



Staying on Target

As an Iowa small business person, you're receiving the inaugural edition of the Targeted Small (TSB) Business newsletter! I have met many of you through the certification and renewal process, but there are many I have yet to meet, so let me introduce myself. I am the new program manager for the Targeted Small Business program at the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA).

Last September, IEDA assumed responsibility for administration of the TSB Certification program on behalf of the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA). The changing of hands was managed by a team of individuals working together to ensure a smooth transition. Amy Kuhlert, program manager for IASourceLink, and I manage the review of TSB applications, certifications and TSB directory updates.

IEDA works with businesses of various sizes so we understand that there's generally never enough time, people, or resources to drum up business from every potential prospect. The last thing a small business needs is to wade through the requirements of various certifications and registrations required for selling goods or services to the state. To simplify the process of certification and promotion of small business, a few changes have been made during the transition:

- Revised certification and renewal application
- Creation of a new "badge" offered to all TSBs who certify or renew certification
- Decrease in processing time required for certification



And, we're just getting started! We plan to grow and enhance the program, and we're working toward that goal by implementing this quarterly e-newsletter, hosting events, promoting and providing outreach, and traveling Iowa to meet with targeted small businesses, partners and state purchasing managers.



This information is not meant to clog your inbox with yet ANOTHER e-mail. Our intent is to offer a useful tool to share information regarding any changes to the TSB program and to provide tips and ideas about how to market your business to the state or successfully secure a state contract. Recipients will also receive information regarding upcoming TSB-related events and opportunities to provide feedback and ideas for us to feature in future editions of the newsletter.

Take time to review the details regarding the TSB Feedback Forums we are hosting around the state in January and February. Use the link provided to register so that we know you plan to attend. We look forward to learning more about your business and experience as a targeted small business.

YOU make this program work. State purchasing managers couldn't meet their TSB goals without you, and we couldn't grow the network of diversity suppliers that are an important component of local and state economic development. Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments at 515.725.3132, or tsbcert@iowaeda.com

I look forward to working with you in the near future!

Newest Members of the Certified TSB Directory

Please welcome the 21 new businesses that became certified Targeted Small Businesses in the last three months. Learn more about them in the Certified Targeted Small Business Directory, an essential resource to utilize when marketing to other local businesses.

[3D Energy, US, LLC](#) — Rock Valley

[AbZorb-A-Products](#) — Fort Dodge

[AccuBraille Services](#) — Garrison

[ACT Safe, LLC](#) — Sioux City

[B & S Steel Erectors, LLC](#) — Winfield

[DSM Notary Signing Agent, LLC](#) — Des Moines

[Duckett Upscale Clothing and More](#) — Mt. Pleasant

[Healthy Jar, LLC](#) — West Des Moines

[Intermix Media, LLC](#) — West Des Moines

[JMD Consulting](#) — West Des Moines

[KJ Signs, LLC, dba Signarama-Ankeny](#) — Ankeny

[LVS Technologies](#) — Urbandale

[M Plus Architects, Inc.](#) — Sioux City

[MDE, LLC dba McDermott Excavating](#) — Dubuque

[Seniors on the Move, LLC](#) — West Des Moines

[Skopos Consulting, LLC, dba Signal 88 Security](#) — Dubuque

[SPECcetera, LLC](#) — Des Moines

[SYNcere Printing](#) — North Liberty,

[Wide Prairie HR, LLC](#) — Coralville

[Zamorins Solutions, Inc.](#) — Des Moines

[Zao525](#) — Ames

Upcoming Events

IEDA wants to hear and learn from you about your experience as a TSB. What are the benefits to the program? What hasn't been helpful for you? What do you wish could be better? To facilitate some round-table conversations and meet with the certified TSBs around our state, IEDA is hosting a series of **“Targeted Small Business Program Feedback Forums”** throughout January and February. All certified Targeted Small Businesses are welcome to attend at one of the following locations listed below and talk with Jill Lippincott, Amy Kuhlert and other TSB owners about the TSB program.

Each forum is designed to be a comfortable and open discussion that can be used to generate ideas for future enhancements to the TSB program. TSB owners are welcome to attend as many of these meetings as they would like! Please register so we know how many will be attending at each location.

January 18 – Iowa City Public Library, 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.* [123 S. Linn St., Iowa City](#)

January 24 – Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.* [149 W. Broadway, Council Bluffs](#)

January 31 – Franklin Avenue Library, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. [5000 Franklin Ave., Des Moines](#)

February 1 – West Des Moines Incubator, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. [318 5th St., West Des Moines](#)

February 7 – Ho Chunk Centre, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.* [600 4th St., Sioux City](#)

February 10 – Economic Development Core Facility, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.* [1805 Collaboration Place, Suite 1200, Ames](#)

February 15 – ISU Extension, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.* [875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf](#)

February 28 – Cedar Falls Public Library, 10:30 am. – 12:00 p.m. [524 Main St., Cedar Falls](#)

*In partnership with the Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS)

Can't make it to one of these sessions? Use the [online form](#) in “Share Your Ideas” to tell us about your business, as well as your thoughts and ideas for the program.

Spotlight: The Toner Place

A TSB owner or state purchasing agent will be featured in each newsletter to provide insight on their experiences selling or procuring TSB goods and services. For the first feature, Bambi Wagner with The Toner Place in Grimes was interviewed.

TSB Background

Name: Wagner Family Enterprises, Inc., dba The Toner Place

Address: 10131 NW 78th Ave., Grimes, IA 50111

Owner: Bambi Wagner

Certified Since: May 2007

In Business Since: March 2007

TSB Type: 100% Woman Owned

Number of Employees: 5

Products:

The Toner Place sells original and remanufactured toner for laser printers, fax machines and copiers, and ink for inkjets. Repair service is also offered.

Contact Info:

595.986.5255; info@thetonerplace.net

The Toner Place became a certified TSB shortly after opening in 2007. As a 100 percent woman-owned business, Bambi saw the TSB program as a way to be recognized and differentiate her business, along with a method to become more visible to state agencies for procurement opportunities. Certification has provided her business the privilege of serving a number of different state agencies over the years.

When asked to describe her technique for identifying state bidding opportunities, Bambi admitted it can sometimes be a challenge. In the case of The Toner Place, their primary product – toner – is grouped in the state’s bidding site with “office supplies,” and in many cases a larger organization garners the contract. She has found that contacting purchasing agents directly and building relationships has been most effective for her particular type of business.

Once she identifies bidding opportunities, IEDA asked Bambi to share her most successful marketing techniques. “We sell on the ability to always save the state money, on our high-quality product, and our unmatched customer service. We also emphasize that we are a TSB and will help them meet their purchasing goals, as well as the fact that they will be buying ‘local’ and helping to support an Iowa small business.”

Finally, when asked what tips or best practices she’s identified that might help a newly certified TSB get started with state procurement, Bambi advises that getting certified as a TSB is just the beginning of the journey. She noted that purchasing agents might have established relationships with other vendors, so it is important to build a relationship with each purchasing manager. However, if you are willing to work alongside the agents and provide customer service to the level it makes their jobs easier you can develop a relationship too, noting that relationship building takes time and doesn’t happen overnight. For that reason, she states, “Persevere and don’t give up!”

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The Toner Place

Share Your Ideas With Us!

Can’t make it to one of the upcoming TSB Feedback Forums? Please send us your thoughts [using our online form](#) so that we can learn more about your experience as a TSB and hear your overall thoughts about the program. We also encourage you to share experiences you’ve had as a TSB as we plan to contact targeted small businesses that share information with us that may be useful to others in future editions of the newsletter.

