



Access and Impact

Small Business, Big Change - One Quarter at a Time

About This Newsletter

This quarterly newsletter is a forward-facing communication platform to inform, and highlight our efforts in championing small, small-diverse and veteran-owned businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Update on the Bureau of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development Annual Empowerment Summit

Earlier this year, we made the difficult but necessary decision to postpone the Summit to ensure it could deliver the level of value, engagement, and impact that Pennsylvania’s small business community deserves. While the event did not take place as originally planned, our commitment to hosting a meaningful and high-quality Summit has not changed.

LEADERSHIP MESSAGES

Dr. Erica Patterson, DM

DGS Deputy
Secretary for
Business
Inclusion
& Supplier
Development



As we begin this year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we have made together and to look ahead to the important work still before us.

Last year, 2025, reaffirmed what we know to be true: Pennsylvania’s small, diverse, and historically disadvantaged businesses are vital to the Commonwealth’s economic strength and resilience. At BISD, our focus remains steadfast - reducing barriers, expanding access to opportunity, and ensuring businesses in every region have the tools they need not only to succeed, but to grow and thrive.

Looking ahead, we are doubling down on collaboration, modernization, and measurable impact. From strengthening technical assistance networks to improving how businesses engage with state government, our work in the coming year will be guided by a single, core principle: meeting businesses where they are and helping them move forward.

Thank you for your partnership, your feedback, and your continued trust. We are energized by what lies ahead and look forward to continuing this work together.

— Dr. Erica

Save the Date

Empowering Connections: Advancing Opportunities For Small Businesses

A virtual micro-summit where small businesses connect to opportunity across the Commonwealth

Monday, May 4, 2026 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

- What You'll Gain:
- Insightful **Keynote Address** focused on advancing opportunities for small businesses
 - Engaging **Fireside Chat** with Commonwealth and industry leaders
 - Interactive, **Impact-Driven Workshops** delivering practical tools and strategies
 - Direct guidance on **how to do business with the Commonwealth**

**Registration Opening Soon -
Mark Your Calendar!**



Your Input makes Our Programs Stronger

BISD achieves the greatest impact when guided by your insights - the businesses we serve. Programs such as the Mentor Protégé Program, Micro & Midsize Business initiatives, and Annual Empowerment Summit continues to grow, your engagement and feedback is essential.

Take action:

- Stay connected through BISD communications
- Share opportunities, feedback, and success stories with our team
- Encourage peers to engage with state resources

Your voice helps shape programs that are more accessible, responsive, and impactful. Together, we can build a Commonwealth where doing business with the state is clearer, fairer, and more inclusive - and where Pennsylvania businesses are positioned to succeed.

Resources and Tools for Small Businesses

Introducing PA-BOSS: Pennsylvania's Business One-Stop Shop

Doing business with the Commonwealth just got easier.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's [PA-BOSS \(Pennsylvania Business One-Stop Shop\)](#) online hub has been designed to help entrepreneurs and business owners navigate the resources, registrations, and services they need - all in one place.

Through PA-BOSS, users can:

- Start and register a business
- Find funding, loan, and grant opportunities
- Access permits, licenses, and compliance information
- Connect with state and local business support resources

By simplifying how businesses interact with government, PA-BOSS helps reduce administrative burden and allows entrepreneurs to focus on what matters most: growing their business. Whether you're launching a startup or scaling an existing company, PA-BOSS is designed to be your front door to state support.



Take action:

- Visit business.pa.gov.
- Create or update your business profile
- Explore funding, certification, and support resources available to you



Expanding Support Through New Business Assistance Service Centers



The Shapiro-Davis Administration recently announced a major investment in Pennsylvania's small business ecosystem with the creation of 11 new Business Assistance Service Centers through the Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance Program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

These centers will provide hands-on, community-based support to historically disadvantaged businesses, including:

- One-on-one technical assistance
- Help navigating state and federal programs
- Support with certifications, procurement readiness, and access to capital

This more than \$21 million investment strengthens a statewide network of trusted associates working directly with entrepreneurs in their communities. For the Bureau of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development, it represents a critical step toward ensuring that historically underserved businesses have equitable access to the guidance and resources they need to succeed.

We look forward to collaborating closely with these new centers in the year ahead.

Mentor-Protégé Program: Second Cohort Launches Across Pennsylvania

This year marks the second cohort of Pennsylvania's [Mentor-Protégé Program \(MPP\)](#), a signature initiative designed to help small, diverse, and veteran-owned businesses build capacity, improve procurement readiness, and compete more effectively for Commonwealth contracts.

Building on the success of the inaugural class, which graduated last May with 15 participating businesses focused on IT services and strategic planning, the program now continues into its second 12-month cycle. In this cohort, protégés are paired with experienced prime contractors who provide one-on-one guidance, technical insight, and networking opportunities, all aimed at helping businesses sharpen internal operations and grow their ability to win state work.

Participants benefit from monthly workshops, mentorship from seasoned business leaders, and expanded visibility within Pennsylvania's vendor community. The program emphasizes sustained partnership rather than short-term intervention, fostering relationships that can unlock long-term success in public contracting.

This expansion reflects our ongoing commitment to building inclusive pathways to government contracting and enhancing the vibrancy of Pennsylvania's small business ecosystem.

Key Program Highlights



Structured Mentoring on Real Projects



Capacity Building Training & "Back Office" Support



Pathway to Prime-Contracting and Certified Business Enterprise Integration



Micro & Midsize Business Program Showing Early Results

Last summer, DGS launched Pennsylvania's first-of-its-kind Micro and Midsize Business (MCB/MDB) Programs to expand contracting opportunities for companies that often fall into a gap, too large for traditional small business support, but still facing challenges competing with major firms.

Just months after launch, the impact is already measurable.

Since inception, 1,755 Micro Business and 30 Midsize Business certifications have been issued, significantly expanding the pool of vendors positioned to compete for Commonwealth work.

Even more importantly, state contracting opportunities are already being awarded to these businesses, demonstrating that the designations are not only increasing visibility, they are opening real doors.

These designations help close procurement gaps by offering:

- Dedicated visibility through vendor directories
- Streamlined certification and onboarding for faster entry
- Strategic capacity-building support
- Targeted opportunities on select Commonwealth solicitations

The programs complement existing Small Business, Small Diverse Business, and Veteran-owned Business Enterprise certifications, creating a more complete pathway for companies as they grow and scale.

Early feedback from participants like Benton Grove, a micro business owner engaged during the initial outreach phase, reinforces the need for this effort, noting that many firms previously felt state contracting was simply out of reach.

By pioneering these programs and continuing to refine certification and outreach efforts, BSD is building a more inclusive supplier ecosystem where businesses of all sizes can compete, grow, and succeed in Pennsylvania's marketplace.



Pennsylvania Department of General Services

Featured SB/SDB Bidding Opportunities:

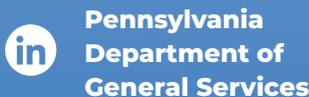
Invite BISD To Your Event:



BISD Goal Setting Process Tutorial



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Office of General Counsel Labor Counsel

This request for proposals (RFP) provides to those law firms interested in submitting proposals for the subject procurement ("Offerors") sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit proposals for the Governor's Office of General Counsel's consideration on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("Commonwealth") to satisfy a need for labor counsel services.

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education ("State System") has identified a need for legal counsel to provide legal assistance in matters relating to labor negotiations, advocacy, and implementation of collective bargaining agreements with unions representing the State System's workforce, and other labor relations and employment-related legal work as designated by the State System or the General Counsel of the Commonwealth.

Solicitation Due Date: 03/05/26

Visit tinyurl.com/5997tbsf

Department of Corrections: SCI Chester

Electrical Upgrades

This PROJECT IS A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL and includes ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION.

Solicitation Due Date: 03/17/26

Visit tinyurl.com/yzmz2jds

Department of Environmental Protection

Analysis Of Water Samples

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Bureau of Clean Water, requires a federally and/or state accredited Laboratory/Contractor to conduct analyses of water samples (from grab samples), collected by DEP. Sample collection is tentatively scheduled to begin in March 2026 and continue throughout 2026.

Solicitation Due Date: 03/16/26

Visit tinyurl.com/2m67et7c

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EXPLORE PA-BOSS AND START YOUR BUSINESS JOURNEY TODAY! - PAGE 2

MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM: SECOND COHORT LAUNCHES ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA - PAGE 3

AND MORE!