

# MWBE *Express*

A publication from the office of Minority & Women Business Enterprises at Erie County Medical Center

## Buffalo's MWBE Business Support and Expansion Moves Forward

### MAYOR BROWN UNVEILS PHASE TWO OF THE BUFFALO OPPORTUNITY AGENDA

*Mayor Brown will expand phase one of the Buffalo Opportunity Pledge by issuing a series of Executive Orders that strengthen the City's minority and women business enterprise programs, promote inclusion and bolster City resident workforce goals*

Buffalo, NY – \*Today Mayor Byron W. Brown announced the next phase of building a city of opportunity for all residents by launching the Buffalo Opportunity Agenda. This next phase focuses on improving conditions for minority and women owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE) and minorities and female workers. The Opportunity Agenda will also include several executive orders that bolster equity in contracting and hiring opportunities in New York State's second largest city, as well as the formation of the City of Buffalo Contract Compliance Committee and the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for an operator of the Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center.

"A healthy and diverse business sector and ensuring employment opportunities for all City residents is critically important to continuing Buffalo's economic renaissance," said Mayor Brown, noting that a part of his Opportunity Agenda establishes a "First Source" hiring policy for major economic development and Public Works projects and encourages selection of professional services firms that have demonstrated efforts to partner with Minority and Women Business Enterprises and diversity in hiring. "The changes included in this plan reflect my ongoing commitment to advancing diversity, inclusion and equity in our City."

The executive orders that Mayor Brown will issue create incentives for contractors who reach and/or exceed MBE/WBE goals in the city. These incentives will recognize businesses that demonstrate their commitment to hiring residents that live within the city limits and mentor MBE/WBEs, by providing them with additional points on city bids.

The city will now employ a "First Source" hiring policy for public works contracts requiring contractors and subcontractors to make demonstrable efforts to meet or exceed the 25% residency hiring goals included in the City's charter. Business utilization goals of 25% MBE and 5% WBE and work force utilization goals of 25% minority and 5% female will also be included for major economic development and public works projects. Mayor Brown's plan also includes new procedures for subcontractor substitutions. In the event that the MBE/WBE subcontractor identified during the bidding process is unable to perform the work as needed, contractors are now required to submit a written request to the City for a replacement, detailing the inability of the subcontractor to perform and the good faith efforts to replace a MBE/WBE with another.

"Success among small businesses, including women and minority business enterprises, means more jobs and long-term prosperity for everyone," said Buffalo Common Council President Darius Pridgen.

"I applaud Mayor Brown's decision to make these issues and concepts the focus of his next phase for the City's Opportunity Agenda."

\*Excerpt from official press release from the Mayor's Office 1/11/2017

# Minority & Women Owned Businesses: **BACK TO BASICS**

You've started your own business. You've become aware of institutions or programs that will help Minority and or Women owned Business Enterprises. Just one question...

## **Do you qualify?**

### **AM I A MBE, WBE OR MWBE?**

A **MBE** is a business enterprise in which at least 51% is owned/operated/controlled day to day by citizens or permanent aliens who are:

- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian Pacific
- Asian Indian Subcontinent
- Native American

A **WBE** is a business enterprise in which at least 51% is owned/operated/controlled day to day by citizens or permanent aliens who are women.

An **MWBE** is a business enterprise in which at least 51% is owned/controlled/operated by citizens or permanent aliens who are minority women.

### **OK, SO I DO QUALIFY...WHAT NOW?**

NYS Certification is one of the suggested paths for you to pursue. NYS Certified businesses that obtain that status are able to be listed in NYS Directory of Certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. This directory is used by state agencies and authorities who are mandated by law to observe the Governor's 30% requirement for Public Entities to contract with minorities and women. This classification puts you in a unique position to be canvassed for new contracting opportunities that your business may not have been exposed to previously. It also gives you the ability to offer more than a bid; you offer them the ability to get that much closer to meeting their mandate.



# What we think, we become - Buddha

## Buddha had it right...

You had that initial thought. "I want to have my own business." or "I want to be my own boss." Whether it be your own bakery, construction company or event planning company, that desire is what fuels each step toward your goal.

So, what next? You'll need a business plan to focus on your path to your goal. It's your road map to your success. You'll want to determine your goals at a

measured rate so that you don't trip over yourself and find yourself taking a fall that will set you back. If you don't know how to write one there are helpful institutions that can help you do that for free or at minimal cost. Check with the SBDC at [sbdc.buffalostate.edu](http://sbdc.buffalostate.edu) or SCORE at [score.org](http://score.org).

So if you THINK you want to be an entrepreneur, this is the first step to BECOMING what you want.

## Is Your Business In A HUBZone?

### Here's How That Can Help You!

#### *Every little bit of information helps...*

##### **What is the HUBZone Program?**

**HUBZone** is a US Small Business Administration (SBA) program for small companies that operate and employ people in identified historically underutilized business zones. It's meant to help small businesses located in distressed areas gain preferential access to federal procurement opportunities

##### **What are the benefits of a HUBZone?**

- Set-asides-Contracting Officers can reserve or set aside specific contracts for qualified HUBZone firms.
- There is a 3% Prime & Sub goal with the Federal Government for certified & qualified HUBZone.
- Possible 10% evaluation can be applied to certified HUBZone firms in full and open contract bids.

##### **Am I eligible for the HUBZone Program?**

- The business must be a Small Business.
- Owned/Controlled by at least 51% US citizens or a Community Development Corporation, and agricultural cooperative, or an Indian tribe.
- Principal office must be within the HUBZone
- At least 35% of its employees must reside in a HUBZone.

##### **If this applies go to your business:**

[www.sba.gov/content/am-i-small-business-concern](http://www.sba.gov/content/am-i-small-business-concern)  
Then collect the requested supporting paperwork/documentation at: [www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/hubzone HUB Application.pdf](http://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/hubzone%20HUB%20Application.pdf).

*\*Helpful tip: Do not complete the application online until you have reviewed the sample form and collected all your documentation.*

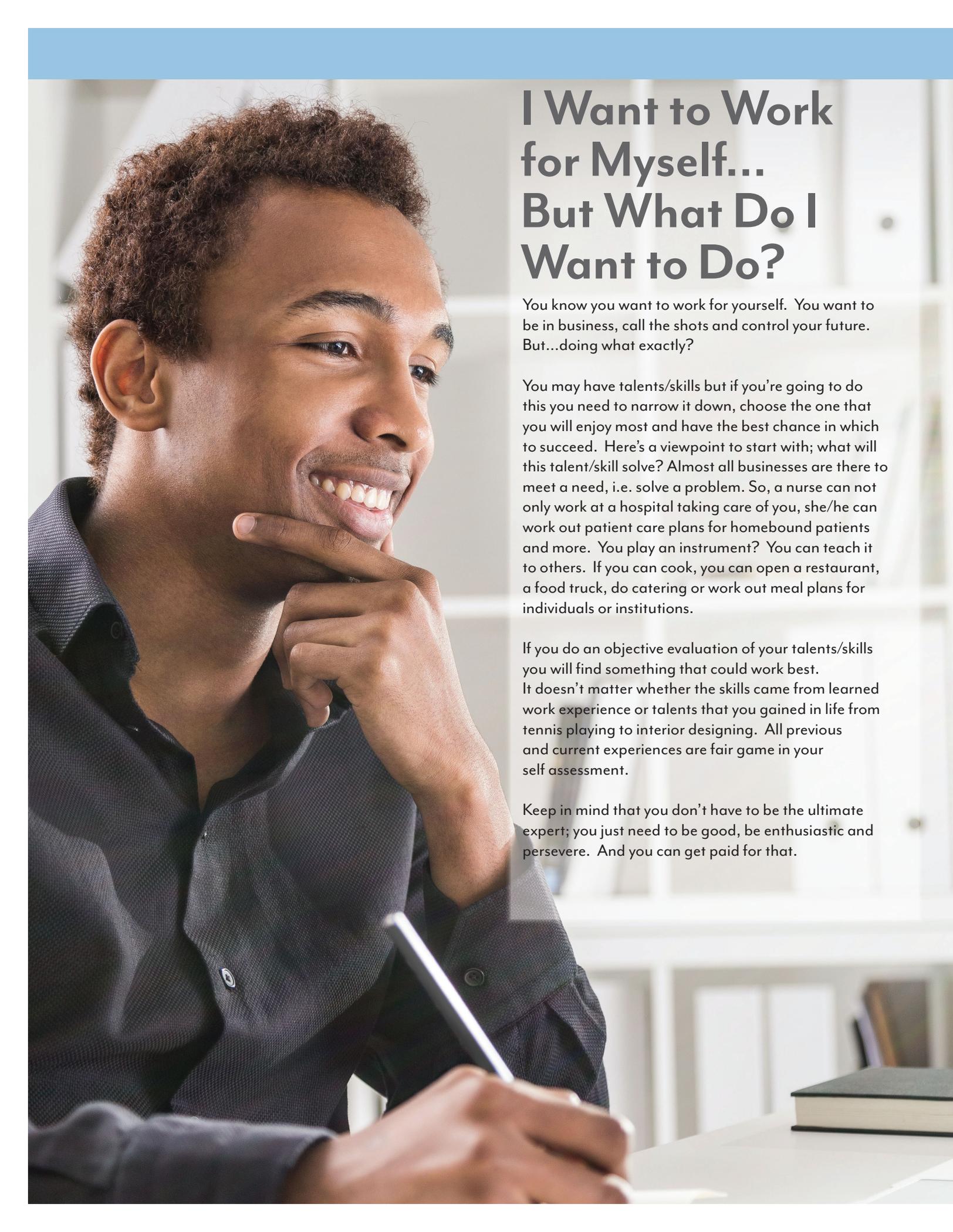
**Still have questions?** Look for answers at [HUBZone@sba.gov](mailto:HUBZone@sba.gov)

Then it's time to get the application done, go to SBA's General Login System (GLS) at: [www.eweb.sba.gov/gls/dsp addcustomer.cfm?imappsystypnm=8ASDB](http://www.eweb.sba.gov/gls/dsp%20addcustomer.cfm?imappsystypnm=8ASDB)

Complete the application and submit along with the requested supporting documentation.

##### **Ok, so I've done all this, HOW does this help me?**

Large parts of Buffalo and the surrounding counties of Kenmore, West Seneca, City of Niagara Falls, Lackawanna, Tonawanda and more are considered HUBZones. This opens up the door to entrepreneurs in those areas to take advantage of business opportunities that others cannot.



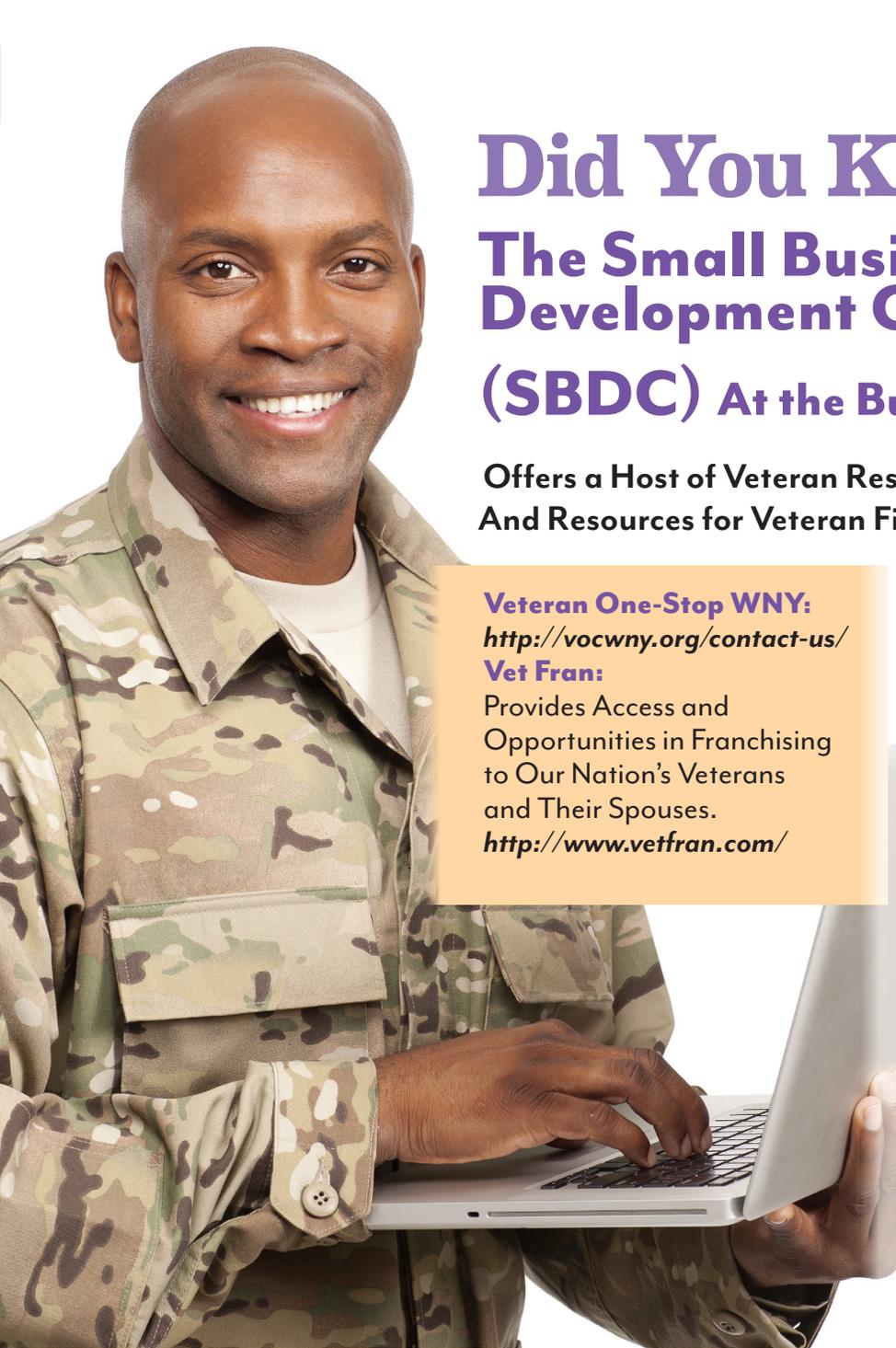
# I Want to Work for Myself... But What Do I Want to Do?

You know you want to work for yourself. You want to be in business, call the shots and control your future. But...doing what exactly?

You may have talents/skills but if you're going to do this you need to narrow it down, choose the one that you will enjoy most and have the best chance in which to succeed. Here's a viewpoint to start with; what will this talent/skill solve? Almost all businesses are there to meet a need, i.e. solve a problem. So, a nurse can not only work at a hospital taking care of you, she/he can work out patient care plans for homebound patients and more. You play an instrument? You can teach it to others. If you can cook, you can open a restaurant, a food truck, do catering or work out meal plans for individuals or institutions.

If you do an objective evaluation of your talents/skills you will find something that could work best. It doesn't matter whether the skills came from learned work experience or talents that you gained in life from tennis playing to interior designing. All previous and current experiences are fair game in your self assessment.

Keep in mind that you don't have to be the ultimate expert; you just need to be good, be enthusiastic and persevere. And you can get paid for that.



# Did You Know?

## The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) At the Buffalo State College

Offers a Host of Veteran Resource Sites  
And Resources for Veteran Financing

### **Veteran One-Stop WNY:**

<http://vocwny.org/contact-us/>

### **Vet Fran:**

Provides Access and Opportunities in Franchising to Our Nation's Veterans and Their Spouses.

<http://www.vetfran.com/>

The Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act, signed into law by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on May 12, 2014, allows eligible Veteran business owners to get certified as a New York State Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB). The goal of the Act is to encourage and support eligible SDVOBs to play a greater role in the state's economy by increasing their participation in New York State's contracting opportunities (6%). The OGS Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development is responsible for certifying eligible SDVOBs, and assisting and promoting their participation in the state's procurement activities.

### **Learn More:**

<https://www.ogs.ny.gov/Veterans/>

## Hey, Team Mate! Where Were You?

## Did You Miss the Last MWBE Certification Class?

*Help! I missed the last class! Am I out of luck?*

No, you can still sign up with us for the class in the next quarter. Our classes are held four times a year. If you miss out, don't hesitate to get yourself enrolled in the next session.

Don't forget, MWBE Certification works for you in multiple ways. Once you are certified, it gives you an advantage with State Agencies that are required to

observe Governor Cuomo's 30% spending mandate with MWBE businesses. There is an additional 6% reserved for Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business (SDVOB) as well. It's time to get your share of the opportunities.

**Our next class session begins late August.  
Call us at 716-898-6170 to enroll.**

# Networking=Opportunities



Never forget that for your enterprise to succeed, you need others. The connections you make when you put yourself forward will be invaluable. No business can grow or survive in a self-contained bubble. Search out opportunities to engage with other businesses. Look for business matchmakers online. Grab your cards, your capability statement and go and engage. The simple phrase of; "Hello, tell me about your business." can open up a myriad of possibilities to expand your own business. You sell paper products? And the person you've just met has delivery vans? Remember that job you felt you needed to turn down because you didn't have the delivery capacity or the price was profit destroying? What can the person you've just met do for you?

When you get there, represent your business proudly. You have every right to be there. Make eye contact and smile. Have a firm hand shake and listen for the opportunities that are there for you.

You know what you do better than they do, and as important as it is to listen, have your elevator speech prepared, short, sweet and concise. Networking is an underutilized factor for small businesses. Break that habit (or don't start it in the first place), you can only gain from finding out other ways to improve your business.



# The Get on the Bus Tour was a Great Success!

The MWBE Department hosted its 1st Annual MWBE Get on the Bus Tour and it was an amazing success. The goal of the Tour was to connect local MWBE Business owners to the concrete reality of the expanded opportunities available to them. The participants met face to face with agencies like the BMHA, City of Buffalo, NFTA, Kaleida, Roswell and others, which meant they heard directly from the stakeholders how the NYS Certification would help them to expand their business opportunities. Q & A sessions were held at each stop and they answered all questions the participants put to them.

The Tour participants made contacts that expanded their knowledge horizons for their particular business. Successful businesses lead to more jobs in our communities and an economic boost that will benefit our city and neighboring areas. Other stops on the Tour included brick and mortar retail outlets & resource partners which gave the participants a chance to talk to certified MWBEs. The MWBE Department will host our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Get on the Bus Tour next spring. Please look for future postings to see when it will be rolling again!

*“We found that the Get on the Bus Tour provided us with insight and access to resources that were very helpful. It gave us the chance to speak face to face with individuals who are actually the people who make the decisions about purchasing and contracts.”*

—Ivory Robinson/Erica Tyler  
from HarpData  
Ivory@harpdata.com  
www.Harpdata.com  
716-249-2185

*“You won’t ever meet these people on your own. This was an opportunity that you just don’t get. You meet very high-profile people in person. This was a great experience, I’m really grateful that Ms. Curry opened that door for me. She does wonderful work with helping MWBEs move up.”*

—Anna Schwass from  
Anna’s Cleaning  
aschwass@juno.com  
716-948-6964

*“I found the event to be informative, eye-opening, and an incredible resource that helped point me down the right path. As a newly certified WBE, it was wonderful to associate with other MWBEs and share information amongst ourselves. The itinerary that Janique put together was exciting and educational. I was happy to be a part of it and I look forward to new opportunities.”*

—Michelle Alberts from Selective Staffing Solutions  
malberts@ssswny.com  
www.ssswny.com  
716-634-3300

The New York State Contract System offers even more opportunities for MWBEs...

Click on Bid & Grant Opportunities and see all the Bid Opportunities out there! [ny.newnycontracts.com](http://ny.newnycontracts.com)

# Did You Know? ECIDA

The Erie County Industrial Development Agency has existed since 1970 and has helped thousands of Erie County Businesses?

They offer business development advice as well as :

- **Small Business Loans (\$5,000-\$50,000)**
- **Large Business Loans (\$50,000-\$2 million)**
- **Bond Financing / Adaptive Reuse Incentives**
- **Venture Capital Funding**

*If it's time for you to expand, hire new employees or just take on bigger jobs, this is one path for you to look into...*

## **ECIDA**

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Minority & Women  
Business Enterprises

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