



2014

# Annual Report



The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises  
Annual Report

Table of Contents

**Introduction**

Message from the Director
Policy Advisory Committee
Vision, Mission and Value Pillars
History and Current Organizational Structure

**Operations**

Certification
Linked Deposit Program
Staff Development
Inter-Agency Communications
Strategic Planning

**Business Development and Outreach**

Increased Awareness
Certification Training Events
Get Certified Campaign
Virtual Outreach: Social Media, YouTube and Website

**Legislative Session and Policy**

Legislative Session
Rulemaking
Policies



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# The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Annual Report

## Message from the Director

Dear Stakeholders,

This year marked great reflection and great progress for the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises. As our country and the agency turns to the next chapter, we are redefining the progress for economic equality for the next generation.

This year, our country celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This historic legislation provided the basis for affirmative action programs like the Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program and government supplier diversity programs. Many, including Washington State, marked this moment with great remembrance of the sacrifices for civil rights.



Similarly, OMWBE started the year with great reflection on our past. We invited great community activists and leaders to speak about and inspire us about their vision for the agency over 30 years ago. The staff internalized that spark of the past to fuel our strategic planning process. In collaboration with the Office of Financial Management, the staff created a roadmap for OMWBE to be the primary source for education, outreach and certification along with eliminating economic discrimination in government contracting and procurement. The OMWBE staff quickly began to realize the vision with great success. Some of the highlights in the annual report are:

Outreach - For the first time in agency history, OMWBE embarked on a massive statewide campaign to bring awareness to certification and government contracts as an opportunity for small business growth. This assisted with the agency's biggest hurdle; lack of awareness about our programs. The "Get Certified Campaign" was a joint effort with many of our agency partners. Staff visited over 30 different locations across Washington State and reached over 200 firms in four days. The week culminated in a "Meet the Prime" event with approximately 300 firms in attendance.

Education - OMWBE strived to realize our value pillars of innovation and being customer-driven by providing more tools to assist firms successfully obtain government contracts. OMWBE launched its own YouTube channel to provide educational webinars on certification and improving success in winning government contracts.

Advocacy and accountability -The staff at OMWBE recognized that meaningful certification must connect to meaningful utilization by state agencies. We successfully increased our compliance with state agencies and higher education institutions to utilize more certified minority and women owned businesses through Governor Inslee's Results WA. As a result, we increased certification by 20% in one quarter.

Once again, I end this year with great humility and thankfulness to be a part of the OMWBE team. The staff, better known as, "Guardians of Civil Rights," are dedicated public servants that go beyond each day knowing that they are not just connecting with businesses; they are dream makers providing hope for many Washington families.

Respectfully Yours,

Alexis Oliver, Director

The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises  
Annual Report

Policy Advisory Committee

The Policy Advisory Committee is an invaluable stakeholder group that assists the agency director in achieving the spirit and letter of RCW 39.19. The Policy Advisory Committee:

- Provides a link between the community, government, and advocates
- Represents and supports certified firms
- Fosters effective working relationships with stakeholders
- Provides education and training opportunities
- Shares and solicits best practices for the growth and development of minority and women business enterprises

The committee is composed of the following dedicated individuals:

Member's Name	Organization
Ollie Garrett	Tabor 100 / PMT Solutions
Regina Glenn	Pacific Communications Consultants, Inc.
Colleen Hall Barta	CH Sustainable Design and Support Services
Grover Johnson	A. Philip Randolph Institute, Tacoma Chapter
Leslie Jones	Sound Transit
Kara Larsen	Department of Transportation
Frank Lemos	LDC, Inc.
Luis Navarro	Port of Seattle
Irene Reyes	Excel Supply Company, Inc.
Vicky Schiantarelli	Seattle Public Utilities
Cheryl Smith	Department of Commerce

## Vision, Mission and Value Pillars

### Vision

We are Washington State's primary source for the education and certification of minority, women, and disadvantaged businesses. We strive to eliminate economic discrimination in the procurement process and government contracting opportunities. OMWBE will encourage meaningful outreach and empowerment for the small business community.

### Mission

Our mission is to optimize and ensure equity and opportunity for small businesses owned by minorities, women, and the disadvantaged through education, certification, and outreach.

### Value Pillars

OMWBE exists to fulfill its mission to educate and empower small and disadvantaged businesses in small business and procurement opportunities. To achieve this, we focus on eight pillars:

- Collaboration
- Customer-Driven
- Dedication
- Empowerment
- Equity
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Transparency

**Collaboration:** Working as a team, we partner with small businesses, contractors and stakeholders to increase opportunities in government contracting.

**Customer-Driven:** We proactively pursue suggestions, ideas, and creative approaches, leading to continuous improvement in everything we do.

**Dedication:** We are proudly committed to providing outstanding customer service.

**Empowerment:** Enabling customers to independently realize their potential and transform ideas into desired outcomes.

**Equity:** We are committed to breaking down institutional barriers and respectfully embracing cultural differences to provide more responsive service.

**Innovation:** Utilize technology and process improvement to optimize inter and cross agency productivity/performance.

**Integrity:** Maintaining strong ethical practices, honest values and open trust.

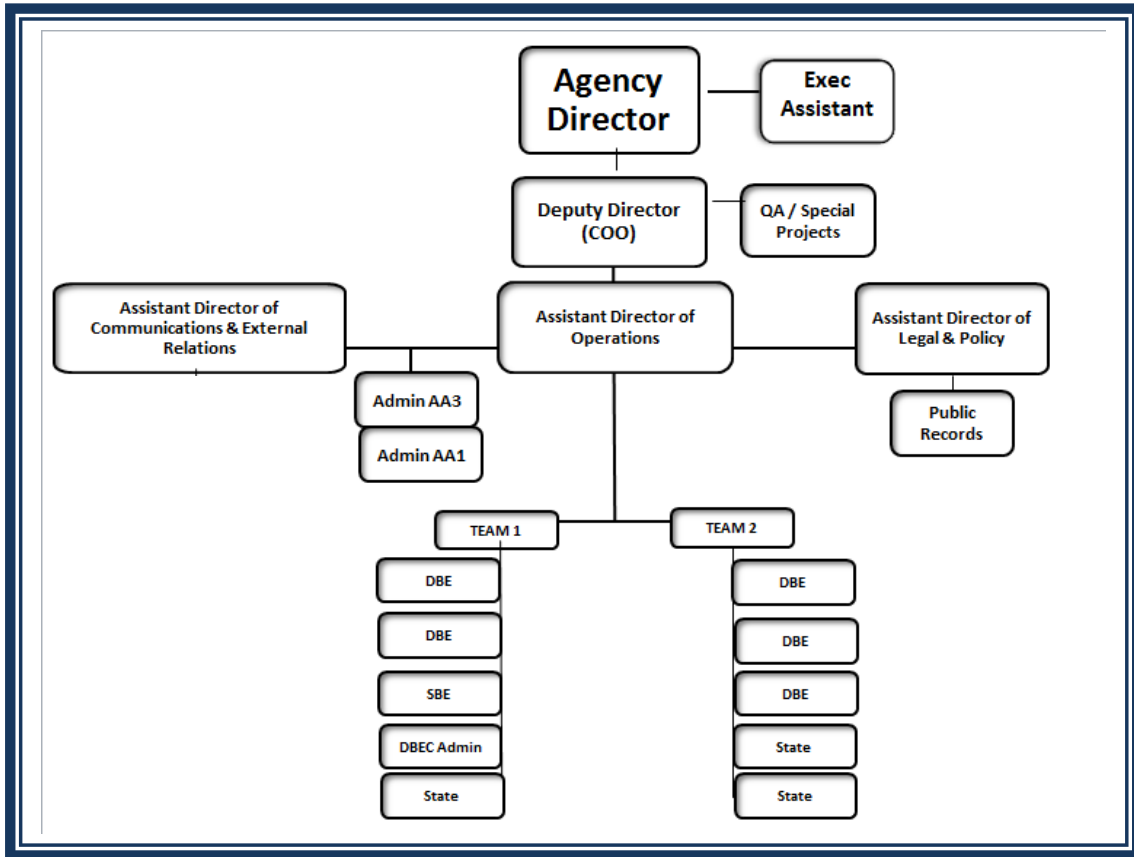
**Transparency:** Leading by example, we are committed to an open government that is accessible to anyone, anytime, anywhere; and responsive to new ideas and demands.

# The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Annual Report

## History and Current Organizational Structure

This year OMWBE celebrated its 31<sup>st</sup> year as a state agency. OMWBE first opened its doors on July 1, 1983. The Office, proposed by Governor John Spellman, exists to ensure that a reasonable amount of the state's contracts for goods, services and public works were awarded to minority and women-owned businesses. Senate Bill 3230, which created OMWBE, was designed to reduce societal discrimination by setting forth a policy that more participation by minority and women-owned firms is desirable at all levels of government. The legislation designated that participation would be measured in terms of goals. The first MWBE goals were 9.1% for Minority Business Enterprises and 3% for Women's Business Enterprises.

### 2014 Organizational Chart



# The Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Annual Report

## Operations

This year, OMWBE operations improved in sophistication of the certification process, staff development, and lead enterprise economic development goals. OMWBE certification and engagement with small firms are vast from certifying new applications in the state and/or federal programs, to on-going renewals required for both the state and federal programs. OMWBE improved the processing and approval of loan enrollment applications for the Washington State Linked Deposit Program. Additionally, OMWBE continues to collaborate in inter-agency communications, internal staff development, and Performance Development Plans. OMWBE continues to be dedicated to long term strategic planning and is a vital agency lead as part of Governor Inslee's Results Washington and GovStat reporting.

### **CERTIFICATION**

OMWBE is the regulatory agency that verifies minority and women-owned businesses for participation in federal programs under 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 26 and utilization in state public works and procurement of goods and services through a process called certification.

OMWBE serves as Washington's sole Unified Certification Program. Federally certified firms are eligible to participate in transportation specific federal projects including construction work on rails, roads, bridges, airports, and seaports. This certification is specifically for those firms that perform transportation related scopes of work funded by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), and its transportation modes, including the Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

During 2014, OWMBE continued to offer three federal certifications:

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- Airport Concessionaire Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)
- Small Business Enterprise (SBE)

On November 3, 2014, United States Department of Transportation issued a final rule amending its DBE program (49 CFR Part 26). The final rule improves DBE program implementation in three major areas. First, the rule revises the uniform certification application and reporting forms, creates a uniform personal net worth form for use by applicant owners, and collects data required by the Department's surface transportation reauthorization, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Second, the rule strengthens the certification-related program provisions, which includes adding a new section authorizing summary suspensions under specified circumstances. Third, the rule modifies several other program provisions concerning overall goal setting, good faith efforts, transit vehicle manufacturers, and counting for trucking companies.

During 2014, 174 firms submitted information for federal certification. OMWBE engaged with these firms through a more customer-driven certification process. As a result:

- OMWBE certified 123 firms
- OMWBE denied 16 firms
- 35 firms voluntarily withdrew from the certification process

Once a firm is federally certified, the applicant is required to provide an annual affidavit affirming that there have been no changes in the firm's circumstances affecting its ability to qualify for the program. This is known as the annual update. This process ensures that certified firms continue to meet eligibility requirements. In the event a firm no longer qualifies, the firm is decertified and removed as a certified firm.

OMWBE processed 367 annual updates. As a result:

- OMWBE renewed 303 firms to remain in the federal DBE program
- OMWBE decertified 64 firms from the federal DBE program

The main reasons for decertification of firms in the federal DBE program are that the firms either went out of business or failed to respond to the requested documentation needed to process their annual update.

State certified firms are utilized by state and local governments for contracting in public works and procurement of goods and services. Some private sector companies recognize and use OMWBE's state certified firms for their supplier diversity goals. The state program consists of the following five different certification designations:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Minority Women's Business Enterprise (MWBE)
- Combination Business Enterprise (CBE)
- Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (SEDBE)

During 2014, 335 firms submitted information for state certification. OMWBE engaged these firms through a more customer-driven certification process. As a result:

- OMWBE certified 238 firms
- OMWBE denied 32 firms
- 65 firms voluntarily withdrew from the state certification process



A state certified firm completes a renewal process similar to federally certified firm; however, the state renewal process is conducted every three years. The state renewal process is recertification. The recertification process similarly ensures that the firm maintains eligibility for the state program.

For the state certification program, OMWBE processed 977 recertifications in 2014. As a result:

- OMWBE renewed 501 firms
- OMWBE decertified 476 firms

The main reasons for decertification of firms in the state program are that the firms either went out of business or failed to respond to the requested documentation needed to process their Recertification.

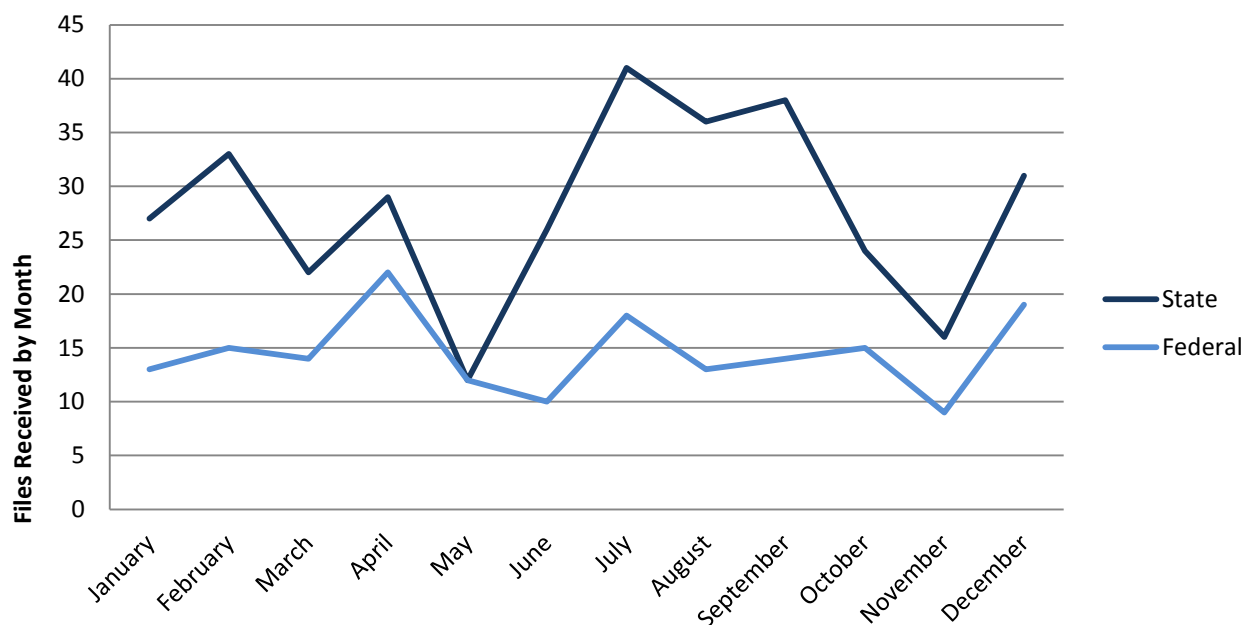
### New State and Federal Applications Received by Month

New state applications accounted for 66% of all new applications received by OMWBE during 2014. The remaining 34% came from businesses applying for the federal certification program.

OMWBE received an average of 14.5 new federal certification applications each month, ranging from 11 to 19. OMWBE received an average of 28 new state applications each month, ranging from 12 to 41.

The graph below, Figure 1, represents the number of new state and federal certification applications received by month.

Figure 1



## Number of Onsites

All new federal certification applications require that a site visit (onsite) be conducted at the firm's place of business. If the firm has an active job site, OMWBE will visit the job site to further review the scope of work performed by an applicant firm. This allows further evaluation that the eligible owner has the technical knowledge to control the scope of work for which the firm is seeking certification. In addition, OMWBE performs onsite every four years to ensure that OMWBE has a detailed and accurate business description of the work being executed by the certified firm, and that the eligible owner(s) are still in control of the firm.

The chart in figure 2 shows a by month breakdown of the 129 onsite OMWBE conducted during 2014. Of the 129 onsites conducted, 53 were for new applications and the remaining 76 for currently certified firms that have not had an onsite completed within the last 4 years.

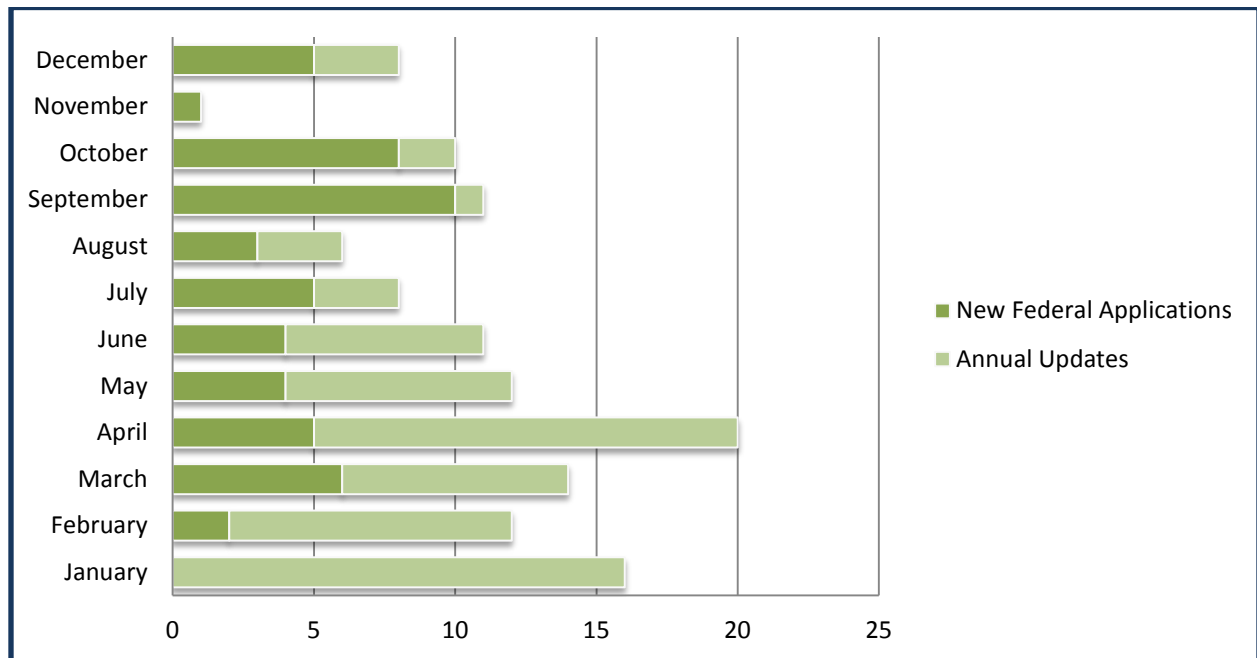


Figure 2

## Distribution of State and Federal Certified Firms

In Washington State, there are 2,199 certified firms. OMWBE has certified firms in 33 of the 39 counties in the State. The map in Figure 3 shows the distribution of certified firms across the 39 counties.

Figure 3



## Out-of-State Certified Firms

In addition to the certified firms located in Washington State, OMWBE has certified 226 out-of-state based firms. These 226 firms include firms certified in either the state or federal program. The majority of OMWBE's out-of-state firms are located in Oregon.

## Timeliness of certification processing

OMWBE strived to complete new application processing with quality and timeliness. OMWBE made a commitment to the Office of the Governor to process new state applications in 45 days. Per federal regulation, OMWBE is required to complete new federal applications within 90 days and federal out-of-state new applications within 60 days. The timeframe to process new applications does not begin until OMWBE is in receipt of a complete application with all necessary supporting documentation.

OMWBE collaborated with the Governor's Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) to lean the current certification process. With the assistance of ORIA, OMWBE has found 24 ways to lean the current certification process to make the process easier for our customers.

## **LINKED DEPOSIT PROGRAM (LDP)**

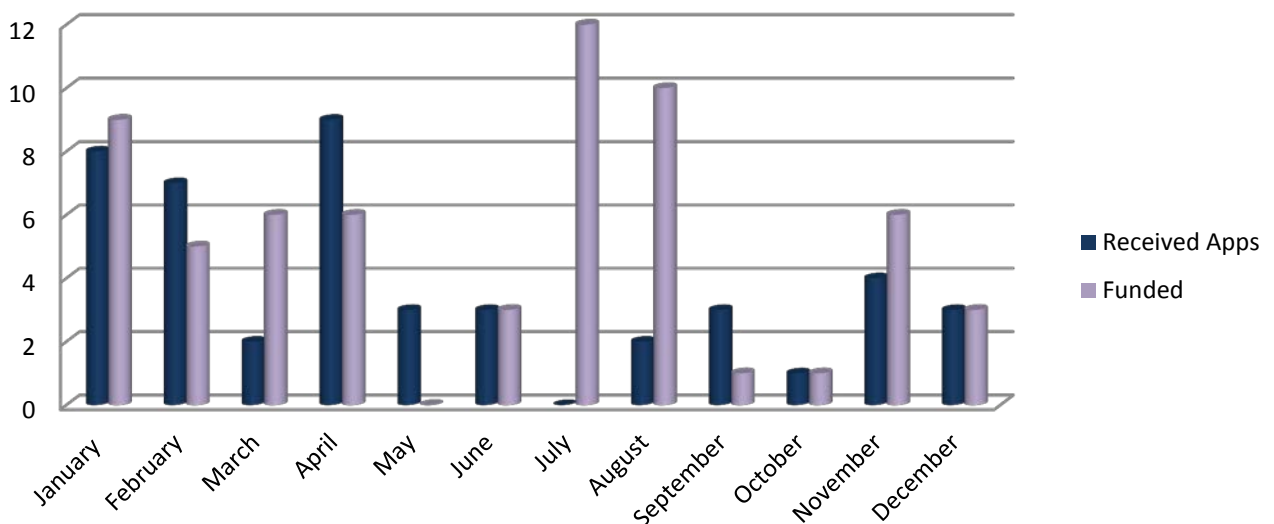
The Washington State Legislature found that minority and women-owned businesses were historically denied access to capital and that lack of capital was a key barrier to the development their businesses. In response, the legislature passed the 1993 Minority and Women Owned Business Assistance Act, which created the Linked Deposit Program (LDP).

The State Treasurer is authorized to use up to \$175 million (as of 6/12/08) of the State's short-term surplus funds to purchase certificates of deposit in an amount equivalent to the amount financial institutions loan to certified minority and women's business enterprises.

For a firm to be eligible for a LDP loan, the firm in conjunction with a participating bank must complete a loan enrollment form. OMWBE is responsible for approving enrollment forms of certified firms to receive loan funds at a participating bank and tracking firms on the waitlist. Since its inception, the linked deposit program remains a very popular program to provide minority and women owned businesses access to capital. Throughout most of the year, OMWBE must manage a waitlist to approve receipt of matching surplus funds for loans by the certified firms.

At the end of 2014, there were 380 outstanding loans with 310 firms involved in the LDP. Firms may enroll in the LDP for more than one loan. During 2014, OMWBE received 45 LDP loan enrollment forms, of which participating banks offered 62 loans with LDP funds at a reduced interest rate. The reason the number of offered loans is higher than the received LDP loan enrollment requests is due to the LDP waitlist from 2013. The average funded loan amount for 2014 was \$398,550. Figure 4 shows a representation of the amount of LDP enrollment forms received and the number of firms offered LDP funds by month.

**Linked Deposit Application Received and Funded by Month**



**Figure 4**

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

In an effort to continue OMWBE's Lean efforts, OMWBE employees attended the Washington State Government Lean Transformation Conference, giving employees' increased knowledge and understanding of Lean and generating opportunities for improvement in our work processes. OMWBE continues to focus on providing excellent customer service and building a positive reputation among the small business community. All OMWBE staff completed online customer service training. Lastly, OMWBE federal certification analysts attended a staff development workshop hosted by the Federal Highway Administration focusing on the federal regulation changes to CFR 49 Part 26.

## **INTER-AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

OMWBE strategically used inter-agency communication to bring together representatives from various state and federal agencies to address regulatory interpretations. OMWBE continues to host meetings with Washington State's Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Department of Enterprise Services, Office of Financial Management, Department of Financial Institutions, three ethnic commissions, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, the Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance, and other state agencies, commissions, offices, and quasi-agencies.

The agency also hosts regular monthly meeting with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), and WSDOT to similarly interpret federal regulations.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The OMWBE team continues to meet quarterly to review our progress towards our strategic plan, business plan goals and objectives.

## Business Development and Outreach

OMWBE continues to develop processes that encourage the use of certified firms to contribute to the prosperity of the Washington State economy. In 2014, OMWBE focused on strengthening its relationships with other agencies to help support the minority and women business community and ultimately the citizens of Washington State.

### **INCREASED AWARENESS**

OMWBE restructured its outreach program to better target potential minority and women owned businesses, ultimately increasing the number of OMWBE firm applicants. OMWBE collaborated with local groups and organizations that focus on minority and women owned businesses to help spread the word about the different types of certification and Linked Deposit programs. OMWBE participated in outreach to firms by collaborating with the following organizations:

- Astra Women's Business Alliance
- Architects Engineers and Agencies Subcommittee (AEA)
- Capital Projects Advisory Review Board (CPARB)
- City of Seattle
- City of Tacoma
- Department of Enterprise Services (DES)
- King County
- National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC)
- Native American Procurement Council Assistance Center (Native American PTAC)
- Northwest Minority Supplier Development Council
- Port of Seattle
- Procurement Council Assistance Center (PTAC)
- Regional Contracting Forum
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Small Business Transportation Resource Center
- Sound Transit
- TABOR 100
- Veteran's Affairs
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Washington Health Benefit Exchange

OMWBE participated in radio programs conducted in the Spanish and Korean languages. Additionally, OMWBE attended numerous “meet the prime” events, an opportunity for certified firms to network with prime contractors.

### **CERTIFICATION TRAINING EVENTS**

In 2014, OMWBE held 40 external certification workshops in 18 different cities. A variety of prime contractors hosted these workshops in an effort to increase certified firms in areas where few firms are certified (i.e. concrete work). The workshops were an opportunity for OMWBE to work directly with firms regarding the certification process, documentation requirements, and to answer questions. OMWBE had staff available to meet one-on-one with the firms to review their application materials, answer any questions and accept completed applications. This targeted work with the prime contractors increased our state applications by 12% over the state applications received in 2013. Additionally, we also reduced the amount of withdrawals and denials by 50% with the assistance of better certification education with firms.

### **GET CERTIFIED CAMPAIGN**

In January 2014, OMWBE embarked on its most audacious marketing campaign in the agency’s history. Building on the internal success of the past year, OMWBE strengthened its relationships with the Governor’s office, WSDOT, Sound Transit, and PTAC by developing the “Get Certified Campaign.” The mission of the campaign is to bring awareness about the benefits of certification as an entry into government contracting and the potential firm growth. Through strong collaboration, OMWBE met with over 200 firms across the state of Washington in 33 different locations during a 4-day roadshow.

Built on the strength of the Governor Inslee’s commitment to minority and women-owned businesses, OMWBE garnered excellent press coverage across the state bringing forth awareness about the agency’s programs. The roadshow culminated with a “meet the prime” event. This was an opportunity for over 300 firms to network with governmental agencies, non-profits, and private sector businesses to increase their opportunities in obtaining contractual work.

Governor Inslee’s Proclamation declaring January 20-24, 2014 as Minority and Women Business Week follows.

# The State of Washington



## Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the vital role minority and women-owned businesses have in not only our daily lives but also the significant contributions these businesses make to our state's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, minority and women-owned businesses are often under-utilized in government contracting and procurement; and

**WHEREAS**, with our economy recovering, our investments in minority and women-owned and operated firms will help create jobs, strengthen families and build ladders of opportunity in underserved communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) has been the lead agency in certifying minority and women-owned businesses so they may obtain state contracts and procurement opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, OMWBE has partnered with agencies like the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration, Sound Transit and the Washington State Procurement Technical Assistance Center to educate minority and women-owned businesses on the benefits of certification; and

**WHEREAS**, OMWBE is launching a campaign to travel the state of Washington to educate and certify minority and women-owned businesses;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim January 20-24, 2014 as

### ***Minority and Women-owned Business Week***

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.



Signed this 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2013

Governor Jay Inslee



## **OMWBE VIRTUAL OUTREACH: SOCIAL MEDIA, YOUTUBE AND WEBSITE**

OMWBE was actively engaged in marketing through various social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This past year's social media marketing efforts were to drive traffic to OMWBE's website and increase visibility with the public.

- We have about 7,191 unique visitors per month and average about 330 each business day.
- On the getcertifiednw.com site, we received 3,217 signups for newsletters and updates.
- The Top 5 most popular pages on the OMWBE site are Bids, Directory of Certified Firms, Survey, Certification, Resources for Small Businesses.
- The top ten referrer Websites are: [www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov), [bls.dor.wa.gov](http://bls.dor.wa.gov), [www.seattle.gov](http://www.seattle.gov), [access.wa.gov](http://access.wa.gov), [search.usa.gov](http://search.usa.gov), [r.search.yahoo.com](http://r.search.yahoo.com), [www.oria.wa.gov](http://www.oria.wa.gov), [des.wa.gov](http://des.wa.gov), [www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov), and [www.kingcounty.gov](http://www.kingcounty.gov).

OMWBE launched its own YouTube channel. The YouTube channel contains OMWBE created webinars, which are also available on OMWBE's website. The webinars are designed to explain the certification process for those unfamiliar with certification and the world of government contracting. Additionally, the YouTube channel contains more advanced webinars that explain what to do once certified to increase the chances of obtaining a government contract. Further, OMWBE is developing webinars regarding capital and finance: two issues that are a historical barrier for minority and women-owned firms.

This year we have added a "Get Certified" tab to our website to share information about the Get Certified Campaign and register for certification workshops. On a daily basis, we are enhancing the website to make it more customer-friendly and a better resource for Washington's small businesses. OMWBE posted small business opportunities daily including:

- Resources for small businesses
- Bid and contracting opportunities
- Calendar of events

The website also includes information pertaining to the specific certification types offered by OMWBE, as well as the applications. OMWBE also manages a publicly available directory of all certified firms that is updated in real-time. Further, the website includes information regarding the LDP and the required loan enrollment form.

## Legislative Session and Policy

### **LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

RCW 39.19.030(3) states that OMWBE must, "Identify barriers to equal participation by qualified minority and women-owned and controlled businesses for each state agency and educational institution." During the 2014 legislative session, OMWBE embarked on realizing its statutory duty by the introduction of bills (HB 2307 and SB 6497) that would allow for the collection of assessed penalties in the agency's revolving account. The OMWBE penalties bill would allow OMWBE to recoup some of the costs associated with assessing fees against businesses that have committed acts of wrong doing in obtaining or maintaining certification. Recouping fees assessed will allow for continuous improvement in program accountability. With the agency's first legislative session attempt, OMWBE successfully worked with the Senate to get it passed unanimously. OMWBE will work on repeating this effort in the House and to the Governor's desk for signature.

OMWBE further focused on building policy and budgetary resources to strengthen accountability in the certification programs. Through efficient advocacy, OMWBE increased its budget by over 25% to support funding for adjudicative proceedings with the Office of Administrative Hearings and Attorney General's Office. In addition, the conversation with the legislature about the benefit of the federal DBE program resulted in a budget proviso to allow the agency to collect fees from local entities to fully support the federal DBE program. This will allow OMWBE to hire an investigator, an additional certification analyst, an outreach person, and an administrative assistant to support those employees. It will also help OMWBE further improve its IT efforts and provide on-line applications.

### **RULEMAKING**

In 2014, OMWBE started building on its administrative duties by embarking on an extensive rule-making process. This is a significant undertaking since OMWBE's administrative code has not been updated in more than a decade. OMWBE collaborated with the Governor's Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) to lean the current certification process and determine how to edit and rework the certification rules under WAC 326-20. This is an on-going process, but OMWBE, with the assistance of ORIA, has found 24 ways to lean the current certification process to make the process easier for our customers and our staff. OMWBE has also been working with ORIA to change WAC 326-02-034, which would allow us to collect fees to support our federal certification process as required by the budget proviso mentioned above.

On December 10, 2014, OMWBE filed a CR101, which is a notice of intent to amend the existing WAC to include the fee to support the federal program and possibly amend the state fee structure. OMWBE held two stakeholder meetings, one in Seattle (which was also available via WebEx) and in Spokane. Due to low participation, OMWBE sent out specific questions to the local entities likely affected by the rule-making changes. OMWBE will continue to work with ORIA on these two significant portions of the administrative code in the upcoming year.

## **POLICIES**

Since the inception of the agency, OMWBE lacked comprehensive administrative policies to guide the staff and others regarding the process, procedures, and functions of the agency. Under the guidance of OMWBE's legal and policy, along with staff input, the agency successfully completed a comprehensive policy manual. This effort mitigates the agency's liability and risk while providing clear guidance to staff on the proper role, function, and procedures of the office.



Washington State Office of

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