

Delaware Small Business Summit to detail new opportunities

Executive Order #44 has opened the door wider to more small businesses throughout the state

DOVER, Del. (Oct. 22, 2014) – The State of Delaware prides itself on its business friendliness and willingness to provide opportunities and access to the small business sector.

The recent signing of Executive Order #44 fosters that spirit of inclusion by establishing a Small Business Focus Program. The program increases access to state procurement opportunities for small businesses of a certain size, which promotes transparency and real opportunities for a broader range of small businesses in Delaware. The program also ensures representation for businesspeople with disabilities so that these individuals are included in the state's supplier diversity initiatives.

These new opportunities and other small business initiatives will be detailed at the 2014 Delaware Small Business Summit, which will be held on Nov. 18 at Dover Downs in Dover. The half-day program begins at 7:30 a.m.

Executive Order #44, signed by Gov. Jack Markell on March 26, 2014, ensures "representation of minority and/or women business enterprises, veteran-owned businesses and businesses owned by individuals with disabilities."

"Delaware's small business sector is crucial to our economy, and we need to do all that we can to make sure that all entrepreneurs have a chance to turn their great ideas into successful companies," Gov. Markell said. "Across the country, many people with disabilities have not been given the opportunities to build successful careers despite their considerable talents. Our supplier diversity efforts can help ensure they are fairly considered to work with the state. And their success will not only be important to their futures, but also to the future of our state."

Gov. Markell will be the keynote speaker at the 2014 Small Business Summit, which will include two panel discussions: One with state small business leaders, and a second describing the state's initiatives towards entrepreneurship and business ownership for individuals with disabilities throughout Delaware. The summit will also feature a presentation on the details of the Small Business Focus Program by the Office of Supplier Diversity.

"The Delaware Small Business Summit will reveal new opportunities created by the Small Business Focus Program for individuals with disabilities and smaller businesses throughout the state," said Ken Anderson, Director for Entrepreneurial and Small Business Support for the Delaware Economic Development Office and Chair of the Governor's Supplier Diversity Council. "This program will not dilute opportunities from qualified, traditional supplier diversity constituents, but will now include more small businesses that have previously been excluded from the state's supplier diversity

community. This program and the other recent policy initiatives of the Governor’s Supplier Diversity Council will go a long way toward making Delaware’s state procurement process one of the most transparent, nimble and business-friendly in the nation.”

The Small Business Focus Program established by the order is a race and gender neutral small business program for small businesses of a certain size in six different industry sectors:

- Architecture & Engineering services
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Service
- Wholesale

“Delaware’s small business community includes an abundance of high-quality companies, brilliant entrepreneurs and long-standing pillars of our community. To exclude anyone of these entities or individuals would be a disservice not only to them but also to our state,” said Alan Levin, Director of the Delaware Economic Development Office. “This executive order and the accompanying programs created by it are not just about leveling the playing field; it’s about making sure that every business has a chance to compete.”

To register, visit www.dedo.delaware.gov/smallbusiness.

About the Delaware Economic Development Office

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit dedo.delaware.gov.

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