

Post Hurricane Katrina: A 2006 Update on Rebuilding Minority Business Enterprises in the Gulf Coast

Highlights

Upon learning of the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, launched into action to mobilize resources and assistance. As of date, MBDA has targeted approximately \$1.0 million to the Gulf Region.

Direct Assistance to Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs): The Minority Business Development Agency has assisted over 340 displaced minority firms to prepare and submit applications for disaster relief, emergency loans and insurance claims, reconstruct business plans and other key business documents; assisted approximately 1,127 MBEs with the identification of procurement opportunities; conducted education and outreach activities reaching more than 4,000 MBEs; and vetted over 1,181 firms as viable MBEs with capacity to participate in the rebuilding of New Orleans.

Two Satellite Offices Established: Through a supplemental award to the Houston MBEC, MBDA has established two satellite offices--one in Baton Rouge and one New Orleans--to assist MBEs in reestablishing their business and participate in procurement opportunities and financial transactions.

Learn more about MBDA's
Rebuilding Gulf Initiative
at www.mbda.gov/gulf

Grant Competition to Operate a Minority Business Opportunity Center in Louisiana: MBDA is currently reviewing applications from organizations to operate a Minority Business Opportunity Center in the State of Louisiana. The new Center will begin operations this summer.

Business to Business Forums: MBDA in partnership with SBA, the Kauffman Foundation and the Urban Entrepreneurship Program held the first in a series of forums in New Orleans on June 4-5, 2006 that will match 8(a) firms from Louisiana and Mississippi with firms from outside the Gulf Coast area to increase their capacity to do businesses with Federal agencies and their prime contractors. A second one is being held on July 24-25, 2006 in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Education: MBDA has collaborated with Members of Congress and other entities sponsoring workshops to educate minority entrepreneurs about financial and procurement opportunities and the Gulf restoration bidding process. Under the terms of the MOU between MBDA and the State of Louisiana, interns from Louisiana State University and Southern University will work in MBDA's offices in New Orleans.

State and Local Partnerships: MBDA is collaborating with state and local organizations and institutions to support the rebuilding efforts, including the City of New Orleans Economic Development Office, City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana Governor's Office, Louisiana Department of Commerce and Department of Economic Development, Alliance of Minority Contractors, National Urban League, National Minority Supplier Development Council, Kauffman Foundation, and the Urban Entrepreneurship Program.

Contract Success Stories:

The Houston Minority Business Enterprise Center secured a contract for \$22.6 million in November, 2005 for BPE & Associates, Inc with Mobile Installation Technologies, LLC. The contract was for disaster clean-up services. The contract calls for clean-up in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Texas.

Two African American owned firms were brought together to increase their capacity to perform and secure contracts. Sai Sai Trucking, which specializes in debris hauling services, won a \$2.1 million contract, and SEMA Inc., which focuses in logistics and disaster recovery, a \$347,400 award. Both companies are based in New Orleans.

