

Pathways & Connections

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



February/March 2023

Resources for
Diverse and
Small
Businesses

Open Bid
Opportunities
on COMMBUYS

COMMBUYS
Vendor Training
Schedule

Directory of
Certified
Businesses



The SDO Celebrates Black History Month and Women's History Month

We just finished celebrating [Black History Month](#) in February (see related articles about Black-owned businesses below), and now in March we acknowledge the contributions and achievements of women for [Women's History Month](#).

Recent Successes of Black-Owned Businesses



In celebration of Black History Month, here are a few black-owned businesses who shared stories with the SDO of some recent success:

Jamoji App LLC is an independent team of consultants that assists companies with DEI strategy and digital media needs. The company also launched a Jamaican-focused emoji keyboard to increase access and instant connection to Jamaican culture. In September 2022, Jamoji was awarded a statewide five-year contract with the Commonwealth as a racial/ethnic management vendor!

Coastal Construction and Management Co. is a facilities and general construction company, offering construction management, drywall/taping, renovation, and more! After receiving MBE certification from the SDO, Coastal Construction was awarded two new contracts worth about \$400,000 each for drywall installation.

V-Solutions Consulting, LLC is a consulting firm specializing in training and staff development that provides solutions to optimize organizational behavior and

management. In the last few years, V-Solutions was awarded several contracts to provide staff development solutions which greatly increased employees' motivation, efficiency, and expertise in their particular industry.

Girls Chronically Rock is a fashion company offering apparel with a purpose, raising awareness and motivation for people who may have a chronic illness like Muscular Dystrophy. The company recently launched a new t-shirt design called "Disabled by Default," which was inspired by owner Keisha Greaves' own experience living with a disability. "People often think we can wish it away and that's not the case," she said. "We are disabled by default, not by choice."

Dominion Concrete LLC is a concrete contractor providing turnkey concrete construction including foundations, flatwork, and other services to the New England region. Dominion has successfully secured contracts with well-known general contractors, jumping from \$1.2 million in revenue in 2021 to \$24.5 million in revenue in 2022. The company has grown from 10 employees to 130 in the span of one year and are continuing to grow as they have successfully secured \$19 million in revenue already for 2023.

Clayton LLC, DBA Bluebird Graphic Solutions is an architectural signage studio that designs and constructs signage for a variety of industries including developers, architects, academia, and commercial organizations. The company was awarded a contract by Consigli Construction to produce and install the wayfinding and graphics for MBTA's new Green Line Extension. With a value of over \$2 million and a span of more than two years and 2,500 individual signs, this project represents Bluebird's most extensive to date and will have a lasting impact for decades to come.

Velney Development LLC is a Somerville-based real estate development firm. In October 2022, Josu'e Velney, founder of Velney Development, was nominated for Boston Business Journal's 40 under 40. Velney Development also received a citation from the Governor's office for dedication and hard work as a 100% Veteran and minority-owned real estate business. The company is currently working on a 230-unit development project in the city of Boston.

The SDO is looking for news about new contracts, business growth, and other milestones for SDO-certified diverse and small businesses. Your story might be featured on our website, the Pathways & Connections newsletter, and on our social media feeds!

If you have a success story to share, please [fill out this form](#) and hit the "Submit" button. We would love to hear from you!



SCORE provides resources for Black-Owned Businesses

The Service Core Of Retired Executives (SCORE) is presenting a number of resources and presentations. Click on the links below to view these programs:

[How To Find Funding Opportunities For Black-Owned Businesses](#)

In this recorded webinar, subject expert Phyllis Johnson shares funding opportunities available to Black business owners. You'll learn the types of funding available, where to find those opportunities, and what you need to do to qualify. If you're a Black business owner, you don't want to miss this!

[SCORE for Black Entrepreneurs](#)

Visit the hub to see all of SCORE's best content specifically for Black business owners in one place. You'll find success stories, webinars, and other resources you can use for your business.

[13 Black Business Owners Share Their Secrets To Success](#)

Get top business advice from other Black business owners that you can use to help your own business succeed.

How to know if you are receiving emails from the SDO

The SDO will periodically reach out to businesses, agencies, and townships to discuss anything from certification to training to bid opportunities.

To ensure the emails you receive are legitimately from the SDO, please see the email names/addresses below. These are the general mailboxes the SDO will send from. This does not include emails from SDO staff members.

If you received an email and are not certain if it was from the SDO, please send any concerns to Webmaster.SDO@mass.gov.

You may receive emails from the SDO under the following email addresses:

Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) - Used for general news, bids, events, and the *Pathways & Connections* newsletter

sdocommunications@notice.anf.mass.gov

Webmaster (SDO) - Used for news and technical inquiries

Webmaster.SDO@mass.gov

SDOCertrak (SDO) - Used for certification news/inquiries

SDOCertrak@mass.gov

No Reply: Supplier Diversity Portal - Used for the Supplier Diversity Hub ("The Hub")

noreply.sdh@ad.autocene.com

Please note: Several of these emails do not accept responses. If you ever need to contact the SDO via email, please send all inquiries to

Webmaster.SDO@mass.gov

Check Out these Changes to the SDO Website!

Visitors to the SDO website (mass.gov/sdo) should notice a few changes:

- Under the "About" drop-down menu at the top of the home page, you'll now see a link to "A Brief History of the Supplier Diversity Office." This new page summarizes the Commonwealth's work to help diverse and small businesses since 1972!
 - Under the "Quick Links" on the home page, you will find a new link to the Supplier Diversity Hub, which is an online portal for diverse and small businesses to connect with Commonwealth public buyers, prime bidders, contractors, and resource providers.
 - Scrolling down the home page, under "More Actions and Services," you'll find a link for "SDO Means Business," a new page detailing the resources and tools we use to eliminate barriers and help connect our diverse and small business partners to bidding opportunities.
 - Finally, we've added links to our social media feeds on LinkedIn and Twitter.
-

Holyoke Soldiers' Home Construction Contracting Opportunities

NEW Holyoke Soldiers' Home Construction Contracting Opportunities

**Project Bidding SOON
INTERESTED - DO NOT WAIT**

If you are considering working as a subcontractor or supplier
to a Prime for a specific trade:

Prime subcontractors will be bidding in EARLY 2023

Sub-tier subcontractors will be needed



Awarding Authority: Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM)

Designer: Payette

Construction Manager: Commodore | Walsh (Joint Venture)

Anticipated Gross Square Feet: 350,000

Anticipated Overall Project Estimated Construction Cost: \$350M

If you are a subcontractor, supplier, or vendor for any of the building construction trades there may be opportunities to work on this project.

Sub-tier Subcontractors in all trades interested in working as sub-subcontractors or suppliers can express their interest in working on the project by clicking on the

Webform Link below.

[Click on this webform link](#) and provide basic information about your firm and area of interest.

Minority, Women and Veteran owned businesses are encouraged to join the project team. Participation goals of MBE 4.7%, WBE 7.7%, and VBE 3% apply to this project.

Interested in attending one of the upcoming business enterprise outreach events for firms new to public construction contracting? Let us know by emailing DCAMM at hshao.dcam@mass.gov.

The Supplier Diversity Hub - an Easy, Free Way to Help Grow Your Business

Diverse and small vendors now have full access to the Supplier Diversity Hub ("The Hub")! Already in use by state agencies, The Hub is a free, new way to help grow your business.

Using The Hub, diverse and small businesses can now receive a number of benefits. Communication between them and prime vendors and contractors is easier, they can receive immediate notifications about new bidding opportunities, and they have instant access to check the status of their SDO certification.

In the coming weeks, diverse and small certified vendors will receive an inquiry from an SDO partner asking about their experiences and questions about The Hub and, if they haven't yet signed up for the Hub, providing information on its many benefits. Your answers will help make The Hub easier and more useful for everyone.

If you are a certified vendor and haven't yet signed into The Hub, please follow the directions below to get started:

1. Open the email you should have received from the Supplier Diversity Hub (it should come from “no reply Supplier Diversity Hub – Commonwealth of Massachusetts”).
2. In that email will be a link to change your password. Click it, then use the Username and Reset Code in the email when prompted. Your username (which is also your email address) should be the same one you use to access your certification account. For a video with step-by-step instructions on how to change your password, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYcRY7QmJ2Y>
3. If you didn't receive an email to set up your account, please visit <https://masdh.autocene.com> to reset your password.
4. Congratulations! You now have access to The Hub!

Once you have signed in, the first thing you need to do is to ensure your information is up-to-date in The Hub so that prime vendors and state agencies can find your business in a search. Follow the instructions below to update your search information:

If you need help, click the “Help” button on the left inside the Hub to see an instructional video.

1. Once signed in, click on your email address in the upper right of your screen.
2. Click on “Edit Profile.”
3. Click on “Company Profile.”
4. You will need to update your NAICS, CSI, and UNSPSC codes. In many cases, NAICS codes for diverse businesses are already entered.

5. Click on the category you want to update (NAICS Code Search, CSI Code Search, or UNSPSC Code Search) on the left. You will need to update each code individually.
6. Once on the NAICS Code Search screen, put your business category in the “Description” field. Click the “Search” button and select the items on the bottom of your screen that are applicable to your business. Then click the button “Select these Codes” on the right.
7. Once on the CSI Code Search screen, enter your business category in the “Sub Title” field. Click the “Search” button and select the items on the bottom of your screen that are applicable to your business. Then click the button “Select these Codes” on the right.
8. Once on the UNSPSC Code Search screen, put your business category in the “Class Title” field. Click the “Search” button and select the items on the bottom of your screen that are applicable to your business. Then click the button “Select these Codes” on the right.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at webmaster.sdo@mass.gov.

Meet the SDO: Zelpha Bennett, Procurement Program Coordinator

Each month, we feature a different member of our team to share a little bit about themselves and discuss useful information and resources the SDO has available for diverse and small businesses. Please send any questions for the SDO team to robert.keane@mass.gov.

What made you come to work at the SDO?:

I wanted to be involved in having a positive impact in making a difference for small and diverse business while contributing to the SDO's mission. I would often meet business owners who were very appreciative of the help they received, but there was a limit and I always felt there was more I could do by focusing on these businesses. Now, I work more closely with them.

What is one benefit of certification that most businesses don't know about?

With certification, businesses may participate in multiple opportunities as long as they can deliver the goods or services. I encourage certified businesses to be proactive and promote their certification status as a potential SDP Partner for either ancillary or subcontracting partnerships.

How can a diverse/small business make the most of a training or a webinar?

Identify your expectations for attending. Ask questions - have your questions ready. Participate and take notes – these events share a lot of useful information.

Can virtual networking events be as effective as in-person events?

Yes, when all parties are prepared. Be sure to do



Favorite quote: "If you haven't confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started." - Marcus Garvey

Favorite songs: *Here I Come* by Dennis Brown and *Viva La Vida* by Coldplay

Favorite vacation spot: the main requirements are sunshine and the beach. For now, there is a plethora of Caribbean Islands to be explored.

Favorite food: Escovitch Fish (a Jamaican fried fish made with onions, peppers, and vinegar)

Pet peeve: Tardiness

Last TV Show seen/binged: I watch a lot of comedy reruns like *Frasier*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and *Two & a Half Men*

your research, gather your resources, documents, etc., prepare your questions, be responsive, and follow-up as needed in a timely manner.

Dog person or cat person?: Cat, growing up my siblings and I had cats for pets: Miss Tibbs and Glue

Zelpha Bennett can be reached at
zelpha.e.bennett@mass.gov

SDO Means *Business*

Click here for more!



Diverse Business Certification Updates

SDO certified 40 businesses in January 2023. For a full list of newly-certified businesses, please click [here](#).

REMINDER: SDO certification expires three years after the date of issue and



Pre-Certification Webinars

For businesses wishing to apply for SDO certification, attending a Pre-Certification Webinar is a must. This webinar discusses the different types of SDO and SDO-recognized third-party certifications as well as the State certification process.

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.

Registration is now available for webinars from now until June 2023. Sign up [here](#).



New SDO training now available!

Buyer Onboarding - Introduction to SDO Programs and Policies

This class is for new employees or anyone who would like a refresher on SDO programs and policies, and to learn how they relate to state procurement and purchasing.

This class gives an overview of the SDO and covers SDO programs and policies, meeting annual benchmarks, and identifying diverse and small businesses.

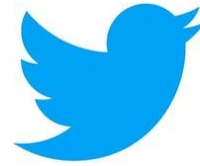
Classes are available on the following dates. All classes are from 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.:

- March 22
- April 19
- May 24
- June 27

If you are interested in attending a class, [Click Here to register](#) (Class can be found under "SDO - Buyer Onboarding")

If you need special accommodations to fully participate in the training, please email Katherine.L.Thomas@mass.gov for assistance.

Follow us on:



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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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