



FLORIDA
Advisory
Council
ON SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



2022-2023
Annual Report

INTRODUCTION & STATUTORY CHANGE

The Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development (Council) provides insight, expertise, and recommendations to the state regarding the engagement, support, and development of the small and minority business community. The Council, established in Section 287.0947, Florida Statutes, is charged to advise and assist with small and minority business development. Its powers and duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- Researching and reviewing the role of small and minority businesses in the state’s economy;
- Reviewing issues and emerging topics relating to small and minority business economic development; Studying the ability of financial markets and institutions to meet small business credit needs and determining the impact of government demands on credit for small businesses;
- Assessing the implementation of s. 187.201(21), F.S., requiring a state economic development comprehensive plan, as it relates to small and minority businesses; and
- Assessing the reasonableness and effectiveness of efforts by any state agency or by all state agencies collectively to assist minority business enterprises.

COUNCIL CHAIR



Dwan Courtney

Gainesville

Director, University of Florida, Small Business & Supplier Diversity

COUNCIL CO-CHAIR



Allison Watson

Pensacola

Director of Procurement and Business Services, Escambia County Schools

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Gregory Britton

Pensacola

CEO, Florida SBDC Network Headquarters



Norma Cruz-Hendrickson

Tallahassee

AVP Financial Manager, Envision Credit Union



Enold Debe

LeHigh Acres

Owner, Fine-Air Cooling and Heating Services, LLC



Jane Dowgwillo

Pensacola

Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Florida Small Business Development Center



Thomas Huggins, III

Tampa

President & CEO, Ariel Business Group, Inc.



Heide Jaksetic

Merritt Island

CEO, Skyra Aerospace Technologies, LLC



Rhonda Lopez

Doral

President, Peco International Electric



Robert Major

Tallahassee

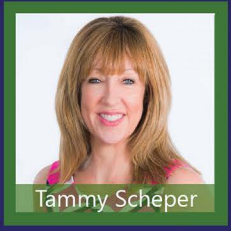
Executive Director, Office of Supplier Diversity, Department of Management Services



Ann McNeil

Miami

President, MCO Construction and Services, Inc.



Tammy Schéper

St. Augustine

CEO, Government Marketing Exchange, LLC



Derek Usman

Tampa

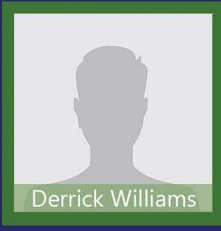
Attorney, The Usman Law Firm, P.A.



Veronica Valdez

Orlando

Vice President, Enterprise Florida - Minority & Small Business, Entrepreneurship & Capital



Derrick Williams

Orlando

CEO, DB Williams Property Management LLC

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & 2022- 2023 RECOMMENDATIONS

With great excitement, I serve as Chair of the Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development, in which I have the honor of working alongside Councilmembers who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and passion in serving our small and minority business community.

For the last few years, our economy has made great strides to recovery from the detrimental impact of COVID. Among the groups most devastated, was our small and minority business community as they faced unsurmountable challenges. During this time, priorities were shifted to address the growing, pressing needs of our stakeholders across the state, that many essential groups, such as this council, were postponed. More specifically, we officially met as a council in February 2023, since 2019. Additionally, there were leadership changes within the Department of Management Services, which impacts the strategic direction of the state.

Nonetheless, since our first meeting, we were able to meet monthly and identify three strategic goals for the council.

- 1. Enhance the DMS Supplier Diversity Exchange** to increase access to resources, including the collaboration with other agencies.
- 2. Develop strategies to educate and support small, disadvantaged businesses** in Florida overcome barriers to entry in state and local government procurement.
- 3. Create resource guide highlighting local and state government resources offered** in Florida.

As we seek to rebuild our communities, we gather with the intent to engineer change and foster an environment that promotes growth for our small business community. To ensure a strategic approach, we have selected three subcommittees charged with identifying strategies for accomplishing the above goals, within the purview of the respective committee expertise. The three committees are:

- Legislative Committee.
- Strategic and State Comprehensive Planning Committee.
- Research and Emerging Trends Committee.

Our sights are set high with the esteemed leadership of these respective committees as they offer their expertise. The Legislative committee is Chaired by Derek Usman, Esq., the Strategic and State Comprehensive Planning Committee is Chaired by Gregory Britton, and the Research and Emerging Trends Committee is Chaired by Jane Dowgwillo.

As a council, we are hopeful for progress and eager to provide our small and minority business community what they need to be successful. In support of our efforts, I express my sincerest appreciation to the Council Vice Chair Ms. Allison Watson for her leadership and the Office of Supplier Diversity Executive Director Mr. Robert Major and his staff for their support during this time of transition.

Kind Regards,

Dwan Courtney

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative Committee

- Committee Chair: Derek Usman
- Committee Role: To review legislation and policies that impact small and minority businesses
- Proposed Three Strategies: Create of a repository of laws affecting small and minority businesses, make legal decisions regarding succession planning, and assign an individual to browse for legislation from government actors

Research and Emerging Trends Committee

- Committee Chair: Jane Dowgwillow
- Committee Role: To research and review the roles of small and minority businesses in the state's economy

Strategic and State Comprehensive Planning Committee

- Committee Chair: Greg Britton
- Committee Role: To asses the implementation of Florida Statute 187.201(21) requiring a state economic development comprehensive plan, as it relates to small and minority businesses
- Proposed Three Strategies: Identify ways to improve the state procurement process as it relates to minority and small businesses, elevate awareness of state procurement opportunities, and provide supply chain support for sustainability

COUNCIL NEWS

Though we gather monthly as a council, through our small business efforts, we collaborate with other councilmembers throughout the year. The Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development continued disseminating information about Council activities across the state. Below are some activities and accomplishments relating to the Council and Council members.



Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development Co-Chair Allison Watson (middle) with FAC council members Thomas Huggins, III (left) and Robert Major (right) at the 2023 Pensacola Supplier Diversity Exchange



Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development Chair Dwan Courtney (right) and Associate Vice President of UF Business Affairs Brandi Renton (left) recognizing UF Small Business Opportunity Fair Sponsor Jerome Guilford, Owner of Knight Raven Enterprises (middle)



Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development Chair Dwan Courtney (right) and Associate Vice President of UF Business Affairs Brandi Renton (left) recognizing 2022 UF Mentor Protege Program Graduate Chef JJ's Creation



Florida SBDC's UNF region held their MEDWeek Annual Luncheon and MEDWeek Annual Breakfast back in August

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Elite Business Strategies

President and CEO, Princess Ousley, M.B.A.

- **Small business designation:** Federal: SBA 8 (a) Certified, Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business (EDWOSB), Women Owned Small Business (WOSB), Small Business Enterprise (SBE). State: Florida & New York Women Business Enterprise (WBE), Florida & New York Minority Business Enterprise (MBE).

- **Location:** Headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida, with additional offices in Orlando, Hampton, Virginia, Fayetteville, Georgia, and Westmoreland, NY.

- **Highlight their success with the state:** Elite Business Strategies (EBS) recognized the need for products and equipment in marginalized communities following disasters. This call to action led to the creation of myEliteProducts (MEP). MEP has been supplying critical supplies and products to underserved communities throughout the country. In 2017, MEP was awarded and has maintained the State of Florida office supplies and consumables contract. This contract has been instrumental in expanding their national products and service offerings. MEP is dedicated to its customers and aims to build sustainable partnerships and drive innovation through enhanced e-commerce capabilities. With the right team, satellite offices, and partnerships with vendors and suppliers who share their customer-centric vision, EBS, and MEP have successfully grown from a proud and successful Florida-based firm empowered with a national reach.

- **Showcase how small businesses were able to leverage state resources:** myEliteProducts (MEP) has established itself as the leading choice for quality products and exceptional customer service through its participation as the sole minority women-owned business on the State term contract for office supplies and consumables. This unique position has allowed MEP to cultivate valuable relationships and tap into resources within school districts, colleges, and various city and county governments. As a result, MEP can offer its clients competitively procured products from over 1,000 renowned national brands. With access to the benefits of the State Term Contract, MEP continues to expand its client base while upholding its reputation as the go-to provider for top-notch products and unparalleled customer service.

