



SBPO Quarterly Newsletter

A Small Business Programs Office Publication

A Message from SBPO'S Director, Meshelle MV Howard

Greetings Business Community,

Welcome in Spring and some awesome weather!

There is always something happening at Metro. We continue to make great strides in the ridership of our Metrorail and buses. We recently completed a successful Fill-A-Bus Campaign by surpassing our goals. We raised \$18,885 and 46,711 meals for people in need. We partnered with the navigation app Waymap to make it more accessible for people with impaired vision. Finally, we celebrated 118 operation graduates from December 2024 and January 2025. At Metro, we focus on building talented teams through opportunities for growth and advancement.

We have a great calendar of educational classes and opportunity-based events for 2025, so please check out our website and register for the in-person and virtual events. There are many contracting opportunities of various sizes to get your foot in the door as Prime Contractors and subcontractors. Continue to visit Metro's website for listings of opportunities.

For those businesses that are certified with us, we send you advance notices of opportunities, so make sure your contact information is up to date. We look forward to doing business with you at any level. We are "Your Metro, The Way Forward".

We welcome all small businesses to visit our site and look at the information for certification criteria.

We know that everyone's schedule is busy, and you may be unable to attend all our outreaches and training events. You can find them on the [SBPO website](#), Visit Small Business Programs | WMATA, to learn more about how to become certified with WMATA in one or more of the following socioeconomic programs:

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- Small Business Enterprise (SBE)
- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) – **New**
- Small Business Program (SBP) – **New**
- Micro-Business Program (MBP) – **New**

We look forward to receiving your certification applications at WMATA's Small Business Programs Office. Have safe Spring!

Cordially,

Words of Wisdom

"The purpose of business is to create and keep a customer."

Peter Drucker

This quote highlights that a business exists to serve its customers—not just to make money. Attracting new customers is important, but keeping them through great service, quality, and relationships is what ensures long-term success. Profits naturally follow when businesses focus on delivering real value and maintaining customer loyalty.

Preparing for Economic Uncertainty: How Small Businesses Can Stay Resilient

Economic uncertainty can create challenges for small businesses, from fluctuating consumer demand to supply chain disruptions and tighter access to capital. However, with proactive planning, small businesses can build resilience and navigate uncertain times successfully. Here are key strategies to strengthen your business against economic downturns.

1. Strengthen Financial Reserves

Having a financial cushion can help businesses weather downturns. It's important to build an emergency fund with at least three to six months of operating expenses to cover unexpected costs. Regularly reviewing cash flow can help identify potential financial risks and areas for cost-cutting. Reducing unnecessary expenses and negotiating better terms with vendors can also provide financial relief and improve stability during uncertain times.

2. Diversify Revenue Streams

Relying on a single source of income can be risky, especially during economic downturns. To mitigate this risk, consider expanding your products or services to meet shifting market demands. Targeting new customer segments or industries can also help create additional revenue streams. Subscription-based models or recurring revenue services can provide a more predictable and stable income, reducing dependence on one-time sales.

3. Strengthen Customer Relationships

Loyal customers can play a crucial role in keeping your business afloat during tough times. Providing exceptional customer service helps build trust and retention, making it more likely that customers will continue to support your business. Offering discounts or loyalty programs can encourage repeat business and help maintain steady revenue. Additionally, gathering customer feedback allows you to adapt your offerings to better meet their changing needs, ensuring your business remains relevant.

4. Optimize Operations and Reduce Costs

Finding ways to operate more efficiently can improve your bottom line. Automating routine processes can save time and reduce labor costs, allowing employees to focus on higher-value tasks. Outsourcing non-core functions, such as payroll or marketing, can also help lower overhead expenses. Reevaluating supplier contracts to secure better pricing or more flexible payment terms can further enhance cost efficiency and financial stability.

5. Access Available Funding and Support

During economic downturns, various funding sources and assistance programs become available to help small businesses. Exploring small business loans and grants from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and local organizations can provide much-needed financial support. Alternative financing options, such as lines of credit or invoice factoring, can also offer flexibility when managing cash flow. Staying updated on government relief programs designed for small businesses can ensure you take advantage of available resources.

6. Monitor Market Trends and Adapt

Keeping an eye on market trends allows businesses to make informed strategic decisions. Staying updated on industry news and economic forecasts can provide insight into potential challenges and opportunities. Analyzing competitor strategies can also help identify new approaches to remain competitive. Being flexible and open to pivoting your business model when necessary can ensure that you remain relevant and adaptable in changing economic conditions.

7. Invest in Digital Transformation

Leveraging technology can make your business more agile and competitive. Strengthening your online presence through search engine optimization (SEO), social media, and e-commerce platforms can help attract and retain customers. Cloud-based tools for remote work, collaboration, and automation can enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Implementing data analytics allows businesses to track customer behavior and financial performance, enabling smarter decision-making and targeted marketing efforts.

8. Build Strong Business Relationships

Establishing strong relationships with other businesses and industry partners can provide support during difficult times. Collaborating with complementary businesses can help expand customer reach and share resources. Maintaining strong relationships with suppliers and lenders can also be beneficial when negotiating favorable terms. Joining small business associations and networking groups can provide access to valuable guidance, mentorship, and new business opportunities.

While economic uncertainty can be challenging, proactive planning can help small businesses stay resilient. By managing finances wisely, diversifying income streams, optimizing operations, and leveraging digital tools, businesses can not only survive but thrive in uncertain times. Taking action today to strengthen your business will position it for long-term success, no matter what economic challenges arise.

Transportation News & Small Business Updates

[U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy Urges D.C. Leaders to Improve Transportation Safety in our Nation's Capital as Workers Return to Office](#)

[U.S. Transportation Secretary Duffy Announces the Newest Political Appointees Working to Move America Forward](#)

[Mayor Bowser Launches Applications for 2025 Robust Retail Grant Program](#)

[Treasury sets March 21 deadline for millions of businesses to report ownership information or risk fines of \\$10,000 or more](#)

The Small Business Owner's Guide to Tax Deductions

Tax season can be a stressful time for small business owners, but taking advantage of the right deductions can significantly reduce your tax burden and improve your bottom line. Understanding what expenses qualify as tax deductions and how to properly document them can help you keep more of your hard-earned money. This guide will walk you through essential tax deductions every small business owner should know about.

1. Home Office Deduction

If you use part of your home exclusively for business purposes, you may qualify for the home office deduction. This can include a portion of your rent or mortgage, utilities, and maintenance costs. The IRS offers two methods to calculate this deduction: the simplified method, which allows a deduction of \$5 per square foot of office space (up to 300 square feet), or the regular method, which requires calculating actual expenses based on the percentage of your home used for business.

2. Business Vehicle Expenses

If you use your vehicle for business purposes, you can deduct expenses related to mileage, maintenance, insurance, and even depreciation. The IRS allows two methods to calculate this deduction: the standard mileage rate, which offers a set amount per mile driven for business, or the actual expense method, which requires tracking all costs associated with the vehicle. Keeping detailed mileage logs is crucial to ensuring compliance with IRS rules.

3. Office Supplies and Equipment

Everyday office supplies, such as paper, pens, postage, and printer ink, are fully deductible. Additionally, larger equipment purchases, such as computers, printers, and furniture, may qualify for immediate deductions under Section 179 or be depreciated over time. Keeping receipts and tracking purchases throughout the year can help maximize this deduction.

4. Business Meals and Entertainment

Business meals with clients, partners, or employees may be partially deductible. Generally, you can deduct 50% of meal expenses if they are directly related to your business. However, for 2021 and 2022, the IRS allowed 100% deductions for meals provided by restaurants. Keeping detailed records of the date, location, purpose, and participants of business meals is essential for claiming this deduction.

5. Employee Salaries and Benefits

If you have employees, wages, salaries, and benefits paid to them are fully deductible. This includes bonuses, commissions, retirement contributions, and health insurance premiums. If you hire independent contractors, payments made to them are also deductible, but it's important to issue a 1099-NEC form if you pay them \$600 or more in a tax year.

6. Professional Services and Business Fees

Hiring professionals such as accountants, attorneys, and consultants can be expensive, but these costs are fully deductible. Membership fees for professional organizations, business-related subscriptions, and software licenses also qualify. Keeping records of invoices and payment receipts ensures proper documentation for tax purposes.

7. Marketing and Advertising Expenses

Promoting your business is essential for growth, and the good news is that advertising and marketing costs are fully deductible. This includes expenses for website development, social media advertising, business cards, flyers, and digital marketing campaigns. Sponsorships, branding efforts, and even the cost of hiring a marketing consultant can also be written off.

8. Business Insurance Premiums

Business insurance is a necessary expense that protects your company from liability, property damage, and other risks. The cost of general liability insurance, professional liability insurance, workers' compensation, and even cyber liability insurance can be deducted. Ensuring you have adequate coverage not only secures your business but also provides a tax advantage.

9. Travel Expenses

If you travel for business, many related expenses are deductible, including airfare, hotel stays, rental cars, and meals. However, the IRS requires that travel must be necessary for business purposes and not excessive. Combining personal and business travel can complicate deductions, so it's important to keep thorough records of business-related expenses.

10. Retirement Contributions

Contributing to a retirement plan not only secures your future but also offers tax advantages. Small business owners can deduct contributions made to plans such as SEP IRAs, SIMPLE IRAs, or 401(k) plans. These contributions lower taxable income while allowing for long-term savings growth.

11. Education and Training

Continuing education, training programs, and certifications that improve your skills or benefit your business are deductible. This includes online courses, seminars, workshops, and even industry-related books. Investing in professional development not only enhances your expertise but also provides a valuable tax break.

12. Rent and Utilities

If you lease office or retail space, rent payments are fully deductible. Utility expenses, such as electricity, water, internet, and phone services, can also be written off. If you operate from a co-working space, membership fees may qualify as a deductible business expense as well.

Final Tips for Maximizing Deductions

To make the most of these deductions, it's crucial to maintain accurate financial records throughout the year. Using accounting software or hiring a tax professional can help ensure compliance with IRS regulations. Additionally, keeping receipts, invoices, and mileage logs will provide necessary documentation in case of an audit.

By understanding and leveraging these tax deductions, small business owners can reduce their taxable income and keep more money in their business. Tax planning should be a year-round strategy, not just a last-minute task during tax season. Taking advantage of available deductions can lead to significant savings and greater financial stability for your business.

New Certifications and Renewals

Highlighting recently certified and renewed businesses partnering with WMATA. Explore this section to meet our latest additions dedicated to delivering exceptional products and services while supporting our local business community!

Home State Certifications:

Reaching From The Stars

Interstate Certifications:

A Squared Plus Engineering	
Support Group	DBE
AC METALS	DBE
Big Tent Design	DBE
Crystal Bright	DBE
Technostruct	DBE
Azar Design Co	DBE
GMG World Media,	DBE
Logical Infrastructure Solutions	DBE
VMC	DBE
Aegis Mechanical Corporation	DBE
REM General Group Inc.	DBE
Mance & Associates, Inc.	DBE
Tru Impact Consulting,	DBE
Flexlynqs	DBE
CMP Group/	
DBA CMP Power Services	DBE
infraTECH Engineers & Innovators	DBE
VankySoft	DBE
Countervail Engineering	MBE
Big Tent Design	MBE
BSV Metal Finishers Inc	MBE
CST Engineering Inc	MBE
Crystal Bright	MBE
Niti Systems Consultants Inc	MBE
Rohrer Studio	MBE
Marine Solutions, Inc.	MBE
Foursquare Integrated	
Transportation	MBE
GMG World Media	MBE
Prive' Demeure, Inc.	MBE
Annuk Incorporated	MBE
Capital Brand Group	MBE
Aegis Mechanical Corporation	MBE
Mercado Consultants, Inc.	MBE
Tru Impact Consulting	MBE
CMP Group/	
DBA CMP Power Services	MBE
Sowinski Sullivan Architects, PC	MBE
VankySoft	MBE

Annual Reviews:

Dulles Geotechnical and Material Testing
Sowinski Sullivan Architects, PC
L B Construction Enterprises, Inc.
SXM Strategies
CST Engineering Inc
RWH ASSOCIATES
TMS Supplies, Inc
Business Transformation Group
SL King Technologies Inc
Regional Contracting Services
THG Companies
Advanced Infrastructure Design
NEW FORM BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC
Admiral Elevator Co., Inc.
JLN Construction Services
Kim Engineering Inc
MIN Engineering, Inc.
Plexus Installations, Inc.
Athavale Lystad & Associates Inc
Idle Time Advertising
A & A Premium Paint Distributor
AmeTrade Inc
TAG Construction
Unicorn Consulting Solutions
NeoNiche Strategies
DDE Inc. dba Generation Cable Corp.
Nebula Engineering P.C.
ELECSYS Engineering Group, P
Floura Teeter Landscape Architects, Inc.
DLR Distributors, Inc.
Network Technology Vision
Birdi & Associates, Inc.
Share Tech Solutions
Unified Industries, Inc
Brewington Management Company
Vaughn Management
Symbology DC
Garg Consulting Services, Inc.
US Supply House
NETWAR DEFENSE CORPORATION
Meliora Environmental Design
Alpine Snow Removal and Landscape
Next Generation Inc
Core Secure
Adept Professional Staffing, Inc.
Remline Corp

RCS Plumbing
Susan Fitzgerald & Associates, Inc.
EVNoire
V-1 Consulting
95 Traffic Safety Supply
Geo Trans
Everlights, Inc.
Dark Light Consulting
PMA Associates Inc
Admiral Elevator Co., Inc.
Martucks Consulting
NBB Media Solutions
JM Utility Group, Inc.
Potowmac Engineers, Inc.
Adept Professional Staffing, Inc.
KGP Design Studio
Paradise Ironworks & Construction
I&B Associates, Inc.
Caliber Consulting Group
Dimensional Strategy
Lee and Associates, Inc.
Ayoroa Simmons
Niti Systems Consultants Inc
OTAS Inc
WFT Engineering, Inc.
Marine Tiger Technologies, Inc.
Capitol Government Contract Specialists
Rohrer Studio
Luster National, Inc.
Boatman and Magnani Inc.
Infinite Consulting Corp
DK Consulting
MFS Construction
Nova Consulting Inc
Capital Brand Group
BATTAs Environmental Associates Inc
Lord & Mitchell, Inc.
Dhillon Engineering, Inc.
RBC Professionals Inc
Subsurface Technologies Inc
Helios Electric
B-Sar Electric
Strum Contracting Company
NAT Consulting
KGL Communications

Explore SBPO's Resource Corner

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you have questions about SBPO's services, eligibility, or certification requirements? Visit our [FAQs section](#) to find answers to common queries. We're here to make the process as transparent and accessible as possible.

Share Your Input

We value your feedback and want to tailor our services to your needs. Take a moment to participate in our survey and help us improve our outreach efforts.

Do you have suggestions for education topics you'd like to see in SBPO's future outreach? How can we enhance our support during the certification process? Is there a specific aspect of certification that you'd like explained in greater detail? We're here to provide the information you need. [Complete the survey here.](#)

Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out. You can email us at sbpohotline@wmata.com. Our dedicated team is ready to assist you with any inquiries you may have.

Visit Our Website

For a comprehensive overview of what the Small Business Programs Office has to offer, visit our [website](#). Explore the full range of resources, support, and opportunities available to small businesses looking to partner with us.

At SBPO, your input and success are our priorities. We're here to support you every step of the way, so please take advantage of our resources and stay connected with us. Together, we can achieve your business goals and contribute to our shared success. Visit our website here for more information about our offerings.

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Outreach Opportunities

We invite you to be part of these upcoming outreach events. These gatherings are not just about information; they're about inspiration, collaboration, and empowerment. Come meet like-minded individuals, gain knowledge, and find the support you need to take your business to the next level. Your presence can make a difference!

[Wednesday, March 19, 2025 - Scaling a Small Business with Customer Experience | Virtual](#)

Small business owners will learn how to leverage Customer Experience Management (CXM) to scale effectively by applying strategies used by large businesses to drive growth, loyalty, and competitive advantage. This session will provide a roadmap for identifying customer needs, designing impactful experiences, and differentiating their brand.

[Thursday, March 27, 2025 - Metro's Meet the Primes | In Person \(Metro's New Carrollton Building, MD\)](#)

Network with industry leaders and explore potential partnership opportunities. Learn about upcoming projects, procurement processes, and how your business can collaborate with WMATA's prime contractors. Don't miss this chance to connect and grow your business. Space is limited so reserve your spot now!

[Tuesday, April 8, 2025 - Simplify Sales & Increase Your Bid Capacity | Virtual](#)

This webinar helps businesses streamline the sales lifecycle in government contracting by optimizing resources and leveraging technology. It covers market readiness, strategic positioning, and selecting the right tools like CRMs and market intelligence platforms. A live demonstration will show how integrated technology can enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

[Wednesday, April 30, 2025 - Metro's Certification Workshop | In Person \(Metro's New Carrollton Building, MD\)](#)

Discover the pathway to Metro certification for small businesses in this in person workshop. Gain insights and practical tips on how to successfully navigate the certification process, opening the doors for your small business to thrive in collaboration with Metro.

[Thursday, May 8, 2025 – Metro's Government Procurement Fair | In Person \(Metro's New Carrollton Building, MD\)](#)

Join us at WMATA's Government Procurement Fair for a unique opportunity to connect with key decision-makers and explore upcoming contracting opportunities. Network with industry leaders, gain insights into the procurement process, and discover how your business can partner with WMATA for future projects!

[Tuesday, May 20, 2025 – Marketing & Branding 101: Branding and Marketing Essentials for the Construction and Trade Industries and Beyond | Virtual](#)

In a competitive market, having the right tools to build a solid brand and effective marketing strategy is essential—especially in the construction and trade industries. In Marketing & Branding 101, you'll learn the foundational principles of branding and marketing tailored to your industry. This session will cover how to better understand and connect with your target audience in order to craft marketing efforts that set your business apart. Whether you're just starting out or looking to elevate your business, this session will provide actionable insights to strengthen your brand and grow your business.

This webinar is in collaboration with DC Small Business Development Center Network.

[Thursday, May 29, 2025 – Hire Right, Fire Smart: HR Rules You Can't Ignore | Virtual](#)

HR compliance isn't just about following the rules—it's about protecting your business, avoiding costly fines, and staying profitable. This workshop is designed to equip small business owners with the essential HR knowledge and employment best practices to ensure they are hiring, managing, and terminating employees legally and effectively.

Check out the full listing of SBPO's events [here](#).