

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

EQUAL BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITY



**MINORITY
BUSINESS
RULES**

How To Do Business Guide

Contact us at 614.645.4764 or visit our website at columbus.gov

Melinda Carter, *Executive Director*

EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY OFFICE

Dear Business Owners:

Welcome to the City Of Columbus' Equal Business Opportunity Office (EBO) How to do Business Guide! I am so pleased that you are considering doing business with the city. The mission of the EBO Office is to promote the inclusiveness of minority- and women-owned businesses within the city's procurement process and to facilitate the equitable awarding of contracts to minority- and women- owned business enterprises via race and gender neutral tools.



These tools include the implementation of a comprehensive internal and external outreach program, monitoring of the departmental procurement processes, providing technical assistance to businesses upon request, and providing guidance to city leadership on industry trends and best practices.

Under the leadership of Mayor Michael B. Coleman, EBO continually strives to live up to the goals of Columbus Covenant. Our principle goal is to provide access to opportunities for small, minority- and women-owned businesses. The rationale for that goal is the acknowledgement that minority- and women-owned businesses are an important economic engine in the creation of jobs and opportunities for many of our residents.

Our guide will help to provide you with information on a wide range of topics, including resources pertaining to minority business participation on city contracts and becoming certified to do business with the City of Columbus. We invite you to use this guide or visit our site to view the real-time electronic version to learn more about How to do Business!

While this comprehensive tool is an important resource, I also encourage you to take advantage of the EBO professionals who work every day to be your advocate.

Melinda Carter

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melinda Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director, EBOCO

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INTRODUCTION

So, you've decided to do business with the City of Columbus. Congratulations! While this journey will require some work on your part, it can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your entrepreneurial life. At least, we are doing what we can to help that happen. To be successful, you will need tactical intelligence, if you will. Let's start with some numbers to help you determine if this process is really worth your while.

The city spends over \$300 million dollars in Construction, Goods and Services, and Professional Services annually. About 10% of that amount is awarded to minority- and woman-owned businesses. That's \$30 million! We work to increase that number every year. We buy everything from horizontal and vertical construction services to hauling and chemicals to architecture and engineering services.

Of the \$300 million spent:

CONSTRUCTION: \$150M Labor and materials for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of public improvements, including but not limited to streets, highways, bridges, sewers, water lines, power lines and plant facilities.

Aggregate Bases	Drainage—pipe culverts & precast bases	Masonry	Sod
Asphalt Paving	Earthwork	Painting	Storm Sewers
Bio-Filters	Erosion Control	Resurfacing	Structural Steel
Bridge Painting	Fencing	Retaining walls	Sub-Station/Electrical
Building Construction	Floor/Ceiling/Wall Finishes	Roadway/Parking	Traffic Control
Concrete	Guardrail	Construction	Trees
Concrete Barriers	HVAC Process Piping	Roofing	Trucking
Concrete Flatwork	Landscaping—Seeding	Roofing	Tunnels
Concrete Paving		Snow & Ice Removal	Windows
Demolition			
Doors			

GOODS & SERVICES: \$80M The most basic products of an economic system that consist of tangible consumable items and tasks performed by individuals. Many business portfolios consist of a mix of goods and services that they offer to potential consumers via a sales force.

Auto repair	Electrical Services	Janitorial Services	Petroleum	Solid Waste Removal
Automobiles	Engraving & Printing	Lawn Care Services	Plumbing Services	Tire Disposal
Bottle Drinking	Equipment	Locksmith Services	Rock Salt	Translation Services
Water Services	Furniture	Mobile Devices	Sign Materials	Uniforms
Chemicals	Hauling	Moving	Software &	Weed Cutting
Communications	Insurance	Office Supplies	Maintenance	Wellness Services
Computers		Paper		

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: \$70M A service which usually requires advanced training and/or a significant degree of expertise to perform, and which often requires official certification or authorization by the state as a condition precedent to the rendering of such service. By way of example, professional services include the personal services rendered by architects, attorneys-at-law, certified public accountants, financial consultants, city and regional planners, management consultants and professional engineers.

Architecture & Engineering Services
Consulting

Insurance Services
Interior Design

Legal Services
Surveying

Does your company happen to provide any of these items? If so, keep reading. This basic "How to do Business Guide", will tell you everything you need to know to win yourself a contract! If you're still not sure, read what other M/FBEs have to say:

ADVANCED ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS (FBE)

AEC is a locally-owned, FBE certified engineering consulting firm specializing in the areas of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, technology, and energy conservation. AEC has chosen to do business locally because we find it important for local companies to have diversity in choices when choosing an engineering firm for their projects. In addition, working locally has provided AEC with opportunities to provide our



services for a number of interesting projects for the City of Columbus such as Fire Station No. 10 (LEED Gold certified), the West Side Family Health & Wellness Center (LEED Silver certified), and the Columbus Police Heliport facility, to name a few. More importantly, AEC takes great pride in being a part of the City's growth and its focus on building a better community through design of sustainable "Green" buildings as outlined by Mayor Coleman's "Green Memo".

DR. LISA HUANG, PhD, PE, RCDD
President/Senior Electrical Engineer

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KING BUSINESS INTERIORS (FBE)

As a Female Business Enterprise (FBE) we have had many opportunities over the years to competitively bid for business at the municipal offices for the City of Columbus. We have found the folks at all departments to be informative. We then approach our bids with a good understanding of the required scope of work. The benefit to King is that not only do we win bids and increase sales, but our company grows. My best advice in doing business with the departments at the City is to introduce yourself and your services to ALL departments. Purchasing owns the job of procurement however your client is ultimately the person in a different department that needs your product or service. Meeting them should be the first step in selling them.



DARLA KING
President and CEO

SUPERIOR ENTERPRISES UNLIMITED (MBE)

As the former owner of 3C Lawn Care and the current proprietor of Superior Enterprises Unlimited, I have always certified my businesses with the City of Columbus. Why? Because we appreciate working with you! The opportunities you have provided through joint ventures with other MBE firms and the outreach meetings have been very helpful in maintaining and growing our business over the years.

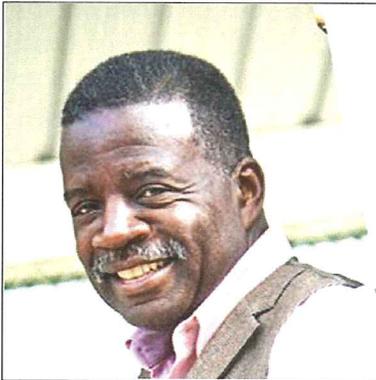


MARK CORBIN
President

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MCDANIEL'S CONSTRUCTION CORP. (MBE)

We have done business with the City of Columbus for almost two decades. I can say undoubtedly that the contracts we were awarded at the city helped make McDaniel's one of the nation's premier MBE construction firms. We had to do our part in being ready, willing, and able to perform, but the city certainly did its part in providing the support we needed—bid preparation assistance and outreach opportunities-- to be successful. The poise we gained doing business with the city made us confident to seek and to win work at the state and federal levels. I would encourage up-and-coming as well as seasoned firms to explore city prospects. The experience can be very rewarding!



DAN MONCREIF III
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

THE OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT GROUP, LTD. (MBE)

As a small minority, female-owned business, I have found working with the City of Columbus to be beneficial to my company's growth. I have expanded my capacity to do business and increased my business network. My initial contact was with the EBO staff; they made a complex certification process, simple and easy to complete. Additionally, the EBO staff has kept me informed of issues impacting my business and provided both training and networking opportunities which have helped me expand my capacity to do business. I have worked with many different business units and appreciated their timeliness in paying for services rendered. Doing business with the City of Columbus is all about US!



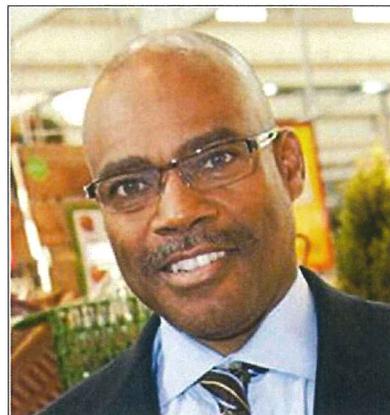
PATRICIA LARKINS HICKS, Ph.D.
President/CEO

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DYNAMIX ENGINEERING, LTD. (MBE)

For small minority businesses, difficulties can exist when trying to comprehend the dynamics of a large governmental organization. The EBO Office helps companies, particularly small businesses, understand how to simplistically conduct business with the City of Columbus. The training provided by the EBO Office has been instrumental in helping our company learn how to pursue projects at The City. Through their continued efforts, the EBO Office has assisted us in identifying project opportunities and helped us through the certification process in order to advance our company's growth and productivity. They are easily accessible and always willing to answer questions.

The City of Columbus EBO Office serves as a role model for other City of Columbus departments. Mayor Coleman should be proud to have a dedicated team who is willing to advance small businesses and serve the community.



GENE GRIFFIN, PE, LEED AP
President & CEO

SHELLEE FISHER PHOTOGRAPHY (MBE)



SHELLEE FISHER
Photographer

Doing business with EBO is a rewarding experience mainly because they care about doing business with you. My first company, Britt Business Systems, did so well as a certified MBE that I certified Shellee Fisher Photography as well.

EBO is very conscientious about helping you, not only source business within the City, but supports you with resources to do good business thus retaining business.

At the completion of a project, EBO makes sure the process is in place for you to get paid in a timely matter! Because you get paid on time, you are able to grow your business.

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THE BREAKDOWN

This booklet is divided into six bite-sized sections written to provide an easy understanding of the city's buying process from beginning to end. Keep it handy as it will be very helpful to you.

SECTION ONE: Meet Your Tactical Support:
The EBO PROFESSIONALS & Partners

SECTION TWO: Procurement. What Is It?

SECTION THREE: How Do I Bid?

SECTION FOUR: I Bid. What Happens Next?

SECTION FIVE: Tips You Should Never Forget

SECTION SIX: Extra Important Info

Once you have mastered these fundamentals, feel free to "graduate" to the supplemental guides which give a little more detail in specific areas.

"HOW TO CONSTRUCT A CONSTRUCTION BID"

"HOW TO BID A GOODS & SERVICES CONTRACT"

"HOW TO BID A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT"

"CRACKING THE CODES: REGISTERING FOR THE RIGHT COMMODITY"

EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY OFFICE

SECTION ONE:

MEET YOUR TACTICAL SUPPORT—The EBO Professional & Partners

The Equal Business Opportunity Office was created to enforce Article 1, Title 39—the city’s Affirmative Action Code. Our primary function is to make sure that businesses which are ready, willing, and able to provide what the city needs can compete for contract opportunities in a transparent and fair process. One way we do this is by participating in and evaluating the bid and award processes. The mission of the EBO Office is to promote the inclusiveness of minority- and women-owned business enterprises. These businesses are an important economic engine for job creation in our local and national communities.

The EBO Office holds cabinet level status and is headed by the Executive Director whose primary focus is to provide guidance to city leadership on matters of minority, female, and small business inclusion and development. The office is staffed by EBO professionals who monitor and develop city policies and procedures to positively impact inclusion.

Two major city components EBO manages are the Contract Compliance & Minority/Female Business Enterprise certification processes. Currently, we utilize race and gender neutral tools to accomplish that goal. Such practices include:

- Creating and identifying appropriately-sized opportunities via the Agency Inclusion Plan;
- Ensuring departmental adherence to City of Columbus procurement policies and guidance documents as determined by the Department of Finance, Purchasing Office;
- Ensuring departmental adherence to Equal Business Opportunity guidance and policies;
- Communicating new policies developed to foster inclusion;
- Creating and utilizing multiple-year procurement awards judiciously;
- Advocating for the utilization of subcontractors when appropriate;
- Requiring prime contractors to identify all subcontractors including the scope and amount of work;
- Complying with all reporting and monitoring requirements; and
- Developing and implementing a targeted department outreach plan.

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Want to contact the EBO Professionals? Please do so. We'd love to hear from you!

EBO Office.....614.645.4764

Director's Office.....614.645.5817

EBO Professionals.....614.645.4764

Contract Compliance & M/FBE Certification.....614.645.2203

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION

Each and every business which contracts with the City of Columbus must have an active contract compliance number. Contract Compliance is designed to ensure that your company does not discriminate in any of its business practices. Whether you are a large, multi-million dollar conglomerate or a small, Mom-and-Pop, two-person establishment, it is MANDATORY that you have an active contract compliance number. This simple, paperless application is located on the city's website under the Vendor Services link, <http://vendorservices.columbus.gov/e-proc/>

MINORITY/FEMALE BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

Stand-up and be counted! It is important that minority, female, Asian-Pacific, Hispanic-Latino, and other targeted groups have the opportunity to identify themselves as such. The city's Minority/Female Business Enterprise (M/FBE) Program gives you the perfect chance to do just that. Unlike the contract compliance process, this certification is completely *voluntary*. Can you qualify? Take a look at the chart on the next page.

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M/FBE CERTIFICATION CHART

MBE	Minority Business Enterprise" shall mean a business which is an independent and continuing operation for profit, performing a commercially useful function, and is owned and controlled by one or more eligible minority group members, U.S. citizens. Minority group members or "minority shall mean an "African American." An "African American shall mean persons having ancestry with origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
FBE	Female Business Enterprise" shall mean a business which is an independent and continuing operation for profit, performing a commercially useful function, and is owned and controlled by one or more females, U.S. citizens, of non African American descent.
ABE	Asian Business Enterprise shall mean a business which is an independent and continuing operation for profit, performing a commercially useful function, and is owned and controlled by one or more Asian Pacific group members, U.S. citizens, of non African American descent.
HBE	Hispanic Business Enterprise" shall mean a business which is an independent and continuing operation for profit, performing a commercially useful function, and is owned and controlled by one or more Hispanic Latino group members, U.S. citizens, of non African American descent.
VBE	Veteran Business Enterprise" shall mean a business which is an independent and continuing operation for profit, performing a commercially useful function, and is owned and controlled by one or more veterans.
RMB	Registered Minority Business shall mean any of the groups listed above outside the MSA

Becoming certified with the city can afford your company many benefits, which include a listing in the city business directory, technical assistance, bid advocacy, and access to key decision-makers.

To do this, your company must:

- Be 51% OWNED and CONTROLLED by at least one of the targeted groups;
- Be in business for at least three (3) months in the Columbus MSA; and
- Hold all applicable licenses and provide appropriate business documentation.

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While this process is comprehensive, it is worth the effort. If you are already certified with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the State of Ohio, or the South Central Minority Development Supplier Council, you can apply for reciprocal certification, and essentially be waived into the city's program. The M/FBE application is located on the EBO website, <http://www.eboco.columbus.gov/>

Minority- and woman-owned companies located *outside* of the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, Franklin County and contiguous counties, can sign-up for the Minority Business Registration Program. For more information about this opportunity, please contact the EBO professionals at 614.645.4764 or eboco@columbus.gov.

AGENCY INCLUSION PLANS AND EBO DEPARTMENTAL LIAISONS

To assist the EBO Office in its efforts, every city department has designated an EBO Liaison. The liaison:

- Has substantive knowledge of the agency's procurement needs and procurement practices;
- Is responsible for the development and implementation of the Agency Inclusion Plan and has access to departmental and EBO leadership to discuss procurement opportunities and practices;
- Is the primary designee to handle inquiries from M/FBE suppliers; and
- Has authority to make routine procurement decisions.

The primary responsibility of the EBO Liaison is to drive the inclusion agenda within the liaison's respective department via the Agency Inclusion Plan (AIP). The AIP is a comprehensive document developed to identify an agency's eligible budget, procurement projections, and proposed expenditures. Its key elements include: responsibility designations, a policy statement, purchasing process, and outreach plan. The purpose of the AIP is twofold: (1) To assist vendors identify potential opportunities within city departments; and (2) To ensure that city departments adhere to the City of Columbus' commitment to fostering a diverse supplier base by ensuring that all suppliers have the opportunity to compete for city work fairly. The EBO Liaison will participate in on-going training conducted by the EBO office.

The AIP serves as a roadmap for potential suppliers seeking work and city departmental leadership seeking to monitor their ongoing efforts to eliminate obstacles to small, minority-owned businesses. The AIP is designed to serve as a resource document and will be posted on the EBO website. It will be updated throughout the year.

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The EBO liaison can answer questions about what the department is planning to purchase, how much, and when. This liaison is your first line of contact with respect to all relevant procurement issues. Contact this individual if you are a certified Minority/Female Business Enterprise and you have an interest in doing business with their department.

To take a look the city's AIPs, please visit the departments' link on the city's website at www.columbus.gov or on the EBO website at www.eboco.columbus.gov

Please contact the Department to talk to an EBO Liaison.

Building and Zoning	614.645.7776
Community Relations	614.645.1993
Development	614.645.7795
Finance & Management	614.645.8200
Human Resources	614.645.7206
Mayor's Office	614.645.7671
Public Health	614.645.7417
Public Safety	614.645.8210
Public Service	614.645.8290
Public Utilities	614.645.8276
Recreation & Parks	614.645.3319
Technology	614.645.2550

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SECTION TWO: PROCUREMENT. WHAT IS IT?

Now that you know have an idea of *what* the city purchases, you have to know *how* the city purchases.

The City of Columbus is one of Central Ohio's largest consumers of goods and services. These purchases are undertaken by the Purchasing Office and individual agency authorities, in concert with the Mayor, City Council, the City Auditor, the EBO Office, and the City Attorney.

The Department of Finance and Management is primarily responsible for developing and administering city purchasing practices and procedures. The Purchasing Office employs Procurement professionals who specialize in particular commodity/service areas.

Each city agency also employs its own purchasing/fiscal officers who work with the Purchasing Office and prospective suppliers when purchasing goods or services. By law, individual agencies also have significant authority to enter into contracts independent of the Purchasing Office.

Once the City Auditor certifies that funds are available for the particular purchase, city agencies have the authority to enter into contracts primarily in the areas of: general service/construction contracts; and small purchases of goods and equipment. These purchases, however, may still be subject to the approval of EBO, the City Attorney, and City Council.

So, what is procurement? *Warning:* This definition might be a little advanced, but don't worry you will understand it if you keep reading.

The process of obtaining goods and services from preparation and processing of a requisition through to receipt and approval of the invoice for payment. It commonly involves (1) purchase planning, (2) standards determination, (3) specifications development, (4) sourcing or supplier research and selection, (5) value analysis, (6) financing, (7) cost, (8) making the purchase, (9) contract administration, (10) inventory control, and (11) disposals and other related functions.

Like we warned, that was a mouthful! Wow! Before you re-read that definition, let's try for a more simplistic one. "In its most basic form, procurement is nothing more than the steps that are used in the acquisition of goods and services" www.wiseGeek.com. The truth of the matter is that if you have ever purchased anything, you have, in fact, participated in a procurement process. Is this a little easier to grasp? Hope so.

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HOW DOES PROCUREMENT WORK AT THE CITY OF COLUMBUS?

Title 329, the City of Columbus' procurement code identifies the legal and uniform requirements to contract with vendors for the acquisition of construction services, professional services, and goods and services. This function is managed by the Purchasing Office, Department of Finance and Management. Their mission is, "To promote cost-effective city operations by acquiring high-quality goods and services at the lowest price and by selling surplus goods at the highest price." Further they strive to assist agencies acquire goods and services in a fair and equitable process. Their hope is to ensure that suppliers feel that the city was impartial in providing the opportunity to deliver goods and services through the evaluation of agency specifications and by allowing you to ask questions through Vendor Services.

Each department may have informal practices in place to acquire the goods and services they need. Those practices may include a process for informal identification of solicited bidders and procurement tool(s); the use and staffing of evaluation teams; preparation of bid specifications; use of pre-bid and pre-construction meetings; the development evaluation tools; and, the post award briefings process.

Departments will also review the EBO Business Directory; various industry directories/resources and consult with the Equal Business Opportunity Office to determine if there are available suppliers to bid on a needed good or service.

If appropriately identified, in addition to the customary solicitation process, businesses may be contacted by the EBO Liaison, the Purchasing Office and/or the Equal Business Opportunity Office, to respond to a bid opportunity.

Before you begin to engage the city's procurement process, you need to know the terminology used and the players in the process. Below are just a few terms to get you started.

KEY TERMS (ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

Advertisement/IFB: The public announcement, as required by law, inviting bids for work to be performed or materials and equipment to be furnished.

Agency: The name and address of the organization on whose behalf the bid request has been submitted.

Award: The written acceptance by the Director of a bid.

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Bid: A tender, proposal or quotation submitted in response to a solicitation from a contracting authority.

Bid Document: Documents required to be submitted in response to an invitation to bid (ITB). These include the prescribed bid form, drawings, specifications, time lines, charts, price breakdowns, etc. Bids not accompanied by all the required documents are considered incomplete bids, and are usually automatically rejected. They are also called bidding documents.

Bid Submittal Documents: The bound manual which includes the advertisement for bids, special provisions, the proposal forms, proposal guaranty, contract forms, supplemental specifications, standard drawings, and other notices.

Commodity Code: Any alphanumeric system designed to identify particular products. There are many different ones--some government, some private sector. All are used to classify goods and services so that they can be better identified. 001-899 are Goods, while 900 thru 999 are Services. AAA through ZZZ are UTC contracts.

Competitive Sealed Bid: Offers submitted by individuals or firms competing for a contract, privilege or right to supply specified services or merchandise.

Construction: Labor and materials, for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of public improvements, including but not limited to streets, highways, bridges, sewers, water lines, power lines and plant facilities.

Contract: The written agreement between the City and the Contractor setting forth the obligations of the parties, including but not limited to the performance of the work, furnishing of labor and materials, and the basis of payment.

Contract Compliance: Contract compliance is a form of contract management that seeks to ensure that government agencies, contract holders and, in some cases, grant recipients, are complying with government standards regarding equal opportunity employment. These terms are different for each government but generally include provisions that businesses must accept applications from women and minorities, that government offices must solicit bids for contract work from minority- and women-owned businesses and that organizations that receive grants from the government follow fair hiring, retention and promotion policies.

Department: A principal administrative division of a government headed by a cabinet member.

Goods & Services: The most basic products of an economic system that consist of tangible consumable items and tasks performed by individuals. Many business portfolios consist of a mix of goods and services that they offer to potential consumers via a sales force.

Informal Bid: Unsealed competitive bid submitted by letter, fax, or email, in response to an invitation to bid (ITB).

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Notice of Award: Written notice by the city to the apparent successful bidder stating that upon compliance with the conditions enumerated therein, within the time specified, the city will enter into contract.

Pre-Bid Meeting: A meeting to discuss with potential bidders, technical, operational and performance specifications, and/or the full extent of financial, security and other contractual obligations related to a bid solicitation.

Pre-Con Meeting: A team-building process with the contractor and the agency used for the purpose of establishing overall project scheduling; understanding project commitments; and defining roles, responsibilities and levels of authority.

Professional Services: A service which usually requires advanced training and/or a significant degree of expertise to perform, and which often requires official certification or authorization by the state as a condition precedent to the rendering of such service. By way of example, professional services include the personal services rendered by architects, attorneys-at-law, certified public accountants, financial consultants, city and regional planners, management consultants and professional engineers.

Proposal: The offer of a bidder, on the prescribed form properly signed and guaranteed, to perform the work and to furnish the labor and materials at the prices quoted.

RFP: Request for Proposal. An invitation for providers of a product or service to bid on the right to supply that product or service to the individual or entity that issued the RFP.

RFSQ: Request for Statement of Qualifications. Solicitation based on establishing a pool of qualified vendors to provide services through Master Agreements.

Scope of Services: A description of the services, detailing the conditions of what is expected for the proposal, also known as SOW or Statement of Work.

Solicitations: Process of notifying prospective or qualified bidders on the bid solicitor's wish to receive bids on the specified product or project. Solicitations include invitation-to-bid (ITB), request for proposals (RFP), request for summary of qualifications (RFSQ), and request for sealed bids, which may be made public through advertising, mailings, or some other method of communication.

Specifications: Performance specifications which are a functional description of a product or service emphasizing the important performance characteristics and the end result desired. It minimizes the specific design details that sometimes hold proprietary requirements unknown to the author.

Vendor Profile: A snapshot of your company's information.

Vendor Services: The electronic platform managed by the Purchasing Office and used by the city required for suppliers to register their businesses for the city's procurement opportunities through the selection of commodity codes.

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Vendor Registration: The process of signing a business up to receive solicitations through the identification and association of commodity codes.

Universal Term Contract or UTC: Option contracts. An agreement authorized by ordinance of city council and established by the Director of Finance and Management or designee, for the option to purchase or sell an estimated amount of goods or services at a specified rate or price schedule for a specified time period.

KEY PLAYERS

Key Players will include *Strategic Resources* and *You*.

Strategic Resources might include:

Department Director: A cabinet-level position at the City of Columbus. The head of the contracting agency under which the project is being performed. The chief officer of any city agency.

Division Administrators/Managers: The heads of individual sections of the departments of the City of Columbus which the project is being performed.

Purchasing Office, Department of Finance and Management: The division, office, branch, section, unit, or other organizational element of an installation or activity charged with the functions of procuring supplies or services.

You might be called:

Bidder: An individual or business entity which has expressed an interest in obtaining a city contract by responding to an invitation for bids.

Consultant: One who gives professional advice or services.

Contractor: Any individual or business entity which has a contract with a city agency. Also a supplier in the construction industry.

Sub-consultant: An individual contracted by a consultant to provide services related to or part of those which the consultant owes to the client under his or her primary contract with the client.

Subcontractor: An individual or company hired by a general or prime contractor to perform a specific task as part of the overall project.

Supplier: A party that supplies goods or services. A supplier may be distinguished from a contractor or subcontractor (of the construction industry), who commonly adds specialized input to deliverables. Also called vendor.

Vendor: A company which supplies parts or services to another company. Also called supplier.

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Now that you have a handle on the key terminology, let's get started with understanding the buying process.

The city is comprised of Departments subdivided into divisions and offices. (See the "City of Columbus Department/Division Contacts" in the back of this publication for a list of all City Departments, divisions, and offices.) For the most part, purchasing is *decentralized* at the City of Columbus. While there is a Purchasing Office, city departments and divisions have alternative means of bidding. They can either bid independently of one another, or together based upon operational needs and what is most fiscally responsible to taxpayers.

The Purchasing Office is available to either bid contracts for departments or to assist them in bidding their own contracts. You should view the Purchasing Office as resource, understanding that although they do not make or oversee every city purchase, they greatly influence the agencies.

The Purchasing Office often bids contracts called UTCs or Universal Term Contracts, or Option Contracts. A UTC, established for a dollar, allows for city agencies to have the option to purchase or sell an estimated amount of goods or services at a specified rate or price schedule for a specified time period, usually multi-year. UTCs may or may not be used. Use depends on the needs of the contracting agencies.

For example, many departments need to have grass cut. Instead of every department/division soliciting proposals for grass-cutting services, the Purchasing Office may solicit for services for all departments through a Universal Term Contract (UTC) process. This way any agency which needs to use these services, could without having to bid each time the grass needed cutting. If the grass does not need cutting, there is no obligation for any agency to use the option contract.

HOW DOES THE PURCHASING OFFICE OR ANY CITY AGENCY BID?

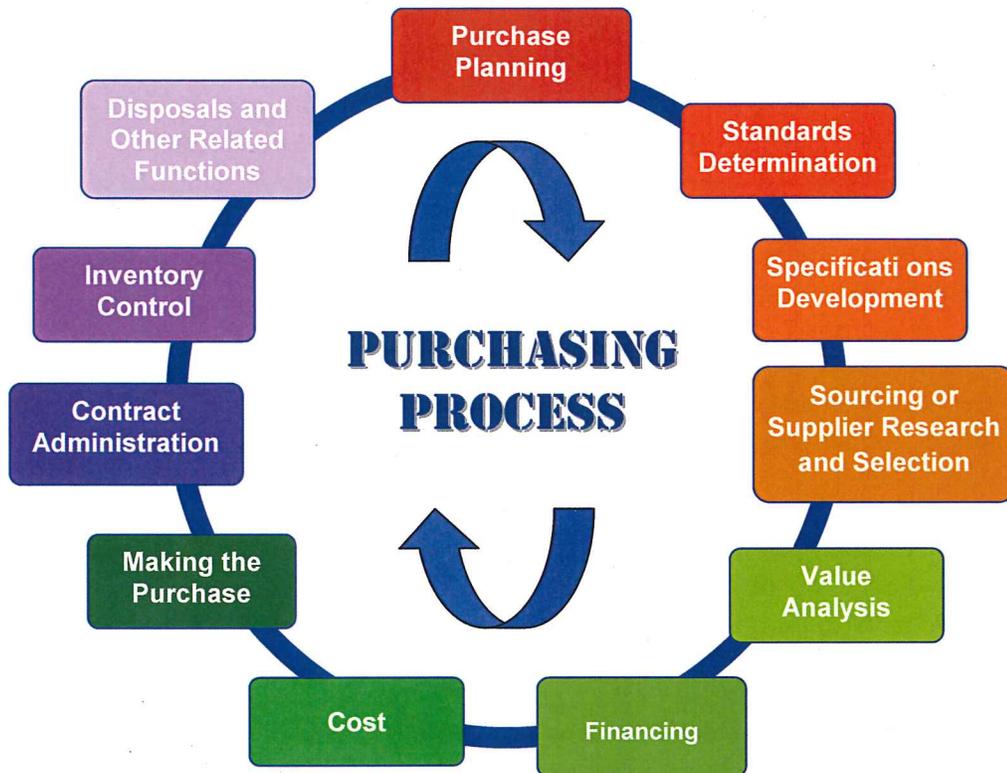
This **Purchasing Process chart** on the next page takes us back to our original 11-part definition of procurement we first visited at the beginning of **SECTION TWO**.

We know what how to bid; so, let's examine types of processes. There are a variety of processes we use at the city as listed below. Formal competitive bidding is the preferred method of solicitation.

Formal Bids: Over \$20,000 to include ITB, IFB, RFP, Goods, Services, UTCs (Options contracts), Consulting, Construction, Engineering, and the like.

Invitation to Bids or ITBs: Prepared for materials, supplies, equipments, construction, and general services estimated to exceed \$20,000.

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Request for Proposals or RFPs: Used for professional services estimated to exceed \$50,000.

Request for Statement of Qualifications or RFSQs: Initiated for professional services estimated to exceed \$50,000 much like the RFP. The difference is that the RFSQ is focused on qualifications for specific projects.

Request for Information or RFIs: Used to find sources and provide the city with information to help with specification development.

Informal Bid: \$1,000 or under agencies sometimes publish their own a request for goods.

- Goods over \$1,000 to under \$20,000 must be bid through Purchasing.
- Services under \$20,000 can be bid by the agency.

Request for Quote: Goods or Services under \$20,000 that are most often submitted online.

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SECTION THREE: HOW DO I BID?

We are happy to share resources with you, but we know what you really want are opportunities to contract with the city. To seek a contract, you may:

1. Submit a bid;
2. Collaborate with someone who submits a bid as a subcontractor; or
3. Partner as a joint venture--a legal entity created for a particular contract.

How do you locate contracting opportunities? There are a few ways:



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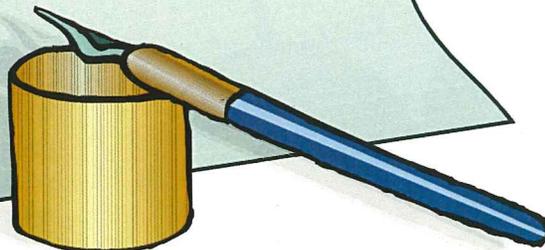
The bidding process begins with **Vendor Services**.

STEP ONE

Vendor Services is the interactive website managed by the Purchasing Office where you register your business with the City of Columbus. Once you set up your password-protected account in Vendor Services, you profile detailed specifics about your company, register under the appropriate 5-digit commodity codes, complete the mandatory contract compliance process as a part of the vendor profile creation, and the optional M/FBE certification process, if you qualify. You may access Vendor Services from the home page of the city's website, www.columbus.gov.

VENDOR REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Visit www.columbus.gov
- ✓ Locate the Vendor Services link
- ✓ Accept the registration agreement
- ✓ Complete the required sections:
Tax Payer ID, Tax ID Type, Company Name, Company Type, etc.
- ✓ Create a business profile
- ✓ Link your Commodity Codes
- ✓ Complete the Contract Compliance application
- ✓ Complete the W-9 form
- ✓ Complete the M/FBE certification, if you are interested and qualify
- ✓ Look for bid solicitations on vendor services at <http://vendorservices.columbus.gov>



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The Vendor Services process has many benefits. They include the ability to:

- Receive immediate access to open solicitations
- Be GREEN and view solicitations and submit bids electronically
- Update Vendor Registration, W-9, Contract Compliance, and M/FBE Certification information
- Track Invoices and payments for up to 6 months
- Change your profile as your business grows

STEP TWO

Contract Compliance is mandatory for everyone who does business with the City of Columbus as we briefly discussed in **SECTION ONE**. It consists of a short document detailing information about your company's ownership, workforce, hiring practices, and employment environment. Certain entities are excluded from the Contract Compliance requirement such as quasi-governmental agencies, employers with less than four employees, and non-profits. These groups, however, must still register to verify their statuses. This online process automatically generates a W-9 for the Auditor's Office so that you can be paid.

STEP THREE

M/FBE Certifications are optional for those who qualify. As we talked about in **SECTION ONE**, we like to provide an opportunity for those African-American, African, female, Asian-Pacific, Hispanic-Latino, and veteran-owned and controlled businesses to self-identify. These certifications cannot guarantee you a contract, but serve as an excellent marketing tool to boost your efforts.

STEP FOUR

Commodity Codes are essential to your success in bidding. Commodity codes tell us what goods and services your company provides. So, if your company provides grass-cutting services, then you would select all codes that are or could be a match, for example, landscaping services, mowing, and the like.

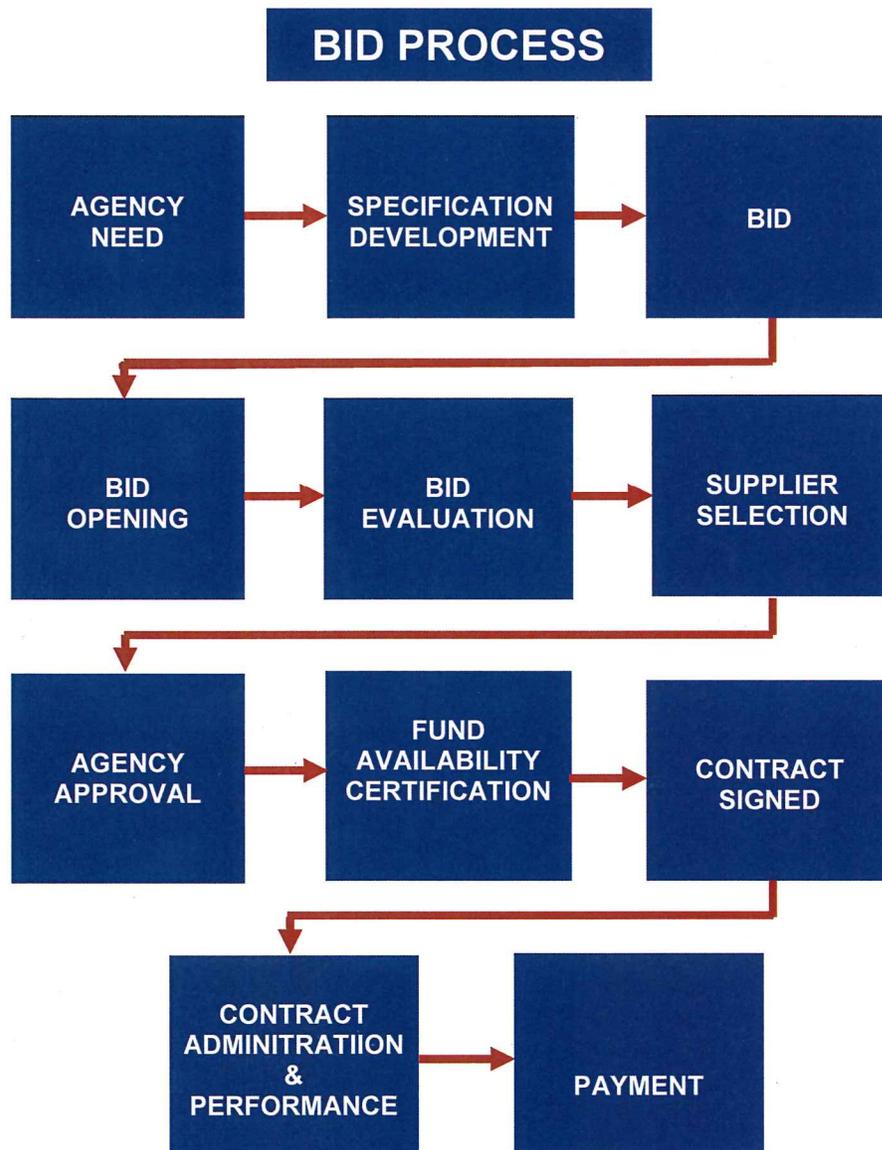
You should receive an email for every bid opportunity within every commodity code for which you register, but you may not register under the commodity code the agency may use to solicit. Be proactive! Visit Vendor Services and check what opportunities are available yourself. You may miss out if you don't.

If you fail to register your business under the commodity codes which are applicable to your company or under codes about which you'd like to receive info, you will NOT be successful. **BE BROAD IN YOUR THINKING!** Commodity codes fuel the vehicle to your success and dictate about which opportunities you will be notified. **You must complete this five-digit registration.**

Note: If you are primarily subcontracting, include the codes that apply to prime contractors so that you will be aware of potential sub opportunities.

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Now, for the actual bid process.



Please note: Informal Bids are submitted ONLINE with the exception of some agency bids, while Formal Bids must be PHYSICALLY submitted.

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SECTION FOUR: I BID. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

It's award time! Informal Bids can take up to 45 days to award. Formal Bids can take up to 180 days to award. These statements are true unless the specifications indicate otherwise.

For informal bids, winning results can be found on Vendor Services under the "Bid Results" tab. Formal bid results must be requested from the bidding agency. If you don't happen to win, it is still a great idea to review the bid of the successful firm, and incorporate what you learned from their bid into your next one.

Review and award processes include the simple identification of the low bid to a more elaborate review of proposals by a team of city staff which usually includes a representative from EBO, called evaluation teams. This comprehensive review process is used for RFPs. In it, the team reads each proposal and scores according to published criteria. The top three bidders are then submitted to the Director of the department who then selects the awardee.

Other bids are awarded to the responsible, responsive, and best bid with cost as a consideration. In other words, how responsive you are to the bid specifications, how responsible you are to deliver on the contract, and how you best address other criteria used to meet city or agency initiatives.

The city also offers a Local Bidder Credit as well as an Environmental Preference, where applicable. Make sure that you ask for and get your credits!

I WON! NOW WHAT?

PROVIDE CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION. You may be asked to provide Workers Compensation compliance and Personal Liability Insurance for services performed on city property.

GET A COPY OF THE PURCHASE ORDER OR CONTRACT. You cannot perform a contract according to its specifications unless you know what those specifications are. Make sure that you get a copy of the *signed* contract.

READ THE CONTRACT! Know what you are required to do, how to do it, when to do it, and ALL exceptions. The EBO staff is happy to assist you in understanding your responsibilities BEFORE you sign your contract. You don't want to be unclear about your new contract.

COMMUNICATE. Get to know the contract administrator. Make sure that you and the agency have the same understanding of the contract terms. If you are confused or unsure, get clarification. Contact the departmental EBO Liaison or the EBO Professionals. We are happy to help.

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SOLIDIFY YOUR TEAM. You may want to give serious consideration to hiring an attorney, and even an accountant. While the city professionals are happy to assist you, we offer no legal representation or accounting services.

PERFORM! Do what you have contracted to do. Do it timely. Do it well.

GET PAID. You must invoice properly in order to be paid timely. Make sure to route your invoice to the proper individual. Failure to do so will delay your payment.

CONGRATULATE YOURSELF! If you have followed the above steps, you have probably done a great job. Kudos!

If, by chance, you did not follow the above steps, then you probably did not do a great job. What happens in this instance? Likely, a contract dispute.

To ease the difficulty of a city contract dispute:

- Maintain accurate documentation of your work performance, communication with city personnel, payments, and the like.
- As soon as you become aware that there may be trouble, address it immediately.
- Try first to resolve the dispute with the contract administrator. Sometimes, it is a matter of a simple misunderstanding. Perhaps the contract administrator thought you should perform a task that is not a part of your contract. Communication can bring these types of issues to the forefront and help to resolve them.
- If you are not successful with the agency, then immediately contact the agency's EBO Liaison as well as the EBO Office for assistance. We will work diligently with the agency, and possibly the Purchasing Office to resolve every issue. We want you to be successful.

I LOST! NOW WHAT?

BE POSITIVE. You win some, you lose some, but you have to persevere.

FOLLOW-UP!

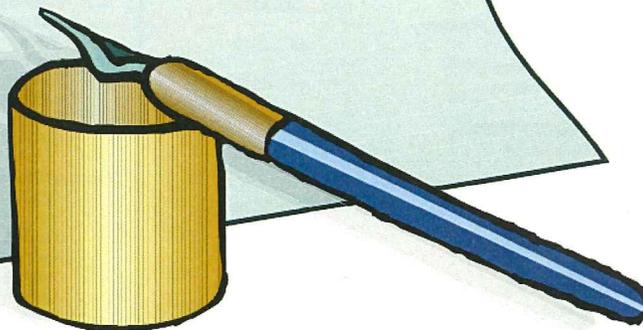
- Review the previously submitted bid results. Take tips from the successful bid to incorporate into your own.
- Ask agency representatives for a de-briefing. Find out specifically how you could improve your approach to proposal submission.

TRY, TRY AGAIN. You just might be successful next time.

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SECTION FIVE: TIPS YOU SHOULD NEVER FORGET!

- ✓ Understand the city's procurement processes
- ✓ Understand the bidding processes--informal vs. formal
- ✓ Know which bidding process is being used
- ✓ Follow directions completely. It is ALL necessary
- ✓ Include your contract compliance number
- ✓ Research prior bids
- ✓ Understand that it may not be in your best interest to bid every opportunity-bid what you can deliver
- ✓ Determine your TRUE cost before bidding. Include delivery AND overhead—don't undercut yourself
- ✓ Contact your prepared list of references. Make sure they rave about you
- ✓ Return a complete bid package—appropriately signed and delivered timely
- ✓ Attend Pre-Bid Conferences
- ✓ Know what you're getting into—READ THE CONTRACT!
- ✓ Ask the EBO professionals for assistance if you are unclear about ANYTHING



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SECTION SIX: EXTRA IMPORTANT INFO

Use this list to contact departmental fiscal officers.

City of Columbus Department/Division Contacts

A Listing of Contacts for Businesses Interested in Doing Business with the City of Columbus
Please contact the Purchasing Office personnel specific to your commodities and service needs – see assignment listing.

Bldg & Zoning Services Department		Municipal Court Judges	
Doug Hoover	645-7979	Cherie Kinney	645-8425
Linda Deis	645-3939		
City Attorney & Real Estate Div.		Public Safety Department	
Linda Helms	645-7712	Director's Office	
City Auditor		Ekow Dennis	645-8210
Jackie Marburger	645-7618	Fire Division	
Income Tax Division		Candy Abbruzzese	645-6005
Andrea Pesta	645-3027	Police Division	
City Council/City Clerk		Mitch Clay	645-4632
Jennifer Moore	645-7808	Support Services	
City Treasurer's Office		Tracea Fowler	645-4937
Debbie Klie	645-7737	Public Service Department	
Talia Brown	645-8238	Director's Office	
Civil Service Commission		Ted Rundio	645-7382
Joey Faber	645-7299	Refuse Collection	
Development Department		Melissa Meyer	645-6073
Chris Swauger	645-6130	Mobility	
Housing Services Division		Elaine Brunney	645-5705
Carol Morse	645-8873	Planning & Operations	
Finance & Management Department		Elaine Brunney	645-5705
Sean Fouts	645-2854	Todd Wiseman	645-7393
Facilities Management Division		Tim Espinosa	645-7985
Elaine Ward	645-8857	Design & Construction	
Chet Cortellesi	645-8478	Elaine Brunney	645-5705
Fleet Management		Public Utilities Department	
Diane Berinato	645-8508	Director's Office	
Dave Bewley	645-6210	Joe Lombardi	645-8623
Print & Copy Center		Operating	
Jesse Stegall	645-8570	Ihab Tadros	645-8838
Purchasing Office		Capital Projects	
Lori Bells	645-6114	Jonathan Lee	645-7820
Health Department		Sanitary	
Scott Hutchinson	645-7417	Debbie Iola	645-6276
Human Resources Department		Water	
Nicole Evans	645-3018	Jim Bond	645-6272
Training		Stormwater	
Abbie Amos	645-3059	Art Currafi	645-6212
Mayor's Office		Power	
Jannis Davis	645-0843	Barb Minister	645-7822
Community Relations Commission Office		Recreation and Parks Department	
Karen Nolan-Mitchell	645-1993	Administration	
Equal Business Opportunity Office		Steve Hiland	645-3315
Thomas Stephens	645-0248	Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging	
Municipal Court Clerk		Phil Rollins	645-3877
Crystal Ross	645-8056	Columbus Municipal Golf Division	
Ken Euman	645-8183	Al Brant	645-3375
		Parks	
		Mike Gimeson	645-6853
		Recreation	
		Elaine Hostetler	645-3010
		Technology Department	
		Robin Cook	645-7247
		Gwen Akrobetto	724-1279

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The City of Columbus Equal Business Opportunity Office (EBO) is now on Facebook and Twitter. Join our online community and gain access to the latest information about opportunities, resources, and events. We look forward to connecting with you!

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ebocolumbus

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile page for the Equal Business Opportunity Commission Office. At the top, the Facebook logo and search bar are visible. The profile name is "Equal Business Opportunity Commission Office" with a "US" logo. The cover photo features a man and a woman smiling, with the text: "OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL, MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES. - DIRECTOR EBOCO, MELINDA CARTER". The City of Columbus logo and name are also present in the top right of the cover photo. Below the cover photo, the profile name is repeated, along with "43 likes · 8 talking about this · 0 were here". The "About" section describes the organization as a "Government Organization" that "Promotes inclusiveness of minority and female owned businesses within the city's procurement process and facilitates equitable awarding of contracts." Navigation buttons for "Photos", "Events", "Latest News", and "Resources" are shown at the bottom.

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Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ebocolumbus

Equal Business
 @EBOcolumbus
 We are the Equal Business Opportunity Commission Office. Our goal is to provide access to opportunities for small, minority and women owned businesses.
 Columbus, Ohio <http://eboco.columbus.gov/>

50 TWEETS
 28 FOLLOWING
 42 FOLLOWERS

Tweets

- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 5h
 Traditional marketing still rules via sba.gov 1.usa.gov/RCKFOX
 Expand
- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 19 Sep
 Go Forward With Your #SmallBusiness | Attend The Mayor's Small Business Conference eepurl.com/poYCH
 Expand
- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 19 Sep
 We hope you spread your wings today, #entrepreneurs!
bit.ly/QmALnl
 Expand
- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 19 Sep
 "The greatest success is being yourself"
pinterest.com/pin/1493929126... via @pinterest
 Expand
- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 18 Sep
 Have ideas about how the City of Cois can improve their website?....
webfeedback.columbus.gov
 Expand
- Equal Business** @EBOcolumbus 17 Sep
 Top 50 most admired companies cnnmon.ie/OT1CVI Who do you think is #1
 Expand

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NOTES:

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

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