



SMALL BUSINESS AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY INITIATIVE



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OVERVIEW

GOVERNOR BRIAN P. KEMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER

On July 13, 2022, Governor Brian P. Kemp issued [Executive Order 07.13.22.01](#), affirming the State of Georgia's commitment to helping small businesses expand and create jobs. The Executive Order charged the Department of Administrative Services, the state agency responsible for administering state procurement, with several responsibilities, including identifying challenges and obstacles small businesses face participating in the state procurement process. The Executive Order further directed the Department to issue a report with recommendations to make the state procurement process more easily accessible to small businesses.

DEPARTMENT'S REPORT AND NINE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department initiated a series of actions, including engaging in dialogue with the small business community and key small business development partners for the purpose of preparing its report. The Department sought feedback on challenges and obstacles small businesses face when participating in the state procurement process, identifying three primary obstacles: (1) satisfying state requirements, (2) bid opportunity identification, and (3) readiness to bid. Initial findings include implementing nine recommendations to make the state procurement process easier to access as further described in the [October 2022 Report](#).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND PROGRESS REPORTS

In the [Implementation Plan](#) published on March 31, 2023, DOAS outlines key activities and related timeframes to complete the nine recommendations. Progress will be shared through quarterly reports publication, with the initial progress report outlined below.

First Progress Report

October 2022 - September 2023



GOAL

Make state procurement process easier to access for small businesses

#1 DESIGNATE SMALL BUSINESS LIAISONS

To facilitate communication and partnership at the agency-level, the Department recommends that each state agency, college, and university subject to the Department's procurement authority designate an existing staff member to serve as the small business liaison.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ Conducted preliminary informational session with agency procurement officers (APOs) and college/university procurement officers (CUPOs) as of November 2022 regarding establishing new small business liaison roles and duties.
- ✓ Formally established a new small business liaison role through an update to the Georgia Procurement Manual communicated via Official Announcement #23-01 on January 18, 2023.
- ✓ Conducted informational session with agency heads as of January 2023 to share information on new role and responsibilities.
- ✓ Received small business liaison designations for more than 70 state organizations as of February 2023.
- ✓ Launched quarterly informational sessions with designated small business liaisons to provide training, and promote information sharing, with the first session conducted on March 22, 2023.
- ✓ Launched a newsletter, SBSD Action News, to share information with designated small business liaisons, with the first edition released in April 2023.



FOCUS

Minority, woman, and veteran-owned small businesses



KEY PARTNERS

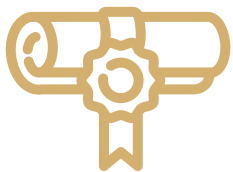
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- University of Georgia Small Business Development Center Minority Business Division (UGA SBDC MBD)
- Small business community and chambers of commerce
- Federal, state, and local government entities and small business development partners

Progress to date (cont.)

- ✓ Began promotion of liaisons to the supplier community and partner organizations through the Department’s website and outreach and training sessions.
- ✓ Began creating networking opportunities for small business liaisons to connect with small businesses through DOAS-hosted events, such as the Georgia Procurement Conference April 2023 Supplier Expo, featuring distinguishing "ribbons" for attending liaisons and small business "flags" for attending small businesses to easily connect.
- ✓ Prepared a “How To” Guide and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) resource to assist small business liaisons as of June 2023.
- ✓ Began promoting collaboration amongst small business liaisons and key local community partners such as the Georgia Chamber of Commerce through various outreach events. In March 2023, Valdosta State University’s small business liaison collaborated with the Department to share information with business owners at the Southern Black Chamber of Commerce business event.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through December 2023 and then ongoing.



CERTIFICATION

Expanding eligibility to benefit more small businesses

#2 EXPAND MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CERTIFICATION

The Department recommends expanding eligibility for the state’s Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification program, expanding certification options, increasing promotion of the MBE program and, through legislation, expanding small and diverse business certifications to include woman-owned and veteran-owned businesses.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:



RESEARCH

Initiated research to develop new processes for expanded business certification

Progress to date (cont.)

- ✓ The Governor's sponsored legislation, House Bill 128, overwhelmingly passed the House and Senate and was signed into law on April 24, 2023, expanding the number of businesses eligible for certification to include woman-owned and veteran-owned businesses in addition to minority-owned, effective January 1, 2024.
- ✓ The Department has initiated efforts to implement the expanded business certification, including the exploration of technical solutions to support the certification program, improve the user experience, and increase functionality. The Department's existing customer service relationship management system, in combination with its supplier registration system, will be utilized to receive and process certification applications.
- ✓ Initiated research to develop new policy and processes for expanded business certification consistent with Georgia law.
- ✓ Connected with other states, including California, Tennessee, and Texas, to discuss best practices and identify innovations to promote small and diverse businesses' access to the state of Georgia's procurement process.
- ✓ Coordinated with the Georgia Department of Revenue to confirm requirements for an annual report of certified businesses beginning 2024.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through December 2024 and then ongoing.



SIMPLIFIED BIDDING

Establishing simplified bidding process for purchases under \$100,000

#3 PILOT INFORMAL BIDDING PROCESS

The Department recommends piloting a state procurement process in which state entities, colleges, and universities would have the option to conduct an informal bidding process within established parameters.

Status: Not Started

Progress to date: Not Started

Estimated Duration:

Q3 2023 through September 2025 and then ongoing.



CONTRACTING

Identifying small business-friendly options

#4 REVISE STATE BIDDING AND CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS

The Department recommends establishing a lower “tier” of insurance and bonding for certain projects and training state buyers on small business-friendly payment strategies.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ The Department initiated a review of existing insurance and bonding guidelines in comparison to best practices. Preliminary revisions to the guidelines have been drafted, including expanding the guidance available to state procurement officers to align requested insurance and bonding coverage with the identified risks of the contract.
- ✓ The draft revisions were presented within the Department for internal feedback as of September 2023 in preparation for presentation to the Purchasing Customer Advisory Panel, a group of representatives of various state agencies, in October 2023.

Estimated Duration:

Q3 2023 through December 2024 and then ongoing.



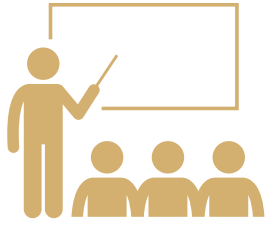
BID IDENTIFICATION

Expanding eligibility to benefit more small businesses

#5 IMPROVED PROMOTION OF THE DEPARTMENT PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS TRAINING

The Department recommends continuing its existing system trainings which specifically assist businesses with searching for and receiving notifications for bid opportunities and initiating a marketing and promotion strategy.

Status: In Progress



SUPPLIER SYSTEM TRAINING

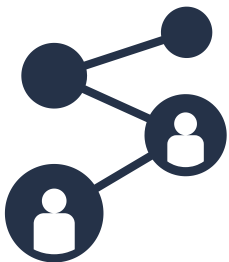
Monthly supplier system trainings held in partnership with various community groups

Progress to date :

- ✓ Continued monthly supplier system training, as well as partnering with various community groups, such as chambers of commerce, to offer supplier training. Eleven monthly training sessions were completed during this progress reporting period with approximately 280 suppliers trained.
- ✓ Featured Department’s system training (bidder registration and online bidding) in multiple outreach events, including the annual Georgia Procurement Conference and the Department’s Small Business Procurement Readiness Workshop series.
- ✓ Onsite supplier registration workshop was held during the November 9, 2022, Small Business Symposium hosted by Georgia Highlands College.
- ✓ Quarterly training on marketing to state and local government continues with Apex Accelerator (formerly Georgia Tech Procurement Assistance Center), with the most recent training held May 26, 2023, for this progress reporting period.
- ✓ Achieved more than 2,800 new small business bidder registrations during this progress report period.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through December 2023 and then ongoing.



MATCHMAKING

Connecting the small business community with prime contractors and state and local government buyers

#6 EXPAND MATCHMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department recommends statewide and regional training, networking, and matchmaking events that help state buyers connect with small and diverse businesses and that help prime contractors connect with subcontractors.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ Hosted the fourth Small Business Symposium, featuring networking and matchmaking opportunities with state buyers from more than 15 attending state government entities and six statewide contract awarded suppliers offering subcontracting opportunities.

Progress to date (cont.)

- ✓ Participated in the National Contract Management Association's Small Business Week Industry Day in February 2023.
- ✓ Hosted Georgia Procurement Conference April 2023, featuring Supplier Expo to create networking and matchmaking opportunities for attending suppliers and state and local government buyers. The conference also featured an additional supplier networking event with the Department's State Purchasing Division staff.
- ✓ Participated in the National Contract Management Association's Small Business Week Industry Day in February 2023.

Estimated Duration:

Q2 2023 through September 2025 and then ongoing.



DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Building relationships with small business development partners providing essential information to help grow small business capabilities and capacity

#7 INCREASE OUTREACH, TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO SMALL BUSINESSES

The Department commits to further grow and create new relationships with state agencies and non-profit organizations that are better equipped to provide such development resources, including increasing procurement assistance to small businesses, and continuing the Department's work with small business development partners.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ Participated in the National Contract Management Association's Small Business Week Industry Day in February 2023.
- ✓ Presented at the National 8(a) Conference held in New Orleans, LA in February 2023.
- ✓ Participated in outreach events with the Greater Black Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Georgia Greater Black Chamber - Valdosta, and the Meriwether County Black Chamber during March 2023.

Progress to date (cont.)

- ✓ Initiated planning for the third annual Small Business Procurement Readiness Workshop series, hosted in conjunction with the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center, Multicultural Business Division. The six-session series was conducted in Fall 2023 with 60 small business representatives successfully graduating in September 2023.
- ✓ Completed 74 training and outreach events with more than 3,900 attending suppliers during this progress report period.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through June 2024 and then ongoing.



MENTORSHIP

Connecting the small business community with prime contractors and state and local government buyers

#8 EXPAND BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Department commits to increased awareness and utilization of these mentorship programs among the small business community.

Status: In progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ Promoted Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council (GMSDC) resources through partnership on outreach events including during the April 2023 Georgia Procurement Conference.
- ✓ Initiated updates to the Department's small business resources webpage, which was launched on September 18, 2023.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through June 2024 and then ongoing.



ACCESS TO CAPITAL

Sharing information to assist small businesses connect with financial resources

#9 FACILITATE INFORMATION SHARING ON ACCESS TO CAPITAL RESOURCES

The Department recommends sharing information regarding offerings from financial institutions, governmental entities, and nonprofits that will assist small and diverse businesses with locating the capital to expand or begin businesses.

Status: In Progress



SMALL BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM

The symposium offers unique training sessions targeted at assisting small businesses in accessing capital, business growth and how to do business with the state.

Progress to date:

- ✓ Hosted a Small Business Symposium in November 2022, featuring networking and training opportunities with small business development partners, including the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the UGA SBDC MBD, Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE), MH Miles Company (representing the Georgia Department of Transportation State Support Funded Program), the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
- ✓ Through the symposium, the Department offered four, unique training sessions targeted to assist small businesses in accessing capital through the support of special guest speakers from the UGA SBDC MBD, ACE, and the SBA.
- ✓ Featured Georgia Department of Economic Development during the annual Small Business Symposium, highlighting various programs to benefit small business growth.

Estimated Duration:

Q4 2022 through December 2024 and then ongoing.

ONGOING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

A. THE DEPARTMENT COMMITS TO IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION AND INTEGRITY FOR ANALYSIS, DECISION-MAKING AND TRANSPARENCY.

Status: In Progress

Progress to date:



DATA COLLECTION
The department commits to improving data collection and integrity for analysis, decision-making and transparency

- ✓ Coordinated with the Georgia State Accounting Office to update the Vendor Management Form and onboarding of new businesses to capture business size and ownership status for improved data tracking.
- ✓ Conducted clean-up activities for existing bidder registrations within Team Georgia Marketplace™ Supplier Portal to identify inactive accounts and update small business status for more accurate data tracking.
- ✓ Supported NextGen initiative through planning and procurement support activities. The NextGen initiative is a transformation initiative intended to replace the state's legacy enterprise resource planning system with a modern tool. Through the NextGen initiative, the Department seeks to improve data collection and tracking related to business size, ownership, and participation in the procurement process.



DATA ENRICHMENT
Improving accuracy of existing information on supplier size and ownership status.

- ✓ Conducted market research around data enrichment services to assess available options for improving the accuracy of existing information on supplier size and ownership status.

Estimated Duration:

Q3 2022 through June 2025 and then ongoing.

B. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT OF EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS.

Status: In Progress

Progress to date:

- ✓ Initiated a project to redesign the Department's website to improve user experience with focus on key customers, including the small business community. The new website was launched on September 18, 2023.

Estimated Duration:

Q1 2023 through June 2024 and then ongoing.



WEBSITE
Improve user experience

