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*Advocating, Informing and Promoting Small & Minority Owned Businesses*

Celebrating 9 Years of Publishing

## OhioMBE Awards accepting nominations

The 2018 OhioMBE Awards are accepting nominations for Top MBE, Top FBE and Top Family Business from Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo, Dayton and Akron/Canton.

The OhioMBE Awards will recognize the state's top small businesses and their advocates during a scholarship luncheon on Thursday, October 25 at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium Africa Event Center. The preeminent business networking event is attended by small business owners, bankers, elected officials, construction companies, corporations, government representatives and others.

A portion of proceeds benefit the Frank W. Watson Scholarship. The renewable scholarship is presented to students who are pursuing post-secondary educational or training opportunities. One scholarship is earmarked for a Columbus East High school student-athlete. To date there

*See Awards on page 3*



*"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any"- Alice Walker*

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## Sales Tax-Free Weekend is August 3-5

State Rep. Emilia Sykes (D-Akron) announced Ohio's back-to-school sales tax-free holiday scheduled for this weekend, August 3-5, as a result of the passage of House Bill (HB) 226. The annual event helps lessen the sting of the 4.5 percent statewide sales tax hike passed by lawmakers in the 2013 state budget.



"I am thrilled that families in my district and throughout Ohio will be able to experience a regular sales tax holiday provided in House Bill

226," said Sykes. "The tax free holiday provides some much needed relief for Ohio's families who prepare their children for school each year, or those looking for a tax break while shopping this weekend."

The sales tax holiday was first introduced in 2015 and, according to an analysis conducted by the University of Cincinnati's Economic Center, saved consumers over \$3 million on almost \$47 million worth of back-to-school purchases.

HB 226, which passed earlier this year, declares the annual tax-free weekend for back-to-school items, including clothing, school supplies and instructional materials a permanent holiday and will recur each year during the first weekend in August.

Qualifying items include clothing priced at \$75 or less per article and school supplies and instructional material priced at \$20 or less per item.

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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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## S.B. 213 to create new loan program

S.B. 213 calls for the creation of a Small Business Microloan Revolving program which would give small businesses up to \$2 million per fiscal year with interest rates at or below current market rates. This program would make it easier for businesses to fulfill capitalization requirements and could be used to invest in a larger workforce and improved goods and services.

Minority-Owned businesses have long played an instrumental role in the development of both state and national workforces and economies. In 2016, the top 50 minority businesses in Ohio earned \$1.88 billion and employed roughly 2,000 individuals from across the region. Despite the significant contributions made by hard-working business owners, minority entrepreneurs are still subject to disparities. While African Americans own 9.5% of small businesses in America, they account for

only 1.3% of sales and 1.7% of employment.

S.B. 213 may help address this disparity by easing financial stress and increasing business opportunities for both aspiring and current business owners. The bill is sponsored by state Senator Joseph Schiavoni and supported by multiple members of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, including Senators Charleta Tavares, Sandra Williams, Emilia Sykes, Edna Brown, and Cecil Thomas.

Additionally, S.B. 213 would allow small businesses to enter into or bid for a contract with the state, political subdivisions, or instrumentalities of either without a bonding requirement. The value of the first contract may not exceed \$25,000 and the contractor must participate in and complete a contractor assistance program. This stipulation is especially beneficial for new and young companies that may be deterred from government contracts

*See SB 213 on page 4*

## State MLK Commission seeks nominations for awards

### **Deadline is Sept. 30**

Nominations are being accepted for awards honoring Ohioans who carry on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Awards honoring such individuals and organizations will be given at the 2019 Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration, scheduled for Jan. 17, 2019, at Trinity Episcopal Church in downtown Columbus.

The award ceremony is sponsored by the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission, which is housed within the Equal Opportunity Division of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

Nominations are due to the commission by Sept. 30.

### **The awards and their criteria are as follows:**

#### **Governor's Humanitarian**

**Award:** Nominees must be individuals who act independently of associations and organizations who give their time and service freely to those in need without question and often without recognition. This award seeks to honor those quiet soldiers who promote the welfare of humanity and the elimination of pain and suffering through their own selfless service. Nominees should represent a personal activism that has led to long-term service to the community.

#### **Community Building Award:**

Nominees must be individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions toward building a sense of unity among Ohio citizens. Nominees must have demonstrated the ability to build safer communities through various area revitalization activities and programs. Nominators must demonstrate how the nominee has used Dr. King's vision of nonviolent social change to successfully bring people from diverse backgrounds together to build a better community.

#### **Cultural Awareness**

**Award:** Nominees must demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and evidence skill in building and maintaining harmonious cross-cultural relationships. Nominators should identify specific initia-

*See MLK on page 11*

## We Got The Power

By Ronda Watson Barber

We've got the power! A few weeks ago I went on a girl's trip to New Orleans to attend the Essence Festival. Wow! Black women took over an American city. It was empowering. The trip was inspiring. It was a good time. Black women in all their glory exhibited entrepreneurship talents, flexed their muscles as cultural trendsetters and according to NewsOne, the four-day music festival generated ONE BILLION DOLLARS in revenue to the Crescent City.

One billion dollars is power.

As I reflected on the fun times in NOLA, it reminded me of another time when Black women convened and made a difference. The Million Woman March in Philadelphia was another girl's trip. I attended with my mom, sister, daughter and an "auntie." The MWM was awe-inspiring. I saw Black women of every age, color, class, and size. We were united.

As we stood and listened to the various speakers and artists, a message was repeated over the loud speakers, "Women hold on to your children. You are losing your kids. Women hold on to your children." Kids were getting lost in mass crowd of people. I took the message to mean more than looking after and holding close our children at this particular event, but to continue the practice once we returned to our communities. It began my call to advocacy. I returned home and started a reading program for under-served children.

Black women have power. Our votes and dollars have clout. As the most loyal and dedicated voters in the Democratic Party, we need our agenda and issues in the forefront. We need an agenda that speaks to the issues that positively impact our families and neighborhoods. The 2018 mid-term elections are less than 100 days away. Our support of a candidate and vote can make a difference. Black women have always worked to improve America. Black women have always been at the forefront of social justice movements. Let's turn our buying power and voting prowess into legislation and laws to benefit us.

Just my thoughts...rwb

*Awards from page 1*

are six Frank W. Watson Scholars.

The nomination form is online at [www.OhioMBEAwards.com](http://www.OhioMBEAwards.com)

The deadline for submitting is Sept. 30.

View bid notices online at  
[www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities](http://www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities)

## With Prosperity for All

by Marilyn Brown, Franklin County Commissioner

When people ask me what county government does, my answer is simple. We're there for every resident, and we work the hardest for those who need us the most.

We are proud of the positive impact that Franklin County government offers every resident, every day. County government is often called the "social safety net," and Franklin County does indeed provide residents with essential services to meet their needs.

We are also intentional in investing and partnering with local businesses to help Franklin County prosper. Many of these investments support small and minority businesses because we know how important a thriving, diverse business community is to our social fabric.

We invest in small business development because the success of our region requires that we maximize the talent and passion of our entrepreneurs. We invest in worker training so that local businesses can hire the qualified employees they need to grow. And we invest in moving residents from poverty to self-sufficiency because the future of our community demands that every person have the ability to prosper.

That's why, along with my fellow Commissioners Kevin Boyce and John O'Grady, we have made attacking poverty and shared prosperity our primary focus for 2018. Working together, we can build a future for Franklin County with prosperity for all.

As your Franklin County Commissioner, I remain dedicated to supporting every resident in Franklin County to have opportunities to thrive. I look forward to continuing this work, in collaboration with the small and minorities businesses that make our community strong.

Brown was the recipient of the 2016 OhioMBE Frank W. Watson Advocacy Award.

*Marilyn Brown has been elected as Franklin County Commissioner in 2006, 2010, and 2014, and is up for reelection this November*



# Vote

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



# business advocate

## Tracy Murnane – Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Through his role as the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's Director of Purchasing, Tracy Murnane has been involved in many aspects of supplier diversity for 27 years. As the organization has grown during that time to also now include the Zoombezi Bay waterpark and Safari Golf Club, as well as The



*Columbus Zoo President and CEO Tom Stalf (right) and the Zoo's Director of Purchasing Tracy Murnane (left) accepted the OhioMBE's 2017 Supplier Diversity Award from OhioMBE Publisher Ronda Watson Barber. The Zoo is committed to working with Central Ohio businesses and strengthening our community. Photo provided by HeadShotsColumbus.*

See Advocate on page 11

SB 213 from page 2

by the cost of performance bonds.

Current Ohio Law allows businesses to be given tax credits if it meets payroll, FTE, and expenditure minimums. These minimum requirements are unrealistic for average small business in Ohio to obtain. S.B. 213 seeks to expand these tax credits to smaller business by eliminating employee, expenditure, and payroll minimums. Tax credits of up to \$2,500 will also credited to companies that choose to employ unemployed and disabled veterans. Provisions such as these continue to ease financial difficulties for Ohio businesses while expanding Ohio's workforce, ultimately leading to increased efficiency and profitability for one's company.

Currently, S.B. 213 is being reviewed by the Senate Finance Committee. The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus encourages you to call members of this committee to stress how this bill is important to you and why these provisions are necessary to help grow small business in Ohio. Your input is necessary if minority-business owners are to be addressed, heard, and served at the Statehouse.

*The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus seeks to promote, foster, and sponsor education, civic, and political activities that enrich and improve African American communities across the state of Ohio through the efforts of its members. To find out more about the caucus and its members, visit [ohiolegislativeblackcaucus.org](http://ohiolegislativeblackcaucus.org).*

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# 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>



**COLUMBUS**  
REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

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)



## 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 **THURSDAY, AUGUST 16, 2018** at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud for:

### **JANITORIAL SERVICES AND RELATED WORK at AMHA SERVICE CENTER 1159 EXETER ROAD AKRON, OHIO 44306**

Specifications can be purchased at SE Blueprint, Inc. located at 520 South Main Street, Suite 2411, 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 Service Center, 1159 Exeter Road, Akron, Ohio 44306, on **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2018 at 3:00 P.M.** and again on **FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 2018 at 3:00 P.M.** **This will be the only date and time the building will be open for viewing in order to assess the work.**

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

# ohiombe.com

# bid opportunities

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THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF  
DEVELOPMENT

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

- **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 [twtilton@columbus.gov](mailto:twtilton@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>.

**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**



The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is an association of cities, villages, townships, counties, and regional organizations serving Central Ohio. MORPC has

brought the communities of Central Ohio together to collaborate on a Greenway & Trail Vision for the growing region. The Central Ohio Greenways (COG) Board serves as a formal committee of MORPC's Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC). Board members represent the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The COG Board's focus is to expand the trail system, increase programming, improve branding & marketing, and establish new public, private, and non-profit partnerships. The COG Board's vision is a world-class network of trails easily accessible to every Central Ohioan, and its mission is to increase greenway trail mileage and use of trails for recreation and transportation needs.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES:

In order to efficiently and successfully support the increased demand for trails, the COG Board would like to complete a planning study. The planning study will serve as an actionable blueprint for implementing the COG Board and funding assessments.

## BUDGET:

The anticipated timeline for this project is 16 weeks from the project start date and its total budget cannot exceed \$50,000.

View RFP at [www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities](http://www.OhioMBE.com/bid-opportunities)

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**OhioDiversityNetwork.com**



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# Ohio Diversity Network

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

**Tuesday, August 7, 2018 at 8:30am**  
**[ODOT Professional Matchmaker](#)** - Columbus

**Monday, August 13, 2018 at 7:00pm**  
**[Columbus Branch NAACP – General Membership Meeting](#)** - Columbus

**Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at 11:00am**  
**[ECDI Capital for Construction Program Lunch and Learn Series: Financial Fundamentals](#)** - Columbus

**Thursday, August 16, 2018 at 1:00pm**  
**[OhioMBE Procurement Fair](#)** - Columbus

**Saturday, August 18, 2018 at 2:01am**  
**[Certification 101 at the WBC](#)** - Columbus

**Thursday, August 30, 2018 at 9:15am**  
**[Certification 101 at the Cleveland WBC](#)** - Cleveland



**Hosting a business event?**

**Did you know you can  
post it on  
[OhioDiversityNetwork.com](http://OhioDiversityNetwork.com)**

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

*OhioDiversityNetwork.com is  
sponsored by:*

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**OFFICE OF DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION**



**Making new connections!** Thanks to the City of Columbus Office of Diversity & Inclusion for hosting the July 19 OhioMBE Procurement Fair. Small businesses were able to meet 1-on-1 with Columbus City Schools, CMHA, ODOT, Wesbanco Bank, Franklin County, City of Columbus Dept. of Development, City of Columbus Dept. of Public Utilities and the Columbus Libraries. Visit [www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com](http://www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com) details on upcoming procurement fairs.



# GOT YOUR TICKET?

**Tickets are going fast for the  
August 16 OhioMBE Procurement Fair,  
hosted by the Columbus WBC**

**Meet one-on-one to promote your  
product/service to:**

- **Columbus City Schools**
- **CMHA**
- **City of Columbus Dept. of Development**
- **Elford Construction**
- **Welty Building Company**

**Register at [www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com](http://www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com)**

*Check our social media sites for updates*

## OhioMBE Certification 101 at the WBC

**Create new business opportunities. Get your business certified**

There are several reasons why you should get your business certified:

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.



***Class dates are online at [www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com](http://www.OhioMBE.eventbee.com)***

**Columbus - August 18**

**Cleveland - August 30**

## How to Foster Business Innovation

Business innovation doesn't just happen — it needs the right conditions to thrive. As an office manager, you might be able to help create an environment that encourages creativity and innovative thinking.

A few small changes can help motivate individuals to review old ideas and approach challenges in a different way. Here are a few ideas for helping spark innovation in your workplace:

### Adjust Your Office Setup

Office managers often help design their office spaces. When the opportunity to arrange your workplace arises, keep an eye on encouraging creativity with the new layout. Getting people interacting can help encourage them to bounce thoughts off each other, and having a few quiet areas for deep focus can help occupants work on fleshing out their ideas.

If you're currently using cubicles, suggest breaking some down to allow for a small, open-office concept, and designate small quiet rooms or nooks for staff to escape from the noise. Consider creating a space for impromptu strategy sessions, where teams can hunker down with whiteboards and tear-away presentation sheets to plot new creative endeavors. If you're simply pinched for space, renovating a small breakroom is another option for giving your team a place to both recharge and collaborate on the fly.

### Stock Up on Brainstorming Tools

Sometimes creativity flows best when people have the opportunity to doodle, scrawl random notes, or even play around without thinking directly about work at all.

Distribute old-fashioned tools like sticky notes, markers, presentation pads and white boards so staff can reach for them whenever they want to mind map or jot down ideas. Make sure any brainstorming session has plenty of these items on hand.

And while it may not work for all businesses, you might stock up on games or grownup coloring books for the breakroom — sometimes, getting absorbed in a different activity can help workers return to a problem with a new perspective.

### Invite People in for Inspiration

Bring in outside voices for regular staff lunches or events. Start a series of get-togethers where an expert can come in and talk about new ideas in your industry. Seek out local sources who want to have real conversations, instead of giving canned speeches. Before your guest's arrival, send out an email or post a message about their ideas and contributions, so attendees can have more informed conversations.

Talking about hot topics with a voice from outside your business can jolt people out of their habits — an essential part of encouraging business innovation.

*Save the Date*



October 25, 2018

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Wesbanco Bank  
Waste Management  
Ohio Business Development Center  
The Columbus Zoo & Aquarium

Tickets on sale at  
[www.OhioMBEAwards.com](http://www.OhioMBEAwards.com)

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### Implement Policies to Encourage Creativity

You may also be able to approach management with suggestions for how to incentivize or promote creativity through policies in your workplace. For example, propose a program that recognizes and rewards an employee who makes a suggestion that the company ends up using. Suggest a mentoring program that crosses departmental boundaries, or try having monthly creativity meetings held off-site. You might also make the case for allowing a couple paid days off every year to work on a creative pursuit — even one that has nothing to do with that person's day-to-day job.

Business innovation originates with smart individuals who can see problems in unique ways. But some environments can actually help inspire innovation. By creating the right conditions for creativity, you might be able to shake up your company's way of doing things.

Source: [staples.com](http://staples.com)

tives and accomplishments that foster Dr. King’s vision of unity among people of diverse cultural backgrounds.

**Economic Opportunity**

**Award:** Nominees, which may be individuals, municipalities, businesses or other organizations, must seek to improve the quality of life for citizens in economically challenged areas through economic incentive programs. Nominees must demonstrate accomplishments in one or more of the following areas: workforce training development programs; upgrading skills of existing workforce; infrastructure improvements; creation of community partnerships; housing assistance programs; energy efficiency programs; environmental programs; encouragement of new business startups; ability to take advantage of state and federal aid to provide economic opportunity.

**Educational Excellence**

**Award:** Nominees in this category must have demonstrated a personal commitment to scholarship and/or attainment of educational goals despite significant barriers or obstacles (e.g., learning disability, poverty, etc.). Nominees also must have successfully achieved progress in eradicating systemic barriers that impede the attainment of academic excellence. The activities/programs of the nominees could include mentoring, tutoring, innovative pre-school programs, highly effective pre-college programs or the provision of scholarships, etc. Nominees must show a commitment to Dr. King’s dream of social justice for all

Americans through the provision/use of equal access to the means/resources of learning and the full utilization of educational opportunities.

**Social Justice**

**Award:** Nominees must have made significant contributions to achieving justice for individuals or communities. Nominees have made contributions through the legal, legislative and governmental systems on behalf of society’s more vulnerable populations (e.g., sentencing disparity, red lining, census under counting, voter registration, environmental justice, etc.). The nominees must have participated in activities that embrace Dr. King’s commitment to nonviolence while fostering social justice.

**Youth: Capturing the Vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**Award:** Nominees must be younger than age 21 on Sept. 30, 2018. Nominees must exemplify leadership, nonviolence, commitment to excellence and interracial cooperation as well as demonstrate an adherence to one or more of Dr. King’s Six Principles of Nonviolence: “Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people; the Beloved Community is the framework for the future; attack forces of evil, not persons doing evil; accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal; avoid internal violence of the spirit as well as external physical violence; and, the universe is on the side of justice.”

For more information and a nomination form, visit [das.ohio.gov/mlk](http://das.ohio.gov/mlk) or contact Bobbi Bell-Bartholomew of the DAS Equal Opportunity Division at 614-466-8380 or [mlk@das.ohio.gov](mailto:mlk@das.ohio.gov).

Wilds conservation center located in Cumberland, Ohio, Murnane credits much of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium’s success to the support of the Central Ohio community, including the 2.3 million guests who are welcomed each year to the Zoo alone and, in particular, local entrepreneurs and partners who continue to assist in enhancing the Zoo’s operations and mission to lead and inspire by connecting people to wildlife.

As the Zoo has gained recognition as a regional attraction with a global impact, Murnane has remained a strong advocate for increased supplier diversity and economic inclusion of minority-owned and women-owned businesses well qualified to meet the organization’s many daily professional service needs, ranging from printing and office supplies to construction projects and maintenance of the fleet vehicles used to transport staff and animal ambassadors to outreach programs held within schools and other community venues. While Murnane’s educational background in business strategies has assisted him in the procurement of many of these services, it is the relationships cultivated throughout his career that have resulted in a meaningful impact for the Zoo, such as the strong partnerships shared with Ohio Minority Businesses Enterprises (MBE), including Uzuri Enterprise, ServiceMaster By Demarrt, Orchem Corporation, Shamrock Paving, Inc., and Electronic Systems Consultants. Murnane also points to the leadership of Greg Bell, the Zoo’s Senior Vice President of Finance/CFO, and support provided by The Jones Company of America’s Ray Ayton Jones, a valued Zoo Association member, as guiding forces in the Zoo’s increased commitment to working with additional minority-owned businesses, especially over the last five years. The results of these efforts culminated in the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium being named the recipient of the OhioMBE Supplier Diversity Award in 2017.

“Together, we have been able to grow our supplier diversity program substantially, and with several upcoming projects at the Zoo presenting us with new opportunities to work collectively to help make a positive difference both for wildlife and people, we look forward to continuing to actively seek out new partners by hosting and attending OhioMBE procurement fairs,” says Murnane.

In addition to his work at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Murnane serves on the board of the Ohio WildlifeCenter (OWC).

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