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IMMEDIATE

U.S. Small Business Administration Recognizes MTA

Chief Diversity Officer Michael J. Garner Honored as 2012 Minority Small Business Champion

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration has named the MTA's Chief Diversity Officer, Michael J. Garner, as Minority Small Business Champion of the Year for New York State. The award is presented annually in each state to individuals who assist small businesses through outstanding advocacy efforts.

Mr. Garner, who joined the MTA in 2009, has overseen the creation of the MTA's Small Business Mentoring Program. It is a set of small business initiatives that provides a supportive framework to help eligible minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises establish stable, long-term business relationships with the MTA as they develop and grow. The program's components include the ability to work as prime construction contractors, access to small business loans, surety bonding assistance, technical assistance and classroom construction training.

The program has exceeded its initial targets. To date, \$20 million in capital construction prime contracts has been awarded to 38 program participants. These projects have created and maintained 568 jobs.

"This award is a tremendous vote of confidence, not only in the work we are doing, but in the commitment and vision of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and MTA Chairman Joseph J. Lhota," Mr. Garner said. "The MTA's efforts are closely aligned with Governor Cuomo's goal of seeing a 20% share of the value of State contract awards go to New York State certified Minority-owned and Women-owned Business Enterprises, and the Obama Administration's focus on job creation. Additionally, our efforts are fully supported by MTA Chairman Lhota and the entire MTA Board. It's a new day at the MTA and I'm grateful to be the proud recipient of such a distinguished award."

In making the announcement, SBA New York District Director Pravina Raghavan said that Garner was selected for his award based on his efforts to advance minority small business interests and to improve conditions in the minority small business community.

According to Raghavan, Garner was nominated for his award by U.S. General Services Administration Regional Administrator Denise Pease, Bill Howell, president of Howell Industries of Brooklyn and Sandra Wilkin, president of Bradford Construction Corporation of Manhattan. "Michael Garner has created an environment and programs that encourage and embrace supplier diversity within the MTA," she said. "His success is evident by the 40 percent increase in MTA contracts that have been awarded to New York State certified minority/women-owned and disadvantaged businesses. Clearly, Mr. Garner's efforts to champion minority small businesses are worthy of this honor."

The Small Business Mentoring Program's contracting awards are a result of targeted, proactive outreach to small businesses, which previously did not have the resources or qualifications to directly bid and compete for MTA contracts. The program includes the implementation of a successful construction training program for participating firms. As a result, the MTA was able to increase the number of MWDBE participants within the New York 12-county region. One hundred and fifty-four firms have been prequalified for the program since September 2010.

The Small Business Mentoring Program is expected to expand 50 percent in the next year, with a long-term goal of awarding \$100 million in contracts annually. The program also includes a small business loan program that will enable smaller contractors, specifically, minority, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises, to apply for a small business loan up to \$150,000, to be used for working capital once a firm wins a contract to be used for working capital. In addition, the MTA is currently in discussions with the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), seeking approval to create and implement a small business mentoring program for federally funded capital construction projects. Once approved, the program will provide additional prime contracting opportunities for small construction firms, including minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises and create additional jobs within the MTA's 12-county service region.

Mr. Garner previously served as Senior Director of Business Development at the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), where he was responsible for the short and long term business development of qualified emerging Minority, Women-Owned and Locally Based Business Enterprises



MTA Chief Diversity Officer Michael J. Garner receives the U.S. Small Business Administration's Minority Small Business Champion of the Year Award for New York from Denise Pease, Regional Administrator for the U.S. General Services Administration, at left, and Pravina Raghavan, SBA's New York District Director, right.

(MWLBes). Under his direction, the SCA created one of the most comprehensive small business development and inclusion programs in the nation including implementation of a Graduate Mentor Program.

Prior to his 15-year career at the SCA, Garner worked at the New York City Housing Authority, including certification of firms, contract compliance, minority and women-owned business development outreach and procurement management.