov/BDI)
## Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Q3 FY2021</th>
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<th>Q1 FY2022</th>
<th>Q2 FY2022</th>
<th>Q3 FY2022</th>
<th>Q4 FY2022</th>
<th>Q1 FY2023</th>
<th>Q2 FY2023</th>
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<td>2. MWBE Subcontracting Goals</td>
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<td>3. Robust Good Faith Efforts</td>
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<td>5. Vendor Rotation</td>
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<td>7. Strengthen Project Forecasting</td>
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<td>8. Supportive Services</td>
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<td>10. Encourage Joint Ventures</td>
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### Current Status

**Disparity Study Complete**

**Current**

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### MWSBE Assessment & Disparity Study

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Status Update</th>
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| 1) Allocation of Resources, Including Staffing:  
  • Larger staff of at least 2-3 additional Contract Compliance Officers |  
  • BDI: FY22 Adopted budget included 4 new positions, for a staff total of six (6); vacant position to be filled on January 31, 2022  
  • Positions Pending:  
    • AFM: 2 - Management Analyst  
    • LUE: 1 - Management Analyst  
    • PRK: 1 - Management Analyst  
    • FIN: 1 - Procurement Analyst  
    1 - Procurement Specialist |
| 2) MWBE Subcontracting Goals:  
  • Set contract-by-contract goals in Construction (Year 1)  
  • Phase in additional categories as resources increase  
  • Set separate MBE and WBE goals  
  • Apply Contract Compliance |  
  • Goal Setting Training was conducted by the consultant. Participants included representatives from Office of Economic Development, Central Finance, Procurement, Asset & Facility Management, Land Use & Environmental Services, and Park & Recreation  
  • Contract by Contract goals for Construction will go live with Phase I rollout to be no later than June 2022 |
| 3) Robust Good Faith Efforts:  
  • Firms must meet goals or demonstration of Good Faith Efforts (GFE)  
  • Good Faith Efforts = Meeting 50 points set by State law  
  • If do not meet goal or satisfy Good Faith Efforts, the bid is rejected as not responsive or responsible |  
  • Worked closely with the director of the State’s Historically Underutilized Businesses and our joint consultant GSPC to align County’s GFE efforts and information with State  
  • Enhanced Good Faith Effort Requirements will go live by with Phase I rollout to be no later than June 2022 |
### MWSBE Assessment & Disparity Study

#### Recommendation | Status Update
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**4) Small Business Reserve Program:**
- Set aside certain level of contracts exclusively for small businesses

**Status Update:**
- State authority is required to establish a program
- Working with the director of the State's Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) and our legal team to determine best way to align our approach and implement program
- Awaiting State’s HUB Office for guidance on proceeding as it finalizes execution of its Disparity Study recommendations

**5) Vendor Rotation:**
- The County already allows for vendor rotation, but it can be better used to assure MWBE utilization on routine and regular purchases.

**Status Update:**
- Refined process by rotating contracts with on-call or pre-qualified panel of firms on a fair and routine basis
- Improved Vendor Rotation will go live with Phase I rollout to be no later than June 2022

**6) Mandatory Subcontracting:**
- Contracts over certain thresholds must subcontract
- Provides more opportunities for SMWBEs

**Status Update:**
- Contract by contract goal setting for contracts over $300,000; the monetary threshold is noted in NC General Statue 143-128.2 – Minority Business Participation Goals

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**7) Strengthen Project Forecasting:**
- Allows for better planning
- Allows for Targeted Outreach
- Encourages Teaming

**Status Update:**
- With onboarding of new staff, we have the bandwidth to send targeted communication to businesses based on trade or industry on current and upcoming contractual opportunities
- Continuing to highlight Projects-at-a-Glance, host Outreach Events, and partner with business resource and advocacy organizations

**8) Supportive Services:**
- Helps firms to grow capacity and be better prepared to respond to bids (i.e., Technical Assistance, Business incubators, Financial Assistance, Loan Programs)

**Status Update:**
- Initiated the Business LaunchPad Program
- With onboarding of new staff, we have the bandwidth to increase attendance and participation at pre-bid meetings and conduct one-on-one and group consultation to businesses, interested bidders and subcontractors
- Introduced bilingual services (Spanish); OED document/information translation; meetings and sessions conducted in Spanish
- Refreshed Meck Lending Program through marketing and revising program requirements; seven (7) loans have been approved of which five (5) are to minority small businesses
### Recommendation Status Update

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| **9) Prompt Pay Ordinance:**  
- Assists small businesses to meet financial obligations  
- Penalties placed on prime contractors who delay payment  
- Contract compliance software can track subcontractor payments |  
- Refined process by strengthening language in guidance and establishing tracking mechanisms to include monthly pay applications, check-in meetings, and close-out process  
- Implemented electronic process for tracking payments utilizing the contract compliance software system  
- Updated guidance will go live with Phase I rollout to be no later than June 2022 |
| **10) Encourage Joint Ventures:**  
- Very large contracts ($5 Million or greater)  
- Helps build capacity |  
- Drafted preliminary provision guidance for joint ventures  
- Rollout to be implemented pending the hiring and onboarding of departmental approved positions and successful launch of Phase I |
| **11) Data Maintenance Reform:**  
- Revised Commodity Code Practices  
- Track award data  
- Implement subcontractor data system |  
- Procurement to lead data maintenance reform in partnership with BDI.  
- Crosswalk created between the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) and United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) Commodity Codes, the latter being more accessible to businesses and align to the State’s historical underutilized reporting requirements.  
- The programming of demographic information (race and gender) in the system of record (Advantage) is underway. This will assist in reporting of spend by demographics.  
- Deployed Compliance Software Solution (PRI$M), uploaded current vendors in system and developed training materials; internal and external training forthcoming |
In December 2020, a $300,000 grant was awarded by CLT Host 2020, Inc. to Mecklenburg County to create the Business LaunchPad Program. The goal of the program is to help minority- and woman-owned businesses be successful in governmental and institutional contracting and other aspects of business development. Funding was provided for two, 20-participant cohorts.

In partnership with Central Piedmont Community College Small Business Center (CPCC), the first cohort session was launched on August 12, 2021. The cohort received targeted hands-on workshops and instruction through a six-month, progressive development program, and completed the program on December 16, 2021. Applications for the second cohort totaled 108 and is scheduled to kickoff on January 13, 2022.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Applications Received</th>
<th>Participants Selected</th>
<th>Completed Program</th>
<th>Would Recommend Program</th>
<th>Contracts Awarded to Participants</th>
<th>Value of Contracts Awarded</th>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>91%</td>
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Cohort #1 Participant: “This program was PHENOMENAL”

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