

# **WEDC: 2020 Marketplace Community Economic Development Awards recognize notable business and community leaders**

Posted on Friday, Dec 4, 2020

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**MADISON, WI. DEC. 4, 2020** – At MARKETPLACE: The 39<sup>th</sup> Governor's Conference on Diverse Business Development, individuals will be recognized on Dec. 9, 2020 at the Community Award Recognition Program for their decades-long leadership and distinguished service in business and community development to support minority-, woman- and veteran-owned businesses in Wisconsin.

The following four individuals will be recognized by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC):

**State Business Diversity Development Award - Michele Carter** of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (formerly of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation)

For the last 16 years, as an experienced program manager and skilled coaching, government contracting and conflict resolution manager, Carter has demonstrated her skill in working within government to diversify the transportation construction industry, improving the efficiency of the state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Certification Program and increasing the participation of disadvantaged businesses through access to state contracts.

Carter served as the director of the Office of Business Opportunity and Equity Compliance at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) from 2018 to 2020. The office serves as WisDOT's regulatory arm, working to promote business

opportunity, equity and compliance in the areas of the DBE program, labor and wage compliance, Title VI and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and tribal affairs.

Carter was recently appointed as administrator of the Division of Employment and Training at the Department of Workforce Development and has more than two decades of past service as an enlisted and commissioned member of the Army Reserve and National Guard.

### **Community Economic Development Award - Lee Shirey** of the U.S. Economic Development Administration

Shirey served as Wisconsin economic development representative for the Chicago regional office of the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). Shirey has been with EDA for over 10 years and has worked with local units of government, economic development districts and nonprofit organizations in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Shirey assists applicants with packaging competitive economic development projects that will help to create high-skill, high-wage jobs and leverage private sector investment.

Shirey is viewed as a highly valued partner by Wisconsin tribal leadership and planning personnel, and has made a personal commitment to invest time for personal engagement in order to ensure they understand EDA's program resources and to develop pathways for Wisconsin tribes to access various EDA development resources. Lee's tireless work has already resulted in \$5 million in EDA investments with Wisconsin tribes.

Prior to joining EDA, Shirey devoted 10 years to leading economic development efforts for communities in northern Michigan and in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

### **Diverse Business Development Award - Marjorie Rucker** - The Business Council

This award recognizes Rucker's dedicated service to the diverse business communities in Wisconsin. For over a decade, Rucker has been a true advocate and tireless worker serving diverse businesses and the lead chambers of commerce that represent them. In her role as the executive director of The Business Council Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to ethnic and diverse business development in southeastern Wisconsin, Marjorie has helped these businesses grow by enabling them to better

access corporate supply chains.

She is also the chair of the Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition (EDBC), a statewide collaboration of ethnic and diverse chambers of commerce and community development financial institutions serving all regions of Wisconsin. Under her leadership, the coalition has grown its membership and become a well-respected voice in Wisconsin and a national model for collaboration.

An effective community leader, Rucker led the coalition's efforts to partner with government and private sectors to ensure the diverse business community is informed about the different aid grants being provided to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was instrumental in the coalition's promotion of WEDC's Ethnic Minority Emergency Grant, We're All In Small Business Grant, and federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act grant funding, as well as managing the disbursement of grants provided by financial institutions to support diverse businesses.

### **Minority Business Development Award - Larry Glusman of Davis & Kuelthau**

Glusman has represented small and midsize entities in their commercial lending, real estate and business transactions for 25 years. As a founding board member of the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, Glusman represented the chamber for a decade in its effort to help Hmong and Asian American business owners. He also works with the African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin. Both organizations are minority-based nonprofit lenders that invest in businesses statewide. Glusman has documented and closed dozens of chamber business loans, helping owners achieve their growth goals.

Glusman also represents established and startup businesses with real estate and asset purchase transactions and other financing, leasing, development and corporate matters. His commitment to helping small businesses thrive comes from his family's legacy of owning and operating small businesses. His experience growing up around entrepreneurs and working for a family retail business gave him the tools to know how to respond and best serve his clients as an attorney.

These awards are a part of the larger MARKETPLACE conference Dec. 8-10, which will be held virtually for the first time in its 39-year history. This event provides an opportunity to celebrate Wisconsin's minority-, woman-, veteran- and LGBTQ-owned businesses, as well as connecting these businesses with new opportunities through



networking, buyer meetings and workshops. For more information, visit [marketplacewisconsin.com](https://marketplacewisconsin.com)