



O'MALLEY-BROWN ADMINISTRATION INCREASES MBE GOAL to 29%

Baltimore, MD (August 20, 2013) – Maryland has increased the overall participation goal of its Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program from 25% to 29%. Long considered one of the country's foremost programs for minority inclusion, Maryland's new aspirational goal will offer more opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses to engage in state contracting.

"Reaching our MBE goal for the first time in Fiscal Year 2012 was a major accomplishment," said Governor O'Malley. "Together, we've made the better choice to increase the goal to help our businesses compete and win in a 21st century economy. By continuing outreach to our minority and women-owned business communities, we will continue to create jobs, expand opportunity and strengthen our middle class."

"Each and every day, Maryland's minority businesses are creating jobs, expanding opportunities, and supporting families throughout our state," said Lt. Governor Brown. "A diverse business community is a strong community, and by increasing our MBE contracting goal, we're giving more Marylanders an opportunity to compete and succeed in our growing economy. Going forward, our minority- and women-owned businesses are going to be a critical part of our state's future, and we're going to continue to support them and encourage their success."

In 2012, the General Assembly passed legislation authorizing the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs (GOMA), in consultation with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Office of the Attorney General, to set the overall aspirational MBE goal every two years. GOMA proposed the increase to 29% after considering several factors prescribed by law – such as the relative availability of minority- and women-owned businesses as demonstrated by the state's most recent Disparity Study, and the past participation of MBEs in state procurement. The 29% goal will be in place for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 on State-funded contracts.

"We are constantly moving Maryland's MBE Program forward," said Zenita Wickham Hurley, GOMA's Special Secretary. "The new goal demonstrates our commitment to remedying discrimination against minority- and women-owned businesses doing business in the state contracting arena."

GOMA will work with state agencies to identify more opportunities for MBE participation while promoting the benefits of MBE certification in collaboration with MDOT's Office of Minority Business Enterprise, the state's official certification agency. GOMA will also expand its outreach programs to guide MBEs through the procurement process and increase education relating to MBE rights and responsibilities when performing on state contracts.

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