

Celebrate Diversity

#MOCelebratesDiversity



INCLUSION EFFORTS THROUGH SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

by Joy Harris-Bird, OEO Minority/Women Coordinator

Before, we have highlighted and celebrated workforce diversity. This month, we will discuss supplier diversity. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) certifies Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE). This allows businesses to provide products and services to state agencies across Missouri. OEO works to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace. OEO also works to increase diversity in the businesses we, the State, buy from.

MINORITY/WOMEN COORDINATOR

“In my role, I determine eligibility for certification, provide access to information, and advocate for underutilized businesses. It is my goal to encourage the use of Minority- and Woman-owned business owners.”

-Joy Harris-Bird

WHAT IS THE SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM?

Supplier diversity programs promote the use of underutilized businesses. Federal, state, and private organizations use these programs for that reason. Supplier diversity is key to the advancement of true equality and inclusion. Statistics show that organizations with diverse supply chains are more profitable.

WHAT IS MBE/WBE CERTIFICATION?

OEO issues the MBE/WBE certification for the state of Missouri. MBE/WBE's are at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by a minority or woman. There are other certifying entities in the state of Missouri. OA's Division of Purchasing houses a Service Disabled Veteran Enterprise (SDVE) self-certification. Missouri Department of Transportation houses the federally recognized Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF OUR MBE/WBE CERTIFICATION?

Most contracts with the state require an effort to include MBE and WBE participation. Certification validates and recognizes a business as Minority or Women-owned. Once certified, the vendor will appear in OEO's MBE/WBE database. Agencies, contractors, and others looking to work with MBEs and WBEs use this database. Certified

businesses receive extra points when they bid on contracts. This can give them an overall-score advantage over other non-MBE/WBE competitors.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Diversity and inclusion is invaluable in the workplace – to the workforce and suppliers. You can help support diversity and inclusion by sharing information about these programs. By embracing our differences, we are creating an inclusive workplace for all. Teamwork is the heart of great achievement. Together we can achieve great things for the citizens of Missouri!