

## The A I R (Awards Incentive & Recognition) Program

### Program Description

The A I R program is designed to recognize University departments, as well as individual staff persons; that demonstrate exemplary efforts in supporting and doing business with Targeted Businesses (women/minority/disabled owned business enterprises -WDBEs). Through this program departments can receive financial rewards based on their efforts to purchase goods and services from Targeted Business while individual staff will also be recognized and rewarded for their work in assisting and creating business opportunities for Targeted Businesses.

### Goals

- Provide financial incentives to departments doing business with Targeted Businesses
- Increase spending with Targeted Businesses on non-competitive bidding contracts
- Recognize individual staff efforts for increasing opportunities for Targeted Businesses
- Increase expenditures with Targeted Businesses to 10% of all University purchases

This program is managed the University of Minnesota's **Office for Business and Community Economic Development** (<http://www.ced.umn.edu/>).

### A I R Award Guidelines

#### **Department & College Awards**

In FY2008 the University will allocate **\$50,000** to fund the **A I R Program**. Financial awards will be made based on using a three tier category award system.

- Tier 1 = \$25,000: Awarded to the department with an expenditure budget of \$500K + and having the highest percentage amount spent with Targeted Businesses.
- Tier 2 = \$15,000: Awarded to the department with an expenditure budget of \$200K - \$499K having the highest percentage amount spent with Targeted Businesses.
- Tier 3 = \$10,000: Awarded to the department with an expenditure budget of 25k to \$199K and having the highest percentage amount spent with Targeted Businesses.

Competing departments will be selected based on a percentage of their total purchasing/spending activity with Targeted Businesses for a (12) month period. These award funds are unrestricted and may be used by the department/unit for any purpose they deem appropriate (staff retreat, business travel, budget supplement, etc).

### Individual Awards

The "Pfutz Award" recognizes University staff persons (buyers, end users, department heads, deans etc.), that demonstrate outstanding commitment to supporting and creating opportunities for Targeted Businesses. Individuals receiving special recognition will be selected through a formal nominations

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process. Awards will be handed out at a special Awards Recognition luncheon each year by a senior level Officer of the University.

**How Departments Participate**

The first step is to complete the AIR Program enrollment form. Enrollment forms can be found online by visiting <http://www.ced.umn.edu/> and clicking on “AIR Program”. Both departments and units may enroll. Enrollment requires that the department or unit designate a contact person at the RRC level or other level. The department designee or RRC designee will be responsible for coordinating their department’s participation in the AIR Program and promoting Targeted Business purchases across their area. For each department or unit that enrolls, OBCED will track eligible expenditures by area number.

To maximize opportunities for Targeted Businesses, it is encouraged that departments focus on purchasing from Targeted Businesses in two key areas. The first is when buying goods and services that do not require assistance from Purchasing Services; this would involve purchases under \$50,000. These transactions are typically carried out with a University purchasing cards or via a direct billing process. Identifying qualified Targeted Businesses to fulfill these orders a simple way to increase AIR eligible expenditures.

The second strategy is utilizing U-Wide contracts that are held by WMDBEs, this may include all purchases under \$249,999. From the U-Wide homepage, buyers may click on “WMDBEs” to view all contracts held by Targeted Businesses. For assistance in identifying and selecting eligible vendors contact Aron Khoury, Project Manager at OBCED at 612-625-8460.

**Finding Qualified Vendors**

Supplier information and vendor profiles are available at [www.bced.umn.edu](http://www.bced.umn.edu) (click on “vendor profile”) including information on external organizations that maintain Targeted Business supplier information to support this program. All vendors listed on these sites are “certified vendors” and purchases from these firms are eligible for credit toward the AIR program.

**USmall Biz & AIR program profile**

<http://usmallbiz.umn.edu/USmallBiz-About.html>

**State of Minnesota, Targeted Business Directory**

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/process/search/>

**Minnesota Small Business Administration**

<http://www.sba.gov/mn/>

For additional questions regarding finding a certified vendor, contact Aron Khoury, Project Manager with Office for Business and Community Economic Development at 612-804-9571 or [khou0012@umn.edu](mailto:khou0012@umn.edu).