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Ronda Watson Barber—Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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Advocating, Informing and Promoting Small & Minority Owned Businesses



Celebrating 9 Years of Publishing

## Damita Brown appointed Interim Director of the Columbus' Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Damita Brown a dedicated and innovative diversity and inclusion professional was recently appointed Interim Director of the City of Columbus' Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Brown was appointed by Mayor Andrew Ginther after the departure of Steve Francis. Francis had served in the role since January 2016, when Mayor Ginther appointed him to the newly created cabinet-level position of chief diversity officer.

The Mayor's Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is responsible for supporting Mayor Ginther and his Cabinet Leadership Team by leading diversity and inclusion management within the City of Columbus. The ODI focuses on four pillars of diversity and inclusion management: Workforce Diversity, Supplier Diversity, Diverse Outreach and Internal Diverse Leadership.

Ms. Brown is an accomplished diversity and inclusion professional, with more than 10 years of successful leadership and management experience in the field. Damita is a graduate of Capital University, where she majored in Political Science and held a concentration in Ethnic Studies. She is also a graduate of The Ohio State University, where she obtained a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration.

Ms. Brown's career has been distinguished by a rich and unique history and an overwhelming ability to develop collaborative partnerships that promote strategic business and community partnerships.

"Damita has been working in the diversity and inclusion arena for 10 years and with our Office of Diversity and Inclusion since it was formed. I have every confidence that she will step into the role as interim director and lead the office in accomplishing this important work," said Mayor Ginther.

Nana Watson, president of the Columbus branch of the NAACP, expressed confidence in Brown. "Damita is a very talented professional who will take the department to another level," she said. "She will step up to the plate, get the job done and make a difference."

Brown was the recipient of the 2016 OhioMBE Publisher's Award.



*"Voting is the foundation stone for political action."*

—  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

*"A man without a vote is a man without protection."*

—  
President Lyndon Johnson

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## Registration is open for the Aerospace Business Matchmaker



Join the Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) of Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia for the Aerospace Business Matchmaker. Held in Athens, Ohio at Ohio University from July 17 -18, 2018, the Matchmaker is an opportunity for businesses, contractors and universities alike to

be part of aerospace industry services and contracting. More than 1,000 attendees are expected to visit for this amazing opportunity. Spots are limited! Register now.

Your registration will get you access to many NASA agencies and prime contractors. Representatives from other federal, state and local governments and major businesses also will be on hand to learn about the products and services you can provide.

And it's not just about rocket fuel. NASA, other agencies and contractors look to small businesses to supply everything from office equipment and supplies to security guards and from facility services to data processing.

Be sure to check out the website to register for pre-event webinars. They will help you prepare for a successful experience at the event.

More information is available online at <http://aerospacematchmaker.com/>

## OFCC Webinar Series: Everything you Need to Know About Tech in 30 Minutes



**OHIO FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION COMMISSION**

During this webinar, we will discuss a wide range of items that are affecting technology packages in projects across the board. Starting with the new-age debate of flat panels vs. projectors, which allows for optimal viewing for the best price? We will also touch on the up and coming technology that can save clients a dime or two, such as virtual and augmented reality. On the tail end of the presentation, we will discuss the affects of coordinating security, management, and maintenance at the beginning of a project to reduce the confusion and chaos the day before a building opens. If time permits, we will also touch on how to reduce technophobia within clients, to ensure all buildings are moving forward.

### Presenters:

Christy Miller, BCL IT Consulting  
Caitlyn Brudnicki, BCL IT Consulting  
Melanie Drerup, OFCC

**July 11, 2018, 10:00-11:00 am**

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5780500255503876354>

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OhioMBE welcomes letters to the editor from readers. Typed letters of 200 words or less are preferred; all might be edited. Each letter must include name, home address and daytime phone number. Some letter may appear on our website.

The 912 Group is an Ohio certified Minority Owned and EDGE business. The 912 Group is a certified FBE with the City of Columbus.

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# publisher's note

## Make your voice heard

By Ronda Watson Barber  
Publisher

I have said it before our votes and dollars have power. It is now time to step up and demonstrate our collective clout. The United States Supreme Court in a 5-4 ruling sided with the Ohio Secretary of State to remove inactive voters from the rosters. The Court's conservative majority decided that Ohio did not violate federal laws by purging voters who failed to vote for six years and did not confirm their residency. Ohio has the strictest law in the nation. Ohio can now legally nullify your voter registration, simply because you didn't vote in recent elections. The decision makes voting a use-it-or-lose-it privilege. Voting is no longer a right. This ruling is a major victory for Republicans. It will help them win elections. The decision impact minorities, the elderly, those of lower income and young people

Voting obviously matters! People are working overtime to prevent certain Americans from exercising this Constitutional Right. Why? What reason could it be to prevent some from voting?

Black people have marched. Some have lost their lives seeking full citizenship. That citizenship includes the right to vote. I challenge you to make sure your voter registration is current. I encourage you to make certain every eligible citizen has registered to vote for the upcoming election. The November election is important. Whatever hurdles are placed before us to cast a ballot and make our voices heard, we must show our resilience. If the voting lines are long, we have to stand in line. We have to persevere. If they don't want us to vote, we need to be as adamant about casting a ballot.

"I have come to see more and more that one of the most decisive steps that the Negro can take is that little walk to the voting booth. That is an important step. We've got to gain the ballot, and through that gain, political power." – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Just my thoughts...rwb



*We all know that an angry electorate is a voting electorate. ~*  
Donna Brazile

# OhioDiversityNetwork.com

# Save the Date



## October 25, 2018

Sponsored by:

- Columbus Regional Airport Authority
- The City of Columbus
- Wesbanco Bank
- Waste Management
- Ohio Business Development Center
- The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium

Tickets on sale at

[www.OhioMBEAwards.com](http://www.OhioMBEAwards.com)

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be considered for publication or posting online. The preferred method is to text within an email. Please include contact information including letter writer's city and state. The letter must be fewer than 300 words. No more than four signatures per letter. We edit and/or trim letters as little as possible, but we reserve the right to do so as necessary. Send to [news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)





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*The American people  
must be able to trust  
that their courts and  
law enforcement will  
uphold, protect, and defend their constitu-  
tional rights.* ~ Loretta Lynch

# #bidnotices

# bid opportunities

To post a bid notice, call 614-522-9122 or email [news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)



## NOTICE TO BIDDERS

**SHOOK**  
CONSTRUCTION

Shook Construction is requesting bids for the Collins Part WTP Ozone Treatment Facilities project in Toledo,

OH. **MBEs, WBEs & SBEs are encouraged to respond.** Bids are requested by 10:00 AM on 06/26/18. Project is taxable and DB Prevailing Wage rates apply.

Scope items include: General Conditions, Demolition, Hauling, Excavation & Backfill, Sand & Gravel Supply, Dewatering, Excavation Support Systems, Erosion Control, Paving, Concrete Curbs/Gutters/Sidewalks, Site Utilities, Fences & Gates, Seeding & Sod, Concrete Repair, Ready Mix Supply, Concrete Formwork, Reinforcing Steel, Cast-In-Place Concrete, Precast Hollowcore Slabs, Masonry, Structural Steel, Miscellaneous Metals, Aluminum Handrails & Railings, Grating, FRP Fabrications, Dampproofing, Waterproofing, Roofing, Firestopping, Caulking & Joint Sealants, Fiberglass Doors/Frames, Access Doors/Hatches, Overhead Coiling Doors, Aluminum Entrances/Storefronts, Hardware, Glass & Glazing, Acoustical Ceilings, Paint & Protective Coatings, Signage, Fire Extinguishers, Dock Bumpers, Aluminum Canopy System, Treatment Plant Equipment, Pumps, Ozone Systems, Instrumentation & Controls, Process Piping/Valves/Gates, Pipe Supports, Mechanical Insulation, Fire Protection, Plumbing, HVAC & Electrical.

Interested subcontractors and suppliers can call our Estimating Department at 800-705-5251 or email us at [atestimating@shookconstruction.com](mailto:atestimating@shookconstruction.com) for instructions on how to obtain bid documents. Shook Construction is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**Need to meet your EDGE/MBE or Good Faith Contracting Efforts?**

**When you need EDGE or MBE participants, The 912 Group and OhioMBE can help.**

**Place your legal ad or bid notice in OhioMBE and our other media outlets.**

**[news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)  
614-522-9122**



**COLUMBUS METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY**

COMMUNITY. COMMITMENT. COLLABORATION.

## SUGAR GROVE BALCONY & FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) will receive bids from qualified contractors for the

Balcony & Façade Improvements at Sugar Grove, 530 South State Street, Columbus, Ohio. All bids will be received and publicly opened on **Monday, July 9, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.**, at CMHA Central Office, 880 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211, Conf. Rm. A, Attn: Mr. Mike Wagner. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled on **Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.**, at Sugar Grove, at the address listed above. Contract Documents may be viewed at [www.cmhanet.com/DoingBusinessWithUs/Development](http://www.cmhanet.com/DoingBusinessWithUs/Development). Contract documents may be obtained from Cannell Graphics, 5787 Linworth Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43085; Phone: 781-9760; Fax: 781-9759, starting **Monday, June 11, 2018**, upon receipt of a **refundable company check or money order for \$50.00**, payable to CMHA. Bidders must agree to comply with Davis-Bacon Labor Standards of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, and Section 3 of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended, and are asked to assist CMHA in meeting their Minority Business Enterprise goal of 20%. A 5% bid bond must be submitted with bid.

**kokosing**  
INDUSTRIAL



**"Attention State of Ohio and City of Toledo Certified MBE/WBE Companies"**

Kokosing Industrial, Inc. is preparing bids for the Collins Park WTP Ozone Treatment Facilities in Toledo, Ohio which bids June 26, 2018. We are seeking quotes for any portion of the project listed that you are qualified to perform or provide supplies for which includes the following: Erosion Control, Paving, Trucking, Fencing, Seeding and Landscaping, Concrete Repair, Reinforcing Steel, Precast Concrete Hollow-Core Planks, Masonry, Waterproofing, Roofing, Caulking, Overhead Doors, Windows, Glass and Storefront, Painting and Coatings, Instrumentation and Controls, Ozone and Oxygen System Cleaning, Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical, and Pipe Insulation. Bidding documents can be examined at Kokosing Industrial, Inc., 6235 Westerville Rd., Westerville, OH 43081 or by calling Sonja Nichols at 614-212-5701. Please have your quote to Chad Lampe by 12:00 PM June 25, 2018: e-mail [snichols@kokosing.biz](mailto:snichols@kokosing.biz) or Fax 614-212-5711.

"Kokosing Industrial is an equal opportunity employer."



# bid opportunities

To post a bid notice, call 614-522-9122 or email [news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)



Columbus City Schools issues solicitations on a regular basis for goods & services related to food, construction, technology, curriculum, & transportation. Interested vendors should periodically check our website at <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/rfp>



The Department of Development is looking for diverse vendors and contractors who are licensed with the City of Columbus working in the following areas:

## DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- **Graffiti Removal.** Contact Eric Voorhees (614-645-7934 or [eavorhees@columbus.gov](mailto:eavorhees@columbus.gov)).
- **Grass Cutting and Solid Waste Removal.** Contact Mike Schwab (614- 645-7122 or [mfschwab@columbus.gov](mailto:mfschwab@columbus.gov)).
- **Demolition and Asbestos Abatement.** Contact Mike Farrenkopf (614- 679-5873 or [mlfarrenkopf@columbus.gov](mailto:mlfarrenkopf@columbus.gov)) or Seth Brehm (614-645-5659 or [swhbrehm@columbus.gov](mailto:swhbrehm@columbus.gov)).
- **Mowing, Property Maintenance, and Miscellaneous Services.** Contact Audrea Hickman (614-645-8907 or [aehickman@columbus.gov](mailto:aehickman@columbus.gov)).
- **Construction trades including: General Construction, Home Improvement, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Lead Abatement.** Contact Tim Tilton (614- 724-3009 or [twilton@columbus.gov](mailto:twilton@columbus.gov)).
- **Lead Safe Columbus has funding to train contractors for the Lead Abatement and Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Program.** Contact Erica Hudson (614- 645-6739 or [ejhudson@columbus.gov](mailto:ejhudson@columbus.gov)).

To register for notifications on upcoming bid opportunities, please visit <http://vendors.columbus.gov/sites/public>.



Minority Planroom  
OHBCD.org

# ohiombe.com



The Columbus Regional Airport Authority values diversity and inclusion and the impact small and minority-owned firms

have on the Central Ohio economy. The Columbus Regional Airport Authority invites you to access the following link: <https://columbusairports.com/doing-business-with-us/solicitation-opportunities> to sign-up for RSS feeds to automatically receive notifications of new bid opportunities and results. Email [BusinessDiversity@ColumbusAirports.com](mailto:BusinessDiversity@ColumbusAirports.com) for questions about the Diversity Programs at Columbus Regional Airport Authority.

WHY ISN'T  
**COLUMBUS**  
ONE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Are you a WBE, MBE or DBE? Then we want to work with you. **The City of Columbus Office of Diversity and Inclusion** can help register your business with the city.

Visit our website or call **(614) 645-2203** for more information.

[columbus.gov/odi](http://columbus.gov/odi)

# bid opportunities

To post a bid notice, call 614-522-9122 or email [news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)



## INVITATION FOR BIDS

Sealed bid proposals will be received by the Akron Metropolitan Housing

Authority at 100 West Cedar Street, Akron, Ohio 44307 until **2:00 p.m.** local time on **TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2018** at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud for:

**FIRE DAMAGE REPAIRS AND RELATED WORK  
at WILLOW RUN APARTMENTS 1387-  
1393 DOTY DRIVE AKRON, OHIO 44306**

Specifications can be purchased at SE Blueprint, Inc. located at 540 South Main Street, Suite 211, Akron, Ohio 44311

(330) 376-1689. Please email ([seblue@seblueprint.com](mailto:seblue@seblueprint.com)) or fax (330-376-2511) quantity requests and notice will be provided when documents are available for pick-up.

An email link for the above mentioned specifications is available at the Subcontractors Association NEO, 637 Vernon Odom Blvd., Akron, Ohio; Akron Urban League, Minority Business Assistance Center, 440 Vernon Odom Blvd., Akron, Ohio; the Builders Exchange of Canton, 5080 Aultman Rd., North Canton, Ohio; Builders Exchange of Cleveland, 9555 Rockside Road, Suite 300, Cleveland, Ohio; and the Ohio Construction News, 7261 Engle Road, Suite 304, Cleveland, Ohio. A list of plan holders can be obtained from SE Blueprint's website @ [www.seblueprint.com](http://www.seblueprint.com)

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held by the Housing Authority at the AMHA Administration Building, 100 West Cedar Street, Akron, Ohio 44307, on **TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018 at 2:00 P.M.**

See full bid notice at [www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities](http://www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities)

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# OhioFBE

*Celebrating Ohio's Women Owned Businesses*



Don't miss your opportunity  
to attend the June 21  
OhioMBE Procurement Fair

Register today to meet with Columbus City Schools, American Electric Power, City of Columbus DOD, Franklin County and the Columbus Zoo.

Reserve your spot at  
[www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com](http://www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com)

# How Your Business Can Benefit From Podcasting

Back in the early 2000s, I was at a party when one of the guests mentioned he was hooked on podcasts. “Huh?” was the primary response, as few of us knew what he was even talking about. My, how things have changed.

Today, nearly two-thirds of Americans are familiar with podcasts, according to the *2018 Infinite Dial Study*, and 44 percent of Americans age 12 and older have listened to one. Consumers ages 25 to 54 are most likely to listen to podcasts — almost one-third of them do.

Here’s how your small business can benefit from podcasting.

## Podcasting is on the rise

The *2018 Infinite Dial Study* names podcasting one of the biggest audio trends for 2018. Widespread smartphone use, as well as an increase in the number of connected cars, are big factors in podcasting’s growing popularity. An estimated 83 percent of Americans now own a smartphone. And, according to Nielsen, the use of smartphones to download and/or listen to podcasts rose 157 percent between 2014 and 2017.

More than 30 million Americans listen to podcasts each month and 21.9 million do so each week. Weekly listeners listen to an average of seven podcasts per week; 80 percent of them listen to all or most of the podcasts they start. With such high levels of engagement, podcasts are an ideal medium for savvy entrepreneurs to promote their businesses.

## Start your own podcast

To successfully start your own podcast, follow these steps:

- **Set your goal.** What do you want to achieve with your podcast? Do you want to become known as a thought leader, drive customers to your website, or make connections in your industry? Your goals will drive the format and content of your podcast.
- **Find your niche.** There are tons of podcasts out there. How will you make yours stand out from the crowd? Determine who your target audience is, and then listen to the most popular podcasts aimed at this audience. Where is there an opportunity to provide something new?
- **Choose a name for your podcast.** The name should include some keywords. Using keywords in your podcast name, as well as online descriptions of it, helps users find it online or with a smart speaker.
- **Plan your cadence.** Creating a quality podcast takes time. You’ll need to come up with topics that you can talk about for 30 to 60 minutes. If you plan to interview guests, you’ll have to find them, convince them to participate, record an interview, and edit the recordings. It’s also a good idea to launch with several podcast episodes — not just one — so listeners who like the first episode can keep on listening.

# How to Create An Inclusive Work Environment

How is diversity reflected in your workplace? For most, it reflects inclusiveness of cultures, orientations and more. Making a conscious effort to embrace inclusiveness and create a workplace in which people of all backgrounds feel safe and welcomed is not only good for business, but it’s also the law.

In celebration of LGBT Pride Month, here are four tips to help you create an inclusive work environment.

## 1. Reflect your passion for an inclusive work environment in your core/company values.

Most companies have a minimum of three-four core values. Why not dedicate one of them to inclusiveness? This will not only impress potential employees, but it will also serve as a great, engaging exercise for your current employees. Take it a step further by creating a contest for employees who want to submit new ideas for the new/revised core value. Ensure that the prize is something special.

## 2. Create an internal diversity & inclusion team

Before you assemble the team, be sure that you are clear on what the goal of the team is. If you need additional help, the

*See Inclusion on page 11*

- **Market your podcast.** Let your customers and prospects know about your podcast. Include a link to where they can download your podcast on your business website, in your email signature, in social media posts, and in marketing emails. Consider buying airtime on complementary podcasts to advertise. Your guests can also help promote your podcast by linking to it on their websites or mentioning it during their own podcasts.
- **Get subscribers and reviews.** Encourage your listeners to subscribe to your podcast, and to review your podcast wherever it's hosted, like on iTunes. The more subscribers you have, the more impressive your podcast will look to new listeners. Positive reviews

will also help convince potential listeners to give your podcast a try.

## Other ways to profit from podcasting

Even if you don’t launch your own podcast, you can still benefit from the podcasting trend. Find podcasts your target customers listen to. Then advertise on or sponsor those podcasts.

You can also connect with podcasters who target your customer base and — if relevant — offer to be a guest on their show. For example, if you own an accounting firm catering to small business owners, see if you can get a guest spot sharing tax tips on a small business podcast.

With a little thought and planning, podcasting can be an effective marketing tool for your small business.

Source: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)



# Ohio Diversity Network

Get a weekly email from [OhioDiversityNetwork.com](http://OhioDiversityNetwork.com) notifying you of upcoming events. Sign up online!

Monday, June 18, 2018 at 8:00am  
[OLBC Annual Golf Outing](#) - Canton

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 2:00pm  
[OSU African American & African Studies Community Extension Center – Wise Wednesday Matinee – Black Panther](#) - Columbus

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 5:30pm  
[Cleveland WBC: Blogging Meet Up](#) - Cleveland

Wednesday, June 20, 2018 at 6:00pm  
[Columbus WBC – BUILD AND LEVERAGE YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK](#) - Columbus

Thursday, June 21, 2018 at 1:00pm  
[OhioMBE Procurement Fair](#) - Columbus

Tuesday, June 26, 2018 at 4:00pm  
[Franklin County Corrections Center Outreach for Small & Emerging Businesses](#) - Columbus

Tuesday, June 26, 2018 at 5:30pm  
[Columbus WBC – LAUNCH BOX](#) - Columbus

Thursday, June 28, 2018 at 5:30pm  
[ECDI – BE CONFIDENT WHEN APPLYING – A LOAN PACKAGING CLASS](#) - Columbus

Saturday, June 30, 2018 at 10:00am  
[OLBC – Shades of Training Democracy Summit](#) - Columbus



**Hosting a business event?**

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[OhioDiversityNetwork.com](http://OhioDiversityNetwork.com)

Email: [news@ohiombe.com](mailto:news@ohiombe.com)  
for login information



**OhioMBE can announce your next  
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THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION



# The New Franklin County Corrections Center

2551 Fisher Road, Columbus, OH 43204

## OUTREACH EVENT SMALL & EMERGING BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

### WHEN

**June 26, 2018—4pm - 6pm**

### WHERE

**Franklin County  
West Maintenance Facility  
4444 Fisher Road, Columbus, OH  
43228**

Franklin County will present information about contracting opportunities for Design Release 4C: **Acoustical Ceiling, Drywall, Flooring, Epoxy Flooring, Painting, Food Service Equipment, Metal Building Systems, Site Lighting, Laundry Equipment, Final Cleaning, Hardscapes and Landscaping.**

Board of County Commissioners  
Franklin County, Ohio:  
Kevin L. Boyce, President  
Marilyn Brown, Commissioner  
John O'Grady, Commissioner

<http://purchasing.franklincountyohio.gov/>

SEBE Coordinator: Marleise Wicker 614.525.2293

Subcontractors and suppliers who are **Small & Emerging Business Enterprises (SEBE)** are strongly encouraged to participate in the upcoming construction of the new Franklin County Corrections Center. The project team is dedicated to maximizing the inclusion of **SEBEs**.

**SEBEs** as defined by the County Inclusion Plan (CIP) should be aware that the project is scheduled to be designed, bid and constructed in a phased plan delivery as identified by the design release schedule.

#### DR#4C Pre-Bid Meeting

**Monday, July 9th @ 10 am**

**369 S, High Street, 1st Floor**

**Meeting Room #2**

**Columbus, Ohio 43215**

**SEBE** firms are encouraged to participate in the Pre-Bid Meeting and collaborate with the project team so that project interest can be fully conveyed in order to maximize the inclusion effort.

Where at all possible, **SEBE** firms are also strongly encouraged to submit bids as a prime bidder. Where this is not feasible **SEBE** bidders are requested to submit their proposal for work to prime bidders as is encouraged by the CIP.

## REGISTER

Register via email: *Laura Slate, Assistant Inclusion Coordinator & Michael Crockett, Gilbane|Smoot JV @ [lslate@srsmoot.com](mailto:lslate@srsmoot.com)*

# 5 Best Risk Management Strategies

Being in business is exciting but it also means facing challenges and risks every day. These risks and threats to your business can come from innumerable sources, including economic conditions, lawsuits, competitors, and the weather. In order to be able to sleep at night, it's essential that you adopt a variety of risk management strategies. These are designed to avert catastrophe and provide you with protection to the extent possible. There's no single action to shield you from the consequences of risks to your business. You need to take a holistic approach and cover your bases. Here are five strategies to consider.

**1. Choice of entity.** You start a business to make money, but things don't always work out as planned. If, for example, you can't pay the remainder of your lease, you may be personally liable for what's owed. One way to protect your personal assets—your home, your personal car, your personal bank account—is to use a business entity that provides personal liability protection.

A sole proprietorship or general partnership does not provide personal liability protection, but a limited liability company (LLC) or corporation does. The cost of setting up an LLC or incorporating and complying with other administrative tasks associated with having the entity is small compared with the potential personal liability exposure for not having the entity.

**2. Insurance policies.** There are many statistics showing that it's not a matter of *if* but rather *when* you'll experience an occurrence that could have been covered by insurance. Carrying adequate insurance coverage can go a long way in protecting you from property losses as well as liability claims. Consider the following types of policies for optimum protection:

- *Business owners policy (BOP).* This policy for small businesses provides protection for your property (except for excluded events and amounts over the policy limit) as well as liability protection for claims by third parties (e.g., a customer slips and falls on your premises). The policy may also cover employee theft and other occurrences.
- *Professional liability coverage.* This policy protects professionals from client claims of mistakes (malpractice), negligence, or unfinished work.
- *Business interruption policy.* This policy provides funds to cover your fixed costs (and possibly loss of profits) following an event that shuts you down (e.g., a hurricane).
- *Workers' compensation insurance.* This protects the business for claims when employees have a job-related injury or illness.
- *Employer practices liability insurance (EPLI).* This covers you for claims by employees and former employees for such actions as discrimination and wrongful termination.

**3. Contracts and agreements.** Put it in writing...whatever you consider important to your business. This can be requiring

*Inclusion from page 8*

Department of Labor (DOL) has helpful resources available.

### 3. Hire an HR professional/consultant that has experience in diversity & inclusion

If you desire to create inclusion initiatives but don't have the time to implement, consider hiring a HR professional or consultant. Ideally, this professional will have past experi-

employees to sign nondisclosure agreements protecting your trade secrets (client lists, pricing, etc.).

In some cases, you can't even sue unless you have a written contract:

- Sale of goods over \$500
- Leases over \$1,000
- Agreements creating a security interest (e.g., a right to collateral)

If you draft contracts and agreements yourself, be sure to have an attorney review it so you're protected to the extent you expect.

**4. Disaster preparedness plans.** What will you do when disaster strikes? What steps will you take to recover from a disaster? These actions should be specified in a plan you create for your business. The [SBA offers guidance](#) on crafting a preparedness plan.

**5. Best business practices.** All of the actions listed above are best business practices, but this list isn't exclusive. There are numerous business practices that you can use to minimize risk. Here are some ideas to get you started in developing your own list of best busi-

ness in diversity and inclusion from strategy to execution.

### 4. Host a diversity/inclusion workshop for your employees

Don't have the budget to hire a full-time HR professional or consultant? Consider hiring one for a project-based initiative for your team. This can vary by topic and format, but the goal should be leave your employees with more awareness of inclusion.

Source: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

ness practices:

- **Hire right.** Be sure to find the right person for your job opening. For example, if you're hiring someone who'll be driving on company business, check the driving record.
- **Enhance safety in your facility.** This will minimize accidents by customers and staff.
- **Check your computer security.** Avoid ransomware and other threats that can damage your data and cost you a lot of money to repair.
- **Stay compliant.** Federal, state, and local laws are constantly changing, but you must stay up to date so you can remain compliant.

**Conclusion.** Be an offensive player when it comes to running your business to minimize your risks. Work with knowledgeable professionals, such as an attorney and an IT person to help you in this regard. Stay vigilant!

Source: [sba.gov](http://sba.gov)



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1. Some entities have purchasing goals. Only certified businesses can participate.
2. Certification adds legitimacy to your business. You have gone through a process that has determined that your business is owned and controlled by a minority, woman or disadvantaged business.
3. Certification can afford you loan and bonding opportunities. The State of Ohio has loan and bonding programs specifically for certified minority owned businesses.
4. Certification can be a marketing tool for your business. You can add your certifications to your marketing materials, business cards, website, etc. Many consumers like doing business with veteran, minority or woman owned businesses.
5. Certification can be used in the private sector. Many companies don't have a certifying program but in an effort to have supplier diversity, will accept the certifications from some governmental agencies.



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