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Los Angeles Regional Program Created To Help Small And Diverse Contractors Win Public Construction Contracts

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Los Angeles, Ca. — May 10, 2022 — A three-pronged Los Angeles regional program — consisting of the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Metro, and the County of Los Angeles — has been created to help small and diverse contractors in bidding and obtaining work on infrastructure development and other publicly funded construction projects. The regional Contractor Development and Bonding Program (CDABP) will provide bonding assistance, contract financing, technical support, education, training, and other services to under-represented businesses. The recent addition of a CDABP at the County of Los Angeles has led to the creation of a new regional CDABP website and to expanded outreach and supportive services in order to help contractors access billions of dollars in infrastructure work, a sector that will soon expand even more with the signing of the \$1.2 trillion federal infrastructure investment plan late last year.

All three prongs are being administered by Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services (MWIS), which has many years of experience working on public construction contracting and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues statewide.

“Los Angeles is a diverse region with so many talented business owners, and we need to use all their talents and optimize competition to have the greatest local economic impact of regional contracting dollars,” said Ingrid Merriwether, CEO of MWIS. “We need to break down the barriers that have prevented many small and diverse groups from accessing public contracts. This program will help to create greater equity in regional public contracting. This is an inclusionary program to build a stronger region.”

Bonding and access to contract funding can be major impediments for small and diverse contractors to be able to bid and successfully participate on public works projects. The regional CDABP helps reduce these and other barriers. For example, the program assists small and diverse businesses in securing bonds by providing collateral guarantees which enable them to bid and qualify for contracts. Also, by increasing access to contract funding, the program addresses the burden of cash flow gaps that exist between the initial cost to prosecute the work and the later receipt of progress payments, gaps that can be 60 days or more. In addition, the CDABP provides extensive business specific technical assistance, training, project completion support, networking and matchmaking facilitation, as well as other contractor support services. The businesses assisted include disadvantaged, minority, small, women, and disabled veteran owned business enterprise categories (i.e., DBE, MBE, SBE, WBE, and DVBE). All regional CDABP services are provided at no cost to participants, giving them a more level playing field from which to compete.

MWIS CEO Merriwether commended regional officials for their commitment and support of the regional CDABP program. She said “the regional CDABP is a ‘win-win’ for government agencies and the general public. By enabling more small and diverse companies to bid on public works projects, government agencies create an expanded and larger pool of firms competing, which can generate more creativity and innovation and lead to lower contract costs, thereby saving taxpayers significant money.” Merriwether added that the regional CDABP also creates more equitable job opportunities in local communities and fosters more robust local economies — the multiplicative impact of contracting dollars staying local.

“With Congress passing and President Joe Biden signing a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure investment plan in November, more opportunities are coming to localities, including the Los Angeles region,” said Merriwether. “If you are a small and diverse business, the new regional CDABP can assist you in competing for upcoming construction contracts. There is an ever-increasing demand for more small, local, and diverse business inclusion in public contracting. We are expanding our outreach, which includes upcoming trainings, workshops, and academies — as well as financial resources. Contact us. We want to hear from you and include you.”

One beneficiary of CDABP assistance is Moninder Birdi, owner of Birdi & Associates, Inc., which specializes in project management, electronic security systems, and software development. Birdi & Associates won multi-million-dollar contracts from Los Angeles World Airports after participating in its CDABP. “The program helped us bid on and win jobs that we previously did not have the capacity to bond for,” Birdi said. “It levels the playing field. It is a DEI program that adds tremendous value to multiple stakeholders. I am pleased by the creation of a regional program. It will collectively benefit many under-represented businesses, the taxpayers, and the Los Angeles region.”

Small and diverse businesses are encouraged to participate in the new Los Angeles regional Contractor Development and Bonding Program (CDABP). To obtain more information, go online to the new regional CDABP website at www.LAConDev.com, send an email to MWISInfo@imwis.com, or call 213-258-3000.