

Pathways & Connections

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



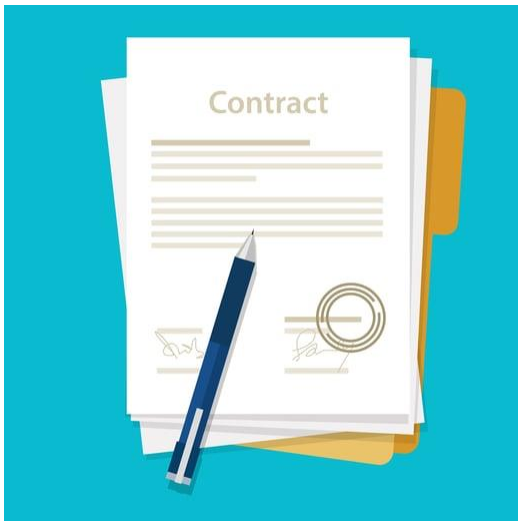
November 2024

Resources for
Diverse and
Small
Businesses

Open Bid
Opportunities
on COMMBUYS

SDO and
Commonwealth
Training
Opportunities

Directory of
Certified
Businesses



New Standard Contract Form Rolls out in December

A new version of the Standard Contract Form will be updated and available at macomptroller.org/forms and mass.gov/lists/osd-forms in early December. The updated Standard Contract Form will include a section regarding Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) obligations and commitments.

There are several benefits to the new contract form: it will standardize and streamline the SDP percentage on the form, it will provide

leverage when enforcing vendor compliance in hiring diverse and small vendors, and it will ensure that each contract/RFR/procurement with more than \$250,000 in annual spend will have the vendor's SDP commitment clearly recorded and easy to locate within the contract document.

The updated Standard Contract Form will be available as a fillable PDF or as a DocuSign PowerForm. The [Standard Contract Form Instructions and Contractor Certifications document](#) will also be updated.

SDO at the Diverse & Small Business Opportunity Fair in Framingham



In photos: (Top) SDO's Director of Programs and Engagement Amanda LaCroix; (Bottom) SDO's Director of Performance and Contract Management and Interim General Counsel Bonnie Borch-Rote (left) and EDP Systems Analyst Sam Gebremichael at the Diverse & Small Business Opportunity Fair in Framingham earlier this month.

We were happy to see and meet with so many diverse and small businesses at the opportunity fair in Framingham earlier this month!

More than 70 businesses attended the event, meeting with more than a dozen state, municipal, and private buyers who participated with us and the City of Framingham. The goal of the event was to connect Framingham-area businesses with public and private buyers looking to partner with local diverse and small vendors.

Thanks to the City of Framingham for hosting and partnering with us to make this such a special event, as well as to the State Treasurer's Office, Department of Correction, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), the Operational Services Division (OSD), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Framingham State University, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, the Town of Wayland, Consigli Construction, the City of Cambridge, and everyone else for their participation!

Our next fair is planned for Brockton in Spring of 2025. Please watch future issues of *Pathways & Connections* for more news as it becomes available.

Grant Policy Updates and Resources

In coordination with the Office of the Comptroller's November 15, 2024 release of several updates to their [State Grants, Federal Sub-Grants and Subsidies Policy](#), including considerations for diverse and small businesses, the SDO is excited to release the following resources to open up more opportunities for diverse and small businesses across our Commonwealth:

- **Supplier Diversity Language for Grant Applications** - provides general guidance and specific model grant application language.
- **SDP Plan Form for Grants** – Agencies that include Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) requirements in their grant process should require the submission of this form by grant applicants with their grant application.
- **Grant Applicant Supplier Diversity Self-identification Form** - Grant applicants can use this tool to self-identify and to pursue SDO certification as a diverse and/or small business.

While not required, Executive Departments that issue grants are highly encouraged to incorporate supplier diversity requirements and reporting processes into their grant applications and awards. Post grant award reporting should be done through the SDO's [Supplier Diversity Hub](#).

Thank you Veterans!



Note: The previous edition of this newsletter incorrectly identified the New England Center and Home for Veterans. The correct name is listed below.

The SDO celebrated Veterans Day (Nov. 11). We thank them for their service. We are proud to serve businesses owned by Veterans (VBEs) and Service Disabled Veterans (SDVOBEs); these owners continue to serve for the greater good.

Check out these updates and success stories from Veteran-Owned Businesses:

- **Velney Construction**, a 100-percent veteran, service-disabled veteran, and minority-owned company located in Somerville, MA, formed a strategic alliance with Callahan Construction Managers, a full-service construction management company headquartered in Bridgewater, MA. Josue Velney, Owner and

CEO of Velney, said, “We are thrilled to collaborate with Callahan and leverage its vast expertise in housing and other sectors of construction. This partnership will allow us to better manage different aspects of a project with the help of Callahan’s oversight and expertise. We are excited to be a part of their project teams that will provide valuable insight into how to best build and manage a project.”

- This just in: The **Vietnam Veterans Workshop, Inc. DBA New England Center and Home for Veterans** has just become the first Veteran-Owned Non-Profit the SDO has certified! The mission of the organization is to equip Veterans who are facing or at-risk of homelessness with the tools for economic self-sufficiency and to provide them a path to achieve successful and dignified independent living.

Eligibility Changes for SDO Certification



The SDO is making some changes to its regulations which will help us to promote diversity in state contracting and increase opportunities for diverse and small businesses.

Soon, the SDO will expand our definition of eligibility to include non-citizens permanently residing in the U.S. under the color of law. Specifically, the language governing who is an “eligible person” to receive SDO certification will now include individuals permanently residing under the color of law in the United States (commonly referred to as PRUCOL). This designation is given to any non-citizen permanently living in the United States when the individual is known to the Department of Homeland Security and there is no evidence that the DHS is engaged in deportation proceedings against the noncitizen.

The citizenship requirement for SDO certification had become a roadblock for many companies that are locally-owned, have been fixtures in their communities for years, may be certified or registered by other public entities and pay their fair share of taxes. This change in our regulations ensures the benefits of SDO certification will be more accessible, equitable, and inclusive of businesses that have been historically underserved.

This new change in eligibility has come after months of meetings and interaction with the public. The SDO conducted a public hearing about the changes on January 25, 2024, and the notice of virtual public hearing was published in *The Boston Globe*. Additionally, the hearing notice and a copy of the proposed new regulations were sent via email to the SDO Directory, which contains more than 4,000 diverse companies. All comments we received were in support of the proposed changes.

**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 FY2023, the Commonwealth spent \$3.38 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!](#)

Check Out these Current and Upcoming Bids!

- CLT09: Clothing, Uniforms, Footwear, Accessories, Personal Care Products. [Link to the bid](#).
- The Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD) has posted a solicitation for Arbitrators. [Please review the COMMBUYS listing](#) for the bid announcement.

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

- Catering Conference - [Link to the bid](#)
- Emergency Assistance Food Services - [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](#).



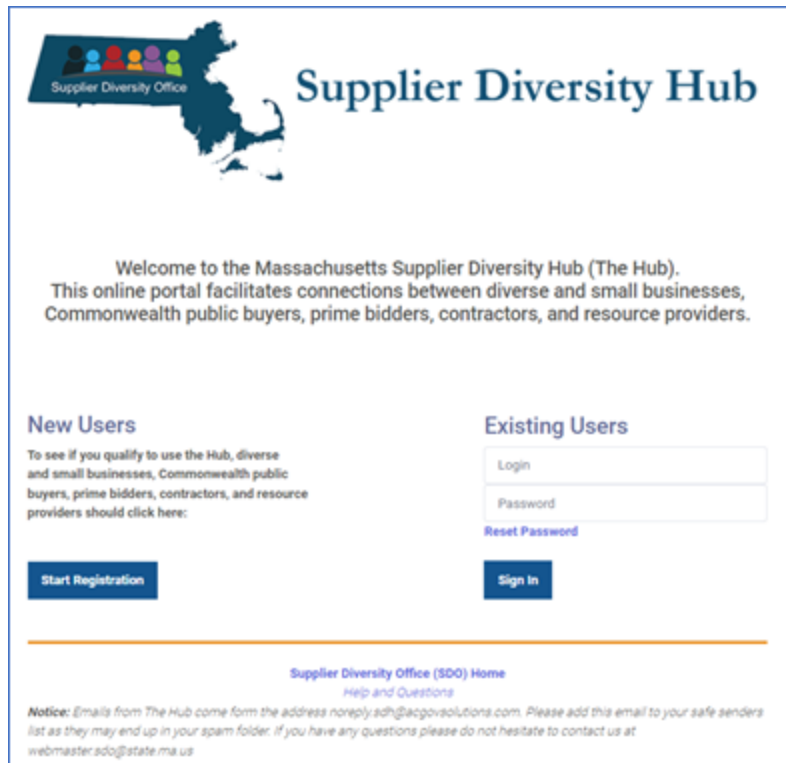
New Updates to the Supplier Diversity Hub

The Supplier Diversity Hub ("The Hub"), a networking tool used to connect diverse and small businesses with interested parties, recently made a number of updates to make the system even more essential.

Now, with these updates, vendors using the Hub will be able to receive important notifications on bids, update their profiles, and upload brochures for their businesses. Agencies and prime vendors will be able to search vendors by departmental contracts and by ethnicity (MBEs only).

"The idea behind The Hub is to make it easier for vendors, agencies, and prime vendors to find each other and communicate," said SDO Executive Director Bill McAvoy. "With these updates, The Hub is a stronger tool than ever before."

If you are a vendor or agency who has yet to use The Hub, [please click here to get started](#); if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at webmaster.sdo@mass.gov.



The image shows the login screen for the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Hub. At the top left is a logo for the Supplier Diversity Office featuring a map of Massachusetts and five stylized human figures in different colors. To the right of the logo is the title "Supplier Diversity Hub" in a large, dark blue serif font. Below the title is a welcome message: "Welcome to the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Hub (The Hub). This online portal facilitates connections between diverse and small businesses, Commonwealth public buyers, prime bidders, contractors, and resource providers." The screen is divided into two main sections: "New Users" on the left and "Existing Users" on the right. The "New Users" section contains a paragraph explaining that diverse and small businesses, Commonwealth public buyers, prime bidders, contractors, and resource providers should click a "Start Registration" button. The "Existing Users" section contains a login form with fields for "Login" and "Password", a "Reset Password" link, and a "Sign In" button. At the bottom, there is a horizontal line followed by links for "Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) Home" and "Help and Questions". A notice at the very bottom states that emails from The Hub come from the address noreply.sdh@acgovsolutions.com and that users should add this email to their safe senders list.

Supplier Diversity Office

Supplier Diversity Hub

Welcome to the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Hub (The Hub).
This online portal facilitates connections between diverse and small businesses,
Commonwealth public buyers, prime bidders, contractors, and resource providers.

New Users

To see if you qualify to use the Hub, diverse and small businesses, Commonwealth public buyers, prime bidders, contractors, and resource providers should click here:

[Start Registration](#)

Existing Users

Login

Password

[Reset Password](#)

[Sign In](#)

[Supplier Diversity Office \(SDO\) Home](#)
[Help and Questions](#)

Notice: Emails from The Hub come from the address noreply.sdh@acgovsolutions.com. Please add this email to your safe senders list as they may end up in your spam folder. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at webmaster.sdh@state.ma.us

The new Hub log-in screen

Meet the SDO: Bill McAvoy, Executive Director

Each month, Pathways and Connections features a different member of the SDO team who will share a little bit about themselves. If you have any questions you'd like to have answered, please send them to Robert.keane@mass.gov.

Favorite quote: *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."* - Maya Angelou

Favorite Song: *Into the Mystic* by Van Morrison

Favorite vacation spot: St. Thomas, USVI

Favorite band: Three-way tie between The Cars, The Beatles, and U2

Favorite food: Pasta

Pet peeve: Negativity

Last TV Show seen/binged: *Shrinking* on Apple TV

Tell us something about you that people may not know:



You are about to embark on a well-deserved retirement after more than three decades in public service. What advice would you give to your successor?

It is so important as a leader to always listen to and be empathetic toward the people you work with and, especially as the leader of the SDO, to those you work for, namely the diverse and small businesses that the SDO represents.

As you look back on your career, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

I Play the guitar and love to sing karaoke

Dog person or cat person?:

Both, but currently own two cats

What made you come to work at the SDO?:

When I was working as Chief Legal Counsel and Deputy Assistant Secretary at OSD, I was asked to assume responsibility for the SDO in 2015. While I had provided legal support to the SDO and formerly the Affirmative Market Program (AMP) for many years, the mission of the SDO and the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion truly inspire me. I was born and raised in Lawrence, known as the Immigrant City, and I was always taught to stand up for those who are underserved and those whose voices aren't being heard.

I am most proud of drafting the legislation that made the SDO its own agency and the executive orders that empowered the SDO and its programs that help diverse and small businesses. I am also most proud of and inspired by the team of professionals that we have assembled and that I have the privilege of working with in the SDO. That is what has made approaching my retirement so easy for me, i.e., knowing that the diverse and small businesses in the Commonwealth are in the very best of hands.

You can reach Bill McAvoy (until he retires!) at

bill.mcavoy@mass.gov



Diverse Business Certification Updates

The SDO certified 54 businesses in October 2024. For the latest list of newly-certified businesses, please click [here](#).

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.



Pre-Certification Webinars

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

Registration is now available for webinars in February 2025. Sign up [here](#).



New SDO training now available!

The Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) for Health and Human Service Providers (Webinar)

Are you a service provider on a state contract?

The SDO fosters business relationships between state contractors and minority-, women-, veteran-, disability-, and LGBT-owned businesses. **Service providers on large state contracts are required to develop partnerships with certified diverse vendors.**

To ensure that **health and human service contractors** achieve this goal, the Commonwealth's contracts for Purchase of Service (POS) require providers to submit an "SDP Plan Form for Purchase of Service" with their Uniform Financial Report (UFR).

[The webinar](#) will cover:

- Updates on the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) for POS providers
- SDP reporting requirements for providers
- How to identify SDP partners for your organization

- Nonprofit Organization certifications available from the SDO

The webinar is offered on December 4, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

[Register here!](#)

Please note that this training is only for contractors that provide services for health and human service clients and that are required to file a Uniform Financial Report (UFR).

Class size is limited! Please register in advance

If you need special accommodations to fully participate in the training, please email Julie.A.Kearnan@mass.gov for assistance.

Follow us on:



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