

## Maryland Loses Best Public School Purchasing Manager



The State of Maryland and Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) will lose one of its best and strongest enablers for minority- and women-owned business. **Richard “Rick” Gay, CPPO, RSBO**, longtime **Purchasing Manager** for BCPS, tendered his resignation with his last official day being Friday, August 28, 2015. Rick will return to his native state of Texas and assume the role of Procurement Officer with the Houston Independent School District. This new position will allow him to move up to the executive level.

A recent highlight of Rick’s commitment to minority and women business inclusion is the school systems’ performance for fiscal year 2015. Baltimore County Public Schools’ sourcing initiatives achieved an MBE/WBE/SBE participation rate of 34% (\$37.3 million) for state funded projects, and for all funding sources 35.3% (\$64.2 million). Over the past 10 years, BCPS has issued 1,361 State/County funded contracts valued at \$1.94 Billion with an MBE/WBE/SBE participation rate of 30%, valued at \$576 million. In October 2014, BCPS, as a part of Baltimore County and Baltimore Metro Council, hosted the sixth annual Meet the Primes for 101 general contractors, 30 state and local government agencies, and 700 MBE subcontractors at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. During their 2014 event, 92% of attending MBEs reported making new usable contacts. Over 25% of those who’ve attended in the past have been awarded a contract as a result of attending this event, while 89% of general contractors that participated as exhibitors reported that they’ve identified new usable sub-contractors or suppliers.

In addition to Rick’s minority- and women-owned business sourcing and spending success, Rick also implemented an online electronic catalog procurement process. In the past 15 years, BCPS end-users have processed an average of 8,000 electronic purchase orders. Since 2001, the BCPS eProcurement system has grown from a small pilot program of 5 catalogs with 15 vendors and 2,000 line items to over 71 catalogs with over 145 vendors and 500,000 line items. Since implementing the online catalog system, BCPS has trained over 1797+ users and dramatically reduced the number of purchase orders.

“Rick Gay has been the best Purchasing Manager for women- and minority-owned businesses of any public school district in Maryland,” said Wayne R. Frazier, Sr., President of Md. Washington Minority Companies Association, (MWMCA). “He has gone out of his way to ensure access, compliance and payment to minority vendors and he will surely be missed.”

Karen Barbour, AFSB, President of The Barbour Group, LLC states, “It is a shock to hear that Rick Gay is leaving Baltimore County Schools. We will lose one of the best advocates for minority, women and small businesses in the history of Maryland school construction. I personally worked with Rick Gay in 2006 when the Individual Surety law was passed. After much due diligence, his office agreed to accept a bond issued by an individual surety for Dundalk High School and saved the county over \$600,000 in costs in addition to saving the award of a \$3.1 million contract for Dundalk Sollers Point HS for a women-owned firm in 2011. Rick Gay’s overall policy did not tolerate any late payments to any subcontractor and made

certain that all MBE rules and regulations were maintained by the general contractors on all his school construction. I know he will bring a positive charge to his new position in Texas and drive the herd home.”

“During his tenure with Baltimore County Public Schools, Mr. Richard Gay proved himself to be a forceful advocate for good procurement practices,” recalls David Lever, Executive Director, Interagency Committee on School Construction. “He consistently brought forward procurement initiatives and acquired a leadership role among the procurement officers of Maryland’s school systems. Mr. Gay and his team were instrumental in assisting the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) to implement revised Minority Business Enterprise participation procedures in 2008 and the following years. In this effort, Mr. Gay and his team developed a number of best practices and assisted the IAC to refine the process. His leadership in the area of public school procurement is recognized across the state of Maryland.”

“The roofing industry wishes Rick the best of luck in his new endeavor. He was a pioneer in purchasing and had in depth knowledge in the procurement arena. Good luck,” said Timothy Boone, Senior Technical Advisor at Tremco Roofing & Building Maintenance Division.

“Rick Gray has proven to be very inclusive in contracting with minority-owned firms. His outreach to Asian American minority certified contractors is second to none. His work has allowed us to be considered for major roofing contracts with Baltimore County Public Schools. We started as a specialty contractor and moved to prime contractor status. Rick has the ability to see beyond the moment and visualize how the present and future should be,” notes David Boo, President of DJB Contracting, Inc.

“Baltimore County Public Schools construction program under the leadership of Rick Gay has provided my company with an opportunity to grow and prosper. His strong adherence to minority business enterprise has made prime contractors more accountable which results to greater sub-contracts being awarded to certified African American companies like mine. We minority owned businesses owe a debt of gratitude to Rick Gay for championing inclusion,” said Keith Kelley of Kelley's Trucking.

MWMCA salutes Rick Gay by saying farewell and we wish you well with your future endeavors.