



Take-Aways from the “TSB Feedback Forums”

If there has been a buzzword around the Targeted Small Business (TSB) office at the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) these last few months, it wouldn't be one word, it would be two: *Relationship Building*.

This phrase has been front and center at the heart of almost every conversation Amy Kuhlbers and I have held since the TSB program transitioned from the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) last September.

When Amy and I set out to meet TSBs at the “TSB Feedback Forums” promoted over the last few months and in January's edition of “Bullseye,” our goal was twofold: Build relationships with TSB owners to get to know them and their businesses better, and learn about their experiences as a TSB. Thank you all who could attend the forums to provide feedback about the program, and thank you to those who weren't able to attend but reached out via e-mail or the newsletter survey link!

We anticipated that the feedback would be helpful to IEDA laying the groundwork to build the value of the State of Iowa's TSB program, grow the recognition and usefulness of the program for those looking to find diverse suppliers, and ultimately, grow the number of the state's targeted small businesses.

We didn't anticipate the other things that happened in the room: TSBs networking to discuss partnering on potential jobs, TSBs helping each other and giving each other advice on navigating the bidding process, TSBs referring others to partners that have been helpful to them in the past. We were blown away by the sheer amount of relationship building happening.

We heard you! We received some great feedback that we have started reviewing collectively and will use to make a series of recommendations about how to grow the Targeted Small Business program, such as:



- Relationship building tools and support for establishing relationships with purchasing contacts
- Education and outreach to promote the program and its brand among those looking to find diverse suppliers and businesses to do business with, including private industries, local cities and counties, and state agencies
- Networking opportunities for TSB owners looking to connect with other TSBs for support and/or business
- Promotion of TSB successes and achievements through IEDA's website, the TSB newsletter and social media channels
- Help establish connections between IEDA and our partners that support TSBs to provide the support needed when taking the next steps after certification
- Enhancing the 48-hour “early access” bid posting site and Certified TSB Online Directory

In the next few weeks, we will use this feedback to build a series of recommendations, that may require a longer timeline to strategies that can be implemented in the next few weeks.

In fact, based on what we heard during the forums, this quarter's “Spotlight” section features input from two state purchasing managers about what they look for when working with a TSB and the tactics of building relationships with purchasing managers once certified.



Take-Aways, continued...

Since many TSBs expressed an interest in connecting with other partners that can help them grow, the “Events” section of our newsletter features submissions of events around the state from our partners that may be helpful for TSBs to attend.

Additionally, please check out the survey linked in this edition to help us learn more about your success acquiring contracts as a TSB.

If you missed an opportunity to provide input, there is still time to stay involved in the decisions.

For those interested in participating at a more engaged level, stay tuned for information about opportunities at a stakeholder level to help us review our recommendations and work alongside leadership.

Finally, we know that to build any sustaining relationship, the dialogue and support must be ongoing. Our mission is to continue conversations with TSBs to learn about what’s working and where there are opportunities, so as always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at 515.725.3132 or tsbcert@iowaeda.com.



Newest Members of the Certified Targeted Small Business Directory

Please welcome the following businesses to the Certified Targeted Small Business Directory. In the last quarter, 33 businesses have certified.

[A Step Above, LLC](#) – Glenwood

[AgriLink International Corporation](#) – Des Moines

[America Coating & Welding](#) – Onawa

[Ben Ben Stone Environmental LLC](#) – Des Moines

[BluPrairie, LLC](#) – Coralville

[BNJ, Inc. dba Home Style Laundry & Dry Cleaners](#) – Council Bluffs

[Cisco Elekrika](#) – La Porte City

[de Novo Alternative Marketing](#) – Cedar Rapids

[eWay Corp](#) – West Des Moines

[Federal Vantage](#) – Des Moines

[FinanSynergy LLC](#) – Cumming

[Jeffries Cleaning LLC](#) – Des Moines

[H2W Yoga, LLC](#) – Council Bluffs

[Jericho Solutions, Inc.](#) – Des Moines

[JonaCal dba MochaGrass](#) – Des Moines

[M.J.G. Inc. dba Eco-Clean and Cuisine](#) – Des Moines

[Moar Tacos, LLC](#) – Des Moines

[Mobilis Home Medical Equipment](#) – Council Bluffs

[MOSAIC FAMILY Counseling Center, Inc.](#) – Des Moines

[Natural Soy Products](#) – Cedar Falls

[NuTreatments LLC](#) – Clarion

[O’Brien’s Own Gourmet Granola](#) – Center Point

[Premier Concrete Pumping, LLC](#) – Grimes

[R3 Uniq, LLC dba Quadyster](#) – Bettendorf

[RedBud, LLC](#) – Ankeny

[Senior Palace Adult Care](#) – Cedar Rapids

[Schropp’s Cabinetry](#) – Ames

[Spa Bilancia](#) – Coralville

[Tallgrass Archaeology LLC](#) – Iowa City

[Thinkmeld, LLC](#) – Coralville

[Thunderhawk Construction](#) – Coralville

[TreePans.com](#) – Akron

[Wenzel Family Towing, LLC](#) - Dubuque

Remember to use the Directory as a resource when marketing to other local businesses!

Spotlight: Tips from State Purchasing Managers

After speaking with TSBs around the state, it became clear that small businesses often want to know how to work with purchasing agents to sell products or services. TSB staff reached out to two state purchasing agents to ask about their experience working with TSBs and tips for TSBs looking to sell their goods and services to the state.

Jill Kennebeck, Purchasing Agent II with the Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) Anamosa State Penitentiary has been in her current role for 10 years. The Anamosa facility purchases a variety of both services and goods every day ranging from asbestos removal and repairs to clothing, food or maintenance items. As Jill describes it, the Anamosa State Penitentiary's buying practices are "similar to purchasing items for your own home, family and business but on a grander scale."

Karen Callaway, Purchasing Agent II with the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) Glenwood Resource Center agrees. Karen has been in her role for seven years and said DHS purchases encompass "everything to make the facility function," which includes tools, paper, lights, electronics, small and large equipment, large and small appliances, medication, clothing, medical equipment and supplies to lawn care services, tree removal, medical services, information technology, and equipment maintenance.

In the past, the Anamosa facility has specifically worked with TSBs for paper products, window coverings, embroidery and screen printing services and IT. DHS has made similar purchases from TSBs as well, often purchasing copier toner, computer equipment, paper products, temporary staffing, drug and alcohol testing and office supplies.

When asked what TSBs should do upon seeing a posting on the 48-hour advance notice website, both Jill and Karen encouraged TSBs to first contact the person who is listed as the contact for bid information so that the bidder can get the full bid packet.

Space is limited for what purchasing managers can include in the description of the bid on the TSB website, Karen noted, explaining that she usually adds the highlights of the bid, and the bidder should contact her for the missing information they need.

"Although TSBs are receiving a heads-up about a bid, it never hurts to be competitive the first time you submit a bid," Jill said. She encouraged TSBs to remember that a competitive response to a bid may yield future business from state agencies.

Beyond bidding on an item posted on the 48-hour site, both Jill and Karen advised TSBs to reach out directly by phone or e-mail to provide them with information about what they can provide as a TSB. One benefit of the TSB program is that for purchases under \$10,000, a purchasing manager can contact a TSB directly, rather than posting a purchase on the 48-hour website if they know the TSB can provide the good or service.

"I do look at the TSB listing when bidding or needing a product/services," Karen said, "but when you have spoken with someone or received an e-mail from them, it tends to stick in your mind and makes it more personal."

In other words, sometimes it comes down to relationship building. Jill also encourages TSBs to build relationships with purchasing agents by contacting them by phone or e-mail, or providing a product catalogs.

"Introduce yourself, your business and the products or services you provide," she said, noting that TSBs that provide great customer service are more likely to see repeat business from state agencies. "Sometimes we don't know that we need your services or products until the need arises. If agencies know that we can procure the items from a TSB, we are eager to do so."

Tell us about your Success!

Have you landed any contracts because you were a Certified Targeted Small Business? We want to hear about your experiences bidding on projects as a Targeted Small Business. Take a moment to complete our quick survey about past bidding experiences or experiences working with other entities (private industries or cities or counties) as a TSB. We would like to offer our appreciation to the agencies and businesses who are working to support the State of Iowa's Targeted Small Businesses by using our diverse suppliers of products and services.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/TSBSuccess417



Upcoming TSB Partner Events

IEDA reached out to its partners to inquire about their upcoming events, programs or workshops that might be of interest to Targeted Small Businesses. Click on the events below to learn more and to RSVP.

April 7, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

First Fridays

Hosted by the Iowa Center

8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

Hear the savvy, successful business owners + entrepreneurs of Des Moines share their story. In a laid-back environment, you'll catch some words of wisdom from women and men who have been through it before—and maybe walk away with a new connection (or two). Seating is limited; first come, first served. Lunch not provided but you're welcome to bring your own.

Fred Scott, Founder/CEO of Locally Grown Clothing Co. began selling Locally Grown® Iowa tees in 2008 at the Des Moines Farmers Market. He founded and launched Locally Grown Clothing Co. in 2010; a message-driven graphic tee and apparel line promoting messages of buying local, eating local, drinking local, connecting to your community and state-pride.

April 10 – 11, 2-Day Workshop

Video Marketing Boot Camp Spring 2017

Hosted by CIRAS

1805 Collaboration Places, Room 1200A/B, Ames

Join us and discover how to improve your business with online video marketing! This hands-on boot camp will cover everything from laying out the content of your video through what equipment fits your needs the best and the basics of how to use it. Early Bird Registration ends March 10, 2017.

April 11, 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Legal Best Practices for Small Business

Hosted by the Iowa Center for Economic Success

8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

Have you ever signed a contract without really reading it? Do you know the best course of action to take when establishing your business as an LLC or nonprofit? What negotiation skills are the most important to leverage as a business owner? Kim Baer, owner of Baer Law Office, joins The Iowa Center on April 11th to discuss the many legal opportunities and threats for small businesses. In the class, you'll learn some business how-tos and shouldn't-dos from the perspective of a legal professional.

April 20, 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Speed Networking

Hosted by the Iowa Center for Economic Success. 6600 University Ave., Lower Level Conf Rm, Windsor Heights

Led by Dr. Glenda Bivens, this interactive networking opportunity will help connect you with professionals in the Des Moines community who can make a difference for your small business. Expect a structure, yet relaxed meeting format designed to accelerate your business contact-making.

April 25, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Spring 2017 Growth Summit

Hosted by CIRAS

1805 Collaboration Place, Ames

A summit that brings CEOs and their Chief Growth Officer together to learn about and discuss options for growing their businesses.

May 2017 – 3 week course

Dream Builder Accelerated

Hosted by Center for Economic Success.

Writing a business plan can be intimidating. You're juggling market research with competitor analysis, financial projections with marketing strategies. Let the Iowa Center help you navigate it all. DreamBuilder Accelerated takes the Iowa Center's 10-week business planning class and condenses it to just three weeks.

May 5, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

First Fridays

Hosted by the Iowa Center

8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

Hear the savvy, successful business owners + entrepreneurs of Des Moines share their story. In a laid-back environment, you'll catch some words of wisdom from women + men who have been through it before—and maybe walk away with a new connection (or two). Seating is limited; first come, first served. Lunch not provided but you're welcome to bring your own!

Karen Brady and Arin Hummel co-own Ephemera, a stationery store nestled in the heart of Des Moines' Historic East Village. Launched in 2007, the shop specializes in custom invitations, announcements and stationery designed and printed in-house. It also offers a selection of gifts and other paper goods.

May 8 -10, 3 Day Course

PCQI Training, 2017 – Human Food

Hosted by CIRAS

1805 Collaboration Place, Rm 1200 A/B, Ames

The Food Safety Preventive Control Alliance (FSPCA) course is a certification program that is recognized by the FDA as a curriculum to support Preventive Control Qualified Individuals. This course is designed to provide knowledge on how to create a FDA Food Safety Plan that complies with the Hazard Analysis and Risk-based Preventive Controls for Human Foods rule. Class size is limited to 40 and pre-registration is required, walk-in registrations will not be allowed. Cost for the training is \$750, and the fee includes course materials, lunch each day, refreshment breaks. This course is three days and provides a certificate of completion after the training. Contact Sean Galleger at galleger@iastate.edu

May 9, 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Human Resources with Score

Hosted by the Iowa Center for Economic Success
8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

May 10, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Restaurant 101: Protocol, Safety and Getting Started

Hosted by the Iowa Center for Economic Success
8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

Thinking of starting a restaurant or on the brink of opening a small café, bakery, or shop? Then this class is for you. Learn about the basics to starting up your own establishment and talk through the certificates, safety measures and other considerations you need to take in order to operate effectively and efficiently. This class will cover the best practices and steps to take and will answer any questions you might have about feasibility and/or industry rules/regulations.

May 19, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

What is the Goal?

Hosted by CIRAS

Scott County Ext Office, 875 Tanglefoot Lane, Bettendorf

Discover a business management approach that identifies and manages constraints in your business limiting your ability to achieve your goals. Discover common approaches for applying a five-step process of ongoing improvement and learn practical implementation techniques to help you get “more of your goal.”

May 23, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

ISO 9001:2015 – Implementation Tips, Tools and Experiences

Hosted by CIRAS

1805 Collaboration Places, Ames

Anyone involved in your company’s quality program, including the quality manager, internal auditors, senior management and persons responsible for transitioning from ISO 9001:2015 to ISO 9001:2008 or seeking certification for the first time should attend this session. Discover the real impacts of ISO 9001-2015 on your company and how to transition to the new standard.

May 24 – 25, 2-Day Workshop

Midwest Small Business Government Contracting Symposium

Hosted by CIRAS

iWireless Center, Moline, IL

This annual conference provides opportunities for both large and small businesses to participate in the Rock Island Arsenal Center of Excellence Advanced Planning Briefing to Industry (APBI), which provides companies with forecasted procurement requirements for the contracting commands currently located at the Rock Island Arsenal. The conference also provides a variety of relevant educational topics for small businesses, a large trade show and networking opportunities, as well as sessions for business matchmaking between small businesses and Government agencies/large prime contractors.

June 2, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

First Fridays

Hosted by the Iowa Center

8345 University Blvd., Suite F, Clive

Hear the savvy, successful business owners + entrepreneurs of Des Moines share their story. In a laid-back environment, you’ll catch some words of wisdom from women + men who have been through it before—and maybe walk away with a new connection (or two). Seating is limited; first come, first served. Lunch not provided but you’re welcome to bring your own!

Liz Lidgett is an art advisor, writer and video host. As CEO of Adore Your Walls, she works with people to find the perfect piece of art for their style, space, and budget. Liz also is a freelance contributor for many national publications and a video host for Better Homes and Gardens and Martha Stewart.

June 6, 13, 20 and 27, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

SCORE SimpleSTEPS Series Workshop

Hosted by Des Moines SCORE

DMACC Southridge, 1111 E. Army Post Rd., Des Moines

The SimpleSTEPS program will give you a practical overview of the fundamentals required to start or expand a small business. You will learn how to define and evaluate your idea, develop a marketing strategy, identify ways to fund your start-up and how to turn your business idea into action using tools and templates. Plus, you’ll connect with other entrepreneurs and learn from SCORE counselors who can help you implement proven business practices.

