



Office of Supplier Diversity
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Governor Charlie Crist

Secretary Linda H. South

April 20, 2009

Mr. L. Jay Burks, Executive Director
Office of Minority & Women Business Enterprise
Office of Management & Budget
Haslet Armory
122 William Penn Street
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Mr. Burks:

It has been a pleasure working with you as part of the Insight Center's state-to-state mentor program. We commend your hard work and efforts to ensure support to minority- and women-owned businesses. Through our strategic partnership agreement with the Insight Center for Community Economic Development, we agreed to provide formal recommendations.

Based on your March 2-3 visit to Florida and our subsequent March 30-31 visit to Delaware, we offer these suggestions for the Office of Minority and Women Business Enterprise:

1. Comprehensive statewide strategy and appropriate resources to execute program.
2. Enhance Web site with less words on the home page to increase online traffic.
3. Monitor, report and post spending for all small businesses particularly minority- and women-owned businesses. Include certified, non-certified and all subcontracting dollars.
4. Create a series of business development seminars focused on doing business with the state and benefits of state certification.

The foundation of our recommendations revolves around policy, partnerships, reporting, accountability and open government. Our intent is to see your office become Delaware's "one-stop" resource center for the customers you serve. Based on data collection and sharing of information, we offer several recommendations to take your program to the next level.

Finding #1: There is an informal process and procedures used to carry out the mission of your office including the certification process; however, currently, no legislation or rules outline the roles and scope of your program. Consider action to change that and avoid litigation. There also appears to be a consensus to create a supplier diversity program for small businesses including those owned and operated by veterans, minorities and women.

We serve those who serve Florida.

Page Two

Recommendation: Draft legislation and/or an Executive Order to outline all aspects of a supplier diversity program that includes small businesses and those owned and operated by veterans, minorities and women. This should include but not be limited to: outlining the governor's mission and vision of the program, definitions for types of businesses served, state agency/university expectations, certification eligibility, certification process, reporting expenditures and other initiatives to support small business owners.

Finding #2: After speaking to several business owners and stakeholders, we learned information about doing business with the state and details on state expenditures are not easily accessible.

Recommendation: Draft legislation and/or an Executive Order for open government and transparency of all records. Also, create a central location for business owners to view all state expenditures and spending with small business owners (including minority- and women-owned business enterprises).

Finding #3: There are vendor registration sites with multiple state agencies. Business owners are frustrated to seek state opportunities due to various registration sites, little notification of state solicitation and the cost.

Recommendation: Create a centralized vendor registration system connecting all state agencies and develop an automated e-mail notification system to alert vendors about solicitations that match their abilities. This increases efficiency and allows for better data collection, sharing of information, less data entry and eliminates the hassle to business owners.

Finding #4: There appears to be little to no constant dialogue between the state and business support groups, chambers of commerce or other entities with similar goals.

Recommendation: Set a monthly or quarterly meeting with the senior official of various stakeholders to keep them updated on state initiatives and new developments. This should also allow for ongoing information sharing and an idea sharing medium. Groups to consider include but are not limited to local chambers of commerce, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, business associations and other support groups.

Overall, we see bright spots with the future of your program. With your leadership and the commitment of your state leaders, we believe your program will be second to none! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Torey L. Alston
Executive Director

TLA/dw