



DIVERSITY EXCHANGE

Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs

Volume 1 No. 2

Fall/Winter 2007

Compiled by: OMA Interns Sayedda Fatima Naqvi & Russell Edwards

County Executive Message	p1
Message from OMA	p1
Executive Director	
Articles:	
Traci Wheelwright	p2
(Bonding Issues with Small Business Contractors)	
Patrick G. Duggan	p3
(Economic Development)	
Simone-Marie Meeks	p4
(Solutions for Healthcare In Nassau County)	
OMA Accomplishments	p5
OMA Current and Future	p5-6
OMA Salutes Minority Vets	p6
.....	p7
OMA: Who We Are	p8

A Message from Thomas R. Suozzi, County Executive



Dear Friends,

Nassau County is one of the nation's best places to live, work and grow. From the first day I took office, one of my major initiatives was to address the needs of all County residents, most importantly those who depend and need the services the County provides. The ethnic diversity of our minority communities is one of the County's greatest assets. I am committed to addressing their needs through various County Agencies.

The Office of Minority Affairs' mission is to reach out to the minority communities of Nassau County to address their particular concerns. The Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs is an excellent resource and is a direct channel by which women and minorities from our diverse communities can be heard. At the Office of Minority Affairs residents will find a knowledgeable, experienced, multi-lingual staff that truly represents the diversity of our great County.

Moving forward is always a challenge and I welcome the opportunity to do my job and to represent all the people of Nassau County.

Sincerely,
Thomas R. Suozzi



A Message from Executive Director's Desk

On behalf of the Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs we are proud to present our Newsletter. We think you will agree that it reflects the many successes we have achieved in the year 2007 as well as the serious challenges we face in continuing our work with Minority Communities throughout Nassau County.

Our mission is to provide leadership for organized outreach to minority constitutes to assure that minority interests are fully represented in the County Executive's policy agenda. We are developing policy and serving as the County Executive's liaison to County agencies and community based organizations on minority business efforts, equal employment practices and cultural diversity initiatives.

We have worked extremely hard over the past years to develop a Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise Program (M/WBE), reached out to assist Immigrant communities, ensured and enforced Federal, State and Local EEO statutes, trained certified M/WBE businesses in areas of business management, law, advertising, insurance and the acquiring of bonds. Our office has made a consistent effort to recognize Minority and Women business leaders in their success and celebrate diversity in Nassau County. We are committed to continue in providing a means for dialogue between community



members and public officials and professionals, such as the 2007 Civil Rights Conference where our office partnered with the Freeport-Roosevelt NAACP.

The challenges for 2007 are many: Increasing the number of certified Minority and Women Owned Businesses in participation with the County procurement process, increasing the number of Minority and Female Officers in Nassau County Police Department, finding affordable housing initiatives to encourage young residents to remain in Nassau County, improving after school childcare centers, assistance for Needy Families, searching out resources and programs to provide greater access to County services, coordinating resources of existing services providers in the area of citizenship and coordinating programs to assist the transition immigrant to economic stability. We will aggressively work with government agencies and community organizations involved in immigrant issues to address federal and local legislation impacting the immigrant community.

Demographers suggest by the mid-century half of the U.S. population will be culturally diverse. A global community awaits us. This phenomenon suggests that we prepare and encourage the future generation to develop to its fullest personal and intellectual potential.

Our objectives for 2007 are clear. We will strive to widen opportunities for qualified minority businesses to participate in County procurement programs. We will be establishing clear and concise procedures that will enable the County to fulfill requirements of federal and state government related to equal employment opportunity for minority business participation in construction procurement programs. We will continue our outreach initiatives to include actively recruiting and developing bilingual resources are lacking. We will continue to establish and maintain community-based coalitions with minority and civil rights organizations to work on issues impacting minority and immigrant community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my staff and the many departments who have participated in the successes of the Office of Minority Affairs. We have an exciting and challenging New Year ahead of us.

On behalf of the County Executive and the Staff of the Office of Minority Affairs, we wish you a safe and healthy school year.

John H. Moye, Jr.
Executive Director

Nassau County M/WBE Participation and the Effects of Bonding

Duak Construction Company has attended numerous Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs contractors meetings. The president herself has gone onto the Nassau County website and filled out the vendor registration profile. She has been diligent and also has gone to the Minority Affairs website, downloaded the Certification application and mailed all the documents so Duak Construction Company can become a certified WBE. After 2 months, she becomes certified and begins to bid on projects. When reviewing the bids online, the president realizes that she must supply bonds in order to be eligible to bid on the projects for which her company supplies services. Now what? Duak is facing the same dilemma that other M/WBEs face daily on getting the necessary bonding to be allowed to bid on projects. Surety bonds are used most widely in the construction industry, where owners of land require their builder to obtain a bond. Many contractors do not realize that a contractor's ability to secure work in the construction industry, especially in the public sector, may be limited if he or she is unable to obtain a bond.

Basically, a surety bond is an agreement under which the surety guarantees to another party – the owner or obligee (usually the government agency that lets the contract) – a third party – the contractor or principal – will perform the contract in accordance with contract documents. Most companies that issue surety bonds work through agents and brokers called producers, who guide companies through the bonding process. Surety bonds are not insurance policies. In fact, qualifying for bonds is more like obtaining bank credit than purchasing insurance. There are generally three types of bonds that are commonly requested – the bid bond, performance bond and payment bond. The bid bond provides financial assurance that the bid has been submitted in good faith and the contractor intends to enter into the contract at the price bid. The performance bond protects the obligee from financial loss should the contractor fail to perform on the contract. A payment bond acts as a guarantee that the contractor will pay certain bills associated with the project.

So how does bonding impact our M/WBE participation? Well in sum, we must have companies who are not only eligible to be certified as M/WBEs but also be capable of participating on projects to ensure successful, M/WBE participation. The second criteria may have nothing to do with the contractor's ability to perform the services but may have everything to do with the contractor's ability to secure financial obligations to participate.

Contractors – large and small – face many problems when securing bonds. Many small companies are not strong enough financially to qualify for bonding. Additionally, the expense of the bond may act as an impediment. The cost of a bond can range from one-half percent to five percent of the contract amount depending on the size, type, duration of the project and the reputation and stability of the contractor herself. Finally, many contractors are unfamiliar with the nuances of the surety industry and just do not understand the process.

Before a contractor can obtain a bond he or she undergoes an extensive prequalification process called underwriting to enable the surety to capture a clear picture of the company. Some of the problems often cited during the underwriting process are mismanagement of the business, imprudent risk taking, weak project execution and poor estimating. Surety



companies will look at the strength of a contractor's balance sheet and financial presentation statement, a history of successful projects, consistent profitability and experience in a particular type of project.

It is critical for a contractor to develop and maintain an ongoing relationship with an experienced and qualified underwriter and producer. An established relationship with a surety company



and surety bond producer helps small businesses grow by increasing contracting opportunities, especially in public sector construction. In the end, bond will be approved only if the surety is confident that the contractor is qualified to perform the contract and work program successfully and has the financial capacity to withstand the numerous risks involved in the industry business. To find out more about bonding, visit our website at <http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/MinorityAffairs/index.html>.

<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/MinorityAffairs/index.html>.

Traci Wheelwright
Counsel to the Office of Minority Affairs



Economic Development in Nassau County



When Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi, took office in 2002, he organized the over 47 County Departments in to "Verticals". The Economic Development Vertical was arranged to include all departments, agencies and related independent corporations whose mission includes furthering the economic growth and community development of Nassau County.

As the Deputy County Executive for Economic Development since February 2004, I oversee a \$75 million vertical which includes the County's Planning Commission; the HUD-funded Community Development Block Grant program, the Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs, the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program and the Office of Housing and Homeless Services, Nassau County Public Utilities Agency, the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency, the Business Development Unit, and the Brownfield Redevelopment Unit.

We are responsible for advancing County Executive Suozzi's 10-point economic development plan to enhance Nassau County's economy through attracting high technology, high-skilled, sports, entertainment, and tourism industries. Through this plan, we intend to create family supporting wage jobs for all residents, and increase the stock of Next Generation housing, and grow the County tax base.

Together these departments work everyday to advance the County Executive's goals. We are especially proud of the recent designation of an Empire Zone, the first in Nassau County's history. The Empire Zone provides benefits to businesses meeting specific criteria located within the Zone and to Regionally Significant Projects (RSP) located outside of designated zone areas.

Our Housing & Homeless Services department, recently received HUD certified status as a Housing Counseling Center. In the past five years, under County Executive Suozzi's leadership, we have created or renovated over 2,000 units of affordable housing and have been able to help, through the Down Payment Assistance Program, almost 300 families achieve the dream of homeownership.

Recognizing the importance of increasing minority participation in the bidding and contracting of our 75 million dollar budget, we recently released an RFP to provide technical support and assistance to small and minority businesses interested in contracting with the county, particularly in the areas of the construction trades, supply, and professional services. We strongly encourage vendors to visit the county website, register, and keep abreast of open RFP's.

Patrick G. Duggan
Deputy County Executive

Solutions to Minority Healthcare Disparities?

Are there solutions to Minority Healthcare Disparities that lay undiscovered or simply ignored? The truth is that healthcare disparities are neither the things of fiction or shrouded in total mystery.

Researchers know that a healthcare disparity is a significant gap in the incidence, prevalence and outcomes of one group when compared to another group. In the United States these significant differences in quality and access to care are most common in areas where racial and ethnic populations are dominate. And most working in healthcare have arrived at the conclusion that disparities are a function of factors that include socioeconomic status, education, environmental factors, cultural differences and politics in and outside of healthcare professions.

In Nassau county health disparities show themselves in areas that are common throughout the United States. The death rates for Black babies continue at tragic levels. And increased levels of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, mental illness, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse are all areas requiring study both in Nassau County and in neighboring counties. Laying aside the obvious, Nassau county has taken on an examination of disparities that is neither common place or easy, but began with a Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS). These surveys, though unable to provide a total picture for all persons experiencing healthcare disparities, provide self-reported information that allows policymakers, healthcare providers, and researchers to suggest solutions to disparate care and access. Additionally, Nassau continues to discuss and explore linkages that its Minority Health Task Force (MHTF) suggests might be advantageous for the lessening of known disparities. And this MHTF allows for cross communication with all Nassau hospitals, its only medical school (New York College of Osteopathic Medicine – NYCOM), academicians, and community based organizations (CBOs). Most recently Nassau County committed to providing partial start-up funding for the creation of the Institute for Healthcare Disparities. And the Nassau County Department of Health began its Health Promotion Pilot Project with five CBO(s). This train-the-trainer prevention model begins with a discussion of what healthcare disparities are and their historical roots and moves to a monthly examination of the body and what keeps it well, what tools are necessary for patient



confidence in office visits, discussion on the necessity of medical screenings, why its important to tell your doctor, whether regular, in an emergency room, or at the local health fair what's going on in your words, and from your family's perspective, and discusses nutrition, exercise, your rights to respect and answers, personal responsibility, oversight bodies, and chronic disease management. But no researcher, doctor, or communicator has found the complete solution to healthcare disparities.



Here in Nassau County we do acknowledge that politics can be used to muddy the path to solutions or it can be the vehicle to possibility. And while science can be seen as having uncovered all the mysteries of life by some, for those of us seeking measurable, sustainable solutions it is simply "piecemeal revelation." Total solutions lay in the places where all are involved.

Simone-Marie Meeks
Communications/Policy Advisor for Community Health



Minority Health and Health Disparities

Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs Accomplishments

June 30th 2007: OMA/NAACP Civil Rights Conference: “From Disparity to Parity: Still Asking Questions, Still Seeking Answers.”

The Conference was designed to raise awareness of the civil rights challenges facing the minority community, to promote greater civic participation in national civil rights dialogue and exchange and, by doing so, to strengthen community awareness and involvement locally. Workshops were held on topics of Immigration, Health Disparities, Education Issues, Women’s Issues, Economic Development, Issues Involving the Youth, Impact of the Media, Legislation and Voting Rights, A Legal Review of the Criminal Justice System and the Judiciary and much more. The Conference was made a success due to the large turnout of both community members and public officials such as Hazel Dukes, Hilary O. Shelton, Douglas Mayers, Legislators Abrahams, Corbin, and Mejias.

June 22nd, 2007: M/WBE Contractors Bid Award

This event awarded contracts to those Minority and Women owned businesses that had bid earlier in the year for contracts made available to the business for goods and services needed by the Nassau County Government.

May 24th, 2007: CelebrAsian: Colors of Asia: Asian Pacific Americans of Distinction Awards

The Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs was proud to bring together all of the various cultures, aspects, and peoples of Asia. It was an interactive way for people to learn of the different facets of Asian cultures and for a community to come together and learn about the cultures and ways of one another. During this event we awarded members of the Asian Community with Distinction Awards highlighting their contributions to the community as a whole.

February 8th, 2007: MWBE Awards Luncheon: “Blazing New Trails on the M/WBE Frontier”

The Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs put together this event in order to give recognition to the individuals who had succeeded in their professional areas. John F. Robinson, President & C.E.O of the National Minority Business Council, Inc. received the 2007 MWBE Business Leadership Award and was the key note speaker for the event. After this event took place, Newsday published an article titled, “Nassau seen as model for support of minority-run businesses,” which applauded the Nassau County M/WBE Program run by the Office of Minority Affairs.



Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs Current and Future Programs

MWBE Entrepreneurial Training

From mid-June to late July, The Office of Minority Affairs had one of its most exciting and insightful training seminars. This entrepreneurial training was a six week program (June 14-21, June 28-July 12, & July 19-26) designed to promote economic wealth among minority and women owned business enterprises in Nassau County. The program included all the essential tools and resources to make a successful entrepreneur. The series featured guest speakers, dynamic workshops and lectures, and the amazing opportunity to network with a plethora of other entrepreneurs. There were courses that taught aspiring entrepreneurs the fundamental aspects of



business management and law, and others that taught how to successfully market a business. Also included in the course were lectures on the basics of insurance and how to acquire bonds. Finally, after receiving all this information and in culmination to the program, the entrepreneurs were taught about MWBE certification and how they could register.

MWBE Executive Breakfast

Networking, self-advertising, and technology's effect on small businesses are just some of the topics that will be discussed at the Executive Breakfast. In 2002, the County Legislature found there to be a lack of minority/women owned businesses in contracts with Nassau County. As a result of their findings, the legislature enacted Title 53 to the Miscellaneous Laws of Nassau County. One of the provisions within Title 53 was that the Office of Minority Affairs verify various businesses owned, operated, and controlled by minority or women owners. From this list, the OMA would create a directory of certified businesses that would be used by contracting agencies and contractors. In essence, what the OMA is trying to do is encourage vendors to do business with the government and for contracting agencies to do business with minority/women vendors. The focus of this executive breakfast is to get these vendors from self-identified to certified.

Bonds, Liens, and Insurance Seminar

In December 2007, OMA is hosting a Bonds, Liens and Insurance Seminar to educate businesses certified under its M/WBE Program on these topics and of their importance in the field of business. The focus will be on how to elevate small minority and women owned businesses in their level of sophistication by empowering them with the knowledge and capability to deal with bonding, liens and insurance issues. Bonds, Liens and Insurance greatly impact the hiring of a contractor or subcontractor and thus, are key players in business interactions. This seminar is a part of the OMA's overall goal to assist Minority and Women owned businesses in achieving success.



Office of Minority Affairs Salutes Minority Veterans

On November 11th, the Office of Minority Affairs honored 10 minority veterans for their service to the country and continued contributions on Long Island. At a ceremony held at the American Air Power Museum at Republic Airport, each veteran was awarded the County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi award for Meritorious Service. Among the honorees were Hezekiah Brown, former Deputy County Executive. Mr. Brown, a paratrooper assigned with the 101 Airborne was dispatched to Little Rock Arkansas in 1957 by President



D w i g h t Eisenhower. In addition, Deputy Presiding Officer Roger Corbin was also honored for his military service. In 1966, Legislator Corbin enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and was

stationed at Travis Air Force Base in California.



Important Nassau County Government Phone Numbers

www.nassaucountynyoma.org

- Office of Minority Affairs 516-571-6174
- Nassau County Police Department 516-573-7000
- Office of Consumer Affairs 516-571-2600
- CASA (Coordinating Agency for Spanish Americans) 516-571-0750
- Human Rights Commission 516-572-1384
- Parks and Recreation 516-572-0200
- Senior Citizens Affairs 516-571-5814
- Social Services 516-571-4817
- Youth Board 516-572-1384
- Nassau County Legislature 516-571-6200



OMA'S First M/WBE Graduation Ceremony Held

Students of the Office of Minority Affairs M/WBE Entrepreneurial Training Program and their families recently came together at OMA's first M/WBE graduation ceremony. 21 Minority and Women



Owned Businesses who completed their courses conducted by the Association of Minority Enterprises of New York (AMENY) were present on the occasion. The keynote speaker for the program was Deputy Presiding Officer

Roger Corbin. The program concluded with the presentation of awards for the graduates. The graduates were presented awards by County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi.



Nassau County Office of Minority Affairs: Who & What We Are

The Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) was created by the Nassau County Legislature and its mandated mission is to serve as a partner to the citizens of Nassau County in strengthening and building communities through programs which promote the establishment and preservation of minority and women owned business enterprises.



OMA advises and makes recommendations to the County Executive in developing policy on matters of County services that affect minority communities across the County. OMA also works in tandem with all County agencies and commissions to leverage resources, identify new opportunities, and ensure equitable access to business opportunities.

The Office of Minority Affairs is committed to and responsible for

safeguarding the civil rights of employees and applicants for employment and for overseeing the County's Affirmative Action Program, including enforcement of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act. As you would expect, OMA also makes a purposeful effort to ensure that Nassau County employees enjoy a workplace that promotes mutual respect and is free of discrimination and harassment. OMA has established and maintains effective mechanisms for investigating and addressing instances of discrimination and harassment.

The Office of Minority Affairs provides a host of its own specialized services which are designed to deliver critical information to its constituents which will assist them in making informed decisions about new emerging opportunities. OMA conducts seminars, workshops, lectures and other special events on a regular basis in targeted communities.

The Office of Minority Affairs takes a leadership role in developing a network of supports and resources that will make community presence and participation a reality affirming the vision that all citizens participate in the life of their community while receiving the supports needed to be productive and valued community members.



Congratulations to the 2007 OMA Summer Interns
Sayedda Fatima Naqvi, Russell Edwards, Marina Hagiwara

Design and Layout

Sayedda Fatima Naqvi & Russell Edwards

Content and Editing

Sayedda Fatima Naqvi & Russell Edwards

Writing

Dean E. Bennett, Traci Wheelwright, Patrick Duggan, Simone-Marie Meeks, Sayedda Fatima Naqvi, and Russell Edwards

Photos

Sayedda Fatima Naqvi & Russell Edwards

Special Thanks

Office of Printing and Graphics

