

# Pathways Supplier Diversity Office And Connections

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

**January 2026**

Resources for  
Diverse and Small  
Businesses

Open Bid  
Opportunities on  
COMMBUYS

SDO and  
Commonwealth  
Training  
Opportunities

Directory of  
Certified  
Businesses

**Happy Anniversary to the SDO!**



January 4th, 2026 marked the five-year anniversary of the Massachusetts Legislature approving the Supplier Diversity Office as an independent agency!

To celebrate, here are some highlights of the SDO over the last five years...

- In 2021, the SDO began hosting monthly forums with executive agencies to keep them informed of what's happening and to answer any questions. Since starting these meetings, attendance has doubled to more than 80 attendees.
- In 2022, the SDO launched the "I am a business owner" ad campaign to raise awareness of SDO programs.

- We helped establish new FY2024 benchmarks for spending with businesses owned by those with a disability and members of the LGBT community.
- In 2023 and 2024, the SDO partnered with municipalities and organizations such as the City of Springfield and the National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NaVOBA), helping to increase the number of certified diverse and small businesses.
- In 2023, the SDO's Cross Functional Team (CFT) received the Commonwealth's Equity in Governance Award from Governor Healey. The award is given each year to employees who demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equity in government operations.
- In 2024, the SDO worked with Governor Healey's office and the Operational Services Division (OSD) to reopen tradespersons contracts with the goal of providing greater opportunities to diverse and small businesses and expanding options for state agencies, cities, and towns.
- In 2024, Governor Healey announced the SDO Diverse and Small Business Advisory Board. Made up of 15 diverse business leaders from across the state, the board guides the SDO in its mission and work to identify and remove barriers for diverse and small businesses.
- In July 2025, the SDO launched the Pre-Certification Training Webcast and Online Application Portal, making it easier for small and diverse businesses to apply for certification.

...and here are some figures demonstrating what we have accomplished...

- Since the SDO became an independent agency, Commonwealth spending with small and diverse businesses has grown from \$2.85 billion to more than \$3.78 billion.
- In the same time frame, the SDO certified business directory grew by 44 percent. We now have more than 5,000 certified businesses.
- The SDO has hosted at least 150 SDO training sessions to promote our programs to buyers and businesses.
- To help spread the word about certification, SDO team members have attended at least 350 partner events.

We're looking forward to fulfilling our mission of bringing fairness and equity to the Commonwealth's bidding process for many years to come!

## Introducing the new SDO logo!



As you may have noticed at the top of this newsletter, we have a new logo! Our new design reinvents our previous logo to give it a modern look, while emphasizing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

---



# Celebrating your Success Stories!

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

[\*\*GBG - The Corporate Gift Source, Inc\*\*](#) reached a defining milestone in their 39-year history following the loss of a single long-standing contract that had been in place for more than two decades. In response, the company invested time and energy into new conversations, new partnerships, and new opportunities. That commitment paid off, as GBG successfully recovered nearly half of the lost revenue within a year, driven by new customer wins, expanded programs, and renewed confidence in their services.

## [\*\*The Institute for Education and Professional Development, Inc.\*\*](#)

has been contracted by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to develop a 14-hour online course on Observation and Documentation of Young Children, designed specifically for delivery through EEC's learning management system. The course supports educators in using observation as a meaningful tool for understanding children's development, informing curriculum planning, and engaging in reflective practice.

**Photographer Cheryl Richards** was awarded "Best Wedding Photographer" from Boston Magazine in August 2025. This is the sixth time Richards has received the award. Congratulations!

**Icarus Construction Services** was hired last year to complete a historical restoration project for the US Department of the Interior. Another firm had started the project and reportedly failed on multiple levels to provide quality work. Icarus was awarded this job as a Sole Source 8A contract and work began last summer. As a result of their work, the company was awarded the second phase of this restoration project.

**Senne Marketing** was awarded a Massachusetts Statewide Contract under PRF86, significantly expanding their ability to serve public agencies across the Commonwealth as a prime contractor. Shortly after the award, they successfully won their first bid through the statewide contract, validating their capabilities and strengthening their credibility in the public procurement space. This milestone increased their visibility with state agencies, supported business growth, enabled partnerships with other certified diverse suppliers, and allowed them to reinvest in their team, tools, and accessibility-compliant marketing and communications solutions that help agencies better engage and serve their communities.

Want to tell us about your recent success? [Click here](#) and fill out the online form!

---

***Check Out these Current and Upcoming Bids!***



**Bids:**

- **ITS86:** Software and Service. [Link to the Bid](#)

**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](#)

- **PRF88:** Foreign Language Interpretation and Translation Services. [Link to the Intent to Bid](#)

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

- Catering Conference - [Link to the bid](#)
- MassAbility Catering, Conference Space, and Accommodations - [Link to the bid](#)
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Conference Space, General Catering Services, and Hotel 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](#).

---

## Introducing 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:

- *"(Intake Coordinator) Nicaurys Johnson remained engaged from the beginning, ensured my concerns were understood and routed appropriately, and stayed with the issue until resolution. Her attentiveness, coordination, and commitment to follow-through were instrumental in moving the issue forward."*
- *"(Director of Diverse and Small Business Certification) Wanda Colon-D' Angelo personally stepped in and worked alongside her team until the problem was fully resolved ... I am deeply grateful for her leadership, her personal attention to my situation, and the culture of excellence she models through her actions."*
- *"(Renewal, SBPP, and Third-Part Coordinator) Bianca Tavaréz provided exemplary assistance ... ensuring my FEIN was correctly added and restoring my system access. Her professionalism, clarity, and customer service allowed me to complete the submission and close out the process successfully."*

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.](#)**

## ***New SDO Certification Webcasts***



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>

# SDO Means *Business*

*Click here for more!*

---



# 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](mailto:webmaster.SDO@mass.gov).



## ***Diverse Business Certification Updates***

The SDO certified 61 businesses in December 2025!

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**

### **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:

- January 27, 9 a.m.
- 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:

- February 3, 9 a.m.
- 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:

- January 13, 9 a.m.
- 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:

- January 14, 9 a.m.
- 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:

- January 20, 9 a.m.
- 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](mailto:Webmaster.SDO@mass.gov)

SDP & SBPP HelpDesk: [sdp@mass.gov](mailto:sdp@mass.gov)

Phone: (617) 502-8843

Was this email forwarded to you? Sign up to receive our monthly newsletter [here](#).

[Manage Preferences](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)