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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES RECORD-BREAKING 4,100 CERTIFIED M/WBES  
IN LAST FISCAL YEAR**

*Department of Small Business Services launches M/WBE mentorship program to help city's small  
businesses continue to build capacity and grow*

**NEW YORK**—The de Blasio administration announced today that the City has reached more than 4,100 certified Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBES) in Fiscal Year 2015 – a record-breaking number that surpasses the previous program high of 3,783 certified M/WBES in FY14. Roughly 1,500 of those – more than one-third – have been certified since the start of the de Blasio Administration.

Increasing the number and capacity of certified M/WBE firms has been a top priority of the de Blasio administration, resulting in the largest number of certified M/WBES in the City's history and underscoring the administration's commitment to increasing the total City awards to M/WBE firms by a minimum of \$16 billion over the next ten years. Certified M/WBE firms have access to programs and services to help them bid on and win public and private sector contracts.

"We have set an ambitious goal to ensure our City's procurement reflects the great diversity of business owners in NYC, and we are using every tool we have to increase City contracts going to Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "This record-breaking milestone is critical to our efforts to create more opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises to compete for City contracts, and we will continue to work directly with businesses to provide resources to help them succeed and compete for larger contracts."

"This historic milestone matters. The Mayor's M/WBE team created a strategy to increase certified M/WBE firms to help achieve the Mayor's commitment to award \$16 billion to M/WBES by 2025," said **Maya Wiley, Counsel to the Mayor and M/WBE Director**. "We have listened to M/WBE leaders. With mentorship programs like the one announced today we will expand opportunities for these firms and build a more prosperous city for all New Yorkers."

"We are thrilled to reach this milestone of more than 4,100 certified firms – the most M/WBES in the program's history," said **Kerri Jew, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Economic and Financial Opportunity at the Department of Small Business Services**. "As we work to build the pipeline of M/WBES eligible to bid and win City contracts, we are also helping build capacity through opportunities like mentorship, to ensure M/WBES have the tools they need to succeed on those contracts."

To help increase certification, the administration has cut down red tape by:

- Making it easier to certify and re-certify by launching the NYC Online Certification Portal in February 2015, and streamlining the certification application process.

- Introducing one-on-one certification application review sessions, to help ensure firms submit complete and quality application packages, reducing back and forth and delays and increasing the chances of obtaining certification.
- Improving the Payee Information Portal to better identify and reach out to firms that are minority or women-owned, but may not be certified.

The Department of Small Business Services also announced today the expansion of those resources through a new mentorship program for NYC-certified minority and women entrepreneurs and small businesses in the professional services, standard services, and goods sectors. In partnership with Entrepreneurs' Organization NY (EO), and as part of the City's Corporate Alliance Program (CAP), participants in the M/WBE Mentorship Program are matched with seasoned entrepreneurs during a six-month cohort to support them in achieving specific business goals. Mentors will work with businesses to help them execute specific steps towards achieving their goals by providing expert advice, guidance, and support.

The M/WBE Mentorship Program is part of the NYC Department of Small Business Services' Corporate Alliance Program, a partnership with ten corporations designed to provide education, mentorship and assistance to M/WBEs and small businesses looking to grow their businesses through corporate contracting opportunities. CAP partner executives will join with the individual mentors to address common business challenges, foster entrepreneurial connections, and facilitate access to new markets.

To be eligible, applicants must be the owner or have majority ownership in the company, and the business must have annual gross revenues between \$200,000 and \$900,000; have been in operation for at least three years; have a minimum of two employees; have had steady growth for the last two years; be a Professional Services, Standard Services and Goods firm; and if a business is a M/WBE, must be NYC-certified or eligible to be NYC-certified. For more information or to apply for the next cohort, visit [www.nyc.gov/corporateallianceprogram](http://www.nyc.gov/corporateallianceprogram).

Additional mentorship opportunities and capacity building programs are also available for certified M/WBE firms, including connections to bonding, financing, and teaming, as well as one-on-one assistance, workshops, and Strategic Steps for Growth, a nine-month business management course for M/WBEs in partnership with New York University. NYC Construction Mentorship and the Bond Readiness programs are currently accepting applications for the next cohort. Dates for information sessions and details about the program and applications are available at [www.nyc.gov/nycbusiness](http://www.nyc.gov/nycbusiness).

Firms interested in starting the M/WBE certification process or participating in M/WBE programming can learn more by calling 311, visiting [www.nyc.gov/getcertified](http://www.nyc.gov/getcertified), or meeting with a client manager at a NYC Business Solutions Centers in any of the five boroughs.

“Certifying thousands of M/WBEs is a significant milestone by this administration that has clearly set the leveling of the playing field as a major priority. The new M/WBE mentorship program is also a strong way to expand opportunities,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**.

“We could not be more thrilled to participate in this important program,” stated **David Schnurman, EO NY Mentorship Chair**. “EO’s Accelerator Program was started in EO NY in 2010 with the goal of helping companies grow from \$250K in revenue to over \$1 million. A core component of this program is mentoring these entrepreneurs. To date we have successfully helped 17 mentees surpass \$1 million. Today we have grown the program to over 30 enrolled accelerators. We look forward to sharing our experiences gained over the years growing these businesses with the firms in the M/WBE Mentorship Program.”

“This record MWBE certification high shows that NYC's minority & women owned businesses are aggressively seeking opportunities to grow and contribute to the economic well-being of NYC. Thankfully, their preparedness is being met by a new level of commitment by Mayor de Blasio and his team. This increase in

certification foreshadows greater victories in increasing MWBE contracting down the line,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr., Chair of Committee on Small Business.**

“As Chair of the Contracts Committee, I am particularly interested in how to expand procurement opportunities to women, minorities, and other disenfranchised communities. I appreciate Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to M/WBEs, and I look forward to working with the administration to translate an expansion of M/WBE certifications into an expansion of M/WBE awards,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on Contracts.**

“As Chair of the Committee on Women’s Issues, I applaud the launch of the M/WBE Mentorship Program to support the economic growth of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises in the City of New York. The mentor-mentee relationship is not only critical in academia, but also in business. With millions of dollars in contracts at stake, it is critical that we help foster the strategic partnerships with minority and women entrepreneurs to help local businesses capitalize on every opportunity in the public and private sectors,” said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo.**

“Getting certified as an M/WBE is a tremendous opportunity for businesses to grow by selling to the government, and at the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO), we walk businesses through the certification process, and connect them with certification benefits which can include information about networking, capacity building, and contract opportunities,” said **Rogina Coar-Smith, Assistant Vice President of MWBE Programs at SoBRO.**

“Congratulations to the City for reaching this milestone, and I encourage minority and women-owned firms to learn more about certification, how working with government can help grow your business, and services offered by West Brighton LDC, located on Staten Island,” said **Loretta Cauldwell, Executive Director.**

“Working with the NYC Department of Small Business Services to get certified as a M/WBE was a huge win for my small business,” said **Roben Allong, Founder and CEO of Lightbeam Communications.** “As a result of getting certified, I recently won a contract with a City agency that will allow me to hire new employees and continue to compete for new business. I definitely encourage other small businesses to see how the City can help.”

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