



# DIVERSITY BUSINESS NEWSLETTER



Diversity Business Newsletter | <http://odeo.ri.gov/> | Quarterly: Issue # 1, Jan-March, 2017  
RI Department of Administration | Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity (ODEO)

## How to Get Certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Women Business Enterprise (WBE), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)



Having a minority-owned business certification can help you tap into a multitude of public and private sector programs. Furthermore, it is a marketing tool you can use to enhance your ability to do business in public markets. The Office of Diversity Equity & Opportunity (ODEO) offers a free gender and race-based certification for small businesses. The certification process does not require legal, financial or other paid professional assistance.

### How to apply:

Contact Dorinda L. Keene, Assistant Administrator-MBE at (401) 574-8670 or by e-mail at: [dorinda.keene@doa.ri.gov](mailto:dorinda.keene@doa.ri.gov) For additional instructions and any further questions, visit our website: <http://odeo.ri.gov/>



## ON THE UPSIDE



***“It’s true, there are a lot of reasons not to start your business. But for the right person, the advantages of business ownership far outweigh the risks...”***

*Source: Small Business Administration (SBA)*

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## Qualifying as a Small Business



The "small business" distinction is important if you wish to register for government contracting as a small business. To be a small business, you must adhere to industry size standards established by the U.S. Small Business Administration. (SBA). When you

register as a government contractor in the System for Award Management (SAM), you will also self-certify your business as a small business.

The SBA, for most industries, defines a "small business" either in terms of the **average number of employees** over the past 12 months, or **average annual receipts** over the past three years. In addition, SBA defines a U.S. small business as a business that:

- Is organized for profit
- Has a place of business in the United States
- Operates primarily within the United States or makes a significant contribution to the national economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor
- Is independently owned and operated
- Is not dominant in its field on a national scale

The business may be a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or any other legal form. In determining what constitutes a small business, the definition will vary to reflect industry differences, such as size standards.

### Size Standards

Because all federal agencies must use SBA size standards for contracts identified as small business, you need to select the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes that best describe your business and then determine if the business meets size standards for the selected NAICS codes. Use our Size Standards Tool (<https://www.sba.gov/contracting/getting-started-contractor/make-sure-you-meet-sba-size-standards>) to find out if you qualify as a small business. If you qualify you can register as a government contractor.

## ENTREPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

February is

Black History Month

African-American Entrepreneur,  
Abolitionist, and Philanthropist  
Christiana Carteaux Bannister



1822—1903

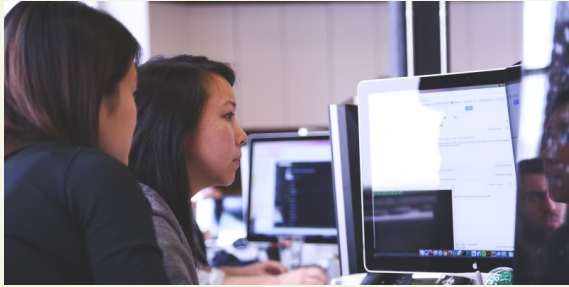
Inducted in 2003 to the  
RI Heritage Hall of Fame

“Born in Rhode Island circa 1820, Christiana Carteaux Bannister became a successful hair salon owner by the 1850s. She and her husband were involved in the abolitionist movement, and supported the formation of the famed all-black 54th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War. Bannister spent her final years in Rhode Island, where she raised funds for Civil War widows and the foundation of an African-American retirement home, before her death in 1902”

See. <http://www.biography.com/people/christiana-carteaux-bannister-020216>.

*“Let’s honor and celebrate  
the achievements of African-  
American Entrepreneurs during  
the celebration of  
Black History Month”*

## What is the Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office?



The Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office (MBECO) promotes the development of certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs). It does this by facilitating their participation in Rhode Island's businesses and economic development opportunities, specifically, MBECO services in certification, enforcement, business assistance and advocacy. Certification is a marketing tool, used to enhance your ability to do business in public markets. Where an agency has affirmative purchasing goals, certification increases your chances of receiving a contract.

Certification does not guarantee that you will be successful each and every time you bid, but it may add a competitive edge to your bid. MBECO works extensively with state and local agencies to help them fulfill their business purchasing goals. MBECO actively promotes the participation of certified businesses in public and private purchasing and contracting programs. For more information on Rhode Island's procurement system, contact [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

The Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office offers many services designed to meet the needs of the Minority (MBE), Women-Owned (WBE) and Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) business communities, and also assists with new legislative and policy proposals that facilitate the involvement of minorities and women in the mainstream economy.

Our goals include increasing the number of MBE, WBE and DBE firms available for contract competition; fostering relationships between MBE, WBE and DBE firms with state agencies, quasi-state agencies, purchasing agents and prime vendors; providing opportunities for growth and development of MBE, WBE, and DBE firms; and ensuring compliance with the participation of MBE, WBE and DBE firms on all state procurement activities.

## What is the Supplier Diversity Office?



The Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) is a newly created program at the RI Department of Administration's Office of Diversity, Equity & Opportunity (ODEO), established to give MBE/WBE/DBE firms in the State of Rhode Island an opportunity to secure contracts with government agencies as MBEs, WBEs and DBEs suppliers.

Our goal is to assist the Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office to increase the number of businesses certified and to ensure that all businesses including diverse and small businesses, have an opportunity to participate in our state's procurement activities.



The Supplier Diversity Office also works in collaboration with the Minority Business Enterprise Compliance Office to host pre-certification workshops, educate individuals/groups on the MBE, WBE and DBE programs, and provide technical assistance and advocacy. These workshops will be offered in our facility and throughout the state at local community-based organizations and other appropriate venues. When necessary, these workshops will also be scheduled to take place during evening hours and weekends.

Our office will work assiduously to assist program participants in targeting their supplier diversity efforts, as well as to ensure that MBE, WBE and DBE enterprises are given a fair and equal opportunity to bid on, win and be awarded state contracts.

## Raimondo Announces Goal to Help Level the Playing Field for Minority-Owned Businesses

**Puts Plan in Motion to Double MBE Utilization Rate for State Contracts by 2020**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - On January 5, 2017 Governor Gina M. Raimondo announced a new performance goal to level the playing field and expand economic opportunity for all Rhode Islanders by doubling the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE/Disability-Owned BE) utilization rate for state contracts to 12 percent by the year 2020.



*State of Rhode Island Governor Gina M. Raimondo signing the two executive orders creating a Diversity in Construction Working Group, which will review laws, regulations, rules, policies and practices that impact minority, women, and disability business enterprises, and an Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity (ODEO) Advisory Council to serve as a sounding board on new policies, initiatives, and structural changes being proposed.*

### What They Are Saying...



*Heroica Construction President Jhonny Leyva, a RI certified MBE/DBE, was invited to speak at the event.*

"As the Latino owner of a family construction business, I am proud and honored to join the Governor in today's announcement," Heroica Construction President Jhonny Leyva said. "Today, the Governor is standing up to say businesses like ours deserve a fair shot."

"Rhode Island can only grow if we support a vibrant small business community," Urban Ventures Executive Director Jr. Neville Songwe said. "Successful enterprises can come from all kinds of backgrounds given the right support. Urban Ventures is thankful to Governor Raimondo for working to expand opportunities for community businesses to make their mark on Rhode Island's economy."



The Diversity Business Newsletter is a quarterly English-Spanish publication of the RI Department of Administration | Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity (ODEO).

#### Contact Us

One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908

(401) 574-8253

[Elvys.ruiz@doa.ri.gov](mailto:Elvys.ruiz@doa.ri.gov)

Visit us on the web at

<http://odeo.ri.gov/>

#### Credits:

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