



Connecting the DOTs

Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Newsletter

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A Farewell from OSDBU Director, Bradley Mims



As I embark on a new chapter in my journey and bid farewell to the incredible family here at the Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the opportunity to lead such an exceptional organization.

Reflecting on my time as Director, each day I have witnessed your unwavering commitment, tireless dedication, and boundless passion in championing the cause of small and disadvantaged businesses. Your collective efforts have not only transformed our organization but have also touched countless lives, making a tangible difference in our communities.

As I prepare to pass the torch to the new OSDBU Director, Tyra Redus, J.D. on June 3rd, I want to express my deepest appreciation to each and every one of you. Your resilience, creativity, and unwavering commitment to our mission have been nothing short of inspiring. Together, we have overcome challenges, celebrated victories, and forged enduring friendships that I will cherish always.

I am filled with pride and optimism for the future of OSDBU. Under the leadership of Director Redus, I have no doubt that this office will continue to flourish and drive positive change and empower those who need it most.

While entering into this new adventure, I carry with me the memories of our shared triumphs and the knowledge that the work we have done together has made a meaningful impact. While I may no longer be by your side, please know that I will always hold each of you in the highest regard and cherish the memories we have created together.

Sincerely,

Bradley Mims

Former OSDBU Director

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OSDBU HIGHLIGHTS

Updates for the Small Business Community



OSDBU Launches U.S. DOT Connect to Capital Virtual Portal

U.S. DOT Connect to Capital is an online portal that serves as an interactive virtual platform for Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs), Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and private capital investors, SBA licensed Small Business Investment Companies (SBICs), U.S. Treasury's State Small Business Credit Initiatives (SSBCIs), and U.S. Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).



U.S. DOT Secretary Buttigieg and OSDBU Access to Capital Initiative Program Manager, Sam Boyd engage in a fireside chat at the U.S. DOT Connect to Capital launch.

The purpose of U.S. DOT Connect to Capital is to provide a secure and reliable way for SDBs/DBEs and private investors to interact, build relationships and gain access to capital. Through the platform, the SDBs/DBEs and various private investment industries can match based on profile preferences and connect to discuss access to capital and goals. The platform features virtual tools to enable these interactions such as a virtual library, video instruction guide, webinars, roundtable discussions, and matchmaking.

U.S. DOT Connect to Capital is part of the Connections MarketPlace (CMP) platform and users may seamlessly access business development symposiums, webinars, panel discussions and meetings. To connect today, visit [U.S. DOT Connect to Capital](https://www.dotcmp.com) at [dotcmp.com](https://www.dotcmp.com).

USDOT Achieves “A” Grade from SBA for FY23



The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) is delighted to share that for the 15th consecutive year, the Department has once again received an “A” grade from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) on its [Small Business Procurement Scorecard](#) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. In FY 2023, the Department awarded a record total of over 2.2 billion dollars to small disadvantaged businesses through prime and subcontracting opportunities.

This is an honor and well-deserved accolade for both the Department and the work OSDBU does to assist a diverse base of small businesses to grow and develop their core competencies. A big shout out to the work OSDBU and Operating Administrations continue to do in prioritization of our small business community and the Department's goals! For questions, email dot-osdbu@dot.gov. Visit our website to find more about OSDBU, upcoming events, and available technical assistance at www.transportation.gov/osdbu.



WELCOME NEW STAFF

Meet the New OSDBU Team Members

Meet Thomasine L. Johnson, Executive Staff Assistant



Thomasine L. Johnson serves as the Executive Staff Assistant of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU). Ms. Johnson has 20+ years of experience in administration and executive leadership support.

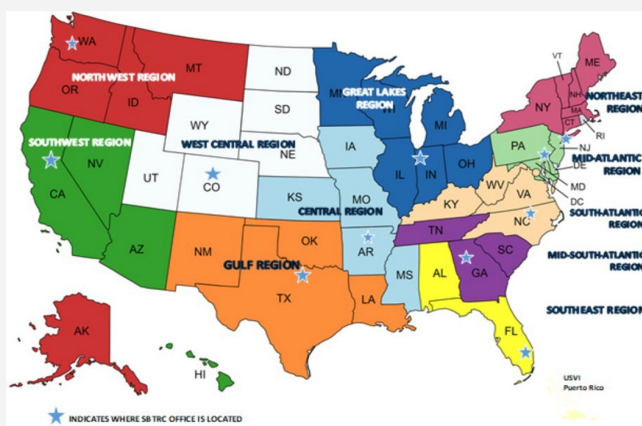
Johnson career in transportation started as a customer service representative for Prince George’s County Department of Public Works where she worked her way to Executive Assistant to the Associate Director of Transportation. At this point she found her love for transportation! In addition to her role as Executive Assistant, she also served as the Program Manager for the Transportation Demand Management Program where she revitalized the Rideshare and Employer Outreach program by strengthening transportation initiatives and strongly supporting multimodal public transportation within Prince George’s County and surrounding jurisdictions.

Prior to her entrance into the Federal government sector, Ms. Johnson served as the Department Administrator for the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority Office of Health and Wellness, where she also served as the Program Manager of WMATA COVID-19 testing site to maintain compliance with testing and vaccination mandate during the pandemic. Ms. Johnson currently serves as the Membership Chair for the Conference of Minority Transportation Official Maryland Chapter. She holds a Master of Business Management in Organizational Leadership. She completed a Human Resource Professional Certification program and Project Management for Transportation Official Certification.

REACH OUT TO YOUR SBTRC

The U.S. DOT Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) established the [Small Business Transportation Resource Centers](#) (SBTRCs) as a network of grantees to work

closely with the transportation contracting community and other technical assistance providers to serve small and disadvantaged, transportation-related businesses.



These centers provide technical assistance to small businesses to build their capacity in order to become more competitive when bidding on USDOT procurement opportunities and federally-funded contracts.

OSDBU ON THE ROAD

Engaging with the Small Business Community Across the Nation



OSDBU Welcomes New Southeast Regional SBTRC Center

On March 21st, the Southeast Small Business Transportation Resource Center (SBTRC) held a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of their office in Miami, Florida. The featured speakers at the ribbon cutting event included Southeast SBTRC Project Director and emcee KyShun Nicholas; U.S. DOT OSDBU Director Brad Mims, and Southeast SBTRC Executive Director Beatrice Louissaint. Participants included SBA and MBDA representatives, as well as small and disadvantaged businesses.



Left to Right: U.S. DOT OSDBU Regional Assistance Division Manager, Peter Kontakos; U.S. DOT OSDBU Lead Program Analyst, Steronica Mattocks; SE SBTRC Program Director KyShun Nicholas; U.S. DOT OSDBU Director A. Bradley Mims; SE SBTRC Executive Director Beatrice Louissaint; SE SBTRC Project Coordinator Henry Payoute; and U.S. DOT OSDBU Small Business Specialist—8(a) and HUBZone.

On March 22nd, the Southeast SBTRC delivered a Women & Girls Transportation Initiative (WITI) program where students from local high schools were provided a tour of Miami International Airport and heard varied airport leadership executives share remarks regarding aviation career pathways. The U.S. DOT OSDBU Lead Program Analyst and WITI Program Manager Steronica Mattocks also served as a panel member moderated by OSDBU Small Business Specialist Natalie Rosa to discuss the WITI mission to increase the participation of women in the transportation industry and prepare young women to become our nation's future leaders in transportation.

The Southeast SBTRC works closely with the transportation contracting community and other technical assistance providers to offer no-cost technical assistance programs designed to enhance the capabilities of small and disadvantaged businesses in Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.



Left Photo: U.S. DOT OSDBU meets with small business firms to talk about women in transportation-related careers. Right Photo: Miami International Airport hangar during a WITI tour with local high school students.

OSDBU ON THE ROAD

Engaging with the Small Business Community Across the Nation



OSDBU Welcomes New Central Region SBTRC Center



Left to right: Central SBTRC ED Maura Downs, USDOT OSDBU RAD Manager Peter Kontakos, USDOT OSDBU Program Analyst Magen Elenz, USDOT OSDBU Lead Program Analyst Steronica Mattocks, St. Louis County Councilwoman Shalonda Webb, U.S. Representative Cori Bush, USDOT OSDBU PAD Manager Leonardo San Roman, Central SBTRC PD Venus Martz, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership CEO & President Rodney Crim, St. Louis Development Corporation Neil Richardson and WBDC President & CEO Emilia DiMenco.

On April 4th, the [Central Small Business Transportation Resource Center \(SBTRC\)](#) held a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of their office in the Cortex innovation district of St. Louis, Missouri. The featured speakers at the ribbon cutting event included remarks from U.S. Representative Cori Bush, St. Louis County Councilwoman Shalonda Webb, St. Louis Economic Development Partnership CEO & President Rodney Crim, and Chairman, President and CEO of St. Louis Development Corporation Neil Richardson, Women's Business Development Center President & CEO Emilia DiMenco. Central SBTRC Project Director Venus Martz, U.S. DOT OSDBU Regional Assistance Division Manager Peter Kontakos, and Procurement Assistance Division Manager Leonardo San Roman also gave welcome remarks.

The day also included a Women & Girls Transportation Initiative (WITI) program where students from local universities and community colleges heard from successful women in transportation careers. St. Louis Lambert International Airport Director Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge, St. Louis County Councilwoman and Boeing Engineering Workforce Affordability & Staffing Lead Sholanda Webb, and MDOT External Civil Rights Director Missy Struedel shared their career paths and how other women can get involved. The U.S. DOT OSDBU Lead Program Analyst Steronica Mattocks also shared remarks about the WITI mission to increase the participation of women in the transportation industry and prepare young women to become our nation's future leaders in transportation.

The Central SBTRC works closely with the transportation contracting community and other technical assistance providers to offer no-cost technical assistance programs designed to enhance the capabilities of small and disadvantaged businesses in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, and Missouri.



*Left photo: St. Louis County Councilwoman and Boeing Engineering Workforce Affordability & Staffing Lead Sholanda Webb
Right photo: St. Louis Lamber International Airport Director Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge*

DOT & SMALL BUSINESS

Get to Know our DOT Small Business Specialists



Meet the Office of the Secretary Small Business Specialist



Steven Budd wears many hats in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation's Office of the Secretary (OST), serving as OST's Small Business Specialist (SBS), Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), and as a Contract Specialist. Before joining the DOT team, Steven worked in contracting at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), where he awarded service, supply, and R&D contracts supporting USACE Headquarters. Prior to his time at USACE, he worked for the Defense Logistics Agency's (DLA) Medical Readiness Division, where he procured pharmaceuticals and medical/surgical supplies to support emergency response and contingency requirements. Steven holds a B.S. in Computer Forensics from Bloomberg University and a J.D. from Drexel Law. He practiced as an attorney prior to his career in the federal

government, working in public interest and housing law, criminal defense, and as a contract attorney. In his free time, Steven enjoys the outdoors, traveling, and going out to dance with friends.

What is OST's mission?

OST oversees the formulation of national transportation policy and promotes intermodal transportation. Other responsibilities range from negotiation and implementation of international transportation agreements, assuring the fitness of US airlines, enforcing airline consumer protection regulations, issuance of regulations to prevent alcohol and illegal drug misuse in transportation systems, and preparing transportation legislation.

What are the most common NAICS codes for OST procurements?

541611 – Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services
561612 – Security Guards and Patrol Services
541511 – Custom Computer Programming Services
485999 – All Other Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation
541519 – Other Computer Related Services

How should small businesses reach out to OST procurement officials and any tips?

We recommend that small businesses first review OST's upcoming requirements on the DOT [Procurement Opportunity Forecast](#) to identify any upcoming needs that may fit the small business' portfolio. Acquisition planning begins with the program office in OST, so the points of contact listed in our forecast opportunities connect you directly with the program office official responsible for the requirement; this is an excellent opportunity to make a mark in the market research being conducted! Send an email to the program office point of contact outlining why you feel you'd be a good fit for the requirement and feel free to reach out directly to me at Steven.Budd@dot.gov.

What are OST's small business achievements from the past fiscal year?

OST has far exceeded all of our small business socioeconomic goals for FY23. OST awarded 50.9% of all its FY23 contracting dollars to small businesses, more than 15 points over our goal of 33.4%. 36% of all OST contracting dollars went to Small Disadvantaged Businesses, also 15 points over our goal of 21%. OST more than doubled our 3% goals for awards to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned and HUBZone Small Businesses, achieving 6.6% and 6.8%, respectfully. OST is proud to have tripled our 5% goal in FY23 for Women-Owned Small Businesses, awarding 15.6% of our contract dollars to WOSBs.



SUCCESS STORIES

Recognizing & Celebrating our Small Business Community

U.S. DOT Great Lakes SBTRC Small Business Client Secures International Bridge Project Contract



Eze Ejelonu is the President of Best Network Design LLC (BND) founded in 2014. BND is a DBE and MBE firm that specializes in low-voltage electrical contractor and security, telecommunication, Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging, and IT services. Over the past 10 years, Eze has been able to secure millions of dollars in contracts with municipal, state, and federal agencies and even grew his business during COVID-19 pandemic. Some of his most notable contracts have been with the City of Detroit, Wayne County, Detroit Housing Commission, Care First Rehabilitation (Healthcare), and Rallyhouse.

Best Network Design LLC is currently working on a once-in-a-generation infrastructure project: the [Gordie Howe International Bridge](#). This bridge creates the first seamless highway-to-highway connection between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario. The infrastructure project currently under construction features a six-lane crossing of the Detroit River connecting the U.S. to Canada to provide much needed transportation improvements for international travel and economic prosperity for both nations. Once completed, the 1.5-mile crossing will also be the longest cable-stayed bridge in North America!

Eze is actively involved in his community. Through his relationship with the [Great Lakes Small Business Transportation Resource Center \(SBTRC\)](#) he has taken advantage of the [U.S. DOT Women & Girls in Transportation Initiative \(WITI\)](#)

which offers young women from universities across the country internship programs to increase the participation of women in the transportation industry. He has previously hosted interns in his firm and is excited to work with another intern this summer on the monumental Gordie Howe International Bridge Project.



Photo credit: Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority

www.bestnetworkdesign.com • (313) 680-2047 • 120 South Green St. Suite A Detroit MI 48209

Article Provided by Great Lakes Small Business Transportation Resource Center



WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX

The Tools Your Small Business Needs to Know



Grant Resources Available for Technical Assistance

U.S. DOT established the [Thriving Communities](#) program to provide technical assistance and capacity building resources to improve and foster thriving communities through transportation improvements. This initiative launched a new online portal called the [DOT Navigator](#) to help communities understand the best ways to apply for grants, and to plan for and deliver transformative infrastructure projects and services. To learn about what money is available, check out potential options on the [Overview of DOT Funding and Financing](#) webpage.

Small Business Technical Assistance Support



Check out all the essential tools for small businesses on the [OSDBU Resources and Tools](#) page. Learn more about the tools, resources and programs with our federal partners, the [Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) and [Minority Business Development Agency](#) (MBDA). The SBA provides free or low-cost [local assistance](#) in an array of technical centers, financial opportunities, and programs for small businesses. MBDA invests in a national network of MBDA [Business Centers](#) and [Federal Procurement Centers](#) which offer customized business development and industry-focused services to provide greater access to capital, contracts and markets.

Don't forget to talk with our [DOT Small Business Specialists](#) in each Operating Administration whose primary role is to serve as small businesses advocates. Our Procurement Assistance Division works closely with each of these specialists to ensure that adequate procurement opportunities are made available to small businesses.

Meet with OSDBU on the Road or Virtually



Attend an upcoming virtual event on our [Connections Marketplace platform](#), which features an online community, roundtable sessions, and business match-making services with our DOT Operating Administrations.

Join the OSDBU team at one of our upcoming small business contracting symposiums to learn more about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law opportunities in your region, navigating procurements within the region and federally, receiving technical and financial resources, and meeting one-on-one with procurement professionals and other stakeholders. To get all the info on upcoming events, go to our [event page](#) and please [subscribe to our listserv](#) for updates.