



## PATHWAY TO STATE PROCUREMENT

### **Determine if the State of Maryland Buys What You Sell**

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Buying is done at the agency and department levels. The best way to identify who is buying what you sell is to become a registered vendor on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA), the state's online procurement portal. Vendors may register for free to receive email notifications of solicitations posted by 70+ state agencies as well as those posted by county and city buyers. You will roll through the registrations process with ease if you read the FAQs and Quick Reference Guides before getting started.

[www.procurement.maryland.gov](http://www.procurement.maryland.gov)

Forecasting reports can also help you find the right buyers. They are available on the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs website. Be sure to download the results of your search in order to identify the name and contact information of the procurement officer.

[www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov](http://www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov)

### **Participate in the State's Procurement Programs**

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**Small Business Reserve (SBR)** – The SBR Program is a race- and gender-neutral program that requires 66 designated state agencies/departments to direct 15% of their spending with registered SBR vendors. This is a prime contracting program. Vendors who meet the eligibility standards complete an online certification process through eMMA.

**Veteran-owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE)** – The VSBE Program creates subcontracting opportunities for veteran-owned small businesses to participate on state funded contracts. The statewide goal across 70 agencies/departments is 1%. Vendors who meet the eligibility standards complete an online certification process through eMMA.

**Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)** – The MBE Program provides opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged firms to participate in the state contracting arena. The statewide MBE participation goal is 29 percent. The Office of Minority Business Enterprise, housed within the Maryland Department of Transportation, is the state's official certification agency. To determine if you meet the program's eligibility standards, visit their website or attend one of their free monthly workshops to gain valuable information about the application process.

The Governor's Office of Small, Minority, & Women Business Affairs has oversight of all three specialized procurement programs.

[www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov](http://www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov)

## **Learn the Rules of State Procurement**

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Get familiar with the purchasing process and understand the rules governing procurement by reading the Annotated Code of Maryland (State Finance & Procurement Article 14) and COMAR Title 21.

[www.dsd.state.md.us](http://www.dsd.state.md.us)

Attend the free Technical Training Classroom sessions offered the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month on a variety of topics relevant to procurement, management, and business development. Visit the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs for a schedule of classes.

[www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov](http://www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov)

## **Get Help**

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Make sure your business is well-positioned to participate on government contracts. Tap into the many free and/or low-cost resources available to small business owners like financing and loan programs, skills training, business development, and much more. Visit the Resource section of the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women's Business Affairs' website to learn more.

[www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov](http://www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov)

## **Market Your Business**

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Traditional marketing, business development, and sales strategies always apply. This is particularly true when performing as a subcontractor. Distribute your one-page capabilities statement to prime contractors, maintain your website and collateral print materials, engage in social media, and never leave the office without a pocket full of business cards. The Internet offers a broad spectrum of ideas and strategies for marketing a small business. Check out the Maryland Department of Commerce's business to government webpage and the U.S. Small Business Administration's online learning center.

[www.commerce.maryland.gov](http://www.commerce.maryland.gov)

[www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

## **Put Yourself in Front of Your Customers**

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The opportunity to meet face-to-face and shake hands with a potential customer is priceless. Attend pre-bid meetings frequently (date, time, and location will be noted in the solicitation) to connect with prime contractors as well as agency buyers. Attend outreach events and procurement fairs, particularly when your potential customers are participating. Becoming an active member of social and/or professional organizations is also a great way to connect with high-level business leaders. Attend the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs' Ready, Set, GROW! Procurement Connections Workshop and visit our online event calendar for business events in your area.

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## **Stick With It**

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Developing a new business in any market takes a lot of hard work. Be prepared to invest 9 to 12 months into building a new relationship before winning any work. Persistence and repeated contacts with your potential customers will pay off in the long run, so don't give up.

Learn more at [www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov](http://www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov).