



TOP 100 MBE AWARDS™

HONORING MINORITY AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

## Report from the Commonwealth of Virginia:

Virginia's Department of Minority Business Enterprise is an office under the Secretary of Administration, Viola O. Baskerville. Secretary Baskerville and the Director of the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, Samuel Hayes III, P.E., are working furiously to enhance the participation of small, women- and minority-owned businesses (SWaM) in Virginia's procurement process. What's more, their efforts are working well. In 2008, Virginia was only 2 percentage points away from meeting its goal of having 40% of the state's contracting dollars spent with small, women and minority owned businesses.

Baskerville states that the current economic situation has resulted in increased competition for the state's MBEs. "What we are seeing is larger businesses bidding on small projects that they would have passed up when the economy was more stable. However, there are increased opportunities for joint venturing on large construction projects the state and colleges have underway."

The State of Virginia is committed to ensuring transparency in letting the public know where the money received as a result of the Economic Stimulus Package will be spent. Their website [www.stimulus.va.gov](http://www.stimulus.va.gov) contains many links to tools and information MBEs can use to help them target government agencies and large contractors for marketing their businesses.

It is important that qualifying businesses apply for certification. Contractors looking for MBE subcontractors will use Virginia's SWaM directory to find. Also, businesses should register to receive notification about RFPs at eVirginia, Virginia's total e-procurement solution.

Virginia is also establishing a pilot program to pre-qualify all small, women and minority construction businesses for renovation projects under \$500,000. The program is not only for state agencies but all public bodies and will allow agencies to consider a pool of businesses for any project under this amount without having to go out to bid. Businesses interested in this program can visit, <http://www.administration.virginia.gov>

The Secretary offers this final bit of advice, "It is critical that MBEs attend pre-bid conferences for every project they have an interest in. This is the best way to meet other MBEs and larger contractors for teaming opportunities. It is also an excellent opportunity to meet state officials who are the decision-makers for awarding contracts."

The Virginia Office of Minority Enterprise can be reached at (804) 786-5560. Applications for certification and other valuable links can be found on their website, [www.dmbv.virginia.gov](http://www.dmbv.virginia.gov).