

To: Chief Financial Officers
From: Beverly Najarian,
Director, Department of Administration
Date: December 30, 2005
Subject: Delegated Contract Authority-DBE Program

CC: Cabinet Directors

The State of Rhode Island has a program to encourage and expand market opportunities for qualified businesses that are either owned or operated by persons with disabilities or who employ people with disabilities.

The Disability Enterprise Program was created through the Governor's Commission on Disabilities in 1987 when the Handicapped Products Procurement Bill became law. Its purpose was to help establish a market for goods and services produced by persons with disabilities in both non-profit and profit making facilities. It is, at best, underutilized.

It is important for personnel in all state agencies who are involved in purchasing functions to understand and comply with that statute (RIGL 37.2.2-3) when making purchase decisions. Essentially, there is a requirement "whenever products are made by, or services provided by persons with disabilities, they *shall have preference* over products or services from other providers."

Their selection is subject to the following:

1. All participating businesses or rehabilitation facilities must be certified by the Disability Business Enterprise Committee of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities.
2. Only products and services that meet the specific requirements of the expending agency will be subject to preferential purchases.

To facilitate usage, the Governor's Commission on Disabilities has published the Disability Business Enterprise Catalog on its website (<http://www.disabilities.ri.gov>) and the Division of Purchases has established a Disability Business Page on the Rhode Island Vendor Information (RIVIP) website under "General Information" (<http://www.purchasing.ri.gov>).

The DBE Program is important to the state not only in an economic sense by providing jobs to the handicapped, but, more importantly, in a social sense by promoting self esteem in our disabled citizens. It merits your full consideration,

