



Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs
PATHWAY TO STATE PROCUREMENT

Determine if the State of Maryland Buys What You Sell

Buying is done at the agency level. The best way to identify which agencies buy what you sell is to become a registered vendor on eMaryland Marketplace, the State's online procurement portal. Vendors register for free and receive email notifications of bid solicitations posted by 70+ state agencies as well as those posted by county and city buyers. You'll roll through the registrations process with ease if you read the eMaryland Marketplace Instruction Guides before getting started.

www.procurement.maryland.gov

Forecasting reports are available on the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs (formerly Governor's Office of Minority Affairs aka GOMA) website. These reports can also help identify potential opportunities.

www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Join the Small Business Reserve Program

Maryland operates a special procurement program just for small business. The Small Business Reserve (SBR) Program is a race- and gender-neutral program that requires 70 designated state agencies/departments to direct 15% of their spending with registered SBR vendors. This is an opportunity to perform as a prime contractor, so every small business owner should join the SBR. Vendors must meet established criteria and enroll through eMarylandMarketplace. First-time registrants are prompted through the process. If you are already registered in eMaryland Marketplace, but are not in the SBR Program, read the Quick Reference Guide for SBR Certification and Renewal online.

www.procurement.maryland.gov

Consider Seeking MBE Certification

Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program provides opportunities for small minority- and women-owned firms to participate in state contracting and procurement. While certification is not required, only certified MBE firms can meet the specific MBE goal set on a state-funded contract. Our 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.

www.mdot.maryland.gov (MBE tab)

Learn the Rules of State Procurement

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

www.dsd.state.md.us

Get Help

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

Market Your Business

Traditional marketing, business development, and sales strategies always apply. This is particularly true when leveraging your MBE certification 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. Be sure to 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

www.sba.gov

Put Yourself in Front of Your Customers

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 as an exhibitor or vendor. Becoming an active member of social and/or professional organizations is also a great way to connect with high-level business leaders. Visit the Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs' online event calendar to see what events are happening in your area.

www.goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Stick With It

Developing 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.