Pathways And Connections

Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office

News and events from the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)

February 2026

Resources for Diverse and Small Businesses

Open Bid Opportunities on COMMBUYS

SDO and Commonwealth Training Opportunities

Directory of Certified Businesses

Contract Opportunities with the 2026 World Cup in Boston

The FIFA World Cup™ Boston 2026 Committee has organized a Local Impact Supplier Program which will identify ready-to-work local suppliers that will be able to participate in FIFA World Cup™ Boston 2026 events. Suppliers needed will include:

- Event Management
- Catering
- Transportation
- Security
- Sanitation
- Event Production

Interested businesses can fill out FIFA's Business Opportunities Form to get started and receive updates and information as opportunities become available.

Get more information and access the form here.

Don't forget to review more bidding opportunities below!

Celebrating Black History Month

In February we celebrate Black History Month, where we acknowledge the contributions and achievements of Black Americans.

In the spirit of Black History Month, here are a few of our certified Black-Owned businesses who have found recent success!

Nadidah Coveney, the owner of CTM Consulting Group, announced

Congratulations, your business is now SDO certified! Your certification with the SDO is valid for three years - so how can you best utilize it? The presentation will answer your question in three parts:

1. Depending on what type of product or service a business provides, there may be an opportunity for certified entities to participate in state contracting. Small business purchasing is also very important to Commonwealth agencies. We will review these two routes to state contracting.
2. If you're interested in contracting with the state or a municipality, you'll need to get familiar with the state's online procurement system named Commbuys. We'll be presenting a few tips and tricks for navigating the site.
3. Not interested in working with the state or local governments? No problem, this event is still for you. While the SDO's primary function is to get folks informed about and prepared for statewide contracting, it's not always the best fit for every business. We have a host of resources and connections we'll be sharing as well.

This event will also include guest presentations from representatives from the Latin American Business Organization (LABO) and the Massachusetts Women of Color Coalition (MAWOCC). The theme for both their participation is sharing on success stories and their work related to certification.

Event details:

- Wednesday, February 18
- 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Worcester Public Library

Register here!

Learn how to grow your business at this upcoming event:

Explore Veteran Entrepreneurship: Business Idea Lab

Wednesday, February 11

10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Virtual

Register here!

Celebrating your Success Stories!

This month, the SDO celebrates these successes from certified businesses:

- Boston BuildHERS was featured in Caught in Southie, a local city blog. The feature told the story of Boston BuildHERS, how they started, who the business is helping, and celebrated the SCALE grant! You can read the blog entry here.

- Communication via Design (CviaD) Helped create a modern and efficient website for the Massachusetts Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC). GMAC's previous digital platform lacked accessibility, organization, and clarity—barriers to engaging the diverse audiences they aim to serve. In partnership with Synapse Energy Economics and Mass.gov, CviaD led the strategy, design, and development of a custom digital platform. With a mobile-first, accessible interface, robust resource library, and dynamic event calendar, the website now transforms how energy information is shared and accessed across Massachusetts.

- Frank Higgins & Co. was the flooring contractor for the new eight-story clinical tower expansion at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford. The $300 million project prioritizes collaborative spaces like multidisciplinary nurse stations and oversized fetal operating rooms to accommodate complex mother-child surgeries, while expanding capacity with 76 new beds, a 50,000-square-foot neonatal intensive care unit, enhanced behavioral health and cancer services, and a national fetal care center. M. Frank Higgins was honored to be the flooring contractor for this large pediatric hospital project. Their highly skilled team expertly installed the specialized flooring to invoke the wonder and imaginations of the kids who will cross the threshold. This project has been submitted for a 2026 Starnet Design Award

in the healthcare category. Learn more about the expansion in this video.

- Terapix was fortunate enough to be the recipient of the Veronica Robles Cultural Center Latino Entrepreneurship Grant in 2025. Terapix was featured in various news outlets like the East Boston Times and were able to use the grant funding to give back to the Latino community in Boston. With that funding, the company was able to offer three mental health sessions to 20 East Boston residents for free! Lowering the barrier and making mental health more accessible has always been key to Terapix's mission, and they're grateful that the Veronica Robles Cultural Center was able to help further the company's mission in that way.

Want to tell us about your recent success? Click here and fill out the online form!

Check Out these Current and Upcoming Bids!

Bids:

- **PRF88**: Foreign Language Interpretation and Translation Services. Link to the Bid
- **MCCA** MassMutual Center Ticketing Solutions. Link to the bid (click the orange arrow to submit your information and download the documents)
- **MCCA** Static Pendent Sign Upgrade. Link to the bid (click the orange arrow to submit your information and download the documents)

Intents to Bid:

- **ITT84**: Cellular Services and Devices. Link to the Intent to Bid
- **ITT85**: Network and Communication Services and Hardware. Link to the Intent to Bid

There are a number of catering bids, many of which have rolling enrollments:

- Conference Space & Catering Services RFR for DCF - Link to the bid.
- Catering Conference - Link to the bid
- MassAbility Catering, Conference Space, and Accommodations - Link to the bid
- MassDOT RFR Catering Services - Link to the bid
- EA Hotel Motel Provider Services - Link to the bid
- Event Services - Link to the bid
- RFR 232128 Catering Services, Conference Space, Hotel Room - Link to the bid
- Restaurant Food Take-out/Delivery Services - Link to the bid
- Restaurant Food Take-out/Delivery Services - Link to the bid
- Event and Emergency Services Contracts - Link to the bid
- MDAR- Conference Service Vendors - Link to the bid
- Conference Space, General Catering Services, and Hotel Accommodations - Link to the bid
- DCF Meetings16-Conference Space and Catering Services - Link to the bid

You can also check out all the newly posted bids on COMMBUYS each week by visiting this link.

Compliments From the SDO Kudos Corner!

Kudos Croner, a new feature at Pathways and Connections features compliments received by SDO staff.

This month's compliments come from Cheryl Ford, owner of Athos1, LLC:

- *"*The Phone support **(Director of Supplier Diversity Programs) John Fitzpatrick** provided to me yesterday was exceptional and certainly exceeded my expectations!"
  - Gregg Snyder, Energy Applications and Systems, LLC

- "(Procurement Program Coordinator) Zelpha Bennett was there to answer my questions in a timely way and helped me solve for some of the processes that were not very user-friendly. Most importantly, Zelpha operates with the highest levels of professionalism while incorporating kindness through superb customer service. My initial interactions with Zelpha were through a group training and she skillfully maneuvered several challenging participants with diligence and patience."
  - David D'Arcangelo, Arc Angel Communications

Want to send someone at the SDO a shout-out? Let us know here!

MassDevelopment Offering Microloans for Small Massachusetts-Based Businesses

For nearly 30 years, MassDevelopment has used economic development tools, creative financing strategies, and experienced staff to stimulate business, drive economic growth, and help communities thrive across the Commonwealth.

MassDevelopment now offers microloans for Massachusetts small businesses of $5,000 to $100,000 to assist with working capital or the purchase of furniture, fixtures, supplies, materials, and/or equipment. To qualify, businesses need to be in operation for at least 12 months and be a for-profit company.

For more information on the microloan program, click here.

SDO Certification Webcasts - Get Certified on Your Schedule!

With the Massachusetts SDO's new pre-recorded webcast, for-profit diverse and small businesses no longer need to schedule an online webinar to apply for certification. With the webcast, you can now learn about certification and apply on your own timeline!

SDO certification enables traditionally underserved businesses to market themselves and participate in the state's bidding process. Certified businesses are listed in the database used by state

buyers and prime vendors, receive news about upcoming bid opportunities, and learn about upcoming networking events.

Simply click the appropriate link below and click on the “Job Aid” link to get started!

Massachusetts-based businesses click here: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-diversity-certification-as-a-massachusetts-based-business

Out-of-state-based businesses click here: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-diversity-certification-as-an-out-of-state-business

Are you SDO Certified?

If you have a business owned by minorities, women, veterans, those with a disability, members of the LGBT community, and/or you own a small Massachusetts-based business, you are eligible for a vital source of support: SDO Certification.

Once you are certified, you will get updates on upcoming state contracts, have access to hours of free training, be given access to the Supplier Diversity Hub, and you will be added to the SDO's diverse and small vendor database, which is used by Prime Vendors, state departments, cities and towns, and private businesses looking to spend with diverse and small businesses.

SDO certification is free and can provide your business with new opportunities and prospects.

In FY2024, the Commonwealth spent $3.78 billion with diverse and small businesses. Many Massachusetts businesses say certification not only helped them stay in business during the pandemic but thrive because of new prospects.

Please note that if you are already certified with one of our partner organizations (such as Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE), Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC), City of Boston, etc.), the steps to becoming SDO certified are simple and straightforward.

To learn more about SDO Certification please click here!

Reminder - Race/Ethnicity Information for MBEs

Currently, the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) makes public the race and ethnicity of our certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs). This change is in response to many buyers looking to make purchases from

Black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and Native American/Indigenous Persons-Owned Businesses. These businesses are still classified as MBEs, but the additional racial makeup is publicly available in our search engine.

While this information is public, it does not affect any vendor's diversity status as an MBE, their ability to bid on and win bids, and their benefits with the SDO.

If any MBE would prefer to make their race and ethnicity information private, please contact us at webmaster.SDO@mass.gov.

Diverse Business Certification Updates

he SDO certified 45 businesses in January 2026!

As a reminder, SDO certification **expires three years after the date of issue** and renewal notices are sent via email to the primary contact on file.

SDO-certified businesses should log in and review your contact information periodically to ensure that your certification stays up to date.

Winter Vendor Classes - NEW CLASSES NOW AVAILABLE!

The Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) now offers the Supplier Diversity Hub (the Hub), a centralized portal to facilitate construction project management through the entire lifecycle.

The Hub is a virtual platform designed to enhance transparency, strengthen industry engagement, and support fair participation across all state-assisted design and construction building projects.

The SDO has developed classes for Owner Project Managers and Prime Contractors:

Owner Project Managers (OPMs) Hub Construction Opportunity Class

OPMs will learn how Learn how to use the Supplier Diversity Hub to create, manage, and award construction project opportunities. The training covers the entire project lifecycle which includes creating a new project, selecting vendors, submitting for SDO review, and awarding to a prime vendor.

Upcoming dates:

- 2/10, 1-2 p.m.
- 3/19, 9-11 a.m.

Link to Register

Hub Construction Opportunity Class for Prime Contractors and Vendors

Prime Contractors and Vendors will learn how to use the Supplier Diversity Hub to manage construction projects, submit payments, resolve disputes, view opportunities, and run reports.

Upcoming dates:

- 2/12, 1-2 p.m.
- 3/24, 1-2 p.m.

Link to Register

Other classes:

Unlocking Opportunities - How to Make Your State Certification Work for You

(PRE-REQUISITE: for Certified Diverse Businesses)

Learn more about using your certification to identify opportunities in public procurement and develop business-to-business relationships with other vendors. This training covers SDO programs, exploring business opportunities, creating SDP partnerships, and introducing free resources available to help grow your business.

Upcoming dates:

- February 24, 9 a.m.
- March 24, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Finding Business Opportunities for Certified Vendors

This session is a follow-up to Certified Vendor Onboarding and is designed specifically for certified vendors who want to expand their knowledge of how to identify and pursue Commonwealth opportunities that align with their business.

In this training, you will learn:

- How to determine whether to pursue contracts as a Prime Contractor or as an SDP Partner
- How to navigate the public procurement process
- Strategies for marketing your business effectively to government buyers

- No-cost resources available to help your business succeed

Limited Class Size! Please register in advance

Upcoming dates:

- March 3, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) for Vendors

Vendors will learn the qualifications to participate in the Commonwealth's Small Business Purchasing Program, how to apply, and the advantages of certification.
Upcoming dates:

- February 10, 9 a.m.
- March 4, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Prime Contractor Onboarding

(PRE-REQUISITE: This class is for Prime Contractors currently on Statewide and/or Departmental contracts).

Prime Contractors will learn how to meet the Supplier Diversity Plan (SDP) requirement. This class gives an overview of SDP, where to find eligible partners, and how to report SDP spend.

Upcoming dates:

- February 11, 9 a.m.
- March 11, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Vendor Hub Reporting - for Prime Contractors

(PRE-REQUISITE: for Prime Contractors currently on Departmental contracts)

Prime Contractors will learn more about the Supplier Diversity Office Hub. The training covers the *new easier SDP reporting*, how to register in the Hub, add and manage users, complete and view spend in the dashboard.

Upcoming dates:

- February 25, 9 a.m.
- March 25, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Don’t Miss Out! Responding to RFQs

(PRE-REQUISITE: for Small Business Purchasing Program participants currently on Statewide and/or Departmental contracts)

SBPP vendors will learn the mechanics of a Request for Quotes (RFQ). The training covers the benefits of the SBPP, how to identify and respond to an RFQ, and how RFQ’s are evaluated.

Upcoming dates:

- March 17, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Supplier Diversity Program for Health and Human Service Providers

(PRE-REQUISITE: This class is for Service Providers currently on Purchase of Service contracts)

Service providers on state contracts will learn about the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP), where to find eligible partners, and how to report SDP spend in the UFR.

Upcoming dates:

- March 18, 9 a.m.

Link to register

Follow us on:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)

1 Ashburton Place

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Certification HelpDesk: Webmaster.SDO@mass.gov
SDP & SBPP HelpDesk: sdp@mass.gov
Phone: (617) 502-8843

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