



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity

To: Honorable General Assembly Members

From: Willis A. Morris, Director 
Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity

Date: July 8, 2024

CC: Laura L. Wilborn, Division of Legislative Automated Systems

Re: Progress Report of the Pilot Mentorship Program

The Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (“DSBSD”) was established and granted statutory powers under §§ 2.2-1603 et seq. of the Code of Virginia. Section 2.2-1606 of the Code grants certain powers and duties to the DSBSD, which specifically includes, inter alia, the duty to “[i]mplement any remediation or enhancement measure for small, women-owned, or minority-owned business as may be authorized by the Governor pursuant to subsection C of § 2.2-4310 and develop regulations, consistent with prevailing law, for program implementation.”

During the 2022 General Assembly session, legislation (*HB815*) was passed, which required the Department of Small Business & Supplier Diversity (SBSD) to establish and administer a pilot mentorship program. SBSD as mandated under *VA Code 52.2-1605.1* established a pilot program. As part of this duty, the DSBSD Director is required to report to the General Assembly on the progress of the initial group as required.

§ 2.2-1605.1. Mentorship program.

B. In establishing the pilot program under subsection A, the Department shall by July 1, 2023, select an initial group of established businesses, subject matter experts in relevant industry sectors, and start-up women-owned and minority-owned businesses. The Department shall by July 1, 2024, report on the progress of the initial group pursuant to § 2.2-1610, but shall not select a second group unless directed to do so in legislation enacted by the General Assembly.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at willis.morris@sbsd.virginia.gov or 804-371-8134.

Sincerely,

Willis A. Morris
Director

Preface

During the 2022 General Assembly session, legislation (*HB815*) was passed, which required the Department of Small Business & Supplier Diversity (SBSD) to establish and administer a pilot mentorship program. SBSD as mandated under *VA Code 52.2-1605.1* established and administered a pilot program. The mentorship program partnered established businesses or subject matter experts in relevant industry sectors with start-up women-owned and minority-owned businesses, where the established businesses acted as mentors to the start-ups. SBSD selected GENEDGE Alliance (GENEDGE) with an emphasis on manufacturing and W.M. Jordan Company with an emphasis on construction services as established businesses and/or subject matter experts in relevant industry sectors. These entities provided ongoing guidance and information to start-up women-owned and minority-owned businesses to carry out the purpose and intent of the program.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has initiated a pilot program under the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to provide mentorship for up to ten (10) start-up Women-owned and/or Minority-owned businesses operating in the Commonwealth. The mentorship program will run for a period of twelve (12) months, during which time mentors will provide training, guidance, advice, and support to their protégés.

The program was structured with a combination of tailored and group training sessions with direct communication between mentors and protégés with the goal of identifying future business opportunities and potential areas for growth. At the conclusion of the initial term of the program, protégés and mentors will provide feedback on the program and DSBSD will report the results to the General Assembly and make recommendations for future iterations.

Executive Summary

The A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership, doing business as GENEDGE Alliance, was established as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth to help create and maintain industrial and manufacturing jobs. GENEDGE is experienced in industrial training and technology transfer programs in the Commonwealth and has access to Federal Grant funds to support the creation and implementation of the program. The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity reviewed GENEDGE's Emerging Business Program and has determined that it is consistent with SBSD's mission and goals and the legislatively mandated Mentorship program, and asked GENEDGE to provide and manage a start-up women-owned and/or minority-owned business mentorship program on behalf of SBSD under GENEDGE's Emerging Business Program. GENEDGE agreed to provide and manage the start-up program, called LEVELING UP: VIRGINIA SMALL BUSINESS AND SUPPLIER DIVERSITY'S MENTOR PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM.

W.M. Jordan Company with headquarters in Newport News has a long history of mentoring minority and women-owned businesses through a combination of its own internal and Federal Small-Business Administration's mentor-protégé programs. The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity reviewed W.M. Jordan Company's Mentor-Protégé Program and has determined that it is consistent with SBSD's mission and goals and the legislatively mandated

Mentorship program, and asked W.M. Jordan Company to assist SBSB in providing and managing a start-up women-owned and/or minority-owned business mentorship program via W.M. Jordan Company's Mentor-Protégé Program.

**Leveling UP: Virginia Small Business & Supplier Diversity's
Pilot Mentor Protégé Program**

GenEdge Alliance – Manufacturing

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SBSD and GenEdge signed on June 27, 2023.

Advertisement of Pilot Program and email invitations sent out to SWaM Woman and/or Minority vendors with a business category of Manufacturing on June 28, 2023.

Virtual training is self-paced, and counseling is scheduled with participants. Each business must complete a business assessment before beginning training. Curriculum includes following topics:

- ✓ Assessment
- ✓ Marketing and Outreach
- ✓ Program Management
- ✓ Intake Management
- ✓ Online Mentoring/Counseling Sessions (up to 16 hours included)

Participants anticipated completion of this self-paced program in about 4-6 months.

GenEdge facilitates/monitors the program and counseling sessions on topics relative to the manufacturing industry.

Cost of program \$2000 - sponsored by GenEdge, participants required to pay \$600 up front to GenEdge and will be reimbursed upon completion of the program. Per the MOU, SBSD will be reimbursing GenEdge after an invoice has been submitted.

19 applications received and 4 were selected based on meeting criteria of the program (to include verification of NAICS codes for manufacturing). Selected participants were notified and were required to sign a Confidentiality and Participation Agreement upon acceptance.

SBSD meets with mentors for biweekly (or as needed) updates on participants.

List of Participants:

- *Virginia's Finest Chocolates, Williamsburg* will complete final coaching session by July 12 – GenEdge will finalize case study and surveys and will provide her with next steps. SBSD to follow up with participant.
- *Onai Botanicals, Virginia Beach* – dropped out of program – did not complete SWaM application process.
- *Hoot All Natural, Norfolk* – dropped out due to health issues.

- *Don Sebastian Salsa, Midlothian* – completed final coaching last week – GenEdge will finalize case study and surveys and will provide her with next steps. SBSD to follow up with participant.
- *Total Protection & Privacy, Virginia Beach* - currently interested in the manufacturing program, however, has yet to complete his SWaM application.

GenEdge will conduct a follow up survey with each participant, provide a program summary and will partner with SBSD to provide a certificate of completion.

W.M. Jordan Company – Construction

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SBSB and W.M. Jordan Company signed on January 24, 2024.

Advertisement and email invitations sent out to SWaM vendors with a business category of Construction – February 2024.

Applications were reviewed and 10 participants were selected (W.M. Jordan would add up to 2 additional participants from their market area.) Selected participants invited to participate and required to sign a Confidentiality and Participation Agreement.

10 SWaM participants (Woman and/or Minority).

Training is 1 hour, once a month (typically 1st Wednesday of the month). This is a hybrid class as participants may join in person at WMJ Richmond office or virtually.

Classes began April 3 and will end November with a in-person graduation in early December (details TBD).

W.M. Jordan Company facilitates/monitors sessions taught by subject matter experts provided by W.M. Jordan. SBSB participates in the sessions and meets with mentors as needed for updates.

No cost to the participants. Each session is recorded, and a copy will be provided to each participant upon completion of program. Curriculum includes following topics:

- Session 1 Intro/Safety
- Session 2 Accounting
- Session 3 Estimating
- Session 4 Project Management
- Session 5 Site Supervision
- Session 6 Enterprise/Information Technology
- Session 7 Marketing/Business Development
- Session 8 Wrap-Up & Close Program
- Session 9 Graduation (In-person in Richmond)

Reading assignments and session evaluations are to be completed by each participant after each class/topic. W.M. Jordan and/or SBSB will meet with each participant as needed for questions and additional resources.

List of Participants

D&G Multi Services LLC	Richmond
CLG PAINTING SERVICES INC	Richmond
Countrywide Building LLC	Fredericksburg
Ives Contracting	Virginia Beach

Yaya Contracting Inc.	Richmond
The Mattocks Group LLC	Woodbridge
Krypton Contractors LLC	Moseley
Royal Flush Plumbing & Services LLC	Richmond
Legacy Builders & Construction	Henrico
Capitol Metro Contracting LLC	Alexandria

Upon completion of the program, W.M. Jordan will provide a complete assessment and final participation survey. SBSB will also follow up with participants and provide ongoing support if needed.

Molina Healthcare of Virginia – Community Health Worker Certification Program

Several meetings and discussion were held with Molina Healthcare of Virginia about how to partner to include this industry to the pilot program.

Molina is in the process of restructuring the curriculum but encountered a few barriers preventing them from moving forward with the program. SBSB waiting to hear back from Molina about next steps.