



State of Rhode Island

Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Disability Business Enterprise Program



Annual Report 2005

I. Introduction

The Rhode Island Disability Business Enterprise (DBE) Program was created through the Governor's Commission on Disabilities in 1987 when the Handicapped Products Procurement Bill became law. It was brought forth through the effort of then Governor Edward DiPrete, Senator Richard Patterson, Representative Paul Sherlock and citizen advocates Peter Holden and Paul Pickens. Its purpose was to help establish a market for the goods and services produced by the employees of the State recognized rehabilitation agencies.

Originally, called the Handicapped Products Procurement Committee and under the stewardship of the State's Economic Development Corporation (www.riedc.com), the program was moved to the Governor's Commission on Disabilities in 1996 and is now titled the Disability Business Enterprise Program. It has evolved through amendments made to the original legislation in 1992, 1997 and 2004 to now certify companies owned by and employing people with disabilities.

More information about the Disability Business Enterprise Program can be found on the Internet at <http://dbe.gcd.ri.gov>

II. 2005 Committee (8 members, 1 vacancy)

Bill Nieranowski, Chair; representing people with disabilities
Paul Grenon, Vice-Chair, designee of the Director of the Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals
William Anderson, designee of the State Purchasing Agent
Andy Argenbright, CPA, representing people with disabilities
Monica Dzialo, designee of the Director of the Department of Human Services
Paul Harden, designee of the Director of the Economic Development Corporation
Kevin McHale, Cranston ARC, representing rehabilitation facilities
Doddie McShane, Trudeau Center, representing rehabilitation facilities
Vacancy, representing rehabilitation facilities in the mental health community

III. Staff (1 part-time)

In May of 2005, Ms. Christine Botts joined the Governor's Commission on Disabilities as Public Information Officer and Disability Business Enterprise Program Coordinator. Previous to Ms. Botts arrival, the coordinator's position was unfilled since the departure of Ms. Andrea Castaneda fourteen months earlier. Ms. Botts brings a wealth of business experience to the program. For the previous eight years, Ms. Botts ran her own contracting business where she competed for and won commercial and government construction contracts.

IV. Certified Disability Business Enterprises (18 organizations)

Adaptive Technology Consultants, Salisbury, MA
Andy Argenbright, CPA, East Providence, RI
Blackstone Valley Chapter RI Arc, Pawtucket, RI
Coffee Plus, Providence, RI
Cookie Place, Providence, RI
CranstonArc Comstock Industries, Cranston, RI
EVAS, Westerly, RI

Fogarty Center, North Providence, RI
In-Sight, Warwick, RI
James L. Maher Center, Newport, RI
J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center, Warwick, RI
Ocean State Center for Independent Living, Warwick, RI
Pandora's Products, North Providence, RI
Russ Blais General Contracting, Cranston, RI
Thayer Wood Products, Inc. South Kingstown, RI
Training Thru Placement, Inc, North Providence, RI
Vision Dynamics, Cromwell, CT
Zane Sherman, artist, Providence, RI

V. State contracts awarded

Event catering – Various (exact value unknown, believed to be <\$5,000)
Paper shredding –(\$5,000/year for 2 years beginning in 2005)
Office cleaning - (\$14,880 for 3 years)
Mailing – Approximately \$10,000
Laundry – Approximately \$100,000/yr for 3 years
Graphic Arts – \$50

VI. Other contracts awarded with GCD/DBE participation

None at this time.

VII. 2005 accomplishments

- Certified 18 organizations as Disability Business Enterprises
- Recruitment campaign - Contacted the in-state Chambers of Commerce to introduce the DBE program to their members. Met with 3 potential DBEs to introduce our program.
- Bid research – Documented bid opportunities based on DBE Commodity Codes
- DBE outreach – Met with 13 of 18 DBEs to discuss the program, do RIVIP training, and update Commodity Codes.
- Support effort. Provided assistance to DBEs pursuing State contracts.
- Marketing materials – Created new DBE brochure to highlight DBEs and their goods and services, Improved the conference display board

VIII. Issues to resolve in 2006

- Purchasing regulations –Work with the DoA and DoP to clarify the intent of the DBE preference as written in law.
- Implement a 5% window for DBE bids. At the discretion of the State's buyers, a contract may awarded to a DBE if its bids is within 5% of the low bid. (Based on regulations in place for the MBE program).
- Improve tracking of contracts awarded to DBEs.
- Program awareness with State purchasing agents.
- Financial support for the staff person to fund hours needed to work on the program. HRIC grant is ending in 2006
- Educating the DBEs on steps necessary find State contracts and overcome trepidation of the State system.

IX. 2006 Goals

- Increase program awareness with State agency buyers.
- Increase the dollar volume of contracts awarded to DBEs
- Increase the number of DBEs awarded contracts.
- Increase the number of DBEs

X. Conclusion

We thank the Governor's Office, the Department of Administration (DoA), the Division of Purchases (DoP), the State's agencies buyers and The Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD) for their cooperation in moving the DBE program forward. We look forward to working with them to make our program successful.

Further, we are looking forward to working with the DoP as they implement new Oracle based purchasing software. We feel the changes being brought forth by the DoP will be beneficial to awarding contracts to the DBEs, and help provide meaningful metrics by which we can evaluate our program.

Going forward in 2006, we believe there are three key elements needed for making our program successful

- Continued staff support from the GCD. We need no less than 40% of staff support person's time in the next year to get our program back on track and moving forward.
- Continued commitment from the DoA, DoP and the State's buyers for our program. Our program simply can not be successful if we are not given the opportunity to submit bids. Given the opportunity the DBEs will win contracts and provide the State with high quality goods and services..
- Continued commitment from the DBEs to learning how the State purchasing system works and to marketing their goods and services to the State's buyers. In general, the DBEs produce quality goods and services at competitive pricing, and are a valuable asset to their customers.