

**July
2005**

"Your guide to doing business with the City of Philadelphia"

"PRACTICAL MATTERS"

By: Michael P. Williams, Director

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Last month I attended an outstanding faith-based economic development conference, held outside of Baltimore. Every session I attended yielded valuable information that I am fortunate to pass on to our MBEC-certified vendors. One of the most informative sessions I attended covered important issues pertaining to start-up businesses. I found that some of the information could also be applied to existing businesses.

If you are a start-up or an established business, the following is a series of questions you should ask yourself, either before venturing into a new business enterprise, or as a reflection or review of your current business:

- ✓ **What are your exact goals?**
- ✓ **What are your reasons for starting a business?**
- ✓ **What is your tolerance for risk?**
- ✓ **What is your tolerance for ambiguity and stress?**
- ✓ **What is your health status?**
- ✓ **Will you be able to endure the rigors of running your own business?**
- ✓ **Are your personal relationships stable?**
- ✓ **Do you have support from your family and/or friends?**
- ✓ **Do you have any relevant industry contacts?**
- ✓ **How strong are your networking skills?**
- ✓ **Do you have sufficient experience in this type of venture to successfully launch and/or manage a business?**



The answer to these questions may very well determine how well you'll succeed in your start-up business, or how well you'll succeed in your current business enterprise. All of us at MBEC are here to assist you in any way we can. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments and/or concerns.

You can reach us at 215.686.MBEC

Vendor of the Month:



BENEFITS PLUS
CONSULTING GROUP INC
REALIZE YOUR RESOURCES

Norma Romero-Mitchell
President & CEO

Benefits Plus Consulting Group Inc
1617 JFK Blvd.
Suite 1230
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: 215-564-0288
Fax: 215-564-0286
www.consultbenefitsplus.com

Q: How long have you been in business?

A: Benefits Plus Consulting Group Inc. has been in business since April 1993.

Q: Are you currently doing business with the City of Philadelphia?

A: Yes, I am currently doing business with several unions and departments at the City.

Q: With what City department(s) have you worked?

A: The Board of Pensions and Retirement, The Philadelphia Housing Authority and District Council 47.

Q: What types of goods and services do you provide to the City?

A: We provide insurance brokerage, employee benefits, and investment management consulting with a special emphasis on communication, education and enrollment. We handle anything from health to retirement plans and have conducted various competitive analysis and research projects.

Q: To what would you attribute your acquisition of business/award of contract?

A: Our certification, due diligence, responsiveness, and commitment to service.

Q: What was the most difficult element(s) of doing business with the City?

A: Identifying opportunities, negotiating compensation and getting paid on a timely basis.

Q: What would you recommend to others who are interested in doing business with the City?

A: I would recommend that they make sure that they have a business plan to guide them, pay close attention to how they structure their business and obtain enough financing or savings to sustain them while pursuing City business.

Q: Has MBEC been helpful to you in getting business, retaining business, getting paid or solving a problem?

A: MBEC has been a tremendous support by serving as an advocate and assisting us in the mediation of our business.

Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation

PWDC facilitates universal access to employment and training information through the [Pennsylvania CareerLink](#) system as well as through funding from the Department of Public Welfare in partnership with the Philadelphia County Assistance Office.

PWDC's Workforce Services Division, and its Staffing Services team have access to the latest job trends as well as which companies are hiring. PWDC reviews your experience in an effort to find the right job for you, and when needed, helps you get the training you need to qualify for today's competitive jobs.

PWDC's Transitional Workforce Division provides employment assistance to individuals who are receiving welfare benefits. In partnership with the Philadelphia County Assistance Office, PWDC provides direct and indirect services that have led to employment and for thousands each year.



Whether you are a new worker, laid off, or looking for a new career, PWDC is a great way to begin your journey. PWDC will utilize its years of experience and diverse network of partners and service providers to make sure that you are on your way to becoming a successful part of Philadelphia's workforce.

If you want to take your future into your own hands, and search for employment opportunities by title, location, or salary, visit the PWDC website at www.pwdc.org. Or, if you'd like a friendly hand to guide you through your options, call 215-557-2625.



MBEC Featured Events and Workshops

Bid Opportunities for Phase 1 of the Comcast Tower:

Sponsored by: **LIBERTY**
PROPERTY TRUST

When: July 27th 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Where: 1617 JFK Blvd. Philadelphia PA 19102 13th Floor Board Room

Why: Hear about the available Bid Packages and meet the key decision makers:

FOR INFORMATION & RSVP CONTACT: CARL S. MOORE, JR: **PHONE:** 215.851.1876 **FAX:** 215.851.1929

Key Bid Packages include:

ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK	SITE CONCRETE	SEALANTS	SPRAY FIREPROOFING
PAINTING & SPECIAL COATINGS	ORNAMENTAL METAL	FLOORING	WALL COVERING
FLASHING & SHEETMETAL	TILE, TERRAZZO	CARPET	SITE IMPROVEMENTS
WINDOW WASHING EQUIPMENT	EXPANSION CONTROL	SIGNAGE	SECURITY SYSTEMS
DOORS, FRAMES & HARDWARE	MEMBRANE ROOFING	LANDSCAPING	GLASS & GLAZING
DRYWALL/ACOUSTICAL TILING	PARKING EQUIPMENT	SPECIALTIES	PLAZA STRUCTURAL
TUNED MASS LIQUID DAMPER	DOCK EQUIPMENT	CONCRETE	CHURCH ADDITION
OVERHEAD DOORS & LOADING DOCK EQUIPMENT	MEMBRANE ROOFING	MASONRY	METAL FABRICATIONS



Understanding the Certification Process

When: August 8th 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Where: MSB, 1401 JFK Blvd. Philadelphia PA 19102 16th Floor Room C

Why:

- Learn about the benefits of being certified with the City of Philadelphia
- Learn how to become certified with the City of Philadelphia

MBEC Employee of the Month: Julie Simmons

Julie Simmons, is a native North Philadelphian who is proud graduate of Oklahoma Christian University of Science and Agriculture (O.C.U.S.A.). Julie Simmons has been a devoted employee of MBEC for over 20 years.

Julie is the sole member of our Supplies, Services and Equipment Unit (SS&E). As of 2003, Julie has taken on a extra responsibility which is working with Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI). Julie is very dedicated to NTI because she believes that the revitalization of City blocks will nurture and enhance the creation of employment and safety opportunities in the the City of Philadelphia's future.



Everyone at MBEC is proud to have Julie Simmons on our team. Keep up the exceptional work Julie.



SYMTRAC: The new Payment Verification System for sub-contractors

One of the biggest hurdles that M/W/DS-BEs face is the time it takes to be paid once awarded a portion of a City contract. The lapse in time between expenses paid to execute and payment received for the respective services rendered can often be enough to put a small business out of business.

To assist City departments in tracking payments from prime contractors to the sub-contractors, which tend to be where many M/W/DS-BEs obtain their first chance to participate on City funded contracts, a new web-enabled tracking program, Symtrac, has been developed.

Symtrac is a web based tool which pulls contract and payment information from the various City systems. Because the tool is web enabled, the payment updates can be entered from any location with internet access.

Symtrac will serve as a tool to track payments from the prime contractors, and from the prime contractors to the sub-contractors on any and all City funded contracts.

Each contractor, prime and sub, will be issued a user account. The prime will log in and enter the invoice numbers and checks received from the City as well as the invoices and payments made to and received by the sub-contractors. The sub-contractors will enter their invoice to the prime and confirm any payments received from the prime contractor.

To assist with training on how to use Symtrac there is an interactive demonstration which will show each user how to log in and enter information into the system. This interactive demo will be sent electronically very soon; please make sure that we have a valid email address on file so that you can be sure to receive the demo and updates. MBEC is developing a work station for any MBEC certified vendors who do not have access to the internet.



Look for the Symtrac debut very soon. We look forward to Symtrac being one of the many positive steps in ensuring fair and equitable opportunities and treatment for the City of Philadelphia's M/W/DS-BEs.

Congratulations JSW Ventures Inc.

Everyone at MBEC would like to send out a special congratulations to Jeffrey White, owner of JSW Ventures Inc., for adding yet another notch on his belt as a MBEC Certified MBE vendor. Mr. White and JSW Ventures will now be taking over ownership of the Rita's Water Ice store franchise located in "The Food Court of the Gallery Mall".

Mr. White is looking forward to providing his customers with exceptional quality and prompt service. He also is focused on the expansion and diversification of his products and services so that he can service corporate and organizational events in the future.



If you are interested in these services being part of your next office event/party or just an end of the week employee morale booster, please feel free to contact Jeffrey White by email @ jswventures@yahoo.com or call the store @ (215) 922-6461

Congratulations JSW Ventures on your success!

