



WEST PALM BEACH

# LET'S TALK PROCUREMENT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM THE OFFICE OF SMALL MINORITY BUSINESS PROGRAMS



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## WEST PALM BEACH APPROVES ANOTHER DISPARITY STUDY MARKS CONTINUANCE OF MINORITY/WOMEN BUSINESS PROGRAM

On April 15, 2024, the City Commission heard from several minority- and women-business owners, who shared their positive experiences with the Office of Minority/Women Business Programs. From the support offered by office staff to events held to make networking easier, the stories of assistance came from various business owners who have benefited from the Office's outreach.

After hearing a presentation from Director Frank Hayden, detailing the results of his Office's five years of work, the Commissioners commended the staff's contributions and approved conducting another disparity study. The Office plans to hire a consultant for the study by July - August 2024.

### Re-evaluating how business is conducted in WPB

The upcoming disparity study will update the results of a 2016 disparity study, which examined the equitability of all qualified businesses to do business with the City and eventually led to the establishment of the Office of Minority/Women Business Programs.

The advantages of M/WBE Program are stated as providing:

- opportunities for M/WBEs to work with Prime Contractors and large firms as subcontractors
- free marketing of their company to other city vendors and at networking events
- contract bids - or "sheltered markets" - for M/WBEs ONLY

At the April 15 Commission meeting, local business owners attested to the tangible results of the M/WBE program since its inception.

"The continuation of this Office is an important part of the growing economic landscape of the City," said Michelle Brown, president of MBE-certified Kaliah Communications, Inc. "I am a direct beneficiary of the work the Office does to keep minority- and women business owners part of the City's ongoing development."

## MEET SOFIA GROSSO, INTERN FOR THE OFFICE OF SMALL, MINORITY- AND WOMEN BUSINESS PROGRAMS



Sofia Grosso, a graduate of Columbia University in New York, is assisting the City this summer by evaluating other small, minority and women business initiatives and comparing them to West Palm Beach's programs. Her research will enable the City to remain competitive with its Small and M/WBE offerings.

## WPB SPRINGS INTO ACTION

Held on May 10th, the City of West Palm Beach's "Spring Into Action" Small Business Resource Fair was an event that extended opportunities to small businesses and entrepreneurs to explore the myriad of resources present within our community. This event was specifically designed to aid entrepreneurs in their journey. Whether the business required resources, technical assistance, or access to funding, the City of West Palm Beach is ready to collaborate with Businesses through the certification process.



# Local Business & SPOTLIGHT

## BLESSED STAGING AND CONSTRUCTION



Trish Gifford is a dynamic and knowledgeable force in the construction industry, known for her attention to detail, productivity, and professionalism.

Trish Gifford, owner of Blessed Staging and Construction, started her construction career in 2003 with Pulte Homes. She holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration from Florida Atlantic University and a Master's in Business Management from the University of Florida.

Blessed Staging and Construction (Blessed S&C), an SBE-M/WBE-DBE-certified, wholly woman-owned company, specializes in both commercial and residential markets in South Florida. Operating since 2016 in West Palm Beach, Blessed S&C is recognized for its comprehensive range of services.

Blessed S&C excels in construction management and project management, providing top-tier services to build and renovate commercial buildings. The company's residential division handles everything from new home builds to renovations, taking projects from dirt or demolition to Certificate of Occupancy.

Licensed General Contractor CGC1532099  
(561) 249-5411  
BlessedStaging@outlook.com  
[www.beblessedconstruction.com](http://www.beblessedconstruction.com)

## WANT HELP WITH EV CHARGING AT WORK? TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE

Mayor Keith James has signed the Change@Work pledge in his continuing commitment and support of workers and clean transportation access in the workplace. Change@Work and Electric Vehicle Adoption Leadership (EVAL) are U.S. Department of Energy-funded complimentary programs aimed at increasing workplace charging programs through technical support and national recognition. Become a more sustainable workplace and get free technical support to install EV charging.

Learn more at <https://build.chargeatwork.org/preview> and <https://www.evalcertification.org/>

For questions, contact Larysa (Lara) Shlyapina, City's Office of Sustainability at (561) 804-4983; [lslyapina@wpb.org](mailto:lslyapina@wpb.org)

