



Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Implementation Plan

March 31, 2023

The Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) has prepared the Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Implementation Plan, which documents DOAS's key activities to successfully fulfill the nine recommendations published in the Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Report dated October 31, 2022, as directed by Governor Brian P. Kemp's Executive Order 07.13.22.01. Through the implementation of these nine recommendations, DOAS seeks to make the state procurement process easier to access for small businesses by taking positive action to address common challenges faced by the small business community.

With a focus on minority, woman, and veteran-owned businesses, DOAS's Small Business and Supplier Diversity Manager is leading efforts to support small and diverse businesses and further strengthen Georgia's growing economy. In this plan, DOAS outlines key activities and related timeframes to complete the following nine recommendations:

- designate small business liaisons at each state entity, college, and university subject to DOAS procurement authority;
- expand the minority business enterprise certification program;
- pilot an informal bidding process;
- revise state bidding and contracting requirements for certain projects;
- improve the promotion of the DOAS State Purchasing Division's procurement systems training;
- expand matchmaking opportunities for small businesses;
- increase outreach, training, and additional support to small businesses;
- expand business-to-business mentorship opportunities for small businesses; and,
- facilitate information sharing on access to capital resources.

These nine recommendations address the three primary challenges to participation in the state procurement process that were shared in response to DOAS's outreach to small businesses: (1) satisfying state requirements, (2) bid opportunity identification, and (3) readiness to bid.

DOAS's efforts are underway, with significant progress in implementing the first recommendation to designate small business liaisons at each state entity. The following actions have been completed:

- An informational session with agency/college procurement officers (APOs/CUPOs) was conducted in November 2022.
- An informational session with agency heads was conducted in January 2023.
- An informational letter was sent to agency heads and APOs/CUPOs in January 2023.
- Official announcement to update the Georgia Procurement Manual with small business liaison role was released in January 2023.
- Survey to agencies for liaison selection was distributed in January 2023.

- Small business liaison designations were submitted via an online survey by state entities in February 2023.
- A virtual training session for newly designated small business liaisons was conducted on March 22, 2023.
- An informational reference guide for small business liaisons was developed and will be shared with liaisons for input.

Additional progress will be shared through DOAS's quarterly report publication, with the initial progress report to be released after the end of the state fiscal year 2023. DOAS looks forward to working alongside our many dedicated partners, as well as the small business community, to effect positive change in the state procurement process.



Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative *Implementation Plan*

Implementation Plan

Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Recommendations

Introduction:

- The Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS), a state enterprise agency with statutory duty to administer the state of Georgia's procurement process, was directed by Governor Brian P. Kemp through [Executive Order 07.13.22.01](#) to develop and issue a report that identifies challenges and offers specific recommendations which will assist in making the state's procurement process more accessible to small businesses.
- The Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Report was published on October 31, 2022, and can be accessed on the DOAS [website](#).
- The report detailed nine (9) recommendations presented in this implementation plan, along with estimated timelines to address the three (3) primary obstacles faced by small and diverse businesses: satisfying state requirements, bid opportunity identification, and readiness to bid.
- Implementing recommendations identified in the Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Report, along with increased engagement and outreach to small businesses, with a focus on minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses, underscores Governor Brian P. Kemp's commitment to supporting all small businesses seeking to do business with the state.
- Governor Kemp's Executive Order represents an important opportunity for DOAS to educate and connect small businesses with state of Georgia procurement opportunities, and in doing so, helps to create jobs and grow Georgia's economy. Small businesses drive Georgia's economy, employing 1.7 million Georgians. When small businesses thrive, Georgia wins.
- This publication presents DOAS's implementation plan for the recommendations identified in the report and demonstrates the state's commitment to engaging and facilitating relationship-building with Georgia's small businesses community, with a focus on minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.
- For this initiative, DOAS's key stakeholders include the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD), the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center Multicultural Business Division (UGA SBDC MBD), Georgia Chamber of Commerce, various local chambers of commerce, certifying bodies, small business development organizations, state of Georgia governmental entities, federal governmental entities, non-profit organizations, and the small and diverse business community.

The Charge:

Executive Order 07.13.22.01 charged DOAS with the following responsibilities:

- Creating the position of Small Business and Supplier Diversity Manager to facilitate communications and engagement with small businesses;
- Holding regular meetings with small business community stakeholders and small business development partners, including chambers of commerce, to better understand small businesses' needs;
- Increasing outreach efforts, including supplier education and training, to the small business community, focusing on minority-owned, woman-owned, and veteran-owned businesses;
- Identifying challenges faced by small businesses and obstacles to participating in the state procurement process;
- Collaborating with GDEcD and other small business development partners, such as the UGA SBDC MCB, to hold these meetings and increase active outreach efforts to the small business community; and
- By October 31, 2022, issue a report which provides specific recommendations to implement, which will assist in making the state's procurement process more easily accessible to small businesses.

In response to the Executive Order, DOAS collected input from the small business community in a variety of ways. The Small Business and Supplier Diversity Manager led DOAS's efforts to meet with key partners, including GDEcD, UGA SBDC MCB, and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. These partners planned engagement opportunities with the small business community. Through partnerships with multiple chambers of commerce, small business development partners, and other community stakeholders, DOAS participated in more than twenty (20) events across the state, including outreach and training sessions, networking events, and leadership meetings. Through these outreach activities, DOAS shared information about the Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative and opportunities to conduct business with state government entities. Most importantly, DOAS sought input from small business representatives and other stakeholders on the challenges they face with the state's procurement process. Additionally, DOAS sought small business input on resources they considered beneficial for readiness to bid. As part of its outreach efforts, DOAS met with several private corporations with successful supplier diversity programs. DOAS continues its ongoing supplier outreach efforts with more than 20 additional events completed since October 2022.

In addition to outreach activities, DOAS released an online survey on September 8, 2022, and collected feedback from small and diverse businesses through December 31, 2022. Over 600 business representatives submitted responses to the online survey. In addition to the input DOAS received during outreach activities, DOAS analyzed the survey feedback received from the supplier community, which informed the recommendations presented in the Small Business and Supplier Diversity Initiative Report. The report (linked above on page 2) includes an in-depth analysis of the supplier community survey feedback.

The following implementation plan presents DOAS's execution strategies and estimated timelines for the recommendations. Each recommendation includes multiple proposed strategies, some of which may take significant time to implement and others which require assistance and buy-in from key partners or may have dependencies on other DOAS initiatives. As such, the timelines reflected in this implementation plan are based on current assumptions and may warrant adjustment as DOAS works through implementation efforts. DOAS will issue quarterly updates to the website on the progress of the initiative, including any necessary updates to timelines.

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
I	Recommendation: Designate small business liaisons at each state entity, college, and university subject to DOAS's procurement authority.		
	Q4, 2022 (October - December 2022)	Q4, 2023 (December 31, 2023) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish new small business liaison roles and duties in consultation with the agency procurement officers (APOs) and college/university procurement officers (CUPOs) and formally adopt through an update to the Georgia Procurement Manual. • Prepare a 'How To' guide for the state of Georgia small business liaisons. • Identify and train designated liaisons on roles, duties, and key informational resources. • Promote liaisons to the supplier community and partner organizations through the DOAS website, marketing/communication campaign, and training sessions. • Conduct recurring quarterly workshops with small business liaisons to discuss the implementation of recommendations, challenges faced, success stories and new ideas. • Engage small business liaisons to participate in quarterly outreach/roadshows and training activities with key partners such as GDEcD and the SBDCs for corresponding geographic locations. • Create networking opportunities for small business liaisons to connect with small businesses through DOAS-hosted events, such as the Georgia Procurement Conference (GPC) 2023 Supplier Expo, featuring distinguishing "ribbons" for attending liaisons and small business "flags" for attending small businesses to easily connect. • Promote collaboration amongst small business liaisons and key local community partners such as the Georgia Chamber of Commerce through various outreach events. • Cultivate information sharing amongst small business liaisons on right-sized projects for small businesses and success stories. • Identify technical assistance or other resource needs to empower small business liaisons and support assigned duties. • Continue collaboration and partnership with designated liaisons.

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2	Recommendation: *Expand the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification program. *Implementation timeline is dependent on the enactment of HB 128 and support from certifying organizations.		
	Q4, 2022 (October - December 2022)	* Q4, 2024 (December 31, 2024) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Expand eligible business certifications to include additional minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses to be effective January 1, 2024. • Increase promotion of existing MBE certification program (and new Business Certification program if passed into law) through training and marketing activities, including collaboration with the Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council (GMSDC) and other certification organizations. • Develop branding for the state of Georgia Small Business Certification program, inclusive of minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses. • Review and refresh the current list of MBE certifications for accuracy and establish an annual review process. • Explore technical solutions to support the expanded business certification program, improve the user experience, and increase functionality. • Connect with other states to discuss best practices and identify new innovations to promote diverse businesses' access to the state of Georgia's procurement process. • Develop policy and processes for expanded business certification consistent with Georgia law and incorporate stakeholder feedback. • Research and identify organizations certifying businesses for acceptance in the state's streamlined certifying process. • Assess estimated business participation and the need to augment state staff to support. • Create a searchable, public database of certified businesses and promote access to government purchasing staff, prime contractors, and the public. • Hold quarterly informational sessions with prime contractors and MBE-certified companies. • Develop a reciprocity framework between the state of Georgia and other certifying bodies, such as GMSDC, for the certification program. • In consultation with the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR), develop an annual report template for submission of a list of certified businesses, with the first submission due by December 31, 2024, and recurring annually.

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3	Recommendation: Pilot an informal bidding process.		
	Q3, 2023 (July - September 2023)	Q3, 2025 (July - September 2025) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines for eligible projects in conjunction with DOAS legal, APO/CUPO community, and small business liaisons focusing on ‘right-sized’ projects. • Assess available technology tools and establish the informal bidding process and tracking. • Invite the current list of Team Georgia Marketplace™ (TGM) registered suppliers to access the supplier portal and update supplier information and business status to improve data accuracy and enhance buyers’ ability to identify small and diverse businesses. • Conduct supplier registration clean-up to remove inactive accounts. • Collaborate with small business liaisons to develop strategies to identify small and diverse businesses within the local community. • Select pilot entities, conduct training, and roll out an informal bidding process for a nine (9) to twelve (12) month pilot period. • Assess the results of the pilot and discuss challenges and areas for improvement by consulting with small business liaisons, APOs/CUPOs, and participating small and diverse businesses. • Present results and propose recommendations for statewide adoption of the informal bidding process by soliciting input from the APO/CUPO community before the formal adoption of policy, training, and statewide rollout.
4	Recommendation: Revise state bidding and contracting requirements for certain projects.		
	Q3, 2023 (July – September 2023)	Q4, 2024 (December 31, 2024) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with DOAS Risk Management Division and legal team to identify lower tiers of insurance or bonding guidance for certain low-risk contracts under \$100,000. • Collaborate with DOAS Risk Management Division to create a resource guide for state buyers on how to assess risk and identify appropriate protections. • Conduct initial training for small business liaisons, state buyers, and supplier community on recommended insurance and bonding coverage for state contracting and new resources for assessing risk. • Create and roll out a short, web-based tutorial on insurance and bonding guidelines to serve as an ongoing training resource for state buyers. • Collaborate with Purchasing Customer Advisory Panel (PCAP) working group and APO/CUPO community to assess available payment strategies that are consistent with Georgia law and identify small business-friendly payment strategies.

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines and train buyers on small business-friendly payment strategies. • Consult with DOAS State Purchasing Division (SPD) Purchasing Card (P-Card) program, P-Card administrators, and APOs/CUPOs to identify opportunities for prompt payment to small and diverse businesses via P-Card. • Provide guidance and training to state buyers and P-Card holders to optimize utilization of the P-Card program.
5 Recommendation: Improved promotion of DOAS’s procurement systems training.			
	Q4, 2022 (October – December 2022)	Q4, 2023 December 31, 2023, and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue virtual monthly system training sessions and expand supplier access through focused community outreach. • Continue partnership with UGA SBDC MBD for the annual Small Business Procurement Readiness Workshop series with a focus on system registration, navigation, and locating bids. • Empower small business liaisons through targeted training to help guide small and diverse businesses to existing state resources, including supplier registration and system training. • Partner with key stakeholders across Georgia, including the Georgia Tech Procurement Assistance Center (GTPAC), Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program, and others, to market and promote systems training to small and diverse businesses. • Incorporate on-site supplier registration workshops as part of outreach events such as DOAS’s annual Small Business Symposium.
6 Recommendation: Expand matchmaking opportunities for small businesses.			
	Q2, 2023 (April – June 2023)	Q3, 2025 (July - September 2025) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop biannual matchmaking workshops with prime contractors and subcontractors, as well as buyers and suppliers, through vendor fairs and industry days. • Promote prime contractor utilization of state-certified businesses for subcontracting opportunities through quarterly informational sessions and approved promotional language within the state’s solicitation templates. • Partner with small business liaisons to match small businesses with ‘right sized’ projects targeted to each state agency’s identified need and through direct outreach to small and diverse businesses within the local community. • Continue matchmaking opportunities by including state buyers in annual events hosted by SPD, including the GPC, DOAS’ Small Business Symposium, and the Small Business Procurement Readiness Workshop series.

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in matchmaking events with organizations such as the National Contract Management Association, the National Association of Minority Contractors, the U.S. Minority Contractors Association, and others to provide opportunities for businesses to matchmake and seek out new partnerships.
7 Recommendation: Increase outreach, training, and additional support to small businesses.			
	Q4, 2022 (October – December 2022)	Q2, 2024 (June 30, 2024) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and manage an annual outreach calendar to complement the key objectives of the initiative by partnering with numerous partner organizations across the state to reach small and diverse businesses with a focus on activities to increase readiness to bid. Expand outreach to local communities such as chambers of commerce and local governments (city, county, etc.) to invite and assist new suppliers with state supplier registration, identifying bid opportunities, and accessing small business informational resources. Develop strategies to spotlight small business resources available through GDEcD, such as 12 regional project managers, local opportunities from the state of Georgia’s film industry, tax benefit programs, and others. Partner with industry associations such as the National Contract Management Association, the National Association of Minority Contractors, the U.S. Minority Contractors Association, and others to promote access to technical assistance for supplier registration and bid identifications. Explore opportunities to increase procurement assistance to small businesses through GDOT Small Business Help Center via a partnership with GDOT and a consultant partner. Continue partnership with GTPAC to deliver quarterly training to suppliers to provide technical support and more information on state procurement opportunities. Continue partnership with UGA SBDC MBD to deliver the annual Small Business Procurement Readiness Workshop Series, DOAS’ Small Business Symposium, and the UGA SBDC MBD’s Multicultural Business Summit. Engage with DOR on opportunities to support and promote DOR’s new Small Business Advisory Group to foster transparency and open communication with small and diverse businesses.
8 Recommendation: Expand business-to-business mentorship opportunities for small businesses.			
	Q4, 2022 (October – December 2022)	Q2, 2024 (June 30, 2024) and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through marketing and promotional campaigns, increase awareness and encourage utilization of mentorship programs offered by key partners, such as the SBA’s Mentor-Protégé program, the GMSDC, and its Georgia Mentor Protégé Connection, the SBA’s VBOC program, Georgia’s SBDCs, Women’s Business Centers and other organizations.

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revamp DOAS’s small business resource webpage to highlight various mentorship programs for easy access. • Develop marketing collateral for various small business resources, such as mentorship programs, to share with small and diverse businesses.
9 Recommendation: Facilitate information sharing on access to capital resources.			
	Q4, 2022 (October – December 2022)	Q4, 2024 (October - December 2024) & Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and promote access to capital resources for small businesses, including offerings from financial institutions, governmental entities, and nonprofits, via training sessions such as quarterly DOAS Procurement Connect Informational Sessions. • Continue partnership with Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs to share critical information with small businesses, such as business advisory services and counseling through training and information sharing. • Engage with the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance to develop strategies to promote available financial resources from local banks or other Georgia resources. • Continue partnership with GDEcD and other state agencies to promote the work that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs is conducting through the Small Business Credit Initiative, which assists approved lenders in providing loans to small and diverse businesses. • Feature ‘Access to Capital’ topics by inviting subject matter experts to deliver training during DOAS-hosted events such as the Small Business Symposium and GPC.

ONGOING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
A	Recommendation: Improve data collection & integrity for analysis, decision-making, and transparency.		
	Q3, 2022 (July – September 2022)	Q2, 2025 (April – June 2025) & Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and execute multiple strategies to improve the state’s collection of identifying information from small and diverse businesses partnering with the state to improve the accuracy of registered business data, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revamp the intake process by State Accounting Office (SAO) through collaborative review and updates to the standardized Vendor Management Form. ○ Update the current payment setup process to prioritize the collection and entry of identifying information for small and diverse businesses within the various financial systems used by the state, including the University System of Georgia and its state colleges and universities. ○ Update DOAS’s TGM supplier portal to improve the registration process and collection of accurate data from registering businesses related to size, ownership, and other demographic information. ○ Establish a standardized data collection process for various financial systems used by the state to receive and publish a consolidated report of current spending data on an annual basis. ○ Explore the cost and viability of utilizing data enrichment services to verify and supplement the state’s existing database of registered suppliers to improve accuracy in identifying small and diverse businesses and assess options to update various financial systems used by the state. • Implement NextGen project in partnership with SAO to transform the state’s current human resource capital management, financial, procurement, and contract systems – with a focus on leveraging new system features and functionality such as self-service operational reporting and built-in analytics, driving more efficient compliance, improved decision-making, intelligent automation, and predictive analytics. • Increase insight into small and diverse businesses’ participation in the state’s procurement process by collecting subcontractor information on statewide contracts to further strengthen the state’s access to more accurate spending data.

ONGOING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#	Date Started/ Estimated Start Date	Date Completed/ Estimated Completion Date	Key Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to develop system dashboards or other tools to increase insight and transparency of small and diverse spending for DOAS, state buyers, and all system users. • Establish a ‘baseline’ of existing spend with small and diverse businesses, publish to the DOAS website, and update annually.
B	Recommendation: Facilitate engagement of existing communication channels to enhance partnerships with key stakeholders		
	Q1, 2023 (January – March 2023)	Q2, 2024 (April – June 2024) & Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with SAO and sister agencies through existing partner meetings, such as NextGen, PCAP, and APO/CUPO meetings, to identify opportunities to take positive action to accomplish initiative recommendations. • Hold recurring meetings with stakeholder partners, including establishing quarterly meeting cadence with GDEcD, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and the UGA SBDC MBD, to discuss progress, challenges, and how best to achieve the goal of making the state’s procurement process easier to access and, in partnership with these key stakeholders, schedule and hold regular meetings with representatives from the small business community and small business development partners, including chambers of commerce. • Supplement the existing DOAS small business website and other appropriate communication platforms with additional resources to inform key stakeholders of initiative objectives, progress-to-date, new small and diverse business tools, and opportunities for partnership.