

Pathways & Connections



News and events from the Massachusetts

Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)

September 2025

Resources for
Diverse and
Small
Businesses

Open Bid
Opportunities
on COMMBUYS

SDO and
Commonwealth
Training
Opportunities

Directory of
Certified
Businesses

See Us at the Diversity Business Exhibit!

Free Admission to the Public!

Diversity Business Exhibit!

2 Days 2 Locations!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

September 12th & 13th 2025

Register Online Today! → DiversityBusinessExhibit.com

FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>Rhode Island Convention Center</i>	<i>Newport Mansions</i>
Exhibit Hours: 9am-4pm	Newport Mansions Networking
Networking Happy Hour: 4pm-5pm	Reception: 5pm-8pm

The Diversity Business Exhibit is a two-day event with guest speakers, exhibitors, and workshops. This conference, trade show, and networking event is designed specifically for entrepreneurs, business leaders, and nonprofit professionals.

The SDO will be at the Convention Center on Friday, September 12. We will have a table in the exhibition hall, and our Director of Programs and Engagement Michelle Mendes will be part of a panel discussing certification at 11:45 a.m.

Details:

Friday, Sept. 12, 2025

Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI

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

Saturday, Sep. 13, 2025

Newport Mansions, Newport, RI

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



MassAbility Partners in Possibility Sept. 24

Designed for both current and prospective business partners, this free event offers a forum to share success stories, explore effective hiring practices, and strengthen the connection to MassAbility (formerly the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission).

The SDO will be there to talk about our new Empowering Abilities in Contracting and Employment (EACE) Program, which promotes the further inclusion of Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises (SDVOBEs) in statewide contracting.

Details:

Wednesday, September 24

7:30am - 1:10pm

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center
181 Boston Post Road West Marlborough, MA

[Register today!](#) Breakfast and lunch will be provided. Deadline to register is 9/10/25.



Hispanic Heritage Month - Sept. 15-Oct. 15

Please join the SDO as we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month! The event celebrates the history and contributions of those who came from Mexico, Spain, the Caribbean, and South- and Central America.

[To learn more about Hispanic Heritage Month, 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>



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:

- ITS88: IaaS, PaaS, and Related Services. [Link to the Bid](#)
- GRO42: School Nutrition Products. [Link to the Bid](#)
- OFF54: Postage and Mail Processing Equipment, Accessories, Services & Supplies. [Link to the Bid](#)
- HSP45: Laboratory Supplier and Equipment (re-opened). [Link to the Bid](#)

Intents to Bid/Reopen:

- WMR001 - Hazardous/Universal, Medical, and Electronic Waste Disposal and Emergency Response. [Link to the Intent to Reopen](#)
- PRF76 - Management Consultants, Program Coordinators, and Planners Services. [Link to the Intent to 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](#)
- ITS87: IT Staff Augmentation. [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](#)
- 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](#).



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

- Recently, [Sarah Scala Consulting](#) won "Great Companies: International Women Entrepreneur Award" again this year in the category of Leadership Strategy - Coaching and Consulting!

- As part of a new partnership, [AirFig Productions](#) taught a photography program at the Hope Center for the Arts, introducing students to the fundamentals of camera use, composition, and creative expression. AirFig guided them through hands-on lessons that built confidence and encouraged them to see the world through a new lens.
- [Academic Discoveries, Inc.](#) reported that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has approved their Special Education Administrator Licensure Program, which will begin in January 2026. The company said this opportunity will expand their business into offering master level courses with the potential of university approval.
- IT services company [Boston Data Pro](#) secured a major staffing and service contract with a leading global manufacturing client, alongside multiple large-scale restaurant enterprise clients. They also launched a B2B technology platform that helps national restaurant chains streamline their end-to-end deployments — from Point Of Sale (POS) rollouts to menu updates and store launches. They said securing these contracts enabled them to expand their workforce, create new jobs, and strengthen their ability to deliver enterprise-grade IT solutions. Their success has been recognized nationally, as they were ranked #136 on the [2024 Inc. Regional list](#) and earned a place on the [Inc. 5000 National list](#) for 2024.

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

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.



Diverse Business Certification Updates

The SDO certified 18 businesses in August 2025. 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.



Upcoming Vendor Classes

Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) for Vendors - NEW!

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:

- September 17, 9 a.m.

[Link to register](#)

Certified Vendor Onboarding – Using Your Certification to Unlock Opportunities

(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:

- September 30, 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:

- September 25, 9-10AM

[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:

- September 4, 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:

- September 24, 9-10AM

[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:

- September 23, 9-10AM

[Link to register](#)

Follow us on:



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