

Pathways & Connections

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



November 2025

Resources for
Diverse and
Small
Businesses

Open Bid
Opportunities
on COMMBUYS

SDO and
Commonwealth
Training
Opportunities

Directory of
Certified
Businesses

SDO Success Stories on YouTube!



Recently, the [MassGovernor YouTube account](#) posted stories of businesses who found success after certification!

The latest videos feature Diego Pereira, owner of Pereira & Son's Contracting Inc. and Jose Figueroa, owner of AirFig Productions. They talk about how they started their businesses, the process of certification, and the benefits that certification can have.

Click the links to see the videos!

- [Pereira & Son's Contracting video](#)
- [AirFig Productions video](#)

Read below for more SDO success stories!

SDO at BizConn



The SDO was happy to be at the BizConn Alliance conference last month. Held on the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Reservation at Foxwoods Resort Hotel, this conference focused on providing resources and creating opportunities for Native American-owned businesses and featured sessions on business development, leadership, and procurement.

The SDO's Chief of Staff Amanda LaCroix and Director of Programs and Engagement Michelle Mendes (pictured above) were there to talk about SDO benefits for diverse and small businesses.

Check out more events the SDO hosted and attended below!



Celebrating your Success Stories!

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

LaVoie Strategic Communications Group, Inc is excited to receive approval from OSD on the PRF86 contract for marketing services with the state of Massachusetts! Their team has already

won its first contract with Mass Health Connector in which they're responsible for media relations and awareness around open enrollment for health insurance for all Massachusetts residents.

[ImEx Cargo](#), a Massachusetts-based certified WBE logistics company, proudly launched Plug-In Freight Ops™, a first-of-its-kind digital portal that lets users quote, book, and track air cargo in seconds! Developed entirely by their team in Peabody, MA, this innovation modernizes how airlines, government contractors, and freight forwarders manage shipments and provide real-time visibility, rate intelligence, and reporting across domestic and international lanes. As one of the few women-owned Airline Cargo Sales & Service Agents in New England, ImEx Cargo is driving digital transformation in logistics while expanding opportunities for other diverse suppliers through their Plug-In Freight Partner Portal.

[A Square Design \(ASD\)](#) is excited to announce they are now designing High-Performance Homes! ASD serves as the primary design partner for high-performance residential projects, leading the full design process from concept through construction. ASD led the full design process for a panelized, high-performance home in collaboration with a local general contractor and a panel system manufacturer. Acting as the primary designer, ASD integrated architectural planning, envelope coordination, and interior detailing to meet Passive House standards. The project demonstrated how early design integration can streamline construction, reduce energy use, and improve indoor air quality.

[Veterans Plumbing & Heating LLC](#) has gotten a new contract! Greenwood Industries, Inc. subcontracted the plumbing portion of a recent Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) contract to them to satisfy the Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Participation requirement.

[tBrex Bio Inc](#) is excited to share that they have secured new partnerships! The company, Massachusetts' first woman- and minority-owned Contract Development and Manufacturing Organization (CDMO), created a critical bridge between early-stage innovation and commercial-scale biologics manufacturing.

With help from their SDO certification, tBrex Bio secured vital partnerships and milestones, including:

- NVIDIA Inception Program acceptance, providing access to cutting-edge AI infrastructure for biomanufacturing optimization;
- Northeastern University, for workforce development and intern programs, and
- Planned acquisition of manufacturing facilities in Norwood, with expansion underway

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



Veterans Day takes place on Tuesday, November 11. We thank all veterans for their service, and the SDO is proud to serve businesses owned by Veterans (VBEs) and Service Disabled Veterans (SDVOBEs); these owners continue to serve for the greater good.

Session for Vet-Owned Businesses

The Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) presents:

VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS INFO- SESSION

This session will include:

- SDO program overview
 - Certification
 - Supplier Diversity Program (SDP)
 - Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP)
- Central MA and statewide resource partners for veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses will be in attendance



Date: November 25th
10AM – 2PM

Location: Worcester
Public Library, Saxe Room
(3 Salem St, Worcester,
MA 01608)



We hope VBEs and SDVOBEs can join us in Worcester on November 25th!

If you are interested in learning about the SDO's various programs and meeting resource partners from across the Commonwealth, [please register here!](#)

SDO at Recent Events

The SDO had a busy October! See what we've been up to...



We were at the Powering Progress Through Partnership Conference hosted by the Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce. The event celebrated the power of collaboration across the chamber's network of LGBTQ-owned businesses, corporate partners, and community allies. SDO Executive Director Bonnie Borch-Rote served on a panel about supplier diversity programs. Pictured (from left) are Keith Wang, a member of the Board of Directors of the LGBT Chamber of Commerce, SDO Chief of Staff Amanda LaCroix, SDO Executive Director Bonnie Borch-Rote, and Xiomara Albán DeLobato, Vice President and Chief of Staff of the Western Mass Economic Development Council. Both Wang and Albán DeLobato serve on the SDO Advisory Board.



To celebrate Supplier Diversity Week (October 27-31), the City of Boston hosted the "Building Connections" event to bring together Boston-area general contractors, City of Boston departments, and external organizations focused on improving equity in construction. At the event are (from left), SDO Construction Programs Lead Meghan Grace Costa, Caan Fence owner Carlene Lewis, Commodore Builders Project Executive Nathalie Assens, and Suzzette Waters, DCAMM Public Information Manager, Access and Opportunity.



The SDO and the Operational Services Division (OSD) recently hosted Partners in Progress, an in-person networking event to help vendors meet with statewide contract prime contractors. Pictured (from left) are SDO Director of Programs and Engagement Michelle Mendes, SDO Procurement Program Coordinator Zelpha Bennett, and Pedal Point Solutions founder Simon Miner.



The SDO was happy to attend the Supplier Diversity in Procurement Fair, hosted by Keolis in partnership with MassDOT, the MBTA, and the Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC). In the photo are (from left) SDO Director of Supplier Diversity Programs John Fitzpatrick, SDO Recruitment, Growth & Retention Coordinator Algeria Marsh, and Keolis Manager of Supplier Diversity Tina Andrews.

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>



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 currently offers Microloans for Massachusetts small businesses from \$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 have been in business for at least 12 months and be a for-profit company.

For more information on the microloan program, [click here](#) or [visit this site](#) to learn more about MassDevelopment's products and services.

Check Out these Current and Upcoming Bids!



Bids:

- **MCCA** - Design services. [Link to the Bid](#)
- **WMR001** - Hazardous/Universal, Medical, and Electronic Waste Disposal and Emergency Response. [Link to the Bid](#)
- **PRF76** - Management Consultants, Program Coordinators, and Planners Services. [Link to the Bid](#)

Intents to Bid/Reopen:

- **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:

- 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](#)

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- 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](#).

**SDO Means
*Business***
Click here for more!



Check out these upcoming events:

Haitian American Business Summit

Friday, November 7, 2025

8:00 a.m.

This event is focused on fostering economic growth, creating partnership opportunities, and strengthening the Haitian American business community. The summit will feature renowned speakers, interactive workshops, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

[Click here for more details and to register](#)

Western Massachusetts E-Contractor Academy

Starting on Wednesday, November 12, 2025

The Fall 2025 Western Massachusetts E-Contractor Academy is a FREE 4-week workshop series building technical, financial and operational capacity with diverse, small and local construction businesses to successfully do business in climate-critical decarbonization fields such as building electrification, energy efficiency and renewable energy. This academy will take place in Springfield and will prioritize applications from contractors in Western Massachusetts.

[Click here for more information and to apply](#)



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

The SDO certified 47 businesses in October 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.



Upcoming Vendor Classes

NEW CLASS - 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:

- November 19, 9 a.m.
- December 23, 9 a.m.

[Link to register](#)

Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) for Vendors

Executive Agencies must give special consideration to SBPP participants when buying non-construction goods and services estimated to cost \$250,000 or less per year.

One of the many benefits of the program is it can help you market your business to Massachusetts' Executive Department buyers. The program is free!

To qualify for the program, you must be a Massachusetts small business, in business for at least one year, employee 50 or fewer employees, and gross less than \$15 million a year.

The class outlines the specific qualifications and the application processes. You will also learn how to search for bid opportunities in COMMBUYS and available resources to help you grow your business.

Upcoming dates:

- November 13, 9 a.m.
- December 4, 9 a.m.

[Link to register](#)

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:

- November 20, 9 a.m.
- December 16, 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 are required to spend a percentage of contract sales with certified diverse businesses and report the spend. This webinar will help prime contractors understand 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:

- December 18, 9 a.m.

[Link to register](#)

Vendor Hub Reporting - for Prime Contractors

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

As part of all contract terms and conditions, prime contractors are required to report spending in the Supplier Diversity Hub. In this class, you will learn how to register in the Hub, submit SDP spend reports, add and manage users, and view current spend.

Upcoming dates:

- November 5, 9 a.m.
- December 10, 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)
Don't miss out on another COMMBUYS opportunity! In this class you will learn the benefits of the SBPP, the mechanics of a Request for Quotes, how to identify and respond to an RFQ, and how RFQ's are evaluated.

Upcoming dates:

- December 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 are required to develop partnerships with certified diverse vendors and report spend. This class gives an overview of the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP), where to find eligible partners, and how to report SDP spend in the UFR.

Upcoming dates:

- December 2, 9 a.m.

[Link to register](#)

Follow us on:



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