


Council Corner

August 2017 Supplier Diversity Digest Article Provided by Cheryl Seals Gonzalez, Chairperson, Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development

The Florida Advisory Council on Small and Minority Business Development (Council) is a resourceful advisor on small and minority business policy that relies upon its members, constituent networks, professional volunteers and the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) staff. The council does not manage programs; it reviews and recommends policy. Its members take heart in positive growth and development, understanding that the changes to help small businesses grow is a marathon and not a sprint having advanced over the last decade.

Nearly a decade ago, the council voted on a vision of principled delivery of products, goods and services needed by state agencies and quasi-state entities through a more vibrantly inclusive supplier diversity culture. Some of many recommendations focused on business growth and job creation in Florida's race and gender-neutral business landscape.

Recommendations and Outcomes:

- ***Support Florida's microenterprises as part of the small business economic development continuum.*** This was achieved through direct involvement with Enterprise Florida, Inc., the Florida Minority Business Development Council, the Small Business Development Center Network, and Florida Chamber of Commerce, Inc. A series of discussions with several well-known business and economic development groups also occurred.
- ***Create equity capital opportunities for small businesses through tools considered non-traditional, such as private placement memoranda, capital formation and business incentives.*** This was achieved through ongoing meetings with the Florida Office of Financial Services, which subsequently helped pass the Florida Crowdfunding Act. In addition, Florida's Microfinance Act was approved. Each law requires changes to make them more user friendly, and marketing the product to prospective users. These efforts could not be possible without the collaborative efforts of such groups as the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Bankers Association, Raise Florida Network and many more.
- ***Monitor Enterprise Florida, Inc.'s (EFI) capital programs utilization through a business inclusion lens.*** A member of the EFI Board was appointed to the council in 2012 for the first time, and a review of capital programs occurred shortly thereafter.

The highlights above provide insight on the council's work in a concise manner, but there is still more work to be done.

Small and minority businesses can and should participate in their local chambers and business groups. In addition, all businesses are invited to participate in regularly scheduled council meetings to walk the talk to improve their status through strategic and precise policy recommendations. Meeting details can be found at www.dms.myflorida.com/facsmbd.