



SBPO Quarterly Newsletter

A Small Business Programs Office Publication

Welcome

The WMATA Small Business Programs Office (SBPO) recognizes that we all have busy schedules, therefore we extend a heartfelt thank you for taking the time to read our Newsletter.

D.C. provides local businesses with \$100 million in Covid-19 Recovery Grants

The D.C. government has launched a new program that will allocate \$100 million in grant funding to local businesses, officials hope a fresh injection of cash will help carry the city's hardest-hit industries through the coronavirus pandemic.

The business supports grants Emergency Amendment Act of 2020, passed by the D.C. Council last July, authorized the city to draw as much as \$100 million of Cares Act funding to support local businesses. The new program, "The Bridge Fund," uses the final \$20 million from the city's federal Cares Act funding and \$80 million from a local contingency reserve. The fund targets restaurants, hotels, entertainment and retail businesses, which will be allowed to start applying for grants in the coming weeks.

The Mayor states, "The Bridge Fund will focus on strategic investments in the hard-hit sectors, so we can support workers and help businesses make it to the other side of the crisis."

\$900 Billion stimulus package is relief for businesses

The newly approved stimulus package will provide funding for transportation agencies and additional funding for small businesses through Paycheck Protection Programs. The bill includes more than \$284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans, and modifications to the program to serve small businesses, nonprofit organizations and independent restaurants. Businesses that received PPP loans and had them forgiven can deduct the costs covered by those loans on their federal tax returns. For further information go to www.sba.gov.



SBPO Shout Out

The SBPO is pleased to announce the recent hiring of Bryan Gleason, Anthony Spain and Mohammed Abiola to the positions of Sr. DBE Auditor.

Is your Small Business struggling? These tips can help you stay focused

Many businesses have struggled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and related shutdowns. However, some of the challenges business owners face today are less clear-cut and can simply be a matter of losing focus. Here are some tips to help you stay focused in difficult times.

- 1. Seek out and talk to a business mentor.** One way to help regain focus is to talk to an established business mentor about your current struggles. An experienced mentor can help you set goals, push your thinking in new directions and inspire you to aspire for more. Mentors can see things that you may not because they aren't inside the bottle trying to read the label. They also have their own customized experiences and can predict the path you're headed down.
- 2. Reconsider your priorities.** When you are lacking in focus or facing new challenges, another option worth trying is to change how you prioritize tasks. The key to success is how you allocate time to what matters most.
- 3. Just say no.** Business owners that say yes too much can also have a challenging time keeping focused. The solution is relatively simple: Say no more often and block off more time for you. Have a realistic sense of your capacity and don't go past your limit.
- 4. Save time with better tools and software.** Some time lost each day can be attributed to not having the right tools and software to help owners or their employees succeed. As many workplaces have shifted to remote work in 2020, it's time to invest in new productivity tools that meet this moment. These tools include: Task prioritization software such as Todoist and I Done This; collaboration tools such as Asana and Monday.com; and time tracking software such as Harvest and ActivTrak.
- 5. Set up a "do not disturb" system to improve productivity.** Employee and personal interruptions can quickly get in the way of staying focused, so it's crucial to create a system that allows you to get work done. Putting your phone on "do not disturb" mode can help block out noisy notifications, while in-person interruptions can be reduced by clearly defining what "emergencies" are.
- 6. Don't forget to take breaks.** While it may be easy to forget, you should schedule breaks from the grind. Research shows that taking breaks can help with focus and improve productivity over the long term.

Current Solicitations

To view a current listing of contract opportunities online, go to wmata.com. Click on Business > Procurement & Contracting > WMATA Procurement Opportunities > View WMATA Procurement Opportunities > View Active Solicitations Opportunities.

WMATA-0000008050
Advanced Notice - WMATA TCR's Upgrade Project
03/05/2021 11:23 AM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000008029
FIRPG211113/RCD, Structural Project A
02/24/2021 02:00 PM EST
IFB

WMATA-0000007989
MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction Measurement
02/22/2021 12:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007599
Advance Notice: WMATA L-LINE STEEL TUNNEL LINER RE
02/22/2021 08:20 AM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000008040
RFP# FCMOWE21007 - Traction Power System Modeling
02/22/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000008039
RFP# COHAW211126 - MD, PA, NP and RN
02/19/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007979
PLC TUNNEL FAN CONTROL PANELS
02/18/2021 02:00 PM EST
IFB

WMATA-0000007881
Functional Assessment Services
02/17/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007935
MTPD Contract Security Services
02/12/2021 12:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000008048
Downdraft Table & Magnetic Particle Inspection
02/11/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFQ

WMATA-0000008044
RFQ# CEAGO211137-Enterprise Data Mgmt. MetaData
02/10/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFQ

WMATA-0000007933
Real Time Traffic Interface Licenses
02/10/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007961
Tunnel Ventilation
02/10/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007640
6K Video Surveillance System (VSS) CCMNT20005
01/29/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000008030
DCMP- Rail Vehicle Battery Charger/Discharger
01/29/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFQ

WMATA-0000007858
Moving Services
01/28/2021 05:00 PM EST
IFB

WMATA-0000008006
BMNT Common Hardware Inventory Autosource
01/27/2021 02:00 PM EST
IFB

WMATA-0000007945
COVID-19 Remediation/Decontamination Cleaning Serv
01/27/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007784
F20142/WJG FIBER OPTIC CABLE INFRASTRUCTURE
01/27/2021 02:00 PM EST
IFB

WMATA-0000007906
GPS Tracking
01/27/2021 02:00 PM EST
RFP

WMATA-0000007876
On-call Outreach & Event Team Support

Newly Certified DBE Firm

WFB Cleaning Solutions, LLC

WFB Cleaning Solutions, LLC is a minority small business that provides professional and technical services in the fields of janitorial/custodial, landscaping maintenance, pest control and snow removal. A virtual site visit was conducted on November 24, 2020 and approved by WMATA on December 22, 2020.

Definition of Native American Owned DBEs

The term "Native Americans" was revised in the Department of Transportation 2014 final rule to make it consistent with the Small Business Administration's definition of the term. See 79 Fed. Reg. 59566, 59579 Oct. 2, 2014). This revision clarified that an individual must be an enrolled member of a Federally or State recognized Indian tribe to receive the presumption of social disadvantaged as a Native American.

Going forward, to streamline the certification process for applicants claiming Native American status as members of an Indian tribe, recipients should seek to amend their DBE Program Plans, with the written approval of the concerned operating administration, by seeking to supplement the Uniform Certification Application, at Appendix F of the Regulation, to require Native American applicants, as applicable, to submit documentation proving they are enrolled members of a federally or State recognized Indian tribe. See 49 C.F.R. 26.83(c)(2).

PROCUREMENT CORNER WMATA to conduct a Disparity Study

Keen Independent Research, LLC, a Phoenix and Denver based company, has been selected by WMATA to conduct its Disparity Study for 2021. The study determines whether an agency either in the past or currently, engages in exclusionary practices in the solicitation and award of contracts to minority—and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES). The study is commissioned by WMATA to determine if there is disparity between the availability of firms in a market area and the utilization of those firms by WMATA. The study period will include procurement activities from July 1, 2015 through December 31, 2019. The industry areas are: Construction, Architecture, Engineering, Professional Services, Goods/Supplies and Other Services. Keen Independent Research, LLC will randomly select firms to participate in focus groups, interviews, surveys, and public hearings.



Upcoming Virtual Outreach Events

March 11, 2021: Maximizing your contracting opportunities: for vendors seeking to supply Inventory Parts and Equipment to WMATA.

Prompt Payment Reminder

Prompt payment submissions through the WMATA supplier portal are required for all WMATA contracts funded with federal funds and a DBE goal. The Small Business Programs Office (SBPO) offers training to all vendors. Please send a request to schedule a time for prompt payment submission training to dbehonline@wmata.com.

DBE Statutory Gross Receipts Adjustment

The Department of Transportation issued a final rule on December 14, 2020, applicable to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program. The rule, effective January 13, 2020, (1) provides an inflation adjustment to the size limit on small businesses participating in the DBE program 49 CFR Part 26, and (2) implements a statutory change to the size standard pursuant to the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018.

The Statutory gross receipts cap for certified DBEs specified in 49 CFR 26.65 is adjusted for inflation from \$23.98 million to \$26.29 million. This adjustment applies to the DBE program only. If a firm's gross receipts averaged over the firm's previous fiscal years exceeds \$26.29 million, then it exceeds the small business size limit for participation in FHWA and FTA-assisted work under the Department's DBE program. A DBE firm must still meet the size standards appropriate to the types of work the firm seeks to perform in DOT-assisted contracts. These standards vary by industry according to the NAICS codes defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA).



15 Great Customer Service Areas

Persuasive Speaking Skills 74% of consumers say they have spent more money with a company because of the positive customer service experience, spent up to 14% more.

Empathy 70% of buying experiences are based on how the customer feels they are being treated. Business people are so used to thinking about the bottom line, but the bottom line in most customers mind is not financial, its emotional.

Adaptability 60% of customers change how they could contact you depending on where they are and what they are doing. Customer service representatives need to be flexible mentally to respond to various situations.

Ability to use Positive Language Customers can contact you when they are in a bad mood, angry, frustrated, etc. It is okay to empathize with the customer, which is a key component of great service, but steer the conversation toward positive outcomes to meet their needs using positive language that is supportive to finding a solution.

Clear Communication Skills 33% of clients say that answering questions accurately is the most important skill that a customer service agent can have. Communication skills and speaking clearly are very important.

Self-Control As stressful and anxiety-inducing as customer service can be, representatives need to have self-control, even when the customer does not. It is important to remain calm as much as possible and keep your professionalism even when a customer is upset.

Taking Responsibility 29% of customers say the ability to handle request without transfers or escalations is one of the most important skills for a representative.

Patience Modeling patience demonstrates keeping your cool and helps customers to do the same, and is critical to great customer service.

Effective Listening Listening skills are about more than just turning up the volume on a headset, its about taking the time to truly understand a customer's issue and then letting them know you are paying attention.

Attentiveness 43% of customers see companies as helpful, but do not do anything special to keep their business. Surprise your customers by being fully present and turning your complete attention to their plight.

Time Management 83% of on-line shoppers will abandon a purchase or take their business elsewhere if they are not helped within five minutes. Streamline systems and processes so updating the customer is quicker and easier. Ensure your representatives have time in their day to complete their task.

Willingness to Improve 62% of employees are more motivated by approachable management, having the appropriate resources for their jobs, and the ability to stay informed about important issues and changes.

Knowledge The chances of selling to an existing customer is 50% to 55% higher than selling to a new one, but only if the representative knows enough to make the right offer at the right time.

Ability to admit you don't have the answer 39% of millennials check a company's FAQs page first before calling the company to ask anything. When using customer service, it's okay to admit if you don't know something or tell them that you will get back with them in a timely manner with an answer.

Thick Skin 33% of customers say they would rather clean a toilet than speak with a salesperson. This is reality that we deal with unfairly every day. That's why having a thick skin made this list. We are on the frontline of customer service and we need solid armor for protection.