



NEWS RELEASE

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As Pandemic Wanes, South Fulton Vendor Program Recruiting Local Small Businesses

(CITY OF SOUTH FULTON, GA – July 9, 2021) – Experts say small businesses drive a major portion of the U.S. economy. The City of South Fulton recruits small business owners as vendors for city contracts, providing resources local entrepreneurs need to thrive.

Championed in 2017 by Councilwoman Dr. Catherine F. Rowell, the Local Small Business Enterprise Program embraces entrepreneurs by including them in the city's supply chain of goods and services. The program defines a small business as having less than \$500,000 in annual sales and a city address.

"The growth we have seen since the program's inception is amazing," Rowell said. "Data from fiscal year 2019 shows our city utilized minority firms at a rate of approximately 15 percent of total spending on professional services. That number doubled to 30 percent in FY20."

Municipalities with well-defined local small business programs show significant and healthy shares of minority business among their vendors. With a long-term goal of broadly promoting minority businesses, South Fulton shares its registered vendor database, powered through Prism Compliance Management, with neighboring cities and counties.

"Cities are reopening so now we can concentrate on recruiting local small businesses for inclusion into the LSBE program, said Donna Stevenson, the firm's president and CEO. "We have 168 businesses registered in South Fulton, but we would like to see more."

The inclusion of small businesses among city vendors not only benefits those companies. South Fulton itself enjoys increased employment opportunities, a more robust tax base and enhanced quality of life for residents.

"It creates positive impacts on multiple fronts," said Anthony Kerr, the city's procurement manager. "Businesses gain access to a new market and revenue stream, the city gets the convenience and savings of having local resource providers and residents see the benefits of keeping dollars in the community."

The enterprise program is not the only way South Fulton supports the local business community. When the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many companies, the city stepped in to create an assistance program to help small businesses stay afloat.

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“At the height of the pandemic, we allocated a little under \$700,000 in CARES Act funding to provide sustainability grants to small businesses negatively impacted by COVID,” said Christopher Pike, the city’s economic development director. “Without that lifeline, many of those businesses likely would have closed or been forced to cut services.”

Small businesses owners can join the city’s growing network of local vendors by registering under the Become a City Vendor tab at cityofsouthfultonga.gov. Find more information on the Finance and Administrative Services Department page.

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