

Supplier Diversity & Engagement

FISCAL YEAR
2023 - 2024





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YEAR IN REVIEW

This report summarizes the County of San Diego's (County) supplier outreach and engagement efforts from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The Department of Purchasing and Contracting (DPC) is committed to supporting the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) in ensuring successful participation of small and diverse businesses in County contracting. DPC ensures that diverse and small businesses, including minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, disabled veteran business, LGBTQIA+ owned, 8(a) business, HubZone business, and other disadvantaged businesses and nonprofit organizations are afforded an equitable opportunity to compete for contract awards through supplier outreach and education opportunities and activities. These activities are in line with all County efforts to implement Board Policy B-53 (Small Business Policy) and Board Policy B-39a (Veteran Owned Business and Disabled Veteran Business Program).

Throughout the year, the County hosted or participated in 41 events to engage with small and diverse businesses and community providers. Events ranged from those where the County participated as a speaker, panelist, or exhibitor to those the County hosted, including "How to Do Business with the County" information sessions.

EQUITY IN CONTRACTING

The County's goal is to ensure that local and regional government dollars used for contracting, consulting and procurements should benefit the communities we serve, proportionate to the demographics in our communities. In order to achieve this goal, the County implements inclusive contracting strategies. Inclusive contracting is a process of creating a more inclusive environment for businesses owned by those from underserved communities, to participate in a governmental procurement and contracting process. Contracting inequities are both internal to the government—how the government does business—and external—driven by the larger economy and how prime contractors to the government do their business.

In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the County developed the Equity in Contracting Questions and Considerations Checklist to provide guidance for incorporating equity and inclusion throughout the procurement and contracting process, including creating the Statement of Work and Evaluation Criteria; designing the process to select the members of the committee that will be reviewing request for proposals (Source Selection Committee), the Scoring Rubric and the SSC Report. Contracting Officer Representatives (COR) who manage County contracts and other County staff that are involved in the procurement and contracting process receive training on the Equity in Contracting Considerations Checklist as part of the foundational classes of the COR certification program. The Equity in Contracting Questions and Considerations Checklist supports the County's Strategic Initiatives of empowering our workforce, engaging the community, promoting justice, and advancing equity.

Community Engagement



Community engagement is at the center of the County of San Diego’s (County) operational model. In alignment with the County’s community engagement goal, the Department of Purchasing and Contracting has prioritized community engagement in the procurement process, especially to appropriately consider and reflect community needs and cultural competency/lived experiences during the process. DPC’s procurement process operates under an inclusive model of fair access to opportunities and full and open competition.

DPC has incorporated goals in the department’s operational plan to demonstrate it’s commitment to community engagement. For the County Fiscal Year 2023-2024 DPC committed to the following community engagement-related goals:

1. Participate/host vendor **24** outreach events
2. Participate/host **10** community engagement activities

DPC exceeded the first goal by participating/hosting 31 outreach events and achieved the second goal by participating/hosting 10 community engagement activities. These goals were accomplished by participating as an exhibitor and/or a panelist at small business-focused outreach events, hosting procurement technical assistance workshops and hosting “Doing Business with the County” webinars.

Participate/host vendor outreach events



Participate/host community engagement activities



2023 OCTOBER 2

Connecting with the County

In collaboration with the Office of Economic Development (EDGA) and Government Affairs, the Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ), the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) and HHS Agency Contract Support (ACS), DPC hosted the County of San Diego's first-ever "Connecting with the County" event at Waterfront Park. This was a "Meet the Prime" style event, which provided attendees the opportunity to meet and learn about the role and goods and services that various County departments purchase. At this event, attendees networked with local businesses from the San Diego region; County Prime contractors PCL Construction Services, Inc. and Balfour Beatty; and Behavioral Health Services, Child Family and Well-Being, General Services, Public Works, Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities, Planning and Development Services and the Sheriff's Office. Additionally, attendees were provided a presentation on how to do business with the County and had the opportunity to ask questions about the County's procurement process from a panel of County Executives from ACS, DPC, EDGA, OERJ and OLSE. A virtual option was provided for the presentation and panel portion of the event.



2023 OCTOBER 3

Live Well San Diego Advance Pre-Conference

In collaboration with the Small Business Development Center, DPC conducted a workshop as part of the Live Well San Diego Advance Pre-Conference. This workshop highlighted how the County of San Diego promotes participation of small, local, minority-owned, community-based organizations and businesses in the County's contracting process. Additionally, this workshop discussed how businesses can become engaged in the contracting processes and successfully do business with the County, as well as, the free training and mentoring resources available to them through organizations like the Small Business Development Center and APEX Accelerator. The recorded workshop can be found [here](#).

2024 JUNE 20 *Small Business Expo*

The Small Business Expo was hosted by the San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly known as the PTAC) and sponsored by the County of San Diego. At this event, entrepreneurs and small business owners had the opportunity to engage with small business resource centers, specialized lenders and connect with fellow entrepreneurs from the San Diego region. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to learn about government contracting opportunities from agencies such as the County of San Diego.

2024 JUNE 28 *4th Annual BELL Business & Government Contracting Summit*

The Black Entrepreneurs Leaders & Learners (BELL), a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide opportunities on educating, growing, funding and supporting black entrepreneurs, hosted its 4th Annual Business and Government Contracting Summit this past June. This Summit gave startup entrepreneurs and small businesses the opportunity to learn how to navigate the government contracting opportunities. Attendees at this event received insight on the government procurement process and how to prepare responses to solicitations from various government agency representatives and contractors who were able to successfully win government contracts.



FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Date	Host/Sponsor	Event
7/14/2023	Black Entrepreneurs Leaders & Learners (BELL)	BELL Government Contracting & Certification Summit
7/19/2023	Small Business Development Center	Connecting with Contracts: Celebrating Pride Months
7/27/2023	United States Navy	Navy Gold Coast Small Business Procurement Event
8/9/2023	Founders First	Doing Business with the County of San Diego
8/16/2023	Public Agency Consortium (PAC)	PAC Meeting
8/30/2023	Caltrans	Caltrans 19th Annual Procurement Resource Fair
9/7/2023	San Diego Airport Authority	Airport Meet the Primes
9/11/2023	San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp. & County of San Diego - Department of Purchasing and Contracting	Anchor Institution Collaborative Meeting
9/13/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 1: Introduction to the County of San Diego/Navigating the Procurement Portal
9/20/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 2: Creating a Foundation for Success/What to Expect
9/27/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 3: Viability Test/The County's Small Business Program

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Date	Host/Sponsor	Event
10/2/2023	County of San Diego	Connecting with the County
10/4/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 4: Proposal Writing
10/5/2023	Small Business Development Center	Small Business Resource Fair & Ribbon Cutting
10/11/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 5: You've Been Awarded a Contract, Now What?
10/12/2023	Public Agency Consortium (PAC)	PAC Meeting
10/13/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Small Business Expo
10/18/2023	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 6: Financial Management/Meet the Buyers
10/24/2023	Small Business Development Center	Connecting with Contracts: Celebrating Women Business Month
10/31/2023	County of San Diego	Live Well San Diego Advance Pre-Conference
11/8/2023	Small Business Development Center	Connecting with Contracts: Celebrating National Veterans and Military Families

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Date	Host/Sponsor	Event
1/8/2024	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Small Business Expo
2/14/2024	Public Agency Consortium (PAC)	PAC Meeting
3/8/2024	University of San Diego	University of San Diego Supply Chain Management Career Fair
3/11/2024	Mental Health America San Diego	Doing Business with the County of San Diego
3/18/2024	San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp. & County of San Diego - Department of Purchasing and Contracting	Anchor Institution Collaborative Meeting
3/20/2024	Small Business Development Center	North San Diego Small Business Development Center Advisory Board Meeting
3/28/2024	County of San Diego	County of San Diego Ethics Fair
4/10/2024	Public Agency Consortium (PAC)	PAC Meeting
4/12/2024	Small Business Development Center, San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Connecting with Contracts: Celebrating Diversity Month

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Date	Host/Sponsor	Event
5/8/2024	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 1: Introduction to the County of San Diego/Navigating the Procurement Portal
5/15/2024	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 2: Creating a Foundation for Success/What to Expect
5/22/2024	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 3: Proposal Writing
6/5/2024	County of San Diego, San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Connecting with the County
6/6/2024	Small Business Development Center	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 1: Introduction to the County of San Diego
6/13/2024	Small Business Development Center	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 2: Proposal Writing
6/20/2024	San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center)	Small Business Expo
6/20/2024	Small Business Development Center	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 3: Pricing/Fair and Reasonable
6/27/2024	Small Business Development Center	Procurement Technical Assistance Workshop Module 4: Understanding County Services Agreement Clauses
6/27/2024	County of San Diego	Meeting with San Diego Chambers of Commerce: Enhancing Small Business Participation in County of San Diego Contracts
6/28/2024	Black Entrepreneurs Leaders & Learners (BELL)	BELL Government Contracting & Certification Summit

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



In 2020, the County of San Diego established a procurement technical assistance program in partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), whose top priority is to encourage small business development and growth to achieve job creation and retention, capital investments and dynamic innovation that improves the quality of life in San Diego County. The purpose of this program is to increase the knowledge of local small businesses, non-profit organizations and other community providers through workshops and one-on-one support to participate in County procurements more effectively. The County expanded the program in Fiscal Year 2022-2033 by partnering with the San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX Accelerator (APEX), formerly known as PTAC), to offer additional support for local small businesses, non-profit organizations and other community providers. The San Diego, Orange, Imperial APEX is an economic development program of Southwestern Community College District located in South San Diego County and a certified Minority Institution that has served the San Diego region for more than fifty years.

The Lunch and Learn workshops with SBDC and APEX cover government contracting and the County's procurement process and policies. Each workshop is two hours long and provides attendees the opportunity to ask questions. All workshops were offered virtually at no cost and attendees are also eligible for no cost one-on-one advisory services from both the SBDC and APEX. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Lunch and Learn series was enhanced to include workshops designed specifically for community-based organizations. Although created for community-based organizations, all businesses interested in learning more about the topics offered through these workshops were eligible and welcomed to attend. In Below is a list of the workshops offered through the procurement technical assistance programs.

- Introduction to the County of San Diego and Navigating the Procurement Portal
- Creating a Foundation for Success/What to Expect
- Viability Test/The County of San Diego's Small Business Program
- Proposal Writing for the County of San Diego
- You've Been Awarded a Contract, Now What?
- Contract Financial Management and Meet the Buyers
- Pricing/Fair and Reasonable
- Understanding County Services Agreement Clauses
- Invoicing
- Documentation and Records Retention
- Compliance with Scope of Work

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

APEX ACCELERATORS

Served 1,729 clients.

- 563 Women Clients.
- 295 Black/African American Clients.
- 402 Hispanic/Latino Clients.
- 161 Asian Clients.
- 430 Veteran Clients.

- Contributed to an increase in sales of \$598,477,418.
- Helped secure \$1,163,777,622 in government contracts.

In a significant milestone, CENTRIC has been awarded a contract with the County of San Diego to provide media vendor services for elections through 2028. The journey of CENTRIC began with Shannon Brown, whose career started in 2000 with a consulting firm focused on navigating the media landscape with honesty and integrity. Inspired by a promise made to her mother, Shannon founded CENTRIC with a vision to inspire individuals and enrich communities. With her mom's belief and the support of loved ones, Shannon created an agency dedicated to making a positive impact.

Today, CENTRIC is a women-owned small business that prioritizes transparent communication and empowers its clients. CENTRIC's success is also attributed to the exceptional support from APEX, which expertly guided the business owner through the process of securing a GSA Multiple Award Schedule (GSA MAS) and the State of California Multiple Award Schedules (CMAS) contract awards. This greatly enhanced CENTRIC's opportunities in government marketplaces. The APEX team has played a pivotal role in CENTRIC's growth, fostering relationships that have exceeded expectations. Their exceptional leadership, training, support, and guidance have been invaluable.

APEX has opened invaluable opportunities for CENTRIC to connect with key business and government partners. The team is especially thankful for the tireless support and expert guidance from APEX's senior procurement advisor and the dedicated assistance from the Regional Director and his exceptional team. APEX's steadfast commitment and extensive support are crucial for any business looking to excel in government contracting and build significant relationships.

As CENTRIC continues to grow and thrive, the agency remains committed to its core values of honesty, integrity, and transparency. The team expertly guides and collaborates with organizations through the complexities of the media world, offering comprehensive solutions that deliver real impact. Together, they are making a lasting difference.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Served 952 clients.

- 209 Women Clients.
- 57 Black/African American Clients.
- 133 Hispanic/Latino Clients.
- 38 Asian Clients.
- 38 Veteran Clients.

- Contributed to an increase in sales of \$578,519,719.
- Helped secure \$112,480,220 in government contracts.

LC Tree Service, a thriving small business based in San Diego County, exemplifies the impact of strategic partnerships and expert guidance. Through dedicated support from the San Diego and Imperial Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and engagement with County initiatives, LC Tree Service achieved significant milestones in government contracting, operational growth, and workforce development.

LC Tree Service faced challenges navigating government contracting, particularly understanding compliance with prevailing wage determinations, workforce certifications, and accessing grant opportunities. The company also sought to expand its capabilities to meet growing demands in public and private contracts.

Solutions Provided

1. SBDC Partnership:

- The North San Diego SBDC, led by Cheryl Brown, provided tailored counseling sessions, including step-by-step guidance on:
 - Wage determination for public projects.
 - CA Department of Industrial (DIR) contractor registration.
 - Submission processes for County contracts.
- Training sessions equipped LC Tree Service with skills in proposal development and compliance.

2. Access to Capital:

- The company leveraged SBDC advisement to secure funding, including vehicle loans for operational expansion, demonstrating financial growth.

3. Networking Opportunities:

- LC Tree Service was introduced to County of San Diego programs and facilitated connections with prime contractors and government agencies.

4. Grant Assistance:

- LC Tree Service successfully accessed resources for the \$25,000 Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Grant and was made aware of local grant opportunities via SBDC support.

Results

- **Increased Revenue:** A reported \$1.3 million in gross annual sales, with \$420,000 secured through a significant contract with Helix Environmental and \$130,000 from Aherns.
- **Operational Expansion:** Acquisition of new vehicles and increased workforce capacity.
- **Contracting Success:** Successful navigation of government contracting barriers led to valuable subcontractor roles on major projects.
- **Empowered Workforce:** Through training and compliance support, LC Tree Service maintained its skilled workforce and met the demands of high-profile contracts.

CONTRACTOR'S CORNER: SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

Credible Messenger Program Procurement

The County of San Diego (County) is committed to creating opportunities for small businesses to participate on County contracts. The solicitation to procure a Comprehensive Credible Messenger Program is one example of how the County has advanced this commitment in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. This program employs former or current justice-involved individuals to mentor youth and young adults currently on juvenile probation. When these services were last procured in 2019, the County was aware that there were many small organizations performing work in the communities within the areas to be served under the Comprehensive Credible Messenger Program. To encourage participation of these small community organizations, the Statement of Work included subcontractor considerations as part of the general requirements of service delivery. The contract was eventually awarded to Social Advocates for Youth, who subcontracted with several small, diverse organizations that are well-established in the communities within the areas to be served under the program and who have staff that have lived experience working with justice-involved individuals.

A solicitation to re-procure these services was posted to BuyNet in December 2023. The contract for this most recent procurement was awarded in May 2024 to Project AWARE, one of the original subcontractors to Social Advocates for Youth on the previous contract. This procurement is an example of how a small organization was able to build contracting experience as a subcontractor and successfully leverage the skills and knowledge they obtained from this experience to win an award on a County contract. The total contract is for five years not to exceed \$2,344,080.

Project MOST Procurement

Another opportunity the County of San Diego (County) provides to encourage the participation of small businesses on County contracts is through the Minority Owned Support and Technical Assistance Project (Project MOST). The purpose of Project MOST is to support small minority-owned businesses and small minority-led non-profit organizations achieve business growth through training and technical assistance. Services for this program were recently re-procured in Fiscal Year 2023-2024 resulting in a contract awarded to The Prep Institute, a small minority-owned business. The Prep Institute gained valuable experience as a subcontractor to RISE San Diego on the previous Project MOST contract, where they prepared presentations for the training and taught some of the classes in the program. This procurement is another example of how a small organization was able to leverage their experience as a subcontractor to win an award on a County contract. The total contract award is for five years not to exceed \$1,073,325.

MEET BUYPNET

The County of San Diego publishes solicitations for needed goods and services on BuyNet, <https://sdbuynet.sandiegocounty.gov/>. Launched in the Fall of 2023, this new portal features additional functionality that was not previously available on the old site, including the ability to track business demographics. This critical information enhances the County's procurement process to ensure that solicitations are viewed by diverse businesses. To emphasize its importance at outreach events, Department of Purchasing and Contracting staff encourages suppliers to register on BuyNet and complete the demographic survey.

The transition to the new BuyNet portal required users registered in the old BuyNet to register in the new system. However, despite this requirement, from launch in November 2023, to the end of June 2024, over 2,000 suppliers registered in the BuyNet portal.

Navigation: [New Supplier? Register Now](#) [View Solicitations](#)

Breadcrumb: [Login](#)

Fields marked by an asterisk * are mandatory

Welcome to BuyNet

There is no charge to register or to use our system. If you are a supplier interested in doing business with the County of San Diego, please self-register in BuyNet. If you wish to receive commodity based notifications of new solicitations and changes to solicitations, you must also register for commodities within your BuyNet account profile using UNSPSC commodity codes.

Please email the [Department of Purchasing and Contracting](#) if you require further assistance on your vendor or commodity profile.

As a public agency, the County of San Diego must adhere to the California Public Records Act. Therefore, solicitation documents may become public records subject to disclosure at the conclusion of the procurement process. The County intends to publish contracts, which may contain some or all of the successful proposal(s), to its public web site. See the solicitation documents for more information about confidential or proprietary information.

Guides and Documents

- [Creating and Managing Supplier Profiles](#)
- [Public View of Solicitations](#)
- [Responding to a Solicitation](#)
- [BuyNet FAQs](#)
- [County Code of Ethics - Prohibition of Gifts & Gratuities](#)

For any historical information, please visit [BuyNet](#)

IDENTIFICATION

Login *

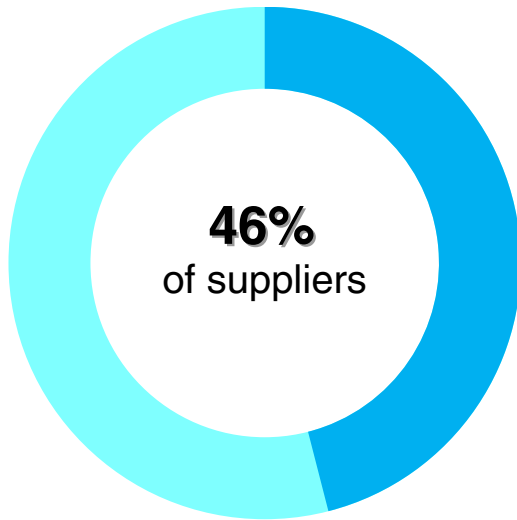
Password *

[Lost your password?](#)

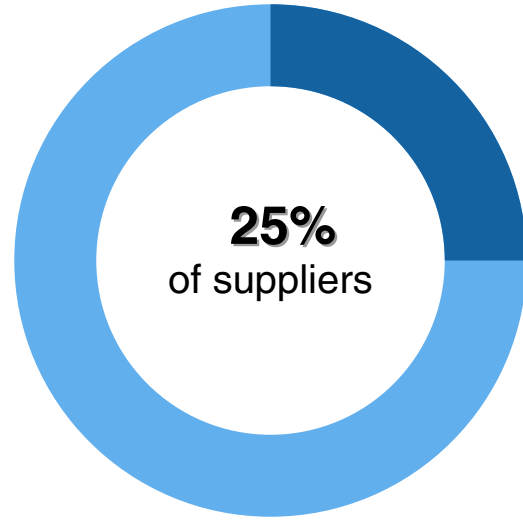
- [Help Desk +1 858-505-6367](#)
- [New Supplier? Register Now](#)
- [View Solicitations](#)

BUYNET SUPPLIER DEMOGRAPHICS

NOVEMBER 2023 - JUNE 2024



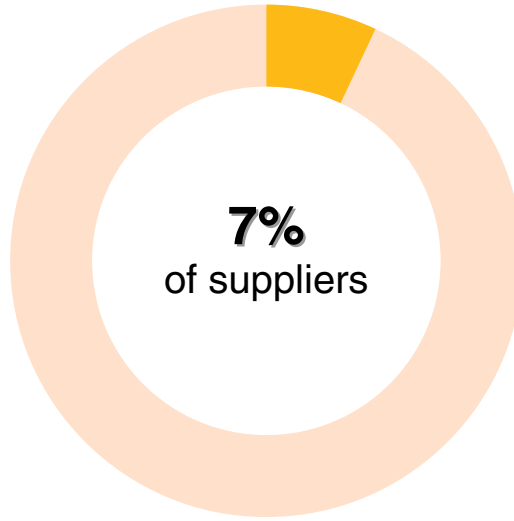
1147 businesses responded as being **small**



623 businesses responded as being **minority-owned**



177 businesses responded as being **non-profits**



181 businesses responded as being **women-owned**



185 businesses responded as being **veteran-owned**

LOOKING AHEAD

The County of San Diego (County) will continue to build on the progress of integrating equity throughout the procurement and contracting process in the upcoming fiscal year and beyond. Some of the actions to look forward to are:

- Formalizing local participation for all County contracts where appropriate and allowable based on funding requirements and law;
- Increasing the County's local business bid preference from 5% to 15% and refreshing the local business preference definition to include non-profit organizations as eligible participants;
- Establishing a goal that 25% of annual procurement spend to be with local, small businesses and non-profit organizations;
- Developing of a small business advancement policy;
- Establishing of a comprehensive technical assistance program to support local small businesses, including non-profit organizations, in navigating the County's procurement and contracting process; and
- Establishing of an insurance and bonding assistance program intended to help local small businesses, including non-profit organizations, overcome some of the barriers to participating in larger County projects.

Highlights from these actions will be included in the next annual report, stay tuned! Follow the County on this journey and keep current on the latest news in procurement and contracting through the Department of Purchasing and Contracting's website and by registering in BuyNet.



Supplier Diversity & Engagement

FISCAL YEAR
2023 - 2024

