State of Missouri's
Office of Equal Opportunity's
Supplier Diversity Newsletter

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 Deputy Director

Dear Readers,

2021 has been a great year in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO), and I’d like to thank you all for being a part of it. While adjusting to our new normal with the rest of the world, we have been able to push ourselves to new heights. OEO looks to be one of the state’s biggest advocates for diversity. We achieve this through countless initiatives under our supplier diversity and workforce diversity programs. In this issue, we discuss key elements of both programs and how they support each other. Please take the time to read OEO’s Supplier Diversity Newsletter for November and December. I encourage you to use this information to support your business. From our family to yours, we hope you have a happy holiday and prosperous New Year!

Danielle Briot, Deputy Director
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We will be hosting one Vendor Office Hour for the month of December. It will cover Certification 101.

Certification 101

by Bridget Eaton

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) is excited to offer the Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) certification. Certification creates additional opportunities for these businesses to bid on contracts with the State of Missouri.

Becoming a certified MBE/WBE is a great tool for your business. It is important to understand that certification does not guarantee businesses a contract; but, you can leverage your certification to gain more opportunities.

Now, let’s talk about the certification process. Businesses owners or its representative will need to create a MO Login account as the application process is completely electronic. Once accomplished, the applicant will submit to OEO their completed application along with the supporting documents requirement for determining certification. The list of required documents can be found on OEOs website.

Applicants can apply two ways. One as a Standard Applicant which is who businesses whose principal place of business is located inside the State of Missouri. Second is as a Rapid Applicant. Rapids are businesses whose principal place is inside or outside the State of Missouri; however, the business has to be certified with another certifying entity prior to application with OEO.

All submitted applications start with an Acceptance Review. If more information or documents are needed the company will receive a time sensitive request with additional instructions. After all acceptance requirements are met a standard application will move on to Desk Review. Next, an On-Site will be scheduled with the all owners to discuss their businesses operations. This is also a great opportunity for both the OEO staff and the business owner(s) to ask questions about specific support or resources that may be available. Last, OEO will conduct a Final Review which leads to determination of the application being certified or not. Rapid applicants is a one-step Final Review.

All standard and rapid applications receives either a provisional (1 year) or standard (3 year) certification. The information collected during the application process determines which is granted. On the certification anniversary date the business is required to complete an Annual Update. Each business is also required to complete a Recertification Application during the first or third year depending the on the certification granted. Failure to complete the Annual Update or Recertification the business will become noncompliant resulting in suspension and/or decertification.

OEO will continue to champion opportunities for Minority and Women Owned Businesses as they look to expand.

On the first Wednesday of each month we offer a virtual event made for you. This time is all about you! During this time you can ask questions and find resources to fit your specific needs.

Please join our next Office Hours: Certification 101 on December 1, 2021 at 10AM (CST).
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.

**MissouriBuys**

**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@lincoln.edu
Ordering Questions: 573-681-5418
Deliveries/Surplus: 573-681-5419

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

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

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**University of Missouri System**

**COLUMBIA | KANSAS CITY | ROLLA | ST. LOUIS**

Contact information is available for each specific bid opportunity available on the website below.

[https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/fa/procurement/bids](https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/fa/procurement/bids)
Alongside the supplier diversity program, the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) also centralizes the workforce diversity program for the state. The state’s workforce consists of over forty-thousand employees. We promote a talented workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the citizens we serve.

Workforce and supplier diversity are two sides of the same coin. Both programs work to help increase the diversity in our state. Studies have shown that increasing diversity positively impacts organizations. We see these benefits through increased diversity in the workforce and supply chains. Diversity and Inclusion (D+I) increases adaptability and makes organizations more capable of reaching a broader customer base. D+I brings a variety of voices into conversation and expands opportunities for innovation.

The momentum behind workforce diversity efforts across the state has continued to grow. Organizations have developed initiatives specific to the needs of individual departments. Some have created diversity-focused councils and hired diversity officers. Others increased D+I trainings and surveyed the workforce on D+I in the workplace. There is widespread support for improving D+I across the state at all levels.

**OEO continues its mission to champion these initiatives.** We promote career opportunities for all individuals through our workforce diversity program. We also encourage supplier diversity through the use of minority and women owned businesses. Our office centralizes these two sides of the same coin, which we know work more effectively in tandem.
Describe what your firm does.

BA Promotions is your one stop shop from creating a logo to printing apparel! We have access to hundreds of thousands of promotional items like pens, headwear, notepads, etc. If you can think of it, we can most likely put your logo on it. We also do screenprinting and embroidery at our facility. We can decorate a plethora of apparel and headwear items as well!

What do you love most about your work?

I love getting to see something created from start to finish. Getting to bring someone's idea to life and see it on their sign, apparel, or social media is just a great feeling! Around here, it's hard to go anywhere without seeing something that we have printed or supplied to our customers!

When was your company established?

We have been in business since 1996 and under the original name B.A. Sports. Since then, our business has expanded and we became a WBE in 2008 when the current owner, Traci Christian, purchased the business.

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

Quality, Friendly, Hardworking.
How do you see your business growing? Is there anything you are working on specifically that you are excited about?

I feel that we are continuously growing! Word of mouth has really taken us to great lengths lately. We currently have a great working relationship with Southeast Missouri State University that started in the athletics department and has just grown insanely! By working with them, it has really opened many other doors in our community near and far after people see what we do for them!

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 actually just worked on a couple orders with the Office of Equal Opportunity! It was a wonderful experience and we hope we made it easy for them as well. We appreciate being able to submit bids for these projects and we pride ourselves on pricing fairly and doing what we can to help out.

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

Don't be so hard on yourself. It is hard starting something new, but as long as you stay true to you and your values, customers will take notice and appreciate you more!

Can other vendors contact you?

Yes!
Contact Information:
Traci Christian
info@bapromotions.com

THANK YOU

If you are interested in being featured, please email us at oeo@oa.mo.gov for more details.
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.

United Paper & Office Supply is a wholesaler specializing in a full range of janitorial products and office supplies. We stand out from our competition by offering knowledgeable and personalized service, along with competitive pricing. Our employees have over 30 years’ experience in the field, which allows us to save you money by offering alternate (and usually superior) products.

What do you love most about your work?

What I love about my work is helping our customers navigate the world of over 40,000 items that we sell. Let’s face it, toilet tissue and pens are not the most exciting items to purchase. We take time to talk to the customer and find out the best cost-effective solution that works for them. Each customer’s ordering process is followed from start to finish. If an item is out of stock, we suggest an alternative. We do not leave you hanging wondering where your items are. It is always nice when a customer reaches out to us and praises how easy we were to work with.

When was your company established?

United Paper has been in business since the 1940’s! At that time, it was a small portion of a company that sold fruit to stores and restaurants. In 1973, United Paper was purchased and expanded to a full line distributor of janitorial products and office supplies.

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

How do you see your business growing? Is there anything you are working on specifically that you are excited about?
United Paper is working on building our relationships with companies that value doing business with minority-owned businesses. It is great to show them that a minority business can compete with the “big dogs.”

What advice would you give a new business owner that you wish someone had given you when you first started?
Be aware that normally, your money struggles will not be over in a few years after the start of your business. Sometimes you will be the last to be paid after payrolls and expenses. You need to find your own niche and not try to always be the lowest price vendor out there. You need to stress the value of your personalized service. Many times, a customer does not factor in the time they spend searching multiple suppliers to save a dime. If you can show them that overall, you are very competitive and that ordering from you saves them time, you normally have that customer for a long time.

Is there anything you'd like to say to our audience?
A woman-owned business in the janitorial field is very rare. Especially one that is owned 100% by a woman. Hopefully, my expertise in the business lends a different approach than your usual “fresh off the street” salesperson who only cares about what is in it for them, not the customer. I am your main contact 24/7. You will have my cell number and email for any questions or problems that might arise.

Can other vendors contact you?
Yes!
Contact Name: Sydney Ellis
Email: sydneye@unitedpapersupply.com

THANK YOU

If you are interested in being featured, please email us at oeo@oa.mo.gov for more details.
The State of Missouri in partnership with the University of Missouri – Columbia Inclusion, Diversity and Equity division, and the University of Missouri – Kansas City looks to deliver the state’s third disparity study specific to contracting opportunities. The most recent studies, 1998 and 2014, included qualitative evidence of race and gender disparities. More specifically, it contained evidence of disparities in the use of minority- and women-owned businesses in State of Missouri’s awarded contracts.

A disparity study is a study that examines the current practices of an organization in soliciting and awarding contracts to MBE/WBEs and non-MBE/WBEs. This study aims to identify the inequality in procurement that diverse-owned businesses experience due to social discrimination. The study also identifies the availability of these underutilized businesses in various markets. The availability of MBE/WBEs is then compared to the use of MBE/WBEs. These factors make up the disparity index which is how one calculates a disparity [1].

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THE ELEMENTS OF SUPPLIER DIVERSITY: DISPARITY STUDY

Organizations conduct disparity studies due to the 1989 U.S. Supreme Court case—City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson—where it was determined that an administration must provide "sufficient evidence" to support the need for a minority- and women-owned business program [1]. With disparity studies providing strong evidence, supplier diversity programs are possible. Supplier diversity programs encourage the use of those business that are historically underused. Encouraging the use of MBE/WBEs lead to a more diverse supply chain. Thus, disparities studies are a necessity in diversifying an organizations supply chain.

A disparity study’s success relies on the participation of small business owners and stakeholders. It is vital that local business owners and stakeholders get involved. They can do so by completing surveys, focus groups, interviews, and attending sessions.

Disparity studies are encouraged to be conducted every five to seven years [2]. The outcome of disparity studies help guide the strategic direction of a supplier diversity program. Organizations use the study to set annual goals that will increase the use of MBE/WBEs. This is achieved using the recommendations specified in the disparity study. Researchers create the recommendations using the data collected.

The recommendations are just that, however. It is up to us to carry out and implement the recommendations to decrease the undeniable disparity in using MBE/WBEs and non-MBE/WBEs. It is vital for small business owners to use their voice to help guide the decisions that impact them. OEO’s mission is to encourage the use of minority- and women-owned businesses. And, we encourage you to do the same by doing your part.

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Like our page and follow us on Facebook!

Content coming soon!
Meet the Team

Corey D. Bolton
Director

Danielle Briet
Deputy Director

Austin Kerns
Workforce Diversity Specialist

Tynesha Hardin
Engagement Specialist

Joy Harris-Bird
Minority/Women Certification Coordinator

Bridget Eaton
Office Support Assistant

Upcoming Events

01 DEC
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION CONFERENCE

01 DEC
CERTIFICATION 101 OFFICE HOUR

10 DEC
2021 MISSOURI HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

14-16 DEC
NY STATE MWBE FORUM

See you in January!

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