To Summit Attendees, Exhibitors and Sponsors,

Thanks to your support and participation, the 2019 Garden State Minority, Women and Veteran-Owned Business (MWVOB) Summit – NJ Connects – was a resounding success! Together we made history, launching New Jersey’s first business-building summit for diverse business owners. In our inaugural year, NJ Connects drew more than 1,200 registered attendees, nearly 100 exhibitors, 19 sponsors/contributors and more than 75 distinguished speakers who delivered a full day of dynamic programming at NJIT’s state-of-the-art venue.

In the New Jersey State Office of Diversity and Inclusion, it was our vision to provide a best-in-class supplier diversity forum for minority, women, veteran and LGBTQ-owned businesses. Thank YOU for helping to make our vision a reality!

As we continue to grow and build on our efforts to position New Jersey as a national leader in contracting with diverse businesses, we hope that you will continue to participate in this important State initiative. Please mark your calendars for our 2020 Garden State MWVOB Summit on Friday, September 25, 2020 at NJIT, and stay tuned for more information over the coming months.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this post-Summit newsletter, which recaps NJ Connects highlights:

- Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy, with The Honorable Sheila Y. Oliver, Lieutenant Governor, State of New Jersey, and James Rhee, Chairman/CEO of Ashley Stewart
- A View from the Top, with senior NJ State leaders
- Industry Outlook, with senior NJ State Cabinet members and Authority leaders
- Private Sector Corporate Leaders View
- Urban Mayors/Legislators Roundtable
- Diversity & Film – Business Opportunities in Film Productions
- And more!

Diversity is critical to our continued growth and success. To our State, it brings innovation, best-in-class enterprise, healthy competition and the ability for New Jersey to leverage our assets and excel. Thank you for advancing diversity and inclusion efforts every day and expanding access and opportunities for MWVOBs. We look forward to our continued partnership – and to seeing you next year!

With heartfelt gratitude and appreciation,

Hester Agudosi, Esq.
NJ State Chief Diversity Officer
Garden State’s First MWVOB Summit Exceeds Expectations, Drawing More Than 1,200 Registered Attendees

In keeping with Governor Phil Murphy’s commitment to building a stronger and fairer economy, the State of New Jersey hosted its inaugural Garden State Minority, Women and Veteran-Owned Business (MWVOB) Summit at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) in Newark on Friday, September 20, drawing more than 1,200 registered attendees from around the region.

The 2019 Summit, which carried the theme NJ Connects, was established this year by the New Jersey State Office of Diversity and Inclusion to connect diverse businesses with NJ’s billion-dollar economic opportunities. The day-long business-building forum featured a full agenda of learning sessions and panel discussions, Business Bootcamps and “How To” workshops, alongside an extensive Exhibition Marketplace of nearly 100 public and private sector exhibitors who came together to share information and insights and, ultimately, foster new opportunities for minority, women, veteran and LBGTQ business enterprises.

“Our 2019 event surpassed all expectations in terms of overall attendance, sponsorship and exhibitor participation and the number and caliber of speakers who joined us, thereby confirming the need for supporting our diverse business community,” said The Honorable Sheila Y. Oliver, Lt. Governor, State of New Jersey, who helped kickoff the day as a distinguished panelist in the opening Plenary sessions. “There was energy and excitement among attendees – diverse business owners who clearly expressed the Summit’s value in terms of what they learned and the contacts they made in one day and under one roof – and I am eager to see these connections grow into real business results over the coming months, and even years.”

Indeed, the numbers speak volumes about the event’s success. In its inaugural year, NJ Connects:

- Surpassed its projected goal for attendance by more than 50 percent, with more than 1,200 registrants
- Sold out its exhibition marketplace, with nearly 100 public and private sector exhibitors
- Connected attendees to key information and insights through 75+ distinguished speakers who led 16 MWVOB-focused programs
“I could not be more pleased with the results of our first event of this kind,” said Hester Agudosi, Esq., NJ State Chief Diversity Officer, who as Summit host welcomed attendees in her opening remarks. “Through this event, we brought Trenton to you, and access to the right information and the ability to establish the right relationships starts now. We want to help you do better, be better, scale up better and make sure you have a seat at the table when contracting decisions are being made. NJ Connects launches New Jersey’s commitment to diversity and inclusion and leadership to build our diverse supply chain – and today is your day.”

Participating from afar, Governor Phil Murphy delivered a pre-recorded video message to attendees. “Creating a more robust and diverse state contracting supply chain is central to our goal of building a stronger and fairer New Jersey economy,” said Governor Murphy. “New Jersey is open for business to everyone who wants to do business with and within our state, and we’re serious about providing the tools and support diverse suppliers need. New Jersey doesn’t just want to talk about diversity, we want to be the state that everyone emulates. This event is our chance to connect you to key public and private sector procurement decision-makers – and everything you need – to help you succeed.”

About the Office of Diversity and Inclusion
The New Jersey State Office of Diversity and Inclusion was established within the Department of the Treasury to lead New Jersey’s efforts to promote diverse leadership in government that is reflective of the state’s population and to increase the utilization of minority and women-owned businesses in the State contracting process. Programs and initiatives include:

- Training curriculum that provides for core competencies in diversity, equity and inclusion
- Collaboration with Cabinet members and appointing authorities to identify diverse workforce talent
- Development of a statewide strategic Diversity and Inclusion plan designed to provide for accountability, measure performance and centralize processes and procedures across state departments, agencies, authorities, colleges and universities. As a result, greater utilization of MWVOBs in state procurement can be achieved.

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NJ Connects Opens with “Visionary Conversation” Between Distinguished Public and Private Sector Leaders

The State of New Jersey kicked off its first-ever Garden State MWVOB Summit with a powerful discussion between The Honorable Sheila Y. Oliver, Lt. Governor, State of New Jersey, and James Rhee, Chairman and CEO of Ashley Stewart, a New Jersey-based billion-dollar plus-size clothing business. Hester Agudosi, Esq., NJ State Chief Diversity Officer, moderated Building a Stronger and Fairer Economy—a visionary conversation on how to “level the playing field” to build successful MWVOBs in the State of New Jersey.

“View from The Top” Panel Reinforces Governor’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

NJ Connects attendees were treated to a first-hand account of how the Murphy Administration means business when it comes to Diversity and Inclusion. Four top officials provided insight into programs and possibilities for gaining access to billions of dollars awarded each year in New Jersey State contracts.

The State’s first Chief Diversity Officer, Hester Agudosi, moderated the distinguished panel of senior officials:

- Sheila Y. Oliver, Lt. Governor, State of NJ
- George S. Helmy, Chief of Staff to the Governor
- Matthew J. Platkin, Chief Counsel to the Governor
- Elizabeth Maher Muoio, NJ State Treasurer
It takes a lot to keep a state as densely populated as New Jersey going every day, and many contracts are awarded each year to keep the programs, buildings and infrastructure in good shape. *NJ Connects* attendees had a ringside seat to an informative session that highlighted the various opportunities that are available to work with State agencies responsible for keeping the lights on, people moving and children learning in the great Garden State.

**Panelists:**
- **Joseph Fiordaliso**, President, Board of Public Utilities
- **Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti**, Commissioner, NJ Department of Transportation
- **Christopher Rein**, Chief Technology Officer, NJ Office of Information Technology
- **Tai Cooper**, Vice President for Policy & Communications, NJ Economic Development Authority
- **Hester Agudosi**, Esq., NJ State Chief Diversity Officer, moderated the panel of Senior State Cabinet members and Authority Leaders, which included:
- **David E. Zimmer**, Executive Director, NJ Infrastructure Bank
- **Michael G. Massiah**, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Port Authority of NY & NJ
- **Dr. Lamont Repollet**, Commissioner, NJ Department of Education
- **Manuel M. Da Silva**, Acting CEO, New Jersey Schools Development Authority
- **Jemal J. Beale**, Brigadier General Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

**Industry Forecast** Panelists Talk Diversity in Education, Energy, Transportation and Technology

Representatives from New Jersey mayors’ offices joined with members of the New Jersey State Disparity in Procurement Study Commission to provide a high-level forecast on what some of the leading municipalities are buying, as well as information on planned initiatives and programming to increase contract opportunities for diverse businesses. The panel also discussed the Disparity Study, answering key questions to address its purpose and plans for advancing contracting opportunities for diverse businesses.

**Getting Connected to Key Information and Insights at Urban Mayors/Legislative Roundtable**

Barbara George Johnson, MPH, JD, Executive Director, The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, Thomas Edison State University moderated the combined session featuring the following panelists:

- **Hester Agudosi**, Esq., Disparity in State Procurement Study Commission, Chair
- **Mayor Ras J. Baraka**, City of Newark
- **Mayor Christine Dansereau**, Borough of Roselle
- **Shep Brown**, Director of Health and Social Services, City of Plainfield
- **State Senator Ronald L. Rice**, Legislative District 23
- **State Senator Sandra B. Cunningham**, Legislative District 31
- **Assemblywoman Nancy J. Pinkin**, Legislative District 18
New Jersey’s top companies spend billions of dollars each year acquiring goods and services. Leaders from just some of those corporations took part in a panel discussion focused on helping MWVOBs identify and explore new business opportunities to become part of the growing diverse supply chain within the private sector.

Carolynn Johnson, CEO, DiversityInc moderated a prestigious panel featuring:

- **Michellene Davis** – Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, RWJBarnabas Health
- **Nathan J. Ayres** – Vice President of Strategic Sourcing, Prudential
- **Christine T. Neely** – Vice President of Procurement, PSEG
- **Kenneth Bouyer** – Director of Inclusiveness Recruiting, EY Americas
- **Willie Smith II** – Director of Procurement, South Jersey Industries (SJI)

Private Sector Corporate Leaders View

The inaugural *NJ Connects* Summit maintained its momentum throughout the day, closing with a robust, insight-filled discussion exploring Diversity & Film – Business Opportunities in Film Production. In this intimate, Fireside Chat – hosted by WarnerMedia – the panel of experts discussed the evolution and future of the industry, along with newly enacted New Jersey State legislation that incentivizes Diversity and Inclusion practices in production.

Tahesha Way, Esq., NJ Secretary of State, moderated the opportunity-focused conversation featuring the following panelists:

- **Elizabeth Parchment**, Chief Diversity Officer, NJ Motion Picture & Television Commission
- **Clint Grimes**, Executive Director, Global Sourcing & Supplier Diversity, WarnerMedia
- **Stephen Gorelick**, Executive Director, NJ Motion Picture & Television Commission, NJ Department of State
- **Kenneth Gifford**, Executive Director, Newark Film Commission

Fireside Chat: Diversity & Film – Business Opportunities in Film Productions
Business-BUILDER Workshops Deliver Need-to-Know Tips, Tools and Intel

In multiple, concurrent sessions that took place in both the morning and afternoon, NJ Connects hosted several workshops aimed at providing Summit attendees with the information and insights they need to keep their businesses on the pathway to success. Here’s a quick run-down of offered sessions:

**Business Builder Bootcamp** focused on the New Jersey State contracting processes, including navigating licensing requirements, accessing State-sponsored financial incentives and exploring Federal contract opportunities.

*Moderator:* Dr. Tendai Ndoro, Regional Director, NJSBDC, Rutgers Business School, Newark

*Panelists:*
- John Cronin, Business Development Rep., Division of Revenue & Enterprise Services, NJ Department of Treasury
- Ana Villagran, Certification Auditor, Division of Revenue & Enterprise Services, NJ Department of Treasury
- Amy Davis, Esq., Associate Deputy Director, Division of Purchase and Property, NJ Department of Treasury
- Donald Newman, Manager of Small Business Advocacy, Business Action Center, NJ Department of State
- Raul Mercado, Statewide Director, NJIT Procurement Technical Assistance Center

**Access To Capital** covered New Jersey’s Angel Investor Tax Credit Program and its incentives for MWVOB investment.

*Moderator:* Kathleen Coviello, Vice President, Technology & Life Sciences, NJ Economic Development Authority

*Panelists:*
- Judith A. Sheft, Associate Vice President, Strategic Relationships and External Affairs, New Jersey Innovation Institute, NJIT
- Jill Johnson, CEO/Founder, IFEL and Women of Color Connecting
- Stephanie A. Caravela, Esq., Managing Director, Jumpstart New Jersey

**Contract Opportunities – Construction, Goods and Services** addressed available/forecasted contract opportunities in the construction, goods and services industry, and what to do to be contract-ready.

*Moderator:* Stephanie Burroughs, CEO, StephanieSpeaking, LLC and Vice President of Procurement, NJ State Veterans Chamber of Commerce

*Panelists:*
- Maurice Griffin, Acting Director, Division of Purchase and Property, NJ Department of Treasury
- Richard Flodmand, Deputy Director, Division of Property Management and Construction, NJ Department of Treasury
- Leotis Sanders, Chief Civil Rights and Diversity Officer, Office of Civil Rights & Diversity Programs, NJ Transit
- Keith Wright, Senior Program Manager of Capacity Building, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Port Authority of NY & NJ
- Megan Carton, Director of Marketing, Ferreira Construction Company, Inc.
- John Aletta, Senior Purchasing Manager/Corporate Head of Diversity and Subcontractor Development, Torcon, Inc.
- C. Aidita Milsted, Director, Vendor Development, New Jersey Schools Development Authority
**Contract Opportunities – Financial Professional Services** covered available/forecasted contract opportunities in the financial services industry, and what to do to be contract-ready.

*Moderator:* Dini Ajmani, Assistant State Treasurer

*Panelists:*
- Michael Kanef, Director, NJ Office of Public Finance, Department of Treasury
- Gina Costello, Chief of Staff, NJ Division of Investments, NJ Department of Treasury
- Steven Nelson, Director of Project Management, New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority
- Judy Karp, Legal and Compliance Officer, NJ Infrastructure Bank

**Powering Your Small Business with Technology** focused on leveraging the power of technology to grow, improve and elevate your business.

*Moderator:* Lyneir Richardson, Executive Director of Rutgers (CUEED)

*Panelists:*
- Erich Peter, LinkedIn Navigator
- Felita Harris, Co-Founder/CEO, ENFORM
- Len Leach, Owner, Team Logic IT
- Detavio Samuels, President, ION/One Solution (TV One)

**Access To Capital – Institutional Lenders and Community Economic Development Leaders** provided an overview of how CDFIs operate to support and finance community development projects to generate economic growth and opportunities.

*Moderator:* Darryl Godfrey, Chief Operating Officer, New Jersey Redevelopment Authority

*Panelists:*
- Andy Marte, Vice President-Business Banker, PNC Bank
- Jeffrey Martinez, Executive Vice President, Market Manager for PNC’s Central Market, PNC Bank
- Meta J. Mereday, Founder, VEDI, Inc.
- Daryl Shore, Director, Inclusive Communities, Prudential Financial
- Fred Dominguez, Credit To Capital Program Coordinator, Rising Tide Capital

**NJEDA Small and Midsize Business Resources and Support** covered NJEDA’s legacy of support for New Jersey businesses, including current programs and services.

*Moderator:* Christina Fuentes, Director of Small Business Services, NJEDA

*Panelists:*
- Erich Peter, Director of Training and Technical Assistance, UCEDC
- Monika R. Athwal, Business Development Officer, NJEDA
- Steven Cohen, President, Excelsior Growth Fund
SAVE THE DATE for Second Annual Garden State MWVOB Summit: SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

The New Jersey State Office of Diversity and Inclusion is proud to announce that the second annual Garden State MWVOB Summit is scheduled to take place on Friday, September 25, 2020, at the same incredible location – the state-of-the-art New Jersey Institute of Technology Wellness and Event Center in Newark, NJ. We hope you’ll join us for what promises to be another outstanding day of insights and opportunities! For now, please save the date, spread the word and stay tuned for more details – coming soon!

Stay Connected with ODI

Thank you for the opportunity to connect with you at the 2019 Garden State MWVOB Summit! The NJ Office of Diversity and Inclusion would like to encourage you to stay connected and engaged with our Office, so you can remain in-the-know and up-to-speed on the latest information, updates and activities. AND: feel free to contact us at any time with your questions, comments or concerns as a New Jersey business owner – or to share your business success stories. We’re here to help and want to hear from YOU! Connect with us at https://www.diversity.nj.gov/.