

# Dept. of Administration: Celebrates Black Business Month with supplier diversity roundtable

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**Milwaukee** – Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld on Thursday celebrated [Black Business Month](#) and the 40th anniversary of the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program with a roundtable to help entrepreneurs do business with the State of Wisconsin and expand the State's diverse suppliers.

Blumenfeld joined Nikki Purvis, President and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin, Marjorie Rucker, Executive Director of The Business Council and Chair of the Ethnic & Diverse Business Coalition, Alex Ysquierdo, Director of the [Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program](#), business owners, local officials, and state lawmakers for a robust discussion about the opportunities available to businesses through the Supplier Diversity program and other investments made by the State to support the success of minority-owned businesses and communities. The roundtable took place at the African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.



*From left: Alex Ysquierdo, Director of the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program, Nikki Purvis, President and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce, State Rep. Dora Drake, DOA Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld, and Marjorie Rucker, Executive Director of The Business Council and Chair of the Ethnic & Diverse Business Coalition.*

“Advancing economic equity means diversifying the supply chain for State contracts, promoting investment in historically underserved communities, and making it easier for businesses to get certified to do business with the State of Wisconsin,” Blumenfeld said. “The Supplier Diversity program plays a vital role in building a Wisconsin economy that works for everyone, and we’re so grateful to many chambers and partners that are working with us to build business resilience and sustainability for the long term.”

“Yesterday’s roundtable, which culminated the celebration of National Black Business Month, demonstrated why collaboration and partnership play a critical role in increasing ethnic and diverse business representation in the State’s Supplier Diversity program,” Purvis said. “Black businesses are essential to the economic vibrancy of this city and state, so it’s important to create equitable access to information and accessibility to senior leadership, and we thank the Evers Administration for being key strategic partners. The African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin is committed to ensuring that these conversations continue, and more entrepreneurs can tap into the resources available to them.”

“It is great to see dialogue like this taking place in Wisconsin between the Department of Administration’s Supplier Diversity Program and Black-owned businesses,” Rucker said. “Supplier diversity is one vehicle for true economic prosperity for black-owned businesses, so my hope is that these conversations continue year-round.”



*Alex Ysquierdo, Director of the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program, talks about the program during a roundtable discussion at the African American Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, August 31.*

The Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program certifies minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), disabled service veteran-owned businesses (DVBs), and women-owned business enterprises (WBEs) to provide better opportunities for doing business with the State. Certified MBEs and DVBs may receive a 5-percent bid preference when they bid on state contracts, per state statute, and be listed in the [State's Certified Business Database](#). For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, Wisconsin spent a record-setting \$200 million with diverse businesses and exceeded the statewide goal of spending 5-percent of state dollars with MBEs for the third consecutive year.

Business owners who would like to know more about the Supplier Diversity program are encouraged to [register for an upcoming webinar](#) on Thursday, Sept. 21. This free program in conjunction with the [DOA Office of Business Development](#) will provide information on the certification and state bidding process, cover tips and instructions on how to navigate the contracting process, and answer additional questions. The webinar will be open to all Wisconsin business owners and the recording will be made available on the [DOA YouTube channel](#).

More information about the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity program is available at [SupplierDiversity.gov](#).