SMALL BUSINESS EXCHANGE NORTHEAST

EXTRA

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Answering Good Faith Effort Phone Calls

By Leslie Ann McMillan

What do you do when someone calls on behalf of a prime contractor bidding or already working on a big public project? I've personally made many thousands of those outreach calls during the past several years, and I'd like to share a few thoughts and examples with you.

If your small business is certified diversity-owned, you've probably received emails, faxes, ads, letters, or phone calls about specific agency projects that require the participation of eligible small business contractors, suppliers, or service providers. This might happen rarely or much more frequently than you ever imagined possible when you first certified your MWBE or SDVOB or DBE or SBE or other disadvantaged business.

You might receive an emailed or faxed bid invitation from a prime contractor, then one or more follow-up phone calls to see if you've gotten the information and are interested in bidding. This is all part of the careful *good faith effort* process to assure greater government contract participation by small businesses owned by minorities, women, or disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Let me first give you a cringeworthy, real-life, unforgettable example of what *not* to do when you receive a follow-up outreach call. If only they had realized then what I'm sharing now . . .

Our company, Small Business Exchange, has been providing outreach services since 1984 on behalf of small and large clients from coast to coast. In the spring of 2018, we were contacting eligible small businesses to invite them to a meeting and networking event hosted by the prime contractors that had recently won the contract to construct the huge new venue for a major professional sports team. During the actual several days that we were phoning, the team was in the playoffs and about to win its third national championship in four years. How exciting! Many small business people were happy about the opportunity and made the extra effort to attend the event, meet the contractors, and perhaps prepare to bid. But one lost opportunity is so, so memorable as an example *not* to imitate.

As always, we were phoning small businesses that had been selected from specialized databases

because their certified business descriptions matched the specific kinds of goals and trades that were needed for that part of the huge project. They had already received meeting invitations, and we were calling to see if they were planning to attend. Our

Small Business Exchange • Voice of Small, Emerging, Diversity-Owned Businesses Since 1984

Click to read more

George Harms Construction is seeking DBE/ESBE/SBE suppliers, subcontractors

Click for details

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SBE OUTREACH SERVICES

With over 1.6 million businesses in our active database—the country's largest non-public diversity database—SBE sets the professional standard for diversity outreach across the nation. For more than four decades, we have served small businesses, prime contractors, and agencies—with proven results.

Advertisements
Placed in various Small Business Exchange Northeast digital publications each month, and at www.sbenortheast.com

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Call for more information: 800-800-8534

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PUBLIC LEGAL NOTICES

With a database of over 1.6 million businesses, SBE assists agencies with public legal notices

Advertisements
Placed in various Small Business Exchange Northeast digital publications each month, and at www.sbenortheast.com

Special Follow-Up Services

Custom design and development of services that you need for particular situations such as small business marketing, diversity goal completion, and agency capacity building

Call for more information: 800-800-8534

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Advertise in our digital EXTRA

weekly or whenever wherever to whomever you need to reach among agencies contractors diversity firms

SKANSKA

SKANSKA USA CIVIL
IS SOLICITING COST PROPOSALS FROM NEW YORK MWBE AND SDVOB SUBCONTRACTORS AND VENDORS
Design-Build Services for Metro-North Railroad Hudson Line Bundle Project
MTA Construction and Development Contract No. C1000220416
Bid Date: September 10, 2026

Description of project:
Design-Builder to complete track raising along all (4) tracks at (4) new permanent bridges. Construction to include new substructure, superstructure, retaining walls, waterproofing, ballast, track, and third rail at these bridges. Utility protection and relocation will be necessary to keep necessary infrastructure in service. Some site remediation will be necessary at distinct track locations, including tree clearing, rock scaling, rock bolts, cable mesh, rockfall drapes, and shotcrete. Substation modifications will be required to tie in new service.

Many bidding opportunities are available: portable toilets, cleaning, survey, trailers, containers and dumpsters, clearing and grubbing reinforcing, concrete, structural steel fabrication, demolition, haul and dispose of soils and ballast, micropiles, soil erosion and sediment control, cofferdams, electrical subcontractor, vibration monitoring, waterproofing, rock scaling.

If you are interested in bidding on this project, please contact Skanska's Outreach Coordinator: Aislinn.Speranza@skanska.com • EOE/Vet/Disabled

20★26 NATIONAL CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2026
FORT WORTH
USHCC
UNITED STATES HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Learn More
NMSDC
National Minority Supplier Development Council

Small Business Exchange Northeast DEI

- Advertise
- ITB to Targeted (NAICS/SIC/UNSPSC) Certified Businesses
- Telephone Follow-Up (Live)
- Agency/Organization Letters
- Computer Generated Dated and Timed Documentation
- Customized Reports Available

For more info contact Valerie Voorhies at vvv@sbeinc.com

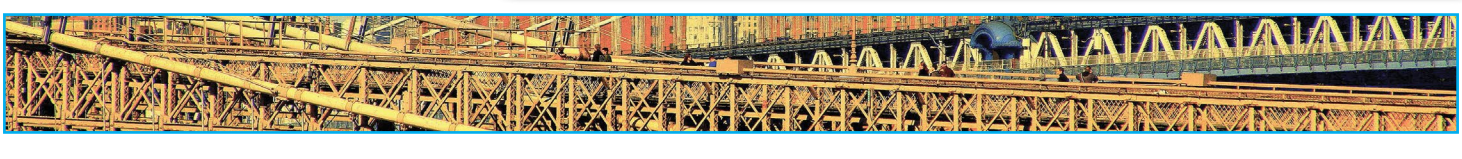
VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

2026

Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar
Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 2:00 pm–4:00 pm
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Patrice Dozier, patrice.dozier@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification! Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosb-certification-program-tickets-1986914049408

Federal Contracting for Small Businesses Webinar
Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 12:00 pm–1:30 pm
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, irene.gonzalez@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
Learn the essentials of federal contracting for small businesses. This event will cover the basics of navigating the federal contracting process, as well as the various certifications available to help your small business succeed in the government marketplace. Certifications include: 8(a) Business Development Program, HUBZone Certification, Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB/EDWOSB), and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB). Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and resources to help your small business. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/federal-contracting-basics-and-certifications-for-small-businesses-tickets-1977729664666

SBA 101: Introduction to SBA Programs Webinar
Monday, September 14, 2026, 9:00 am–10:00 am
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Rhode Island District Office
Contact: Brian Hopkins, 401-528-4575, brian.hopkins@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
This free workshop, presented by the Rhode Island District Office, is designed to help entrepreneurs understand the various SBA programs and services available to help them as they start, expand, grow, and recover their businesses. This overview presentation covers: Introduction to the SBA; SBA Resource Partner Network—Business Training and One-on-One Counseling; Selling to the Federal Government—SBA Contracting Certification Programs; Access to Capital—Loan and Surety Bond Programs; International Trade Assistance; Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Assistance Loans. Register online for the free workshop webinar at https://legacy.sba.gov/event/80674



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