

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 3, 2023

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Lt. Gov. Austin Davis Visits Department of General Services, Highlights Shapiro-Davis Administration's Commitment to Creating Opportunities for Small and Minority-Owned Businesses to Grow and Thrive

Harrisburg, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis visited the Pennsylvania Department of General Services today and met with team members from the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities, which is responsible for improving small business and small diverse business access to Commonwealth contracting opportunities.

“The global pandemic took a toll on Pennsylvania’s economy, and our small businesses and minority-owned businesses, in particular, were hit the hardest,” said Lt. Gov. Davis. “Minority-owned businesses are three times more likely to be denied a loan and pay a higher interest rate. Still, these businesses have continued to thrive, despite a historical lack of support from the government. That changes under the Shapiro-Davis administration. We are committed to providing opportunities and support for small businesses that have previously been shut out from state contracts and investment.”

The Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO) advocates and identifies contracting opportunities for small businesses, veteran business enterprises and small diverse businesses. Their mission is to engage actively, equitably and successfully small, diverse and veteran businesses in the Commonwealth’s public procurement system to fuel Pennsylvania’s economy.

The recent 2021-22 fiscal year was record-breaking with nearly \$1 billion in state contracting payments funneled to small businesses. Over the past seven years, growth in the number of registered small business participants increased 34%, growth in small diverse business participants jumped 37% and veteran-owned business participants grew 48%.

“The strength of our economy is directly tied to the success of our small-, diverse- and veteran-business communities,” said DGS Acting Secretary Reggie McNeil, who is a Navy veteran and the first African American to ever hold this cabinet position. “The Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities is dedicated to ensuring that the Commonwealth removes barriers affecting small businesses – who are the lifeblood of our economy – as they pursue financial success, growth, independence and economic development opportunities.”

The economic impact of BDISBO is a remarkable success for the Commonwealth and the verified businesses registered with the Bureau’s programs. In fiscal year 2021-22, businesses registered under BDISBO created 10,000 new jobs, generated \$140 million in federal tax revenue and \$76 million in state and local tax revenue.



Lt. Gov. Austin Davis and DGS Acting Secretary Reggie McNeil



Lt. Gov. Austin Davis, DGS Acting Secretary Reggie McNeil, DGS Deputy Secretary for Diversity, Inclusion & Small Business Opportunities Kerry Kirkland and BDISBO team members

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