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ANNUAL REPORT

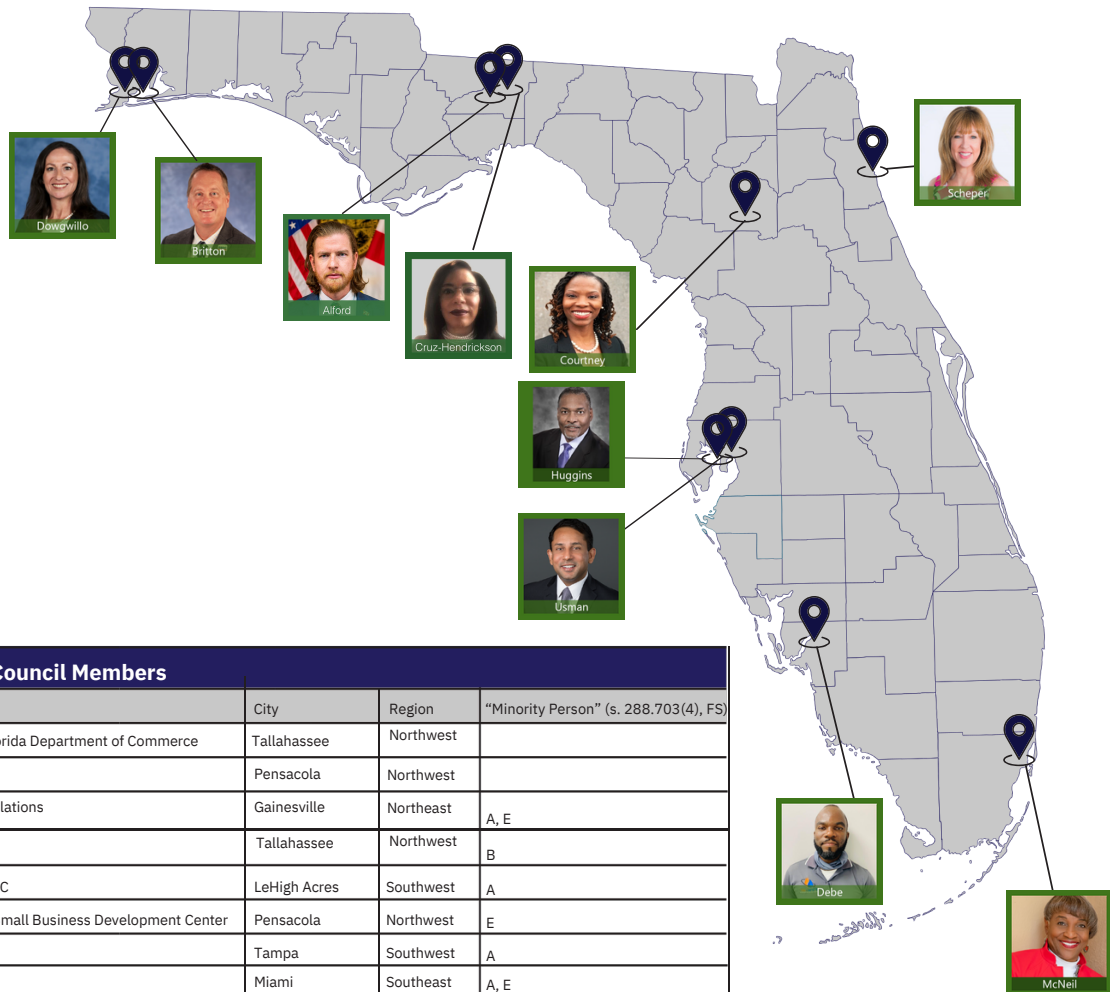


Introduction and Statutory Charge

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 the 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 determine 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 Members



Current Council Members				
Name	Company	City	Region	"Minority Person" (s. 288.703(4), FS)
Mason Alford	Director, Office of Small Business Innovation, Florida Department of Commerce	Tallahassee	Northwest	
Gregory Britton	CEO, Florida SBDC Network Headquarters	Pensacola	Northwest	
Dwan Courtney	Director, University of Florida, Small Business Relations	Gainesville	Northeast	A, E
Norma Cruz-Hendrickson	AVP Financial Manager, Envision Credit Union	Tallahassee	Northwest	B
Enold Debe	Owner, Fine-Air Cooling and Heating Services, LLC	LeHigh Acres	Southwest	A
Jane Dowgwillo	Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives, Florida Small Business Development Center	Pensacola	Northwest	E
Thomas Huggins, III	President & CEO, Ariel Business Group, Inc.	Tampa	Southwest	A
Ann McNeill	President, MCO Construction and Services, Inc.	Miami	Southeast	A, E
Tammy Scheper	CEO, Government Marketing Exchange, LLC	St. Augustine	Northeast	E
Derek Usman	Attorney, The Usman Law Firm, P.A.	Tampa	Central	C

Message from the Chair and 2023-2024 Recommendations

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chair of the Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development, while collaborating with Council members who too share the charge in serving our small business community.

Still navigating the economic impact of COVID, the council remains steadfast in its efforts. Committed to advancing our state's economy, we strive to adequately support the needs of Florida-based small business owners. Since reconnecting as a council in February 2023, from last meeting in 2019, we've faced challenges maintaining a fully, active council. Nonetheless, the council is building traction to impact change.

With this, we will continue with our previously proposed strategic goals for the council to:

1. Enhance supplier development events across the state, including DMS Supplier Development Exchanges, to increase access to resources, including collaboration with other agencies and municipalities
2. Develop strategies to educate and support small, disadvantaged businesses in Florida overcome barriers to entry in state and local government procurement
3. Create a resource guide highlighting local and state government resources offered in Florida

Along with maintaining our previous goals, we will resume with our three subcommittees that will use their expertise to help identify strategies for accomplishing the above goals. The three committees are:

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

We anticipate great things with our subcommittee leadership. 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.

We greatly appreciate the leadership and support to the Office of Supplier Development Executive Director Donna Williams and her staff.

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 strategies:

- Create a repository of laws affecting small and minority businesses
- Make decisions regarding succession planning
- Research legislation from government actors

Research and Emerging Trends Committee

Committee Chair: Jane Dowgwillo

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

Proposed strategies:

- Identify, review, and assess data sources that show the current state of small business in Florida
- Investigate and identify resources for Florida's small businesses in the innovation and technology transfer area

Strategic and State Comprehensive Planning Committee

Committee Chair: Gregory Britton

Committee Role: To assess the implementation of Florida Statute 187.201(21) requiring a state economic development comprehensive plan, as it relates to small and minority businesses.

Proposed Strategies:

The Strategic and State Comprehensive Planning Committee recommends a strategic approach for the Council, the department, and the state as a whole to support Florida's small businesses, ensuring that the state's procurement practices enhance business opportunities while fostering a strong and resilient supply chain.

The first priority is to continue enhancing the state's procurement strategy by implementing targeted initiatives that prioritize the economic impact of utilizing Florida-based small businesses in state contracts. This includes bringing together the collaborative activities of like-minded organizations, leveraging partnerships to share costs, and aligning efforts with the state's fiscal strategies. These initiatives should be tied to key objectives that reflect the goals of the Council, the department, and the state in supporting Florida's small businesses over the next five years.

As part of this initiative, we will consider suggestions to include legislative ideas that increase awareness of state procurement opportunities among Florida's small businesses. Many businesses remain unaware of the broad range of procurement opportunities available to them in state contracts. Increasing this awareness is critical. To support this initiative, the Council will recommend steps such as increasing the number of supplier development exchanges, partnering with the Florida SBDC's nine regions, and leveraging larger events and platforms like the Florida SBDC Small Business Success Summit. Additionally, awareness campaigns in collaboration with media outlets, social media, and cross-agency efforts can maximize outreach.

Council News

Aligning with the Council's strategic goal of supporting supplier development events across the state to increase access to resources, including collaboration with other agencies, the below photos showcase council members supporting small businesses at supplier events.



Annual UF Small Business Opportunity Fair where small businesses market themselves to UF and other exhibitors.



Chair Dwan Courtney moderating a panel discussion at the 2024 Gainesville Supplier Development Exchange.



Member Mason Alford presenting at the SBDC Small Business Success Summit.



Member Greg Britton speaking at the SBDC Small Business Success Summit.



Member Jane Dowgwillo (left) presenting at the SBDC Small Business Success Summit.