

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Issue 15 — November 2024

## *What's NEW!*

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)



## The Minority Business Development Agency Announces Winners of the 2024 National Minority Enterprise Development Week Awards



On October 22, 2024 the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) announced the recipients of the 2024 Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Awards. The National MED Week Awards are the highest level of national recognition that a U.S. minority business enterprise can receive from the Department of Commerce. These prestigious awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of minority business enterprises, as well as the individuals and organizations that have demonstrated their commitment to advancing minority business enterprises.

The annual National MED Week conference kicked-off this week (October 20-26) in Atlanta, where policymakers, MBEs, and their advocates collaborated on strategies for economic empowerment and long-term wealth creation.

"The Minority Business Development Agency and I are so excited to be in Atlanta to celebrate both the minority business enterprises and individuals that make up this amazing nationwide community," said **Deputy Under Secretary for Minority Business Development Eric Morrisette**. "With the continued and extensive support from the White House and our partners at NMSDC, and expanded resources to include our newest series of Capital Readiness Program incubators and accelerators, we are fully committed to elevating the revenues and capabilities of minority business enterprises, ensuring they are well-prepared to excel in our nation's economy and achieve equitable success."

National MED Week serves as a catalyst for hundreds of local MED Week conferences across the Nation. These local and regional conferences are sponsored by state and local governments, for-profit entities, and non-profit organizations. Today, National MED Week is broadly accepted and synonymous with quality and support for the recognition and growth of minority business enterprises.

**The 2024 National MED Week Award recipients, by category, are:**

#### **Minority Firms of the Year**

- Minority Construction Firm of the Year Award: Guiomar Obregon, President, Precision 2000 (P2k)
- Minority Export Firm of the Year: Bianca Rhodes, President, Knight Aerospace Medical Systems, LLC
- Minority Manufacturing Firm of the Year: Antoine Hutchinson, President, Fabpro Technologies,
- Minority Emerging Technology and Industries Firm of the Year Award: Eric Trevan, President, aLocal
- Minority Health Products and Service Firm of The Year Award: Dr. Roy Rivera, President, Elation Physical Therapy
- Minority Marketing and Communication Firm of the Year: Daniel Cenicerros, Connect Creative
- Minority E-Commerce Firm of the Year: Pamela Ramos-Brown, Be Wealthy with Pamela, LLC
- Minority Veteran Owned Firm of the Year: Zeferino Banda, Jr., President, Banda Group International, LLC
- Robert J. Brown Minority Business Enterprise of the Year Award: Daren Masten, President, Clear Cloud Solutions, LLC

#### **Champions of Minority Business Development**

- Advocate of the Year Award: Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund

#### **Individual Recognition**

- Abe Venable Legacy Award for Lifetime Achievement Award: Donata Russell Ross
- Ronald H. Brown Leadership Award: Necole Elan

Award winners were recognized at this year's National MED Week. The 2024 National MED Week was hosted in collaboration with the Annual Conference & Exchange by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), which took place in Atlanta, Georgia from October 20-26.

For more information on this year's National MED Week, visit [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov).

## ***MBDA Business Centers at WORK!***

On November 7, 2024 the **Maryland MBDA Business Center**, Owned & Operated by **L. S. Caldwell & Associates, Inc.** hosted its first annual **Grant Symposium** themed "*Bridging the GAP between Minority Business Enterprises and Grant Dollars*" where *U. S. Department of Commerce Deputy Under Secretary for the Minority Business Development Agency, Eric Morrisette*, delivered Welcome Remarks to over one hundred (100) minority business enterprises.

### **2024 GRANT SYMPOSIUM UPDATE**



## **Maryland MBDA Business Center** **2024 Grant Symposium**



**"Bridging the GAP between Minority Business Enterprises and Grant Dollars!"**

On behalf of the entire Grant Symposium team, we want to express our sincere gratitude for their attendance at the **2024 Grant Symposium**. We were thrilled to see such a fantastic turnout and engagement from passionate entrepreneurs, community leaders, and grant professionals. Their presence and enthusiasm helped make this event a resounding success.

Over one hundred (100) minority business enterprises gained knowledge and access to over one hundred (100) grants – federal, state, local and private sector, as well as received valuable insights during the Symposium's **Breakout Session**

## Workshops:

Grant Symposium attendees received a comprehensive **Grants & Resource Guide**, identifying **one hundred thirty-six (136) grants**, packed with valuable information to help them succeed in their grant-seeking journey. Attendees also received special offers for **Government Contract Training & Curriculum** and **Business AI Consulting**. Four attendees were our lucky RAFFLE WINNERS of E-book "**AI FOR EXECUTIVES – A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS INNOVATION AND GROWTH**" by Nilda G. Thomas.

## PRESENTER & COMPANY | BREAKOUT SESSION

- Carroll Bernard, **Govology** | "Gov't Contracting Training & Curriculum"
- Jerry Hollister, **BBCetc** | "SBA SBIR Program"
- LaQuan McCarley, **Verve Consultants, Inc.** | "Grant/Proposal Writing"
- Nilda Thomas, **Business AI Consulting** | "Utilizing AI for Grant & Proposal Writing"

The Maryland MBDA Business Center and L. S. Caldwell & Associates, Inc. are committed to providing resources and support to help minority-owned businesses thrive, and believe this symposium was a significant step towards achieving that goal! We would like to extend a special thank you to the participating Grantors that made this one-of-a-kind event possible, as well as our sponsors who continuously show their commitment and support to the minority business community.

## 2024 Grant Symposium Sponsors:



## BEYOND THE SYMPOSIUM:

Grant Symposium attendees received a comprehensive **Grants & Resource Guide**, identifying **one hundred thirty-six (136) grants**, packed with valuable information to help them succeed in their grant-seeking journey. Attendees also received special offers for **Government Contract Training & Curriculum** and **Business AI Consulting**. Four attendees were our lucky RAFFLE WINNERS of E-book "**AI FOR EXECUTIVES – A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS INNOVATION AND GROWTH**" by Nilda G. Thomas.

For information on how you can participate in next year's Grant Symposium contact: [GrantEvent@lscaldwell.com](mailto:GrantEvent@lscaldwell.com)

## Client SPOTLIGHT!

### THE MARYLAND MBDA BUSINESS CENTER WELCOMES



**Pamgrace Gachenge, Executive**



#### Company Overview

Pamgrace Gachenge, MHCM is a healthcare executive with expertise in human resources and business development. She is passionate about creating positive environments that foster success, particularly for women- and minority-owned businesses. Pamgrace empowers businesses to scale by highlighting the critical role of investing in healthcare.

At DiscoverU Health, Pamgrace leads a tech-enabled, membership-based concierge medicine practice specializing in comprehensive preventive healthcare. Their services include **primary care, mental health, psychiatric care, women's health, chronic care, urgent care, and senior care**. DiscoverU Health delivers inclusive, tailored services to minority



businesses and individuals in the District/Maryland/Virginia region, regardless of insurance status. Their goal is to simplify the process with private health plans and individual insurance options that align with your business.

#### Core Areas of Focus:

- Providing exceptional healthcare for individuals
- Offering tailored health benefits for employers
- Building healthier communities

#### Accelerator Program:

Bridging Health Equity is both a campaign and an accelerator—the campaign focuses on increasing healthcare, while the accelerator is centered on driving business growth. DiscoverU Health is excited to announce the launch of the **Bridging Health Equity Accelerator**—a groundbreaking program designed to help businesses scale for success in 2025. This initiative invites businesses to pledge their commitment to health equity by investing in healthcare for their employees as employers are a vital gateway to healthcare. In return for their commitment, participating employers will gain access to a dynamic program led by industry experts, focused on business growth within a supportive community—all at no cost to them.

By joining the accelerator, **you're not just prioritizing employee wellness—you're laying the foundation for sustainable growth** and success. **Applications are open now**, and seats are limited, so don't miss this incredible opportunity to elevate your business in 2025. **Join the Bridging Health Equity Accelerator** - Submit your interest form here: [bridginghealthequity.org](https://bridginghealthequity.org)

#### Save The Date:

Join DiscoverU Health for an informational webinar hosted by the **Maryland MBDA Business Center** on **January 6, 2025**, presented by Pamgrace Gachege, Founder/CEO of DiscoverU Health. The session, titled *"Scaling for Success: Your Employees Are the Differentiator"* will explore why and how to leverage employee wellness for accelerated growth.

W: [discoveruhealth.net](https://discoveruhealth.net) | P: 301-363-9233 | E: [hello@discoveruhealth.net](mailto:hello@discoveruhealth.net)

***We wish DiscoverU Health and its clients much SUCCESS as they work together to bridge health and equity and build stronger businesses!***

## Partnerships that WORK!

### ELITE RESOURCE PARTNER (ERP) PROGRAM

The Maryland MBDA Business Center is actively identifying **Finance** and **Procurement Sector Resource Partners** to participate in our **"Elite Resource Partner Program,"** where we refer Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Enterprises (S/EDBEs). The Center is seeking firms that are reliable and have a vested interest in providing access to capital and procurement opportunities to these Business Center Clients. The Elite Resource Partner Program is yet another effort in advocating for the growth and sustainability of S/EDBEs nationwide.

If you are a Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Enterprise seeking funding opportunities and more advantageous financial resources, or if you are a financial organization seeking to expand your pool of qualified candidates seeking capital, allow the Maryland MBDA Business Center's ERP Program to assist your company and/or organization in meeting those goals. **S/EDBE Financing Opportunities include:** *Accounts Receivable, Business Loans, Bridge Loans, Construction Loans, Equipment Financing, Line of Credit, Mezzanine Financing (Debt & Equity Financing), Mortgages and more.* **Learn more by visiting our S/EDBE Website Financing tab:** [Elite Resource Partner Referral Program - Maryland MBDA Business Center \(marylandmbdacenter.com\)](https://marylandmbdacenter.com/EliteResourcePartnerReferralProgram)

**For those seeking to participate as an "Elite Resource Partner"** please contact *Senior Business Development Specialist, Gary Moore:* [gmoore@marylandmbdacenter.com](mailto:gmoore@marylandmbdacenter.com) or (P) 667.303.3530 to learn how your organization can benefit from the ERP Program, meet Socially and Economically Disadvantaged participation goals and/or expand your capital portfolio.

#### PARTNERS:



GOVOLOGY



U.S. Capital & Commodities



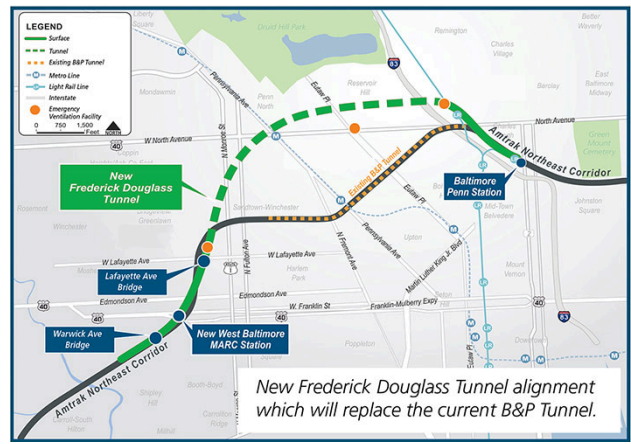
HARKINS

SKANSKA

## Owner/Operator's CORNER!



### MINORITY BUSINESS COMPLIANCE REPORTING



L. S. Caldwell & Associates, Inc. has been selected to provide contracting and employment compliance on the Frederick Douglass Tunnel Program (FDTP). Under the leadership of the ADVANCE Team (AECOM and Jacobs), the FDTP [aims to modernize and transform a 10-mile section of the Northeast Corridor \(NEC\) between Washington, D.C. and New Jersey](#) over ten (10) years. [It includes the construction of two new high-capacity tunnel tubes for electrified passenger trains, new bridges, track, rail systems, and infrastructure. The existing B&P Tunnel in Baltimore, which dates back to the Civil War era, will largely be replaced by the new Frederick Douglass Tunnel.](#) The new tunnel will have two parallel, single-track tubes, each approximately two miles long, and will allow for faster travel speeds than the existing tunnel. The project will cost \$4.7 billion and aims to increase speeds from 30 mph to 110 mph, reducing delays on the entire NEC. It also includes new roadway and railroad bridges, track, rail systems, and infrastructure, as well as an ADA-accessible West Baltimore MARC Station.

**L.S. Caldwell & Associates, Inc. (LSC)** is charged with Compliance oversight for the project which includes identifying all aspects of contracting and employment compliance under federal, state and local legislation and ensuring all lower tier subcontractor participation. Additionally, LSC will monitor, track and report all compliance requirements including workforce development.

This new tunnel will provide enhanced Customer Benefits including:

- State-of-the-art tunnel for all-electric passenger trains
- Modernized rail infrastructure along 10 miles of the NEC
- New ADA-accessible West Baltimore MARC Station
- Improved travel times and reliability for MARC and Amtrak customers

and result in numerous Community Benefits including:

- \$50 million Community Investment Program
- Modern fire/life safety systems
- Improvements to West Baltimore roads and bridges

For more information contact **Laura Caldwell** at [laurac@lscaldwell.com](mailto:laurac@lscaldwell.com).

## **Get CONNECTED!**

### **MONTHLY BUSINESS CENTER EVENTS**

***Is your business seeking to be connected with procurement opportunities, available resources and other businesses? Learn how your business can benefit from the Center's monthly B2B and B2G events!***

The Maryland MBDA Business Center regularly hosts **ProcurementCONNECT Series**, a **Premier Invitation Only** event that pairs Center clients with Procurement Officers and decision makers from government agencies, corporations and institutions, referred to as Center "Resource Partners" with "real-time, current and specific" procurement opportunities. This exclusive participant Series has proven to be successful over the course of MBDA program years as Center Resource Partners continue to utilize the Center to identify and vet viable S/EDBEs to participate in their procurement opportunities. ProcurementCONNECT Series include procurement opportunities in all trades including construction, insurance, food service, information technology, medical staffing and much more! The upcoming ProcurementCONNECT Series will include Skanska Construction and the Department of Veteran Affairs, Veterans Health Administration.

The Center also conducts informative workshops as a part of its monthly **Webinar Series** on various topics supporting high growth S/EDBEs. **Recent topics covered:** "Globalizing Your Business" hosted by Black & Global Business Network; "Mental Health in the Workplace" hosted by Reju Wellness; "Business Cash Flow Workshop" hosted by Chase Bank; "Global Marketplace" hosted by Phoebe Marketing and more.

### **KEY DATES**

**Keep Up-to-Date with the Business Center's Upcoming Events**

<https://marylandmbdacenter.com/calendar-events>

## MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

### CORE BUSINESS SERVICES

#### Access to Capital

Identification of domestic and global financing opportunities, equity financing, brokerage of financial transactions, merger and acquisitions.

#### Access to Contracts

Identification of procurement opportunities, solicitation analysis, bid and proposal preparation, negotiation and closing, research contract award histories.

#### Access to Markets

Government procurement assistance, private sector contract identification, specialized Federal, State and Local certification assistance and market research assistance.

#### Strategic Business Consulting

Sales consulting and forecasting, market feasibility studies, operations management and quality control, bid preparation, construction bonding and facility leasing.

#### Events and Training

Procurement series, monthly webinar series, strategic partnership events and federal procurement education and training.

**For the latest information on MBDA programs and announcements, please visit [www.MBDA.gov](http://www.MBDA.gov).**



### ABOUT THE MARYLAND MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, BUSINESS CENTER

Funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, working on behalf of the nation's 9.7 million Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (S/EDBE), the Maryland MBDA Business Center located in Baltimore, Maryland is owned and operated by L. S. Caldwell & Associates, Inc. (LSC). The Center is part of a national network of forty-six (46) funded Centers located in major cities throughout the U.S. and works with various resources to increase access to financing, contract opportunities and creation and retention of jobs for S/EDBEs.

#### VISION

Economic prosperity for Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Enterprises.

#### MISSION

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is the only federal agency solely dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Enterprises.

#### WHO WE SERVE

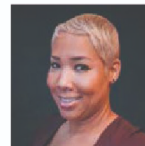
Our clients are U.S. Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Enterprises (S/EDBEs) averaging over \$500 Million annually in gross sales.

S/EDBEs are fast-growing, innovative and represented in every industry sector in the United States. S/EDBEs directly contribute to the U.S. economy and account for the creation of millions of U.S. jobs.

### MARYLAND MBDA BUSINESS CENTER KEY STAFF

#### Gianna Hylton

Director



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#### Gary Moore

Senior Business Development Consultant



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### L. S. CALDWELL & ASSOCIATES, INC.

#### Maryland MBDA Business Center – Owner/Operator:

33+ years successfully providing Contracting, Employment and Community Awareness Participation Compliance

[202.587.7800](tel:202.587.7800) [www.lscaldwell.com](http://www.lscaldwell.com)

