



Access and Impact

Small Business, Big Change - One Quarter at a Time

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 Pennsylvania.

What's Inside:

Bringing Opportunity to Communities Across PA

Meet the BISD Summer Interns

Agency Spotlight: DCNR Supports Small Businesses Across PA

Micro Summit Recap: Certification Opens the Door to Commonwealth Opportunities

Micro Summit Recap: Building Confidence in the Commonwealth Procurement Process

Resources and Tools for Small Businesses: Meet the Office of Small Business Advocate

A message from Leadership



DR. ERICA PATTERSON, DM

DEPUTY SECRETARY - OFFICE OF
BUSINESS INCLUSION & SUPPLIER
DEVELOPMENT

Pennsylvania's small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and BISD is committed to helping them access the opportunities that come with doing business with the Commonwealth.

This quarter, we continued that commitment by expanding outreach across Pennsylvania, hosting our first Virtual Micro Summit last spring, and providing practical tools to help businesses navigate certification, procurement systems, and Commonwealth contracting opportunities. Every workshop, and conversation helps us better connect businesses with the agencies that rely on Pennsylvania suppliers every day.

The months ahead will bring even more opportunities. We look forward to celebrating another graduating class of our Mentor-Protégé Program, continuing our work to connect micro, small, small diverse, veteran-owned, and midsize businesses with Commonwealth agencies, and sharing the impact of these efforts in BISD's Annual Report.

We're also excited to announce that our Annual Summit will return as an in-person event this year. We look forward to bringing together businesses, agencies, and resource organizations from across the Commonwealth for a day of networking, learning, and collaboration. Be on the lookout for event details in the coming months.

Thank you for being a valued member in BISD's mission.

Together, we're creating more opportunities for Pennsylvania businesses to compete, grow, and succeed.

Dr. Erica Patterson

Connect with BISD

Interested in having BISD participate in your conference, workshop, business event, or supplier outreach program? We welcome opportunities to collaborate with organizations that support Pennsylvania's business community.

To learn more about BISD outreach services or to request participation at an upcoming event, visit www.pa.gov/agencies/dgs/programs-and-services/business-inclusion-and-supplier-development/resources-and-support or contact the BISD Outreach Team at audresmith@pa.gov

Scan the QR code if you're ready to invite the team:





Bringing Opportunity to Communities Across Pennsylvania

Helping small businesses succeed starts with meeting them where they are. That's why outreach remains a cornerstone of the Office of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development's (BISD) mission.

Throughout the year, BISD collaborates with chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, universities, nonprofit organizations, industry associations, and local governments to connect businesses with Commonwealth contracting opportunities. By participating in conferences, business expos, supplier fairs, workshops, and community events, BISD helps entrepreneurs better understand the resources available to compete for state business.

These outreach efforts provide valuable opportunities for businesses to learn about certification programs, supplier registration, procurement processes, and the many ways the Commonwealth supports Pennsylvania's small, small diverse, veteran-owned, and disadvantaged businesses. Just as importantly, they give BISD staff the chance to hear directly from business owners, answer questions, and build lasting relationships that strengthen Pennsylvania's supplier network.

No matter where a business is located, BISD is committed to making information and opportunities more accessible. By working alongside regional collaborators throughout the Commonwealth, the bureau continues to expand its reach and connect more businesses with one of Pennsylvania's largest customers.

Meet the BISD Summer Interns

This summer, BISD is pleased to welcome two talented students who are gaining hands-on experience in public service and small business development. Their unique academic backgrounds and career aspirations reflect the next generation of leaders who are committed to strengthening Pennsylvania's business community.

Meet Nick Brotto

Returning for a second internship with BISD, Nick Brotto is a student at Penn State Harrisburg majoring in Public Policy with a minor in Homeland Security. He plans to apply to the university's Master of Public Administration program next semester.

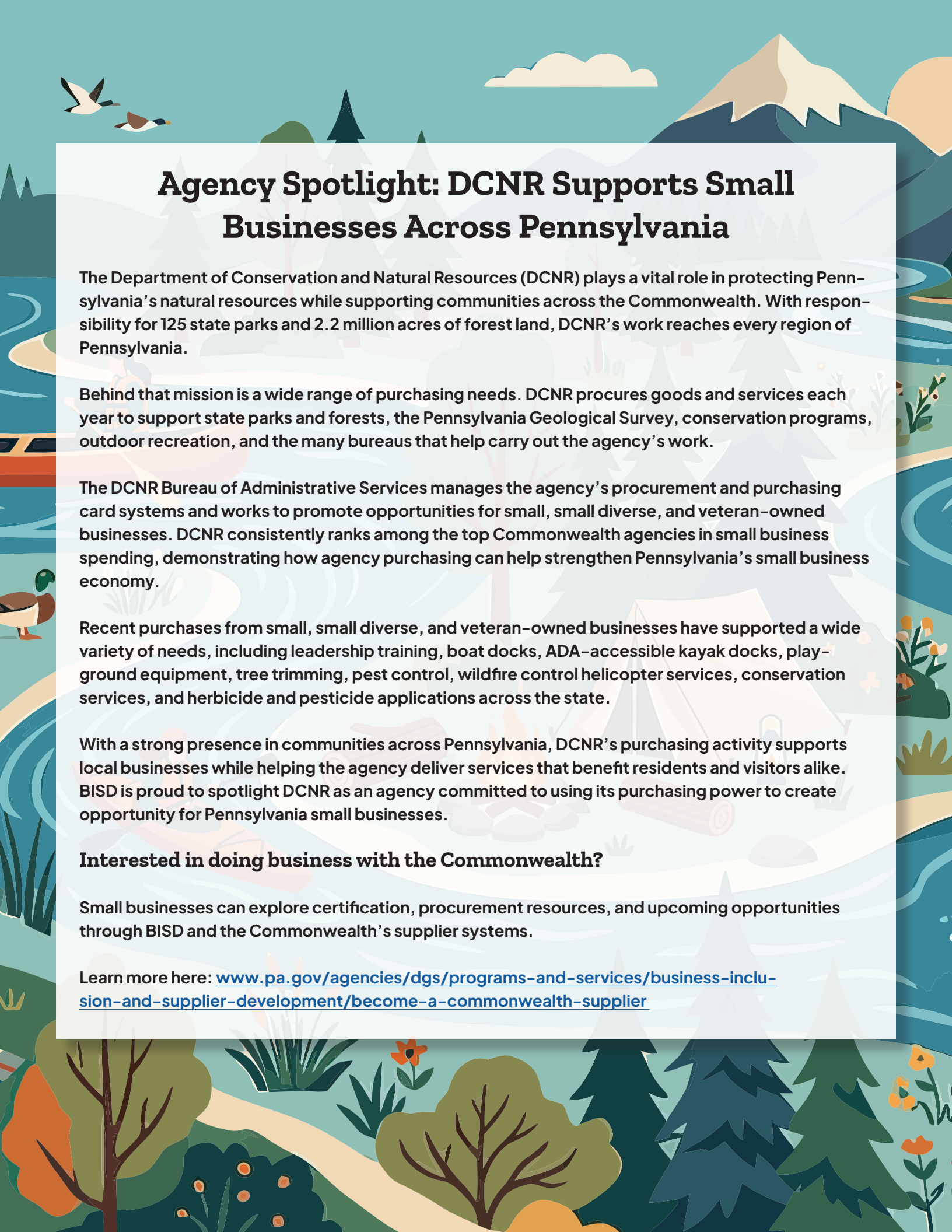
Nick is passionate about public service and is motivated by a desire to make a positive impact through government. During his internship, he looks forward to expanding his knowledge of state government, strengthening his professional skills, and building relationships with colleagues and collaborators across PA.

Meet Jayant Bullett

Jayant Bullett is a student at Millersville University majoring in Entrepreneurship. With aspirations of becoming a successful business owner, he is eager to learn more about the programs and resources that support Pennsylvania's small business community.

Through his internship with BISD, Jayant hopes to gain valuable professional experience, explore career opportunities, and develop practical skills that will help him succeed as an entrepreneur and future business leader.





Agency Spotlight: DCNR Supports Small Businesses Across Pennsylvania

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) plays a vital role in protecting Pennsylvania's natural resources while supporting communities across the Commonwealth. With responsibility for 125 state parks and 2.2 million acres of forest land, DCNR's work reaches every region of Pennsylvania.

Behind that mission is a wide range of purchasing needs. DCNR procures goods and services each year to support state parks and forests, the Pennsylvania Geological Survey, conservation programs, outdoor recreation, and the many bureaus that help carry out the agency's work.

The DCNR Bureau of Administrative Services manages the agency's procurement and purchasing card systems and works to promote opportunities for small, small diverse, and veteran-owned businesses. DCNR consistently ranks among the top Commonwealth agencies in small business spending, demonstrating how agency purchasing can help strengthen Pennsylvania's small business economy.

Recent purchases from small, small diverse, and veteran-owned businesses have supported a wide variety of needs, including leadership training, boat docks, ADA-accessible kayak docks, playground equipment, tree trimming, pest control, wildfire control helicopter services, conservation services, and herbicide and pesticide applications across the state.

With a strong presence in communities across Pennsylvania, DCNR's purchasing activity supports local businesses while helping the agency deliver services that benefit residents and visitors alike. BISD is proud to spotlight DCNR as an agency committed to using its purchasing power to create opportunity for Pennsylvania small businesses.

Interested in doing business with the Commonwealth?

Small businesses can explore certification, procurement resources, and upcoming opportunities through BISD and the Commonwealth's supplier systems.

Learn more here: www.pa.gov/agencies/dgs/programs-and-services/business-inclusion-and-supplier-development/become-a-commonwealth-supplier

Micro Summit Recap: Certification Opens the Door to Commonwealth Opportunities

One of the featured sessions during the Office of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development's (BISD) Spring Micro Summit focused on one of the most important first steps for businesses interested in working with the Commonwealth: certification.

The workshop provided participants with a practical overview of Pennsylvania's business certification programs, helping small businesses better understand the process of becoming self-certified as a Small, Micro, or Midsize Business, or pursuing verification as a Small Diverse Business (SDB) or Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE). These certifications can increase a business's visibility to Commonwealth agencies and strengthen its ability to compete for contracting opportunities.

Attendees received a guided walkthrough of the certification application, including eligibility requirements, required documentation, and common mistakes that can delay approval. The session also highlighted resources available through BISD to help businesses successfully complete the process and begin positioning themselves for future procurement opportunities.

For many businesses, certification is more than an administrative step, it's an investment in future growth. By demystifying the application process and providing clear guidance, BISD continues to help Pennsylvania's small businesses gain access to one of the Commonwealth's largest customers.

Whether businesses are taking their first steps toward government contracting or expanding their existing public-sector portfolio, the knowledge shared during this Micro Summit session provides a strong foundation for long-term success.

Didn't Attend the Micro Summit?

It's not too late. All Spring Micro Summit workshops are available on demand, allowing you to learn at your own pace and revisit the information whenever it's convenient. Watch this session here:

https://www.youtube.com/embed/ewR2yeb-sUIE?si=WcD8b2t_pvKnYM59

At a glance:

Certification boosts opportunity – Self-certifying as Small/Micro/Midsize or verifying as SDB/VBE helps businesses compete for Commonwealth contracts.

Practical walkthrough – The session covered eligibility, documentation, and common application mistakes to avoid.

Support is available – BISD offers resources to help businesses complete certification and prepare for future procurement opportunities.

Micro Summit Recap: Building Confidence in the Commonwealth Procurement Process

Navigating government procurement can seem complex, but understanding the process is the first step toward competing for Commonwealth business. During the Spring Micro Summit, the Office of Business Inclusion and Supplier Development (BISD) hosted a workshop designed to help suppliers better understand the Commonwealth's Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) program and the online tools used throughout the procurement process.

Participants learned how the ITQ program works, how it differs from other contracting opportunities, and what businesses can expect after being awarded a contract. The session also provided practical guidance on using the Commonwealth's procurement systems, giving attendees a clearer understanding of how to position their businesses for future opportunities.

Through live demonstrations, participants explored the Supplier Service Center and the JAG-GAER procurement platform. The workshop walked through supplier registration, profile management, and account maintenance, while highlighting where to find important information and resources. These step-by-step demonstrations helped simplify the process and gave businesses the confidence to navigate the systems independently.

The interactive format encouraged questions throughout the session, allowing attendees to gain clarification on real-world scenarios and better understand how the Commonwealth's procurement tools support businesses seeking to compete for state contracts.

By combining practical instruction with hands-on demonstrations, the workshop equipped suppliers with the knowledge needed to register, respond to Invitation to Qualify opportunities, and participate more effectively in Commonwealth procurement. As one of Pennsylvania's largest purchasers of goods and services, the Commonwealth offers significant opportunities for businesses that are prepared to compete.

At a glance:

Understand the ITQ program – Learn how the Invitation to Qualify process works, how it differs from other contracting paths, and what to expect after winning a contract.

Hands-on system demos – Live walkthroughs covered the Supplier Service Center and JAGGAER platform, including registration, profile setup, and account maintenance.

Real answers to real questions – The interactive format let attendees get clarity on real-world scenarios to navigate procurement with confidence.

Missed the Spring Micro Summit?

It's not too late to take advantage of this valuable resource. Watch the recorded workshop at your convenience and learn how to navigate the Commonwealth's procurement systems with confidence.

Watch the workshop here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHW5IYLLI-8>

Your Voice Matters.

The PA Office of Small Business Advocate
wants to hear from you!



Pennsylvania
Office of Small Business Advocate

Forum Place
555 Walnut Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

717-787-2525 | osba@pa.gov | www.osba.pa.gov



QUICK ACCESS:

FIND OPPORTUNITIES:



CONNECT WITH BISD:



Resources and Tools for Small Businesses: Meet the Office of Small Business Advocate

Utility costs and service reliability can have a significant impact on your business. That's why Pennsylvania's Office of Small Business Advocate (OSBA) exists to ensure small businesses have a voice when important utility decisions are made.

The Office of Small Business Advocate is an independent state agency that represents Pennsylvania businesses with 250 or fewer employees in matters involving regulated electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, and telecommunications utilities. Whether a utility proposes a rate increase or changes that could affect service, OSBA works to ensure the interests of small businesses are represented before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and other decision-makers.

OSBA also serves as a valuable resource for business owners by helping them stay informed about utility issues that may affect operating costs, service reliability, and future policy decisions. Small businesses are encouraged to share their experiences with utility service, allowing OSBA to bring real-world perspectives to formal proceedings and advocate for practical solutions.

If your business relies on dependable and affordable utility service, OSBA is a resource worth knowing.

Learn More

Visit the Office of Small Business Advocate on PA.gov to learn more about its services, explore utility resources for small businesses, and find out how the office can assist your business.

If your Pennsylvania business has 250 or fewer employees and has questions or concerns about regulated utility services, the Office of Small Business Advocate encourages you to reach out for assistance.

Scan the QR code or visit: www.pa.gov/agencies/osba