

NASSAU COUNTY

OFFICE OF MINORITY AFFAIRS



“If There Is No Struggle, There Is No Progress”

- Frederick Douglass

Annual Report

2007

**Presented to the Nassau County Executive
by the Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs
John H. Moye, Executive Director**

Table of Contents

Staff of the Office of Minority Affairs	ii
Executive Summary	1
Section 1. Overview of Nassau’s M/WBE Program	2
Section 2. Accomplishments for 2007.....	3
Section 3. Outreach Activities and Projects	7
Section 4. Strategic Goals and Planning for 2008 – 2009	8
Conclusion	13

Staff of the Office of Minority Affairs

John H. Moye,
Executive Director

Dean Bennett,
Deputy Director

Doris Stallings-Rodriguez,
Deputy Director

Traci Wheelwright,
Counsel to the Office of Minority Affairs

Mohinder Taneja-Singh,
Project Director

Luis Mendez,
Project Director

Alana Smith,
Program Supervisor

Cynthia Mitchell,
Special Assistant

Not Shown:
Jack Prophet
Elaine Smith



Executive Summary

This report, *Minority/Women Business Enterprise Program in Nassau County: From Disparity to Parity*, is submitted in accordance with the Local Law 14-2002; Title 53, (Please see *Appendix A*) which requires, the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) to:

“... [R]eport to the County Legislature on the activities of the office and efforts by contracting agencies to promote employment of minority group members and women, and to promote and increase participation by certified businesses with respect to county contracts and subcontracts so as to facilitate the award of a fair share of county contracts to such businesses. Such report may recommend new activities and programs to effectuate the purposes of th[e] local law ...”

This report is also prepared so that our legislators and stakeholders may have a comprehensive view of our progress in our strategic planning efforts. All information and statistics in this report, unless otherwise specified, cover the period of January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

OMA has continued to serve as the principal advocate for Nassau’s minority and women owned businesses (M/WBEs) in the County and serves as a centralized clearinghouse of information and support to help women and minority businesses navigate the County’s procurement and certification systems. This year’s report provides an overview of the many outreach, support activities and services that are available to local businesses and constituents and diversity initiatives designed to promote research and development within the Nassau County government for the purposes of facilitating increased participation of minorities and women in Nassau County procurement. The 2007 report differs from the 2006 format in that procurement activity has been documented for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, *an Assessment of the Percentage Utilization of Certified Minority and Women-owned Businesses on Nassau County Contracts and Subcontracts* Memorandum, which was published on March 31, 2007. The Memorandum is incorporated into this Annual Report and attached hereto as *Appendix B*. The remaining report contains the same format but is divided into the following four sections:

Section One: Overview of Nassau’s M/WBE Program. This section delineates the role of OMA and provides a synopsis of the program to date.

Section Two: Accomplishments of 2007. This section outlines the accomplishments of the program.

Section Three: Outreach Activities and Projects. This section outlines the efforts of OMA to increase participation of M/WBEs in County contracting.

Section Four: Strategic Goals and Planning for 2008 - 2009. This section is a summary of performance during 2007 and an introduction to goals for 2008.

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW OF NASSAU’S M/WBE PROGRAM

In 1994, the Nassau County Charter was amended under Article XXI, Miscellaneous Officers, Section 2112 to establish OMA for the purpose of serving as an infrastructure for addressing issues related to minority constituents.

Established in October 2002 by the Nassau County Legislature, the Minority and Women’s Business Enterprise Program (the “M/WBE Program”) includes both economic development and diversity development, which are integral components in the County’s efforts to improve and expand the economy and economic opportunities for minorities in Nassau County. The M/WBE Program embodies the strong partnership between economic development and diversity development. OMA seeks to establish innovative programs that include business, vocational or skills upgrade training. It is OMA’s intent to encourage potential County contractors to have in place or develop an aggressive outreach and recruitment program that reaches minority and female populations and encourages their participation.

The Office of Minority Affairs continues to be a catalyst in innovation, partnerships and growth. In our fourth year of the operation of the M/WBE program, OMA continues to prove through strong partnerships that it can take on and meet impressive challenges to energize support for the M/WBE Program both inside and outside of County government.

OMA as required by Title 53 continues to increase M/WBE participation and has set aspirational goals according to service and ethnicity to diversify our pool of potential vendors. Please see *Appendix C*. Our continued partnerships will be instrumental to our future success. In this past year, the Nassau County M/WBE Program has provided regional leadership and guidance on ways to maximize growth for our constituency. Title 53 has been used as a model by other entities in the region for conducting disparity studies and fashioning legislation to ensure equal opportunity for M/WBEs. Title 53 continues to empower the Executive Director to follow through in effectuating its purpose by holding County agencies and contractors accountable and by monitoring the implementation of its programs for the benefit of bona fide minority and women owned businesses. For 2007, OMA has outlined objectives in effectuating the purpose of Title 53.

What are the objectives of OMA in effectuating Title 53?

- To research and address the causes and effects of minority socioeconomic deprivation in the County contracting process through assessment and remediation.
- To establish a database of statistical information for distribution to members of County agencies, the business community and other entities capable of effecting change.
- To be the County's clearinghouse for business and procurement statistical information for minorities and women contracting with Nassau County and to publish a County-wide summarization of findings.

- To liaison with community leaders, businesses, department heads, procurement officers and elected officials to build the infrastructure needed to foster economic prosperity among local minority and women owned businesses.
- To serve as the impetus for identifying and linking funding and programs from both the public and private sectors to enhance the ability of minorities and women to compete in the local marketplace.
- To conduct educational programs and coordinate technical assistance programs necessary to address inequities confronting minorities and women in the County procurement process.
- To foster conducive relationships with contracting agencies to facilitate collaboration in increasing participation by M/WBEs in county contracting opportunities and assist in the diversification of vendors from which they draw their resources.

SECTION TWO: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2007

In 2007, OMA continued to cultivate existing initiatives and collaborated with other agencies to ensure the continued success of its programs and promote new programs to progress towards new goals. Through Strategic planning and goal setting, OMA has implemented certification procedures, certified over 400 Minority and Women Business Enterprises to date and has conducted numerous entrepreneurial training programs. The accomplishments of the year culminated in the establishment of an M/WBE Task Force, which was instrumental in increasing opportunities towards the end of the year and tracking the accomplishments of the departments and OMA in reaching the goals of our strategic plan for 2007. 2007 was a year of continued significant accomplishments for the Office of Minority Affairs in other respects as well. Accomplishments for 2007 are as follows:

Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program (M/WBE Program)

- M/WBE Certification, Technical Assistance. OMA retained the services of three consultants who provided assistance to OMA and other agency staff with the delivery of technical assistance and outreach services that increased the awareness and accessibility of the M/WBE program with existing and prospective M/WBEs.
- M/WBE Entrepreneurial Training. OMA conducted entrepreneurial training classes during 2007. Topics covered were, Business Management, Business Law, Marketing, Bonding & Insurance, Access to Capital and M/WBE Registration and Certification.
- Hispanic Small Business Development Conference. OMA in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration sponsored a series of evening seminars to assist small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to take advantage of local business resources.
- Procurement Officers Workshop. OMA in partnership with the New York State Office of General Services (OGS) conducted a one day training workshop for the

- Nassau County Purchasing Department and various agency procurement officers. Topics covered were an overview of NYS Executive Law Article 15-A governing New York State's Minority and Women Business Enterprise Program, the NYS certification program and the role and responsibility of contracting agencies in implement minority and women business enterprise programs.
- Fourth Annual M/WBE Contractor's Workshop. OMA in partnership with the Department of Public Works, Nassau County Purchasing Department and Nassau University Medical Center conducted its fourth annual M/WBE contractor's workshop. The workshop was designed to bring contractors and procurement officials together to talk about upcoming county contracting opportunities.
 - M/WBE Certification. In 2006 OMA streamlined its certification process by creating an internal system for receipt, filing and response. To date, the Office of Minority Affairs has certified over 420 Minority and Women Business Enterprises.
 - Empire State Development Corporation. OMA in collaboration with the Empire State Development Corporation conducted a series of workshops to assist local entrepreneurs with New York State M/WBE certification.
 - Nassau County Empire Zone Program. In partnership with the NC Department of Economic Development, OMA continued to promote the NC Empire Zone Program for prospective M/WBE's seeking to relocate their business to Nassau County. The New York State Empire Zone program was created to stimulate economic growth through a variety of state tax incentives designed to attract new businesses to New York State and to enable existing businesses to expand and create more jobs within economically depressed communities. .
 - M/WBE Task Force. OMA has formed a Task Force comprised of individuals from various Nassau County departments. The Task Force serves to centralize information relating to the M/WBE program in designated areas of each agency to facilitate the exchange and distribution of information relating to the requests and requirements of OMA's M/WBE program needs.

Affirmative Action/Diversity Management

- Nassau County Affirmative Action Plan. OMA in partnership with the County Attorney's Office and the County's Human Resources Department has assembled an inter-governmental committee for the purposes of establishing a county wide Affirmative Action Plan by 2009.
- Diversity Management Training. During 2007, OMA conducted in-service diversity trainings for the Nassau County Police Department for numerous recruits, and/or experienced officers. The trainings were designed to increase the awareness of various cultural values, beliefs & behaviors resulting in a more effective interaction between police and minority community residents. OMA also conducted diversity trainings for CSEA employees from various departments as part of collaborative effort with the Nassau County Human Resources Department. The trainings are an extension of the National Coalition Building Institute program and are designed to promote understanding of various differences by confronting stereotypes, underlying feelings & discriminatory behaviors and then practicing, via role-plays, socially acceptable responses & practices to be used in the workplace.

Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (DBE Program)

- Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program. The purpose of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program is to provide equal opportunity to minorities and women in contracting. OMA authored the program and developed guidelines and procedures to ensure that DBEs have an equitable opportunity to compete for contracts, subcontracts, and agreements with regards to procurements that include grants from the United States Department of Transportation. (Please see *Appendix C*) The submission of the program saved an earmark of federal funding that was due to expire and assisted the Department of Planning in finalizing its application for grants from the USDOT, which will be used to start the HUB study and project.

Community Services and Constituent Affairs

The goal of Community Services and Constituent Affairs is to diminish bureaucracy and make Nassau County more accessible to the public. This function empowers the constituent by providing information necessary to optimize efficiency and best address the unique challenges facing minorities and women by first identifying specific issues and then locating appropriate and specific resources that are most suitable in resolving their specific problems. This program also functions to provide outreach to the community.

- Rosa Parks Memorial Project. Rosa Louis Parks was a civil rights activist, who on December 1, 1955 refused to obey a bus drivers order to give up her seat to make room for a white passenger. This act of civil disobedience was hailed as the start of the Montgomery Bus Boycott which sparked the national civil rights movement under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King,

In 2006, OMA convened a meeting of the Rosa Parks Memorial Committee for the purposes of selecting a contractor to provide the “materials portion” for the proposed project. In collaboration with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums African American Museum, OMA unveiled the proposed design for the Rosa Parks Bus Terminal.

- New York State Association of Black & Puerto Rican Legislators. Elected officials gathered for the 28th annual Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus in Albany in February. OMA set up a booth and distributed materials to the public to inform them about the Nassau County M/WBE Program.
- 2007 Women’s History Lunch Program. For the second year, OMA honored a group of local women who are influencing the way business is done in Nassau County. This tribute to local women served as the premier event for honoring women whose lives and accomplishments exemplify the mission of OMA in eliminating disparities and empowering all women. The County Executive and

County Legislature presented and honored women selected by a committee established in OMA.

- 2007 Minority Health Fair. OMA, the Village of Hempstead and Affinity Health Plan partnered to present a program that offered free and low-cost health awareness and educational screenings. Affinity Health Plan is one of New York's largest and most-trusted non-profit health insurance plans. Materials and services were provided both in English and Spanish. The health fair gave OMA the opportunity to reach out to people of Nassau County and talk about their health and well-being. The health fair included exhibits, mini-workshops, demonstrations, screenings, etc.

- OMA/NAACP Civil Rights Conference. OMA in partnership with the Freeport/Roosevelt NAACP hosted a Civil Rights Conference on June 30th at Adelphi University to investigate the significance of the civil rights movement and its impact on communities of color. Hazel Dukes, President of the New York State Conference of NAACP Branches and Hilary O' Shelton, Director of the NAACP Washington Bureau were present. More than 350 members and supporters took part in the conference.

- 2007 Somos El Futuro Legislative Conference. OMA participated in the annual Somos El Futuro Legislative Conference which brings together nearly 7,000 New Yorkers who represent a cross section of the the state's Hispanic community, including federal, state, and local elected officials as well as community, labor and business leaders. With its mission to provide a forum for the development of legislative and budgetary initiatives of concern to Hispanic communities throughout the state, the conference also serves as a stage to acknowledge the significant contribution of Hispanics living in New York State. This is achieved through workshops, seminars and policy institutes. The outcome, of these meetings and networking opportunities, is a legislative agenda focused on meeting the needs of Hispanic communities across the Empire State.

- 2007 Asian-American Pacific Islander Awards. OMA observed Asian Pacific Islander American Heritage Month, which honors the rich history and presence of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Nassau County and the United States. OMA coordinated a number of events, which included an awards ceremony at Hempstead House reflecting the diverse history, cultures and experience of Asia and the Pacific Islands. There was a performance of both traditional and modern music, exhibits, and cooking.

- 2007 Veteran's of Color Celebration. For the second year, OMA in partnership with the American Airpower Museum honored 6 Service men and women on Veterans Day. The Tuskegee Airmen are a group of African American pilots who flew with distinction during World War II as the 332d Fighter Group of the U.S.

Army Air Corps. The event was marked by participation of a crowd of over 300 participants.

In summary, 2007 was a year in which this agency continued to strengthen its operational infrastructure, its education and outreach efforts, and its active engagement with stakeholders across the County in leveling the playing field for minorities and women to competitively bid or participate in Nassau County procurements. In the coming year, OMA will continue to guide the County government's stakeholders through new and exciting opportunities to increase our M/WBE usage, reduce marginalization of minorities and women in the County procurement process, and manage our business outreach in educating the community at large and the County.

SECTION THREE: OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

In an effort to reach out to various audiences and to promote greater access, OMA regularly undertook activities that highlighted topics where accessibility to the Nassau County contracting process had been problematic and identified, developed, and advocated for sustaining solutions to those problems. OMA defines outreach as speaking to groups, hospitality, training events, and peer M/WBE activity. The overall goal with outreach is threefold: to inform the M/WBE community about the existence and activities of OMA; to professionalize OMA through continual learning activities; and to enforce a constant message amongst stakeholders, business communities, and government officials that OMA is deserving of its reputation as Nassau County Advocate for M/WBEs. The purpose is to have OMA offer its expertise and resources to the public and private sectors. OMA's focus in 2007 has been to do staff training and orientations so that they are better enabled to pass along information about OMA to the community they deal with and to establish cooperative relationships with local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and comparable jurisdictions with similar programs.

Promoting effective outreach to form supportive, collaborative links between OMA and community is crucial in supporting OMA's commitment to public service. Partnerships are developed or strengthened with productive and effective community groups and institutions to bring resources to bear on specific initiatives. OMA collaborates with a broad range of CBOs to implement activities. Developing alliances with organizations that have similar activities stimulates dialogue and promotes community outreach within Nassau County.

OMA has continued its internal partnership with the Department of Economic Development, which began with community forums detailing the Empire Zone Program. OMA has begun developing the Town Hall Meetings projects. This project is a County-wide initiative designed to create the foundation for communicating the work and effectiveness of the M/WBE program to business and non-business community members. The details regarding outreach projects follow.

SECTION FOUR: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOALS

2008-2009 Strategic Plan Goal One

Promote the participation of minorities and women in the Nassau County procurement process and assure equal access to information for those groups with majority firms, by:

- Acquiring and installing a new comprehensive recordkeeping system
- Completing all required certification inspections within specified time frame to facilitate compliance with time restriction for approval of certification applications and ensure participation only by certified firms
- Providing increased business technical assistance focusing on the needs of the minority and women owned businesses in the local community
- Facilitating coordination among county-wide agencies for procurement issues

Acquiring and installing a new comprehensive recordkeeping system. In 2006, the Office of Information Technology successfully upgraded our information technology capabilities by implementing computer programs designed to catalogue information concerning our certified vendors. This program allows OMA to perform its mandated functions - including certifying self-identified minority and women owned businesses and monitoring compliance of County departments with the M/WBE Rules more effectively. The upgraded software implemented in the E-Procurement system also allows OMA to monitor whether applications have been successfully closed, track the time taken to approve or deny applications, and effectively sort all inquiries into categories such as business and certification type.

Completing all required certification inspections within specified time frame to facilitate compliance with time restriction for approval of certification applications and ensure participation only by certified firms

Title 53 requires OMA to complete the certification process within sixty days of receipt of a complete application. OMA has implemented procedures authored in 2005 by performing periodic inspections of those businesses that have self-identified as a M/WBE and by processing applications for certification well under the sixty day time frame. In 2006, OMA worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that sufficient resources were available and allocated for such necessary certification.

Certifications conducted in 2007, while not fully comprehensive, were far more thorough than in 2006, when the County relied solely on the certification process of other jurisdictions. OMA also made a substantial effort to reduce the backlog of open applications that resulted from the large volume of submissions generated from the premier of the E-Procurement system.

Providing increased business technical assistance focusing on the needs of the minority and women owned businesses in the local community

OMA continues to receive a substantial number of inquiries regarding specific services and eligibility for participation in the M/WBE Program. The inquiries range from the requirements of eligibility to the reporting of employment data.

OMA has provided increased formal and informal technical assistance to the certified vendors. One of our most effective tools for providing technical assistance has been our M/WBE Informer publication. The M/WBE Informer was created in 2004 as a “real time” educational tool to address and highlight procurement opportunities. It is the intent of OMA to publish the newsletter on the web site to significantly increase traffic on our website in 2007. OMA has also designed and collected surveys from our M/WBE business community and it plans to use our M/WBE Informer material to help target and develop training for the M/WBE community.

Facilitating coordination among county-wide agencies for procurement issues

One clear result from the increased collaborative nature of our business outreach process has been better communication among County agencies. In 2007, OMA made major progress toward the implementation of a compliance system established by the promulgation of the M/WBE Rules by establishing the M/WBE Task Force. The purpose of the M/WBE Task Force is to clarify roles, responsibilities and processes for all parties involved. OMA intends to establish appropriate protocols County-wide with each of our major stakeholders, thus establishing a clearer understanding of our agency’s processes. Communication and coordination are especially critical in effectuating the intent of the program because without the support of the agencies the program would cease to exist. The M/WBE Task Force serves as a working group and mechanism to disseminate M/WBE Program information from department heads along to procurement officials.

2008-2009 Strategic Plan Goal Two

Improve knowledge and understanding of rights and responsibilities under Title 53 and promptly/fairly resolve disputes by:

- Conducting education and outreach efforts to improve the voluntary compliance with Title 53 and to improve the quality of the agency-M/WBE contractor relationship
- Establishing OMA as a repository of information and technical guidance
- Undertaking research to foster improvements in knowledge of the minority and women owned business community regarding their rights and responsibilities under state and local law

Conducting education and outreach efforts to improve the voluntary compliance with Title 53 and to improve the quality of the agency-M/WBE contractor relationship

OMA continues to educate minority and women owned businesses about their rights and responsibilities under Title 53. OMA endeavored to become even more pro-active in this area in 2007. Significant accomplishments in the education area include a Strategic Information Technology Plan that will add a powerful search engine on the agency's web site, an electronic update of all educational products, a new educational resource manual and accompanying CD-Rom, and a new printing of the Office of Minority Affairs M/WBE Rules. Our products will be improved, easier to read and more thorough. An additional benefit is uniformity of appearance of all materials by incorporating a newly designed Office of Minority Affairs logo and organizational identity. All of this is designed to make M/WBE information readily accessible to the contracting community for the purpose of identifying viable joint ventures, partners and sub-contractors. It is the hope of OMA that increased awareness and knowledge will empower M/WBEs to reach out to contracting agencies and become more sophisticated in navigating the procurement process.

Establishing the Office as a repository of information and technical guidance

OMA continues to support the establishment of a clearinghouse for shared best practice information on topics covered by and related to M/WBE Programs. In 2007, OMA continued discussions with public sector, private sector and not-for-profit organizations such as the Empire State Development Corporation Westchester County Office of Minority Affairs, the Suffolk County Office of Minority Affairs, the New York City Small Businesses Services, the New York and New Jersey Business Development Council and the Long Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to receive insight on best practices of both private and public sectors. These relationships have proven to be instrumental resources for future partnership activities. For example, our discussions with Empire State Development Corporation may lead to certification reciprocity. This will help M/WBEs maximize the expediency of Nassau County certification throughout the region by allowing them to take their Nassau certification to other jurisdictions.

Undertaking or commissioning studies and research to foster improvements in knowledge and sophistication of the M/WBE community

In 2003, OMA commissioned a disparity study to evaluate the participation of minorities and women in the overall Nassau County procurement process. OMA, with the assistance of a management consultant, assessed the state of informal procurement programs already in place throughout the County and concluded its study with findings. One of those findings was that other disparity studies should be periodically conducted. This is important to continue evaluation of our programs and determine whether we have or have not reached aspirational goals and to ensure the legal integrity of our program.

CONCLUSION

Overall, 2007 should be viewed as another year of rapid progress toward the achievement of the goals of the M/WBE Program. As the Office stays the course toward increased participation of minorities and women in the County procurement process, it will require the following to ensure program continuity and integrity:

- Continued collaboration with the procurement officials from every County Department in the enhancement of data retrieval and reporting
- Internal and external education of minority participation requirements, goals and expectations.
- Systematic completion of an increasing number of audits