



Connections

MBEC Minority Business Enterprise Council NEWSLETTER

1401 JFK Blvd, Room 330 • Philadelphia, PA 19102-1666 • P:215-686-MBEC (6232) • F:215-686-3878 • www.phila.gov/mbec

Vendors' Corner

March 2006

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MBEC appreciates all the tremendous feedback we have received regarding our program and what we have done for folks individually and collectively. We particularly appreciate all the letters and telephone calls thanking us for what we do.

All feedback, no matter what its form and content, ultimately makes us a better department, and better positioned to serve our MBEC certified vendors.

While going through letters we have received, I have noticed that some of them are sprinkled, unintentionally or not, with advice that, in my opinion, is of value to all of our MBEC certified vendors. Reading them reminds me of the forum MBEC sponsored for Med Week 2005, where we invited MBEC certified firms whose owners had been in business for over 20 years to talk about their experiences. These "war stories" were all outstanding, and the information gleaned by the audience was invaluable.

While the forum's audience (primarily made up of young entrepreneurs) related to us that they absolutely enjoyed and profited from the information, I feel that this information (as with the information from the letters we've received) would be of value to ALL MBEC certified vendors.

To that extent, I'm asking our Special Projects Unit to create a "Vendors' Corner" section in this newsletter. This section will give our MBEC certified vendors an opportunity to share their experiences, collective wisdom, "war stories," and other valuable information with all MBEC certified vendors. If you are interested in sharing information that would be of value to your fellow vendors or have suggested topics, please contact LaShawnda Ellison, MBEC Special Projects Assistant, at (215) 686-3872.

On behalf of MBEC, I thank you all for your continued feedback and assistance.

Michael P. Williams, Esq.
Deputy Finance Director
Director, MBEC



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Deputy Finance Director
Director, MBEC

Vendor Spotlight



Q. How long have you been in business?

A. Arora Engineers, Inc. has been offering solutions for secure environments since its establishment in 1986.

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

A. Yes. Arora continues to provide our service to many City agencies, namely the Philadelphia International Airport, Division of Aviation and the School District of Philadelphia.

Q. What type of goods and services do you provide to the City?

A. The firm offers a broad range of design and consulting Engineering Services including Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Protection and Special Systems as well as Construction/Project Management Services with an emphasis on systems in secure environments in the areas of Aviation, Health Care, Education, Finance, Mass Transit and Housing.

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

A. Philadelphia International Airport, Division of Aviation, School District of Philadelphia, Capital Programs Office, Philadelphia Housing Authority, and the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

Q. How has doing business with the City enhanced you or your business development?

A. As a prime consultant to the Division of Aviation, we are part of the evolution of the Aviation industry. Our experience and success at PHL has provided very positive exposure and has helped us market our services to other airports in the Mid-Atlantic region.



From L-R: Manohor Arora, Manik K. Arora, and Rajeev K. Arora

**Manik K. Arora, P.E.
President & CEO**

124 Commons Court
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
(610) 558-3429 (office)
(610) 558-3613 (fax)
www.aroraengineers.com

Q. What would you recommend to others who are going into business?

A.. Don't be afraid to take risks and venture into new directions. Arora made a decision in the early 1990's to expand our services to offer

Specialized Systems Engineering along with the traditional "MEP" services offered by our competitors. That decisions have proven to be a key element to the firm's success.

Q. What recommendations would you give to others who are interested in doing business with the City?

A. As an MBE company, you will often be asked to participate on a team and be given a scope of work that is strictly parallel with the MBEC percentages required. This may require your firm to offer a service that is different from what you are used to providing. Be flexible and strive for excellence, which will give you an advantage at being a prime consultant in the future.

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

A. MBEC has been very helpful in giving Arora advice. One notable piece of advice, given by Cal Gaines, was to update our commodity codes to reflect the newer services that we offer, which were not offered at the time of original certification.

Employee Spotlight: Irene Sampson, Clerk Typist I

Irene Sampson joined the MBEC in October 2005. Prior to joining the MBEC, Ms. Sampson worked for the School District of Philadelphia as a secretary for 11 ½ years. Ms. Sampson joined the MBEC after realizing her need for a more advanced and challenging position.

Ms. Sampson enjoys working side by side with not only the clerical staff, but also with the executive staff and MBEC vendors. Ms. Sampson's overall goal is to continue to do the best job as physically possible. She hopes to enhance the already existing relationships that have been formed between MBEC and the Philadelphia public; as well as others who may need her assistance in her future with MBEC.

Message from Deputy Director of Special Projects: *Rubi Pacheco-Rivera*



I am proud to join the MBEC as the Deputy Director of Special Projects.

I have worked primarily at Philadelphia-based Latino non-profit organizations. Most recently, I was the Conference Coordinator the Pennsylvania Statewide Latino Coalition and also served as Administrative Director at the Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations, Inc.

I am a graduate of Beaver College (now Arcadia University), earning a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, and received an MBA, with a specialization in Management, from LaSalle University.

As Deputy Director of Special Projects, I hope to bring new and exciting changes to MBEC in the upcoming months. In addition to the new newsletter layout, you will see increased activity from the Special Projects team. We will strive to create opportunities for MBEC vendors through regular communication of upcoming opportunities. We will also create increased networking opportunities through co-sponsorship of events with City Departments, the private sector, as well as business development agencies. Our goal is to increase contracting opportunities for our MBEC certified vendors through our advocacy and outreach efforts.

I look forward to working with you. I can be reached at 215.686.3876 or via email at rubi.pacheco-rivera@phila.gov.

“Know Your Rights” By Brigitte Daniel, Esq., Compliance Officer

Since MBEC implemented the new and improved certification procedures last year, MBEC has seen a substantial rise in the amount of certification applications. Due to this large increase, the MBEC Enforcement, Compliance, and Monitoring Unit, would like to fully explain to all our new MBEC certified vendors how to initiate an MBEC enforcement investigation.

Pursuant to Executive Order 02-05, MBEC may perform investigations on a myriad of issues to ensure that any and all MBEC certified vendors' interests, complaints, or questions, are being fully examined and if necessary rectified. To begin an MBEC investigation, a vendor must be MBEC certified or the vendor must have submitted an updated MBEC certification application. Once it is determined that a vendor is MBEC certified, the vendor should contact the MBEC Deputy Director and/or an MBEC Enforcement Compliance Officer by writing a letter or an e-mail detailing the specific issue and stating how the vendor would like MBEC to be of assistance.

Once the complaint is received, an MBEC compliance officer will notify the vendor of receipt of the complaint and ask for any additional information necessary to begin the investigation. Investigations may include contacting the contracting department and the prime contractor, and site visits to a contractor's office, other place of business and /or job site to ascertain more information about the complaint.

Once all information about the complaint has been obtained, the facilitation of a mediation may occur bringing all parties together in an effort to resolve all outstanding issues of concern . Usually a representative

from the MBEC certified company, a representative from the company against whom the complaint was lodged, a representative from the City Department, the Deputy Director of Enforcement and an MBEC Compliance Officer will be in attendance to discuss and examine the issues.

In most circumstances, the meeting will conclude with a resolution(s) amenable to all parties in attendance. All resolutions will be documented and included within a letter detailing all agreements made during the mediation. The letter will be mailed, faxed, and/or e-mailed to all attendees. After the resolutions have been determined and mailed to the appropriate representatives, MBEC will continue monitoring and enforcing all written agreements until the initial complaint has been completely resolved.

Therefore, if as an MBEC certified vendor you believe that you have a legitimate complaint or issue, please call or write our office immediately. No matter how small or big the issue, we encourage all MBEC certified vendors to contact us as soon as possible. The earlier you come to MBEC for help, the quicker we will be able to help resolve your problem.

Enforcement inquiries can be addressed to the following:

Wendy M. Staton, Esquire
Deputy Director of Enforcement
Minority Business Enterprise Council
1401 JFK Boulevard
Suite 330 MSB
Philadelphia, PA 19102

MBEC Events and Workshops

IMPACT (Invoicing, Minority Participation and Compliance Tracking) Training

Would you like to check and verify if payments are being made to your company from the Prime contractor? Do you want to learn how to track your City contract participation by YOURSELF? If you answered "YES" to the aforementioned questions, this training will be held on:

Mondays	11:00 AM-12:00 PM
Wednesdays	4:00 PM-5:00 PM 5:00 PM-6:00 PM
Thursdays	3:00 PM-4:00 PM

For location and scheduling, please contact Theresa Stevens at (215) 686-4712. Seating is limited.

Understanding the Certification Process

Come and receive all the answers to your questions regarding:

How to become a CERTIFIED VENDOR with the City of Philadelphia?

We will take you step-by-step through our certification process.

All of the following workshops are held from 10:00 AM until Noon at MSB, 16th Floor, "C":

Monday, March 27, 2006
Tuesday, April 25, 2006
Tuesday, May 30, 2006
Tuesday, June 27, 2006
Tuesday, July 25, 2006
Tuesday, August 29, 2006
Monday, September 25, 2006
Monday, October 30, 2006
Tuesday, November 28, 2006

Please contact Ms. LaShawnda Ellison at (215) 686-3872 to confirm your attendance. Seating is limited.

The Empowerment Group Presents Philadelphia Entrepreneurship Week Week of April 17-23

The goal of Entrepreneurship Week is to unite Philadelphia entrepreneurs to the organizations that support their efforts and to educate the public about the important roles that entrepreneurs play in our neighborhoods.

- Representatives from more than 150 small businesses will be present
- Opening ceremony and press conference
- Workshops and networking events
- Celebration at *World Café*

For more information about Entrepreneurship Week, please contact the Empowerment Group at (215) 427-9245.

MBEC and the City of Philadelphia's Procurement Department will be hosting How to Do Business with the City

When: Tuesday, April 17, 2006

Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**Where: The Municipal Services Building,
1401 JFK Blvd, Philadelphia, PA,
16th Floor, Rooms Y & Z**

To confirm your attendance at "How to Do Business with the City", contact Ms. LaShawnda Ellison at (215) 686-3872.

Message from Business Development Liaison, Assistant Managing Director: *Shinjoo Cho*

As a Business Development Liaison, I am here to assist new and existing immigrant businesses in Philadelphia. I can be reached by email Shinjoo.cho@phila.gov or phone 215-686-2465.

I have compiled this **Top 10 List** of Information for businesses. It is impossible to provide all business related information in one page, but after some observation and spending time with individual clients, I have chosen the following ten items. I hope this will be helpful and I will be glad to provide more details. This might even apply to your business or organization.

#10 Finding a new business location

- ❑ When considering a new business location, look at the neighborhood and its zoning code. Look it up online! Go to <http://citymaps.phila.gov/citymaps/> and click on zoning maps.
- ❑ Use Commerce Dept's free location search tool. Fill out a Site Request application (Peter Iacovoni 215-683-2106 Peter.Iacovoni@phila.gov) and it will be sent to a network of realtors who will conduct the search based on your criteria.

#9 Permits and Licenses

- ❑ Business Privilege License is a must for everyone. It's permanent and you can open as many businesses as you want under this license.
- ❑ Giving a full description of your plan to a Licenses and Inspections staff/examiner will set you off on the right course. Withheld information can interfere with your plan and go back to point zero, eg: Any business signage (banner, painted signs, sign posts, etc) is regulated under zoning and must be discussed during the zoning process, not after you open your business. Art Commission is responsible for signs that project over the sidewalk.
- ❑ Many permits and licenses require approval by other city departments.
- ❑ ALWAYS keep a copy of documents. (Letter, permit, license, invoice, notice, violation)

#8 Wait time

- ❑ Apply for permits & licenses several months ahead of time of your opening date.
- ❑ Acceleration: only permits can be accelerated for additional fee and doesn't guarantee approval.

#7 Food establishments: Go to Health Department first

- ❑ The Health Department takes equally long to issue you a variety of food handling, preparation and sales license. Submit your food license to Health Dept when you submit a building permit at L&I. The Health Department also wants to know the details of your construction/renovation for food safety reasons.

#6 Hiring architects/engineers/contractors for construction beyond your own skills

- ❑ With knowledge of your needs and city/nationwide building code, they will design it right from the beginning and you'll save time and money.
- ❑ ALWAYS hire licensed and insured professionals- L&I website features list of licensed contractors. Remember, any failure to comply with code is your responsibility.

#5 Inspections

- ❑ Know what department your inspector is from. Ask for their business card or write down their unit, full name and number.

#4 Zoning

- ❑ Exercise your right to sign lease/purchase contingent upon zoning. When encountered with complicated zoning situation, you could end up spending a fortune on mortgage or rent even before your business opens.
- ❑ Zoning is determined by City Council. L&I does not have the control to change residential to commercial zoning overnight.

#3 Zoning Variance

- ❑ If your zoning permit is refused, file for an appeal and you'll be given a hearing date.
- ❑ Bring a lawyer who speaks both your first language and English to the zoning hearing. Lawyers are familiar with zoning and only they, not your interpreter, can be your legal representative.
- ❑ Agreeing to provisos that suffice only your current situation may encumber economic value of your business & property. eg: ZBA offers you a proviso that you may operate your bakery business until 8pm, but this may discourage future buyer of your business intending to open a restaurant. Your contractor/engineer can also help you determine if given provisos are feasible or necessary.

#2 Free telephonic interpretation is available

- ❑ Municipal Services Building Concourse Level L&I area.
- ❑ L&I Services and Operation: L&I complaint hotline 215-686-2403.

#1 Resources

- ❑ Website, website, website! Many city departments, including L&I, have forms, instruction and research tool on their website. Find them at www.phila.gov. Commerce Dept Mayor's Business Action Team (MBAT) can assist you with information on small business loans, setup and support and various tax incentives.

Events and Workshops

Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation and Small Business Support Center March 2006 Calendar of Events

Using Tax Credits to Increase Your Cash Flow	Thursday, March 9, 2006 10:00 AM-11:30 AM
Business Plan Writing on the Computer for Students, Grades 9-12	Saturday, March 11, 2006 11:00 AM –1:00 PM
Navigating the Minority/Female Certification Process	Wednesday, March 15, 2006 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
Establishing Your Credit to Improve the Financial Health of Your Business	Wednesday, March 22, 2006 10:00 AM-1:00 PM
How to Receive Funding through PCDC	Wednesday, March 29, 2006 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

Refreshments served at each workshop. For more information, location or to reserve your seat , please call (215) 790-2200 or e-mail Lenette.DeLoatch@pcdc1.com at least 1 WEEK ADVANCE. www.philadelphiacommercial.org

The U.S. Small Business Administration Presents The 8(A) Business Development Program

Are you interested in learning how you could become 8(A), Hubzone, and SDB certified? If so, you should attend these seminars. Upcoming dates are:

When: Thursday, March 23, 2006

**Where: U.S. Small Business Administration, Robert N.C. Nix Federal Building
900 Market Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, Pa 19107**

To register please contact Jane Aquila at (215) 580-2701 or jane.aquila@sba.gov or register online at <http://www.sba.gov/pa/phil/philregistration.html>. Sign in time is at 8:30 AM. Orientation time starts promptly at 9:00AM. Important: Please bring photo ID for security clearance in lobby upon arrival.

Join the March 2006 celebration of diversity and recruit Philadelphia's most qualified job candidates at the March 22 Diversity Job Fair taking place at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Presented by The Inquirer and Daily News, you'll have the opportunity to meet and interview hundreds of highly skilled job candidates in a vibrant, invigorating atmosphere. Our last Diversity Job Fair in October 2005 attracted over 3,500 quality job candidates in all fields at all experience levels. This event is sponsored by the NAACP, the Minority Business Enterprise Council, Career Link, the Latino Employment Opportunities Network and the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation. Better yet, you'll receive your own advertising package in The Inquirer, Daily News (in the *Diversity Philadelphia* sections) and on CareerBuilder.com, which allows you to promote your participation in the event and reach over 86% of the job seekers in the Philadelphia region!

Don't miss this exciting Diversity recruitment event - reserve your booth today! Call 215-854-4140 or visit <http://go.philly.com/careerfairs> for exhibitor information.



The Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (ACDBE) by Kathleen Padilla, Acting Certification Coordinator

Some work at Philadelphia International Airport (PIA) is funded by the City of Philadelphia and requires City of Philadelphia certification; some is federally funded and requires UCP certification (Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program, the UCP operates under federal DOT regulations.) If you are bidding on work at PIA, the procurement officer can inform you which certification is required. As a general rule of thumb, much of the work requiring UCP certification involves heavy highway construction projects. Concessionaire opportunities at PIA are an exception. Firms applying to do business as a concessionaire at the PIA must be certified by the UCP Program, not the City of Philadelphia Program.

Airport Concessionaires are a separate section of the UCP Program and operate under their own regulations. They are certified as an ACDE, not as a DBE. The requirements for DBE certification and ACDBE certification have some important differences. The Personal Net Worth Statement, business size standards and information required on the UCP application for ACDBE's are different from those required of DBE's. An outline of these differences from the US DOT's Final Rule on ACDBE's is included below:

For firms applying for airport concession DBE (ACDBE) certification: The average annual gross receipts for most firms (including their affiliates) over the previous three fiscal years must not exceed \$30 million. Certain types of businesses have size standards that differ from the standard (1) Banks: \$275 million in assets; (2) Car rental

companies: \$40 million average annual gross receipts over the firm's three previous fiscal years; (3) Pay telephones: 1,500 employees. A Personal Net Worth statement will be required after April 21, 2005

The following are additional special instructions for a firm applying for airport concession DBE certification.

1. In the space available in Section 2(B)(7) of the application form, the applicant must state that it is applying for certification as an Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE).
2. With respect to Section 4(C) of the application form, the applicant must provide information on an attached page concerning the address/location, ownership/lease status, current value of property or lease, and fees/lease payments paid to the airport.
3. The applicant need not complete Section 4(I) and (J) of the application form. However, the applicant must provide information on an attached page concerning any other airport concession businesses the applicant firm or any affiliate owns and/or operates, including name, location, type of concession, and start date of concession.
4. Please note for airport concession DBE certification, Federal regulations, 49 CFR §23.3, define personal net worth (PNW) for an airport concession owner as follows:

"Personal net worth" means "the net value of the assets of an individual remaining after total liabilities are deducted. An individual's personal

net worth does not include the following: (1) the individual's ownership interest in an ACDBE firm or a firm that is applying for ACDBE certification; (2) the individual's equity in his or her primary place of residence; and (3) other assets that the individual can document are necessary to obtain financing or a franchise agreement for the initiation or expansion of his or her ACDBE firm (or have in fact been encumbered to support existing financing for the individual's ACDBE business), to a maximum of \$3 million. An individual's personal net worth includes only his or her own share of assets held jointly or as community property with the individual's spouse."

If an applicant is relying upon the exclusion of "other assets" to meet the PNW requirement, the applicant must demonstrate and provide documentation to show that the assets are necessary to obtain financing or a franchise agreement to enter or expand a concession business at an airport (e.g., by producing letters from banks to that effect); or show that the assets have in fact been encumbered to support existing financing for an airport concession business (e.g., by producing loan agreements showing value of assets used as collateral for the loans).

The Certification Unit at MBEC looks forward to assisting you with any questions on the ACDBE Program. Information on opportunities at Philadelphia International Airport (and other agencies) can be found at: www.phila.gov/contracts.

Certification Unit Contact Information

Name	Title	Unit	Phone Number
Jasmin Campos-Rivera	MBE Specialist	Certification	(215) 686-6395
Karen Cromwell	Data Services Support Clerk	Certification	(215) 686-6391
Kathy Padilla	Acting Certification Coordinator	Certification	(215) 686-6377
Jeremiah Rusnov	MBE Specialist	Certification	(215) 686-6369
Michael Tancredi	MBE Specialist	Certification	(215) 686-6373

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