Who We Are

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) is the office of the state’s Chief Compliance Officer and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for the executive branch of state government. Additionally, we house the State of Missouri’s MBE/WBE Certification Program.

Our Mission

We will champion career opportunities for all individuals and encourage utilization of minority and women owned businesses.

Our Vision

OEO aims to cultivate a diverse and inclusive environment for all Missourians by centralizing the state’s workforce diversity programs in order to promote a talented workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the citizens of Missouri and enhance the state’s economy.

Words from the Director

Welcome to the Office of Equal Opportunity’s first Supplier Diversity Newsletter! It is my honor to serve as the Director of OEO. The purpose of this newsletter is to create a new venue for our certified vendors to access information that may assist with current and future activities. Every issue will highlight great topics of current events and/or opportunities for vendors and partnering organizations. Please take the time to review our newsletter’s first edition. I encourage you to use this information in hopes that it aids in your growth and success. We are truly better together.

— Corey D. Bolton, Director
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OEO Update

We will be hosting two vendor office hours for the month of November. The first office hour will cover Certification 101. The second office hour will showcase the ACCESS Series event.

Click HERE to see our Vendor Office Hours Infographic.

Click HERE to access the WebEx event.

The ACCESS Series, focuses on three core areas: ACCESS to Information, ACCESS to Resources, and ACCESS to Capital. In September, we hosted the first event of the series, ACCESS to Information, where we heard from the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, Corey Bolton; Jacinta Witherspoon, Regional Director of the Women's Business Development Center; Nia Richardson, Assistant to the Director of Small Business and Enterprise (KC); and Jim Whitt, Director of City of Columbia's Supplier Diversity Program. In October, ACCESS to Resources saw guest speakers Director Cathie Frede, Director of Lincoln University of Missouri's Purchasing and Risk Management Department, Jessie Yankee with Missouri's Women's Business Center, Shad Burner with the Department of Economic Development, and Missouri PTAC's Jana Weitkemper. These events create an opportunity to connect with OEO and the partnering experts in supplier diversity and small business development. It is our hope to give you the tools, resources, and information OEO seeks to provide small businesses.

Each series of the Vendor Office Hour has been geared toward businesses in different stages of our program. For example, if you are a newly certified or a current applicant of the certification program, you may have attended our Certification 101 series. We identified the need to create a platform to engage our customers, answer questions, provide valuable information, share resources, and create networking opportunities. We identified that need, and the Vendor Office Hour was then created. We have received incredible feedback from vendors who have used the tools we provide to grow their business. We plan to continue providing this live, free, face-to-face, and virtual event to small businesses as we all continue to grow and do better.

On November 17th, we will discuss ACCESS to Capital. This will be the final office hours for this year and will also conclude the three-part ACCESS Series event.
Opportunities

Vendors are encouraged to register with MOBuys, the state’s E-procurement system, for contracting opportunities that may be available to you. Usage of the bid locator tool will assist in searching Missouri’s public sector websites to locate bids that have been posted.

**MISSOURI BUYS**

**BID LOCATOR TOOL**

- Search engine that crawls Missouri’s public sector websites
- Locates bids posted by all levels of government (local, state and federal) and political subdivisions in Missouri
- User selects bids of interest; then redirected to entity’s website for bid details
- No cost to use and no registration in MissouriBuys required

[missouribuys.mo.gov/business-opportunities](http://missouribuys.mo.gov/business-opportunities)

**Contact Information**
purchasing@lincolnmo.edu
Ordering Questions: 573-681-5418
Deliveries/Surplus: 573-681-5419

Lincoln University Purchasing
1002 Chestnut Street
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0029

[https://www.lincolnmo.edu/web/purchasing/bid-information](http://www.lincolnmo.edu/web/purchasing/bid-information)

**HARRIS-STOWE STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Contact Information**
purchasing@hssu.edu
Telephone: (314) 340-5763

Vendor Spotlight

If you are interested in having your business spotlighted in OEO’s Newsletter, please email oeo@oa.mo.gov.

Vendor Spotlight Q&A

Describe what your firm does.

PSRI Technologies, LLC provides Staffing (IT/Admin/Clerical/Call-Center/Helpdesk), Project Management and Computer Sales (HP, Dell and Lenovo Reseller).

What do you love most about your work?

Providing solutions for our clients.

When was your company established?

We have been in business since 2001.

If you could describe your brand using three words, what would they be?

Since we are a service provider, we provide quality services which includes being efficient, effective and responsive to our client’s needs.

How do you see your business growing? Is there anything you are working on specifically that you are excited about?

After the effects of Covid-19 we are just glad to still be here. Our foundation is solid and during the past 6-8 months we have been able to kick off our new Computer Sales division which allows us to provide various types of computer equipment to our clients. We are now a Dell, Lenovo and HP reseller. Our background has always been IT so we are happy to provide a total solution to our clients.
Are you currently working on a contract with the State of Missouri? How is that experience? What would you say is the most important thing to remember/know when bidding on a state contract?

We recently won a project with our partner, Missouri Works Initiative where we are providing project management support and data collections. As always, we enjoy working with the State of Missouri.
The most important thing to know about bidding on State contracts is to understand exactly what is required. In this regard, make sure that you read the RFP very carefully and that you understand the statement of work and the contractual obligations. If you don’t understand then reach out to the buyer for clarification.

What advice would you give a new business owner that you wish someone had given you when you first started?

Decide how you want to work with a given agency. If you are interested in taking the lead on a project you should have the experience. This is necessary to be a prime contractor. If you need to learn more, then work as a subcontractor to build your skills so that you can eventually become a prime contractor if that is your goal. Also, always read the bid evaluations. This can be a learning tool. If you don’t win the bid, the evaluations can give you information so that you can position yourself to win the next time around.

How can other vendors contact you?

Website: www.psritech.com
Owner Name: Natasha Conley, PhD, PMP
Phone Number: (636) 778-3434
Email Address: info@psritech.com.

THANK YOU, Dr. Conley!

If you are interested in being featured, please email us at oeo@oa.mo.gov for more details.
The power of supplier diversity could mean the difference between success and failure. The power of supplier diversity could mean the difference in having a competitive advantage and not having one at all. It is a necessity in the private and public sector alike. Supplier Diversity means creating equal opportunities for all businesses. This means recognizing the disparity in spending with disadvantaged businesses, including but not limited to minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses. Supplier diversity means diversifying our spending and diversifying our suppliers in procurement. National, state, and local organizations consider supplier diversity a core value, not only because it is considered their social responsibility in today’s society, but because it is proven that diverse spending directly impacts a company’s market share and ROI. Increasing diverse spending also directly correlates to growing our economy.

Diverse business owners, such as minorities and women, can obtain a certification to validate their disadvantaged status as the majority or sole owner of a business. As organizations seek to diversify their spending, having a certification can be leveraged by small businesses to obtain contracts. OEO houses the state’s MBE/WBE certification program to maintain and support supplier diversity for the State of Missouri as a buyer. There are other certification opportunities within the state and across the nation that may also be beneficial for business owners to obtain. Certification as a minority or woman owned business validates your status as a diverse business owner and allows you to participate in the supplier diversity programs set by many organizations with feasible effort goals or participation goals for diverse suppliers.

Supplier diversity can lead to innovation, opportunities, and growth. Whether you are a diverse supplier or any other organization looking to diversify your spending, you hold the key to changing the landscape of procurement across the state of Missouri, and the world. Supplier diversity is many things, but most importantly, it gives everyone an opportunity to be great. If we all do our part, we can achieve this together.
Certifying Entity Spotlight

This month's certifying agency spotlight is the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) who administers national WBE and WOSB certification.

The Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) is a 501(c)(3) nationally recognized leader in the field of women's economic development. The organization was founded in 1986 to provide programs and services to support and accelerate women's business ownership and strengthen the impact of women on the economy by creating jobs, fueling economic growth, and building strong communities.

The WBDC is the largest of 14 Regional Partner Organization (RPO) for the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) providing national Women Business Enterprise (WBE) and Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) certification. The WBDC serves a nine-state Midwest region. The WBDC is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, and serves nine Midwestern states (Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) providing certification, capacity building, and procurement opportunities. Additional WBDC offices are in Minneapolis, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Milwaukee.

How to Contact WBDC

Website
https://www.wbdc.org/certification-services/

Phone
(312) 853-3477, Extension 100

The Office of Equal Opportunity is thrilled and honored to call the WBDC a partner in our efforts to diversify suppliers in procurement throughout their footprint. With our partnership, WBEs certified through the WBDC and other regional WBENC partners can apply to OEO through our Rapid Certification Process. We are fortunate to learn from each other and with each other as we serve the needs of business owners.
Meet the Team

Corey D. Bolton
Director

Danielle Briot
Deputy Director

Austin Kerns
Workforce Diversity Lead

Tynesha Hardin
Engagement Specialist

Joy Harris-Bird
Minority/Women Certification Coordinator

Bridget Eaton
Senior Office Support Assistant

Upcoming Events

Click each event for more information.

08-12 NOV  STL Startup Week

17 NOV  OEO Vendor Office Hours: ACCESS to Capital

17-18 NOV  2021 Virtual Diversity Summit

See you next month!

Please email oeo@oa.mo.gov if you have any questions about the information we provided in this newsletter.