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### **Answering Good Faith Effort Phone Calls**

By Leslie Ann McMillan

What do you do when someone calls on behalf of a prime contractor bidding or already working on a big public project? I've personally made many thousands of those outreach calls during the past several years, and I'd like to share a few thoughts and examples with you.

If your small business is certified diversityowned, you've probably received emails, faxes, ads, letters, or phone calls about specific agency projects that require the participation of eligible small business contractors, suppliers, or service providers. This might happen rarely or much more frequently than you ever imagined possible when you first certified your MWBE or SDVOB or DBE or SBE or other disadvantaged business.

You might receive an emailed or faxed bid invitation from a prime contractor, then one or more follow-up phone calls to see if you've gotten the information and are interested in bidding. This is all part of the careful good faith effort process to assure greater government contract participation

by small businesses owned by minorities, women, or disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Let me first give you a cringeworthy, real-life, unforgettable example of what not to do when you receive a follow-up outreach call. If only they had realized then what I'm sharing now . .

Our company, Small Business Exchange, has been providing outreach services since 1984 on behalf of small and large clients from coast to coast. In the spring of 2018, we were contacting eligible small businesses to invite them to a meeting and networking event hosted by the prime contractors that had recently won the contract to construct the huge new venue for a major professional sports team. During the actual several days that we were phoning, the team was in the playoffs and about to win its third national championship in four years. How exciting! Many small business people were happy about the opportunity and made the extra effort to attend the event, meet the contractors, and perhaps prepare to bid. But one lost opportunity is so memorable as an example *not* to imitate.

As always, we were phoning small businesses that had been selected from specialized databases



because their certified business descriptions matched the specific kinds of goals and trades that were needed for that part of the huge project. They had already received meeting invitations, and we were calling to see if they were planning to attend. Our

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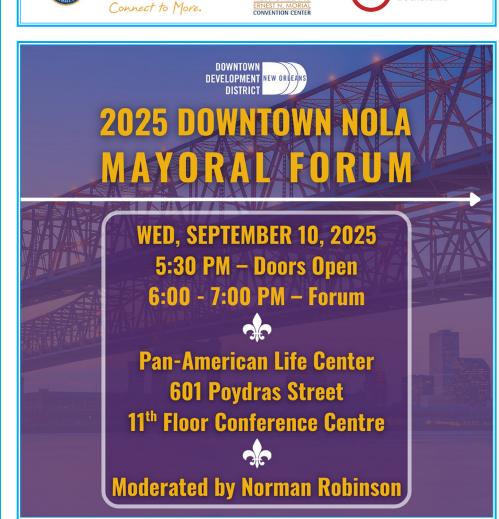
### Construction Tailored for general contractors and trade services. + SERVICES Learn from Frank Johnson, Director, Contractor's Resource Center, Urban League of Louisiana, and Courtney Elzey, Principal, MCDS, LLC. Bring a laptop and your capabilities statement. Friday, August 22 @ 9:30 am - 12:00 pm Meeting Room 267 | Free Parking in Lot F FREE WORKSHOP - REGISTER NOW! Space is limited. Hosted by LaToya Martin, Manager, Small and Emerging Business Program

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8(a) Orientation and SAM Registration Webinar Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 9:30 am-11:00 am CDT Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration

Contact: SBA Illinois District Office, 312-353-4528, illinois.do@sba.gov Fee: Free; registration required

Join the Small Business Administration (SBA) Illinois District Office for a virtual workshop providing an overview of the 8(a) Business

Development program, eligibility requirements, and program benefits. Also learn how to increase your potential for federal contract opportunities through System for Award Management (SAM) registration, including information that you need for the registration process. SBA presenters will offer addional tips, address FAQs, give directions on where to get further assistance, and answer your other questions. For this and other events, one goal is to better address the needs of attending current and soon-to-be business owners. To register for this free webinar, visit https://www.sba.gov/event/65188 Selling to the Federal Government Webinar Thursday, August 28, 2025, 12:00 pm-3:00 pm CDT Online

Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration Contact: George Tapia, 610-382-3086, george.tapia@sba.gov

Did you know that the federal government is the

Fee: Free; registration required

government? Register online at https://www. eventbrite.com/e/how-to-sell-to-the-federalgovernment-tickets-21790713611 SBA helps to ensure small businesses get fair opportunities to share federal government prime contracts. Topics will include: How to Register, Small Business Certifications, Finding Opportunities, Marketing Your Firm, Federal Supply Schedules, Getting Paid, Tips to Prepare Your Offer, How to Seek Additional Assistance. All training sessions are held via Microsoft Teams Meeting. Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small

world? Interested in learning how your business can market your services or goods to the federal

**Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar** Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm CDT Online Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration Contact: Patrice Dozier, patrice.dozier@sba.gov

Fee: Free; registration required SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification!

Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register at https://www.eventbrite. com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosbcertification-program-tickets-1123668515779 **CERTIFICATION** 

### is **DBE certified** by the Louisiana UCP.

Small Business Exchange, Inc.





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