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Advocating, Informing and Promoting Small & Minority Owned Businesses

## City of Columbus Minority Plan Room Open

The City of Columbus Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Department of Development and Department of Finance and Management are partnering with the Ohio Business Development Center to operate a construction plan room.

The City of Columbus Plan Room, which will house the Columbus Enterprise Center, will serve as a central hub for MWBE seeking support with certification, understanding contract guidelines and giving access to training workshops and networking events.

The plan room opened July 1 at 1393 E. Broad St., Room 104.



Upcoming July training sessions include Certification Saturday at OBDC on July 20 and the July 25 OhioMBE Procurement Fair, hosted by the City of Columbus.

“We are thankful to the City of Columbus for providing access to construction documents and trainings for small contractors,” said Ronda Watson Barber, OBDC founder. “The planroom will fill a necessary void. We have received commitments from City of Columbus depts, Columbus City Schools, Columbus Airports and Franklin County to have their construction documents on file for viewing by small businesses.

The planroom will operate Mon-Thursday from noon to 7 pm and Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm.

OBDC’s mission is to provide professional assistance and guidance to small businesses across the State of Ohio.

OBDC has a network of professionals in the areas of legal, accounting, MBE/WBE/DBE certification, marketing, and general business consulting.

OBDC develops and coordinates programming such as webinars, workshops, seminars, and professional consultations.

OBDC has partnered with the City of Columbus, Franklin County, the Women’s Business Center of Ohio, Wesbanco Bank, and OhioMBE to provide economic opportunities and trainings to small businesses.

**Media’s responsibility is to challenge government**

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## Leader Sykes observes Minority Mental Health Month

COLUMBUS— **House Democratic Leader Emilia Strong Sykes (D-Akron)** today recognized Minority Mental Health Month, observed annually in July to raise awareness and promote education regarding mental health conditions that impact Ohio communities.

“Ohioans are suffering every day because of challenges managing mental health issues, and we have a responsibility as lawmakers to help create awareness and highlight disparities that impact our communities,” **said Leader Sykes**. “I encourage you and your family to engage in conversations about mental health so we can begin to break the stigma and create a better and brighter future for everyone.”

It is estimated one in five Americans are affected by mental health conditions each year. However, access to mental health treatment differs among racial and ethnic identity groups, and other minority communities. These disparities point to significant social and structural barriers related to health care.

For more information, resources and opportunities to get involved, visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness’ website <http://bit.ly/2LkcUca>

## BWC announces Safety Innovation Awards

Has your company or organization developed an innovative way to address a workplace safety or health risk? Tell BWC about it and you could win a cash award in their annual Safety Innovation Awards program.

Your innovation can take the form of advanced technology, the creative use of existing equipment, or unique processes and practices you’ve created to reduce the risk of injuries and illnesses in your workplace.

“Ohioans have a rich history of innovation. That same spirit of ingenuity carries over to many employers throughout our state today,” said BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud. “We offer this program to give innovative employers the credit and recognition they deserve for finding new and better ways to protect their workers from injury and illness on the job.”

BWC will announce the winners from a group of finalists at our annual Ohio Safety Congress & Expo, scheduled for March 11-13, 2020, in Columbus. Cash awards range from \$6,000 for first place to \$1,500 for honorable mention.

Visit the Safety Innovation Awards webpage for additional details and to apply online. The application deadline is Sept. 30, 2019.

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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 letters 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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**Prime Day is July 15 & 16**

Shop epic deals at **smile.amazon.com** and Amazon donates.

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You can make a difference while you shop Amazon Prime Day deals on July 15 & 16. Simply shop at [smile.amazon.com/ch/46-3350000](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-3350000) and AmazonSmile donates to Ohio Business Development Center

## Who's American

By Ronda Watson Barber  
OhioMBE publisher

*My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From ev'ry mountainside  
Let freedom ring!*

Racism is alive and well in the United States. We are experiencing, many "I never thought I would hear the president say" moments. Every statement surprisingly gets viler than the one before. How offensive and un-American to tell Black women and women of color to go back where they came from, particularly when it comes from the president, simply because they have opposing views. For the record, the women in the POTUS tweeter attack are American citizens. They are duly elected representatives of their congressional districts. Some of our fellow citizens are working overtime to disenfranchise others. Black folks are American. We expect and want full citizenship. Contrary to what some believe, the Constitution applies to Black folks as well.

The beauty of our country is being able to have an opinion and more importantly the right to freely express it. Forcing others to comply with your values or views isn't freedom, it's slavery. We are as full citizens as anyone else. Our patriotism can't be defined or mandated by others.

As the descendant of slaves (I can go back seven generations of my family being born in this country); the granddaughter/great niece of soldiers who fought in WWII, came home and couldn't vote or eat at a lunch counter, and the mom of an active duty military member, I AM AN AMERICAN CITIZEN. I value my rights and take them seriously! I love my country enough to work to make it a more perfect union that includes calling out BS and injustices.

There is so much going on in our country that we need to lend our voices and support. The fight on. Kids are in cages. Families are being separated. People are being detained in horrible inhumane conditions. Voting rights are being suppressed. There is an attack on womens' healthcare. A small minority is imposing their views and values on the majority. I continue to say our votes and dollars have power.

Just my thoughts...rwb

## NAACP Voter Registration Kickoff

By Brandi Slaughter

Grace and Peace!

As you know, Franklin County has the highest amount of provisional votes in the state. Therefore, the Columbus NAACP Political Action Committee has prioritized voter registration and education with a voter campaign kickoff scheduled for August 10<sup>th</sup>. A majority of these ballots was cast in the black community, and about 17% of those ballots went uncounted. Your Columbus NAACP has set a goal of educating or registering **2,742 people in our community. This number represents the total of those rejected last November.** We are focusing on the areas in our community where there was a high incidence of provisional voting. Please join us from 10-2PM in the parking lot of Trinity Baptist Church located at [461 St. Clair Avenue](#) in Columbus, Ohio.



There is a lot at stake in 2020! The time is now to mobilize our community and support them in becoming engaged civically. We need your help! Below are a couple ways you can support this initiative:

- Pledge to get 10 people registered on your own time (registration forms make be picked up as the general membership meetings held in August and September or you can [access it here](#). Please do let us know when you register people so that we may count your efforts against our collective goal.
- Sign up to volunteer for the Kick-Off Event by clicking here: [volunteersignup.org/FHP84](https://volunteersignup.org/FHP84) Just follow the instructions on the page. It only takes a few seconds to do.
- Forward the attached flyer to friends and family and encourage their participation. Soon we will reach out with sample social media content for your use in amplifying our message.
- Give a tax-deductible contribution to offset expenses related to voter registration and education efforts. There

See Guest on page 11



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Triad Residential Solutions is seeking to fill multiple positions including direct support professionals as well as a full time, salaried Residential Manager for their Toledo area. The Residential Manager will oversee the operations of 5-6 homes with individuals with disabilities.

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[wbejaige@triadresidentialolutions.net](mailto:wbejaige@triadresidentialolutions.net)

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## How to Get the Most From Your Marketing Budget

Are you getting good results from your small business marketing? If your results are falling short of your expectations, perhaps it's because you're not investing enough money in your marketing campaigns. How much money should a small business spend on marketing annually, and how can you make the most of your precious marketing budget? Here's what you need to know.

### How much should a small business spend on marketing?

If you think of marketing spending as eating into your profits, you're thinking the wrong way. Marketing isn't an expense—it's an investment, one that drives your sales. Without marketing you won't reach new potential customers, and that could mean lower sales.

There's no hard and fast answer to how much your marketing budget should be. Many businesses use a percentage of revenues as a guide (if you're a startup, use your projected revenues). But there's a wide range when it comes to what percentage to spend.

Small Business Trends reports that the average business spends 1.08% of its revenues on advertising, with variations from industry to industry. For instance, retailers spend more (about 4%) while restaurants spend 1.93%.

Web Strategies reports average marketing spending in 2018 was 7.9% of revenues, with B2B product companies spending 6.3%, B2B services companies spending 6.9%.

B2C companies spent slightly more on average, with product companies spending 9.6% and B2C services companies spending 11.8%.

In general, B2C companies need to budget

more for marketing than B2B companies. You'll also need to budget more for marketing when your business is just starting out, because you're still trying to build awareness of your brand and attract customers. Once your business is established, you can reduce your marketing budget because you will have a steady customer base. However, that doesn't mean you can stop marketing—you'll still need to invest in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones.

Because marketing budgets can vary so widely, it's a good idea to contact your industry trade association or read industry trade publications to see if they offer any benchmarks for setting a budget.

Keep in mind that marketing can easily lead to a chicken-and-egg situation—your sales are dropping, so you cut your marketing budget, leading your sales to decline even further. If you see sales slowing, it might be

# 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.

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

The Department of Development has contracting opportunities in the below areas. Please reach out for more information and bidding requirements.

DEPARTMENT OF  
DEVELOPMENT

- Graffiti Removal and Arborist Services. 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 [mifarrenkopf@columbus.gov](mailto:mifarrenkopf@columbus.gov)) or Seth Brehm (614-645-5659 or [swhbrehm@columbus.gov](mailto:swhbrehm@columbus.gov)).
- Property Maintenance and Miscellaneous Services in November 2019. Contact Audrea Hickman (614-645-8907 or [ahickman@columbus.gov](mailto:ahickman@columbus.gov)).
- Construction trades including: General Construction, Home Improvement, Electrical, HVAC, and Plumbing. Contact Tim Tilton (614- 724-3009 or [twilton@columbus.gov](mailto:twilton@columbus.gov)).
- Lead abatement. 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>.

## Get Bid Notices Delivered to your inbox

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3. Add your email address
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INDUSTRIAL



“Attention City of Akron Local EDGE/MBE/SBE/VBE/WBE”

Kokosing Industrial, Inc. is preparing bids for the WRF Headworks Improvements project in Akron, Ohio which bids August 1, 2019. 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: Video Documentation, Temporary Erosion and Sedimentation Control, Demolition, Asbestos Abatement, Concrete Reinforcing, Precast Hollow Core Planks, Masonry, Misc. Metals, Building Insulation, Roofing, Overhead Doors, Painting, Signage, Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical, Instrumentation & Controls, Clearing, Auger Cast Piles, Fencing, Landscaping, Asphalt Paving, and Aggregate Trucking. Bidding documents can be examined online by emailing Sonja Nichols at [snichols@kokosing.biz](mailto:snichols@kokosing.biz) for the link. Please have your quote to Steve Ehret by 12:00 PM July 31, 2019: e-mail [snichols@kokosing.biz](mailto:snichols@kokosing.biz) or Fax 614-212-5711.

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# bid opportunities

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority is requesting proposals from professional architectural & engineering firms to Provide Interior Survey & Design Services and Related Work at the AMHA Administration Building, 100 West Cedar Street, Akron, Ohio 44307.

A pre-proposal conference will be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. at 100 West Cedar Street, Akron, Ohio 44307.

Those interested in submitting a proposal for the aforementioned work may obtain the instructions/information package by contacting SE Blueprint, 520 South Main Street, Suite 2411, Akron, Ohio 44311. (330) 376-1689 [akron@seblueprint.com](mailto:akron@seblueprint.com)

Proposals, to be considered, must be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the RFP and received by AMHA no later than 4:00 p.m. (local time) on Wednesday, July 31, 2019.

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority  
Brian M. Gage  
Executive Director

# Looking for bid notices?

# WE GOT BIDS!



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Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

## 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)

## 5 Ways A Virtual Assistant Can Make You More Productive

A virtual assistant is an employee who supports various business operations from a remote location. Startups can use VAs to help with inbox management, social media content, online customer support, and basically any task that doesn't require them to show up in person.

Some VAs specialize in a specific task or industry. For example, there are VAs that focus specifically on marketing, and others that work only in the tech industry. More specialized VAs often cost a bit more since they offer a more focused skillset. However, there are also general VAs who can handle a variety of tasks and work with businesses in a wide array of industries.

Virtual assistants have been around since the 1980's, when organizations like ABSSI and Home Secretaries popped up to support moms looking for work-from-home jobs. However, the niche really took off when home internet usage became more ubiquitous around the world.

And it's still growing today. In fact, Gartner, Inc. predicts that about a quarter of digital workers will use a VA on a daily basis by 2021. If your small business has yet to jump into this growing trend, here are some of the main reasons why it may be time to reconsider.

### They Put Processes in Place

Inefficiencies cost businesses between 20 and 30 percent of their revenue each year. Often, these inefficiencies are a result of not having processes in place. Processes can be anything from canned responses in Gmail to automated invoicing.

Many business owners don't take the time to set up these processes because they're so busy working on their day-to-day operations. Hiring a VA gives you a way to set up these processes without having to focus on them yourself. Give your VA a list of processes you'd like to set up or hire someone with experience setting up business processes so they can identify inefficiencies on their own. This can actually make your business more efficient even when your VA isn't on the clock.

### They Filter Communication

Not all of the emails, calls or live chat messages you receive are necessarily worth responding to. And some can simply receive a canned response or quick reply that doesn't require your personal attention.

By hiring a VA to manage your inbox or other methods of communication, they can filter those messages that don't require a thoughtful response. This allows you to really focus on those other messages, rather than constantly being overwhelmed with an overflowing inbox.

### They Capture and Organize Data

Today's businesses have access to more data than ever. Your data is essential for helping you make decisions about the future of your business. But too much of it can be overwhelming and distracting.

See VA on page 10

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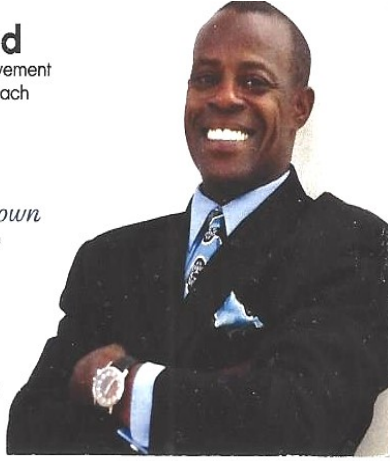
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# Ohio Diversity Network

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

Friday, July 19, 2019 at 8:15am  
Coffee & Conversations with the County  
Columbus

Saturday, July 20, 2019 at 10:30am  
Certification Saturday at the Columbus Enterprise Center  
Columbus

Thursday, July 25, 2019 at 1:00pm  
OhioMBE Procurement Fair  
Columbus

Friday, August 2, 2019 at 10:00am  
Franklin County First-Step  
Columbus

Saturday, August 10, 2019 at 10:00am  
Columbus NAACP Voter Registration Kick-Off  
Columbus



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  
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OFFICE OF DIVERSITY  
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## FRANKLIN COUNTY FIRSTSTEP

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- *Veterans Service Commission*
- *Legal Aid Society of Columbus*



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get information about:

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- Legal • Expungement •
  - Public Transportation •
- Health • Education •
- Parenting and Families •
- Voting • Mentoring •
- Public Benefits • and more! •



Columbus-  
Franklin County



Ohio

Department of  
Rehabilitation & Correction

# Why you should 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 your 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 a 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.



Attend a class and learn how to get your business certified. Visit [912group.eventbrite.com](http://912group.eventbrite.com) for the upcoming class schedule. For more information on certification, call 614.522.9122 or attend a certification class.

*VA from page 7*

Additionally, collecting and organizing all of your data can be quite an undertaking. You can have your VA go over all of your web analytics and customer data to organize it and share it with you in digestible reports or updates. This allows you to more quickly access the information that's pertinent to your business at a particular moment, without having to pour over all the minute details for hours on end.

### **They Complete Tedious Daily Tasks**

Things like data entry and Internet research tend to be fairly time-consuming and don't necessarily require attention from a high-level team member. But they're still essential for your business. By giving these tasks to a VA, you can feel confident about the completion of those important items without taking significant time from your own day, while saving managers and specialized employees from focusing on them.

### **They Let You Focus on What You Do Best**

Most entrepreneurs have a specialty. Maybe you develop software products or help other businesses develop marketing plans. But when you start a business, you also have to handle support tasks like bookkeeping and marketing. If you're not good at these things, you may end up wasting a ton of time learning the ins and outs or struggling through trial and error.

Hiring a specialized VA allows you to outsource the items with which you struggle. You can trust that the tasks will be handled competently — maybe even better than you would have on your own. And it frees up a ton of your time to focus on things that you're actually good at. It also gives you a better opportunity to work on growing your business, rather than getting stuck in the day-to-day operations. This can be especially helpful for solopreneurs or very small businesses where the owner needs to wear many hats at once.

*Source: sba.gov*

*Marketing from page 4*

the right time to increase your marketing—particularly if it's a slow economy and other businesses are cutting back on their marketing.

### **How can I maximize my marketing budget?**

Once you've set your marketing budget, plan the most effective way to use it. If you've been in business a while, focus your marketing efforts on the ones that have gotten the best results in the past. This enables you to fine-tune your marketing and phase out ineffective campaigns.

Including a mix of marketing methods also helps maximize results. Don't put all your eggs in one marketing basket! Good marketing plans build brand awareness by promoting the business in all the arenas where you find your target customer.

Some marketing methods are costlier than others. Tactics such as word-of-mouth, social media marketing and volunteering at community events are all virtually free ways to get your business in front of the public. If your

marketing budget is tight, ramping up the low-cost or free methods and being very selective about the more expensive methods you use can help you make the most of it.

### **Monitor your Results**

Whether your business is a startup or you've been around a while, tracking the results of your marketing is key to getting the best return on investment. Tracking can be as simple as reminding your employees to ask new customers where they learned about your business. If you're doing print, direct mail, TV or radio advertising, you can use different codes for each ad to track which ones attract the most customers.

There are also a wide range of tech tools available to help you monitor the effectiveness of your marketing. For example, email marketing apps, social media apps and online advertising all offer analytics tools you can use to see which of your marketing messages are getting the best results.

*See Marketing on page 11*



**THIS CONFERENCE WILL INCLUDE:**

- Business best practices from nationally recognized leaders
- Learn how to do business with the City of Columbus and private-sector entities
- How to become a certified small business enterprise
- Business expo featuring local and statewide organizations

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

- Ohio certified and uncertified business owners
- Aspiring entrepreneurs
- Small, minority and women-owned business enterprises
- Procurement officers from public and private sectors
- Diversity professionals



**ANDREW J. GINTHER**  
Mayor  
City of Columbus



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Marketing from page 10

By taking advantage of all the tools available to you, monitoring your results and learning to see marketing as an investment, not an expense, you'll get better results from your marketing budget.

Source: sba.gov

Guest from page 3

is no amount too small. Please contact me directly to make a contribution.

We are hopeful for your participation. Thank you so much for your support. If

you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [\(614\) 940-4248](tel:6149404248).

Best wishes in all that you do to address the needs of our community.

Brandi Slaughter, PAC Chair  
Columbus NAACP



**Save the Date!**  
**July 25**

**Make new contracting connections**

City of Columbus  
 Columbus Regional Airport Authority  
 Elford Construction  
 Franklin County  
 State of Ohio

[912group.eventbrite.com](http://912group.eventbrite.com)

**NEED MBE, DBE, FBE OR EDGE?**

**ATTEND CERTIFICATION SATURDAY AT COLUMBUS ENTERPRISE CENTER**

**JULY 20 10:30AM TO NOON**

The City of Columbus MWBE Certification will be required to participate in the new Crew Stadium project.

[HTTP://912GROUP.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://912group.eventbrite.com)

GET CERTIFIED

**1 to 4 pm**  
**1393 E. Broad Street**

**Registration is REQUIRED**

Organizations confirm their participation daily. Check our social media sites for updates.

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Recognizing Ohio's Top MBEs, FBEs, Family Businesses & their advocates

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