

MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (MWBE) NEWSLETTER

Advancing equal opportunity in procurement to strengthen our school communities.

Summer 2016

Message from Theresa Wade, Diversity Management Unit Chief, Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management (OEO)

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) is committed to ensuring that all businesses, including Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), have an equal opportunity to compete for DOE contracts. Enhancing opportunities for all vendors, including MWBEs, is crucial to the DOE's success in providing a world-class education for a diverse student body. Casting a wide net for qualified suppliers from all segments of the community helps ensure that the DOE obtains creative, innovative and high-quality goods and services to meet the needs of our students and staff.

The DOE MWBE Newsletter is intended to serve as a useful resource for vendors and DOE staff by providing the most up-to-date and relevant information relating to the MWBE community and supplier diversity. We hope you find this Summer 2016 edition inspiring and informative.

Sincerely,



Theresa Wade, Esq.

Upcoming Events

***DOE Workshop: How to
Do Business with the NYC
Department of Education***

Wednesday, June 29, 2016
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Public Library
10 Grand Army Plaza
(Balcony Conference Room)
Brooklyn, NY 11238

RSVP by sending your full
name, email address and phone
number to:
wbc@bcnet.org

Learn about marketing your
business effectively to the DOE,
accessing resources available to
MWBEs, qualifying your
business as a vendor, and
available contracting
opportunities with the DOE.
For more information, please
contact [OEO](#).

*If you would like to request an
accommodation for this event,
please submit your request to
OEO at
OEODiversity@schools.nyc.gov
or (718) 935-4987.*

DID YOU KNOW?

The benefits of registering with the DOE's Vendor Portal include being able to:



- View current DOE solicitations;
- View solicitation requirements and download all necessary documents;
- Select specific goods and/or services so that all solicitations matching your selections will be automatically sent to you via email;
- View Purchase Orders; and
- Check your MWBE status.

To register, log onto <https://vendorportal.nycenet.edu>



- Familiarize yourself with **the DOE**:
 - Office and Programs: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/default.htm>;
 - Schools in the Community: <http://schools.nyc.gov/community/default.htm>;
- Review our “**Information for Vendors**” page: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DCP/Vendor/Default.htm>
- Attend a monthly “**How to do Business with the DOE**” workshop to learn about our procurement process and how to sign up to view solicitations.
- Learn more about the **Department of Small Business Services’ (SBS) Contract Financing program**: The DOE participates in the SBS Contract Financing program, which provides short-term working-capital for upfront expenses such as insurance, labor, and equipment for eligible MWBEs and other small businesses awarded contracts with the DOE. Find out more about Contract Financing at the site below. http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/nycbiz/html/growing/nyc_construction_loan.shtml



DOE MWBE COUNCIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

QUENIA ABREU

Quenia Abreu is the President, CEO and founder of the [New York Women's Chamber of Commerce](#) (NYWCC), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting women and other disadvantaged minorities achieve success and economic independence through business ownership, microenterprise and self-employment. Ms. Abreu currently sits on the DOE MWBE Diversity Council, as well as New York City's MWBE Advisory Council.

We spoke with Ms. Abreu about her role in supporting MWBEs.

Q. What propelled you to start NYWCC?

A. When I was director of the Hunts Point Economic Development Women's Business Center, women entrepreneurs often told me that the chambers of commerce they joined did not provide them with the kind of opportunities they were looking for. They also found it harder to foster business relationships within the existing male-dominated industries. NYWCC created structured events that placed its members in front of agencies and businesses, so they could access different business opportunities.

Q. What types of services does NYWCC provide?

A. NYWCC's mission is to be a business development service provider, tailored to address the needs of women business owners. NYWCC has an MWBE center that conducts outreach to MWBE firms to advocate for MWBE certification with [New York City](#), [New York State](#), [the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey](#), and other government agencies. MWBEs gain a tremendous benefit when they become certified because they are listed in MWBE directories, where they can be identified by city agencies for business opportunities. Many agencies have MWBE participation goals they seek to meet, and the only way they will know if a particular vendor is an MWBE is if it is certified. NYWCC also provides technical assistance in obtaining business loans and developing marketing plans.

Q. What advice do you have for MWBEs working to start and expand their businesses?

A. Look at what government agencies buy to see if opportunities exist for your product or service. The DOE spends billions of dollars annually on goods and services. Also, when you meet representatives from government agencies, be sure to follow-up with them. Develop a plan and do not sit on the sidelines.

Q. What are your goals for the DOE MWBE Diversity Council and MWBE procurement at the DOE?

A. I began serving on the Council this year and am very excited about it because I am a big advocate of the MWBE community. I see my role as bringing positive change by working alongside the DOE to see what can be done to improve MWBE participation. A current project we are planning is a roundtable event for MWBEs that will give us the opportunity to hear from them on what challenges they have faced, so that we can counsel them and determine what we can work on from our end to improve their participation.

Q. As a DOE MWBE Diversity Council member, what message do you have for MWBEs interested in doing business with the DOE?

A. Seek MWBE certification if you are not already certified. Familiarize yourself with the DOE and attend the workshops and seminars that it offers. Follow-up with DOE contacts and seek help from them if you need assistance. Also, be sure to actively seek out subcontracting opportunities with vendors who have prime contracts with DOE.

MWBE SUCCESS STORY SPOTLIGHT:



Follow Us to Success, a city-certified MWBE founded in 2013, specializes in comprehensive student support services, professional development, leadership training, and various continuing education certification courses customized to meet end user and client objectives. Follow Us began with a handful of advisors and now has over 100 individuals affiliated with the organization, who provide expertise across a range of areas from education, law enforcement, and workplace safety, to emergency response and other types of regulatory trainings. Follow Us has worked with the DOE's [Brooklyn Borough Field Support Center](#) and six partner DOE schools as a non-contracted vendor. Follow Us has also worked as a subcontractor for prime contractors working with the DOE.

MWBE Resources

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs)

Manhattan & Brooklyn
Dial 311 or (212) 513-6444
www.nyc.gov/SBS

Bronx
South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBro)
(718) 292-3113
www.sobro.org

Queens
LaGuardia Community College
(718) 482-5306
www.laguardia.edu/ptac/

Staten Island
West Brighton Community Local Development Corporation (WBCLDC)
(718) 816-4775
www.westbrightonldc.com

We spoke with Follow Us founder Sarah Dong to get an insider's look on the company's growth and success.

Q. Follow Us has been successful doing business with DOE as a non-contracted vendor, securing smaller business opportunities directly with schools and offices through informal purchases. What strategies did you use to attain business opportunities with DOE as a non-contracted vendor?

A. I emailed and cold-called schools to speak with teachers and guidance counselors to determine the need for supplemental student services. I also reached out to Parent Teacher Associations and gave free workshops on the services we provide. I believe our genuine passion and persistence set us apart from other vendors. I feel strongly about helping New York City students bridge the gap in post-secondary education, and we set high standards for our students. We also provide excellent services at reasonable prices because we know that school budgets are stretched thin. In addition, we provide niche services that the DOE administration might not be able to handle themselves, such as assisting undocumented students find appropriate post-secondary education, and focusing on parent engagement. Also, whenever I had a question, I consulted with DOE's [Vendor Hotline](#).

Q. Follow Us has also been successful working as a subcontractor. How did Follow Us secure opportunities to provide its services as a subcontractor on DOE contracts?

A. When I was inquiring after subcontracting opportunities, DOE's Vendor Hotline suggested that I look online to find the list of current [Multiple Task Award Contracts](#) (MTACs) and the associated prime contractors. The Vendor Hotline also helped me formulate strategies on how to approach the prime contractors of the MTACS. I then reached out to prime contractors and made sure to conduct follow-up after the initial contact. One of the most common mistakes I see vendors commit is failing to follow-up. I've also demonstrated to be a trustworthy partner by providing good references, meeting with prospective partners, and being open with what I am looking for. Viewing others as potential partners and not just as competitors is important.

Q. Follow Us became certified as an MWBE six months ago. How has MWBE certification impacted the company's business?

A. Becoming certified has opened doors and provided us with countless business opportunities. We also now regularly receive invitations to networking events, business development workshops, and procurement fairs.

Q. What other advice can you offer to MWBEs?

A. Take advantage of the services offered by SBS. Get MWBE certified and work with your local Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC).

WON A DOE CONTRACT? SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY!

Are you an MWBE doing business with the DOE? Tell us your story and we may feature you in the next issue of the DOE MWBE Newsletter! We want to hear what worked, what didn't work, and tips you may have for fellow vendors. Submit your success story to OEODiversity@schools.nyc.gov.