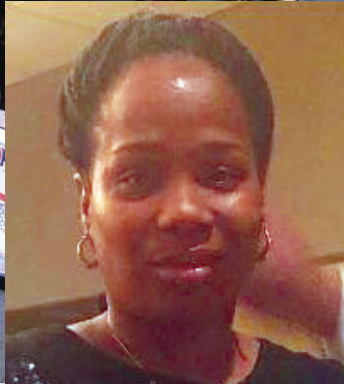




The Business Diversity  
Development Department  
Achievements — A Continued  
Commitment to Diversity

2015–2020





## Business Diversity Development Department

The Business Diversity Development (BDD) department is the certifying body for the City of St. Louis' local Minority and/or Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) program, as well as the Airport's federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) programs.

The BDD is committed to offering the best environment for companies to receive the top technical assistance and certification training, develop partnerships with prime contractors in their industries, and access to compete successfully for meaningful contracts and other business-building opportunities.

## The Early Years

Originally, the department was named the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Programs Office until a bold rebranding initiative was put in place by Amber Gooding, Assistant Airport Director Community Programs and Business Diversity, to evolve the name to Business Diversity Development. This better described the mission of the department and suited the breadth of services they offer – it is also unique to St. Louis as many other departments in other cities still go by “DBE.” The rebranding effort included a logo refresh, an overhaul of the website presence, development of new communication materials and enhanced the quality of the information being delivered.

In addition, the BDD ramped up its efforts to build awareness of certification opportunities to both prime contractors and sub-contractors with a presence at various expos, such as MOKAN, Small Business Monthly, St. Louis Consumer Construction Council and PEOPLE. They also presented to labor unions and held in-person meetings with potential bidders. A database of certified firms and interested parties was created to implement an email communication strategy to build relationships with the audience, provide ongoing educational material and keep firms informed on updates and upcoming events. The team also conducted more than 25 one-on-one meetings with interested firms to educate them about the certification process and which programs will help them meet their goals.

In 2015, the BDD held its first annual Business Diversity Forum to proactively assist local businesses to get connected with new business and career opportunities. The event drew 300 guests and 41 exhibitors. Airport Director Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge and other key staff highlighted contract opportunities within the areas of construction and engineering, supplies and material management, airport operations

and airport concessions. The forum also offered valuable networking opportunities for attendees and highlighted requirements for federal and local certification for minority and women-owned businesses. The BDD team helped raise awareness of the importance of developing strategic alliances, financial resources and improving back-office skills to assist with the attendee’s future success. This event set the stage for many more Forums to take place in the coming years.

## Results-Oriented Team Committed to Innovation & Technology

Through the years, under the guidance of Ms. Gooding, the BDD staff has been dedicated to making the certification process as streamlined as possible for eligible firms. The BDD staff has proven to be detail-oriented, thoughtful and vested and works diligently with firms and the Program Review Committee (PRC) (the certifying body) to exceed the established turn-around time goals for certification. In addition, Ms. Gooding provided her staff with additional professional development opportunities. This included sending her team to industry conferences, training and even bringing in industry experts to increase skill sets and competencies in areas related to certification.

The new online certification process exceeded all expectations and dramatically increased the number of approved certifications.

The department as a whole embraces new technology and structure to help achieve its goals – and has received much success and accolades along the way. In 2016, the BDD launched a new online portal to help manage contract compliance expeditiously that was a gamechanger. The new system streamlined reporting requirements and empowered vendors to manage their records and submit contract payment details online instead of manually. The online certification process exceeded all expectations and the department had a dramatic increase in the number of companies approved for certification and a decrease in the number of days needed to process an application – setting the BDD up for future success.

## BDD Sees Extraordinary Achievements

In line with Ms. Gooding’s vision, even greater milestones were achieved in the areas of construction, professional services, goods and services, and concessions contracts awarded. In FY2015–16, DBEs received 28 percent of the \$25,410,753 total spent on federally funded construction projects. Under the local program for construction and professional services, MBEs received 32 percent and WBEs received 7 percent of nearly \$45 million in total spent.

The second Business Diversity Forum returned and drew over 300 attendees. Yet again, the Forum provided an excellent setting for companies to connect with the full range of contractors and service providers who help in the management and production of the Airport’s day-to-day operations. Highlights of the event included a “state of the airport” address focusing on the Airport’s Five-Year Strategic Plan by Director of Airports Rhonda Hamm-Niebruegge, and a keynote presentation

by motivational speaker Ravi Norman, CEO of Minneapolis-based THOR Construction Company. New this year was the introduction of roundtable discussions covering a wide range of topics. The exhibition hall at the event featured a curated collection of national and local brands and businesses.



## The BDD Makes an Impact, Receives Accolades

Airport and construction industry groups have taken notice of St. Louis Lambert International Airport’s progress in growing business diversity among its contractors. This is demonstrated by awards and recognition the BDD has received throughout the years.

In 2015, MOKAN, a champion of Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises, honored Amber Gooding and Jackie Taylor during its 41st Annual Awards Dinner titled, “Embracing Diversity, Excelling Towards Diversity.” Taylor received MOKAN’s Public Sector Executive of the Year Award for her work in helping companies get certified and maintain their certification status. Gooding received MOKAN’s Public Sector Agency Visionary Award. The

award is presented to a person within the public sector who has advanced policies and practices that will improve diversity and create a sustainable impact on minority business inclusion within the construction and building industry.

In March 2017, the BDD was also recognized as a winner of the Organizational Excellence Inclusion Award by the St. Louis Council of Construction Consumers (SLCCC). The Airport was honored for positive growth in minority business participation rates and its outreach. The scope of their efforts extended beyond the local and federal programs for inclusion and are designed to provide equal opportunity for minority and women-owned firms. Contract proposals included provisions for participation in all areas, including construction, professional services, concessions and goods and services. In addition, they were also recognized for implementing the new online certification process and a new website which has led to a dramatic increase in the number of companies the Airport certifies. Shortly thereafter, in 2017, the Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) recognized the Airport as a Medium Hub Inclusion Champion. "Each year, the Inclusion Champion Awards celebrate exceptional achievement in promoting and sustaining diversity throughout the airport industry," said Kevin M. Burke, ACI-NA President and CEO. "Airports are committed to ambitious goals that serve their local communities and strengthen the businesses that support airport operations."

St. Louis was honored for its longstanding commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion through innovative programs and practices that are incorporated into every aspect of the Airport's overall business development model. Working closely with businesses, the Airport has increased the number of pre-bid opportunities and

The BDD was honored for their growth in minority business participation rates and its outreach by the SLCCC.

informational meetings to ensure more minority and women-owned companies participate in Airport contracts. In FY2016–17, the Airport achieved a 34 percent participation rate in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 for design and construction contracts, which is part of a federally recognized and monitored Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. In another federal program, participation in the Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE) reached nearly 39 percent, well surpassing a 23 percent goal.

## BDD Achievements Continue to Soar

In FY2017, under the guidance of Ms. Gooding and the work of her dedicated team, the BDD reported that spending on construction and other professional services provided by MBE/WBEs increased a notable 10 percent over FY2016. The same growth was seen in federally-funded contracts at the Airport. In the last Federal Fiscal Year, DBEs received 28 percent of federal spending for construction and other professional services. A year later, in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016, that percentage has increased to 34 percent.

Airport general service contracts represented \$44 million in spending with 34 percent going to MBEs and WBEs.

These noteworthy achievements mean that more disadvantaged businesses are competing, winning and performing on meaningful contracts for the Airport. That increase proves that businesses owned and operated by women and minorities can compete and succeed on a level playing field which is what the BDD strives to provide every day.

When given the chance, DBEs can match or even outperform larger competitors. And with their dedication and commitment, MBE/WBEs can rise to a level of prime contractor, a concept that has never crossed anyone's mind before. The BDD has diligently assisted several firms that have risen to the designation of prime contractor, for example, Mechanical Solutions, Interface Construction, KAI, ABNA Engineering and Simms Building Group.

The BDD actively works to change perceptions about MBE/WBE firms by consistently featuring success stories that spotlight how these firms have worked with the BDD.

## Working to Change Contractor Perceptions

The construction and contracting industry is changing – it's a world of successes, failures, adjustments, advancements, and shifting

attitudes. What has traditionally been a male-dominated business is now seeing a growing influx of women, not just in administrative and labor positions, but as company owners. This marks a notable shift in the industry. As MBE/WBE firms become more common, the BDD seeks to encourage and facilitate the trend.

However, one of the BDD's challenges is to get prime contractors to recognize the value of working with MBE/WBE subcontractors. Sometimes firms do not want to "give away" part of a contract that they just won. The BDD compliance officers work conscientiously to help prime contractors overcome their misperceptions by educating them about the benefits of MBE/WBE goals and how to meet them. The BDD helps bring to light that working with MBE/WBE firms, prime contractors can earn and increase their credentials and respect within the industry. Many of these businesses are headed by young, up-and-coming professionals who have outstanding insights into the evolution of the industry and its unique problems and can bring those insights to the contractor. By helping a new small business grow, they are also helping grow the construction and contracting industry overall by opening doors to new businesses who might otherwise not have had a chance – and this is good for their business and the St. Louis economy.

The BDD actively works to change perceptions about MBE/WBE firms by consistently featuring success stories that spotlight how these firms have worked with the BDD to get the most out of their certification to build their business and achieve their dreams. These testimonials demonstrate that anyone who is smart, determined and has a good business plan can use their certification to their advantage to open doors in a crowded category. These success stories are celebrated in the BDD's Annual Report and featured on the flystl.com website.

## Connecting Diversity to New Heights

In 2017, the 3rd Annual Business Diversity Forum took place. The event was held in the Airport's own Aero Event Space where more than 450 professionals were in attendance. The Forum offered participants two roundtable discussions, increased time for networking and awards were presented to several companies for their diversity performance. Keynote speaker Krystal J. Brumfield, president and chief executive officer of the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC), focused on national opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses. She praised the efforts of STL and the BDD office in setting the tone for many airports that are growing and for their commitment to diversity. Ms. Gooding shared the news that there was a dramatic increase in the number of companies approved for certification and a decrease in the number of days needed to process a certification application. "Participation of minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged business enterprises in Airport contracts is on the rise," said Gooding.

## Continued Commitment to Diversity

The BDD continued in its commitment to offer companies the finest environment for top technical assistance and certification training. They have remained intensely dedicated to assisting those companies in developing partnerships with prime contractors in their industries, as well as successfully competing for opportunities, such as Airport contracts. In FY2019, the BDD achieved an average certification turnaround time of 65 days. Through the years, the BDD has worked hard to fine-tune the certification process. This, along with strong partnerships with local

Chambers of Commerce and community agencies, has allowed for increased opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses.

The BDD has relied on the strong relationships with its partners to assist in building awareness and understanding of the local MBE/WBE programs as well as the requirements for the DBE and ACDBE programs and furthering their mission. These long-standing partnerships include the SBA, MoDOT, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, the MRCC and the Airport Minority Advisory Council among others.

The BDD achieves a record-breaking attendance at the 2019 Business Diversity Forum.



Real Talk.  
Real Opportunities.  
Real Success.

In April of 2019, the BDD hosted its 4th and largest ever Business Diversity Forum (BDF) that attracted nearly 500 guests – over half of them were first-time attendees. The event was actively promoted to the business community garnering coverage in a multitude of media, including, iHeart radio appearances by Ms. Gooding as well as radio advertising, inclusion



in the Better Family Life Speaker Series and editorial coverage in the St. Louis American. A promotional video was created and shared with media outlets to generate buzz about the event. This event provided a tremendous opportunity for local businesses to network, share ideas, and give voice to their ideas and ideals.

One particular highlight of the forum was the keynote address, delivered by Otis Williams, Executive Director for the St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC). Williams noted several new development projects in and around St. Louis, touching on the many contributions of minority and women-owned business owners, which have exceeded the city's participation goals.

## Embracing New Technology, Increasing Efficiency

In the interest of increasing efficiency and to improve monitoring and tracking of all Airport projects, the BDD passed a major milestone by completing their first project using the Construction Workforce Management System (CWMS) in 2019. Designed to assist in tracking trucking participation on federally funded projects, the CWMS was designed and built by a locally MBE/DBE certified firm.

In addition, the use of this innovative software provided a chance to beta test enhanced features of this cloud-based tracking equipment and software, while allowing the BDD to get more accurate, real-time reports

The BDD passed a major milestone by completing their first project using the Construction Workforce Management System (CWMS).

on trucking participation on projects. Truly, this endeavor stands as a testament to the core values and mission of the BDD.

## The BDD Hosts the Gateway to Diversity

The Missouri Regional Certification Committee (MRCC) agencies are responsible for administering the DBE program and the Airport is one of the seven partner agencies in the committee. Every year, one of the partners hosts the MRCC training session and in October of 2019, the BDD had the honor of holding the meetings in St. Louis. They also hosted an evening networking event entitled the "Gateway to Diversity" that gave the BDD the chance to show off St. Louis at the beautiful venue of Vue 17. Also, a former BDD staffer and his well-known blues band entertained the guests while they networked. The event, that drew over 150 guests, was designed to connect business owners who want to pursue partnership opportunities in the upcoming fiscal year with St. Louis Lambert International Airport, Bi-State, City of Kansas City, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Missouri Department of Transportation & Mid-America Regional Council.

## The Journey Continues

While the BDD's dedicated staff works to expand their network of community partners who support their efforts to level the playing field for minority and women-owned firms. Their journey continues. As they move ahead, they work tirelessly to broaden their reach to create even greater growth opportunities and enhance our diversity and inclusion programs for minority and women-owned firms in the St. Louis City and County and will do so for many years to come.

The success of the Business Diversity Development (BDD) department is due to the leadership of Amber Gooding, Assistant Airport Director Community Programs and Business Diversity, and the hard work of her dedicated team. Amber oversees a team of 12 individuals that work to serve one shared goal – to provide minority and woman-owned businesses with access to contract opportunities that will enable their businesses to experience growth and success.

## Business Diversity Development Team

Amber D. Gooding

Barbara Carter – Administrative Assistant III – Airport Conference Room Rentals

Carrie Bagwell – Program Manager I – Certification

Georgetta Vann – Certification Compliance Officer

Marie Yancey – Certification Compliance Officer

Tynetta Bruce – Certification Compliance Officer

Jackie Taylor – Certification Compliance Officer

Stephanie Smith – Certification Compliance Officer



Amber D. Gooding

Assistant Airport Director  
Community Programs  
and Business Diversity

Ms. Gooding, the Assistant Airport Director Community Programs and Business Diversity, has served in her role at the BDD for almost seven years. Ms. Gooding is a respected expert in the airport and aviation industry with more than 25 years of leadership experience in business development, community relations and strategic planning focusing on diversity and inclusion.

Before coming to STL, Ms. Gooding held a similar role for the Nashville International Airport. There she developed all aspects of Nashville Airport's federally mandated DBE and ACDBE Programs, and the local Minority and Women-Owned Programs. Under her tenure, expenditures with firms increased by 65 percent.

Ms. Gooding relocated to St. Louis due to a career opportunity her husband received to work for the NFL. She considers herself fortunate that the Airport was looking to fill the same role she held with the Nashville Airport which allowed her to continue to do the work she loves in the field of diversity and aviation.

In her role, Ms. Gooding oversees a team of 12 and has the opportunity to work with a variety of people – internally and externally. From construction to IT professionals to tradesmen looking to start their own business. Her department helps people obtain a foothold into the complex world of contracting and assists them in successfully navigating through it.

Amber is a team player that is committed to resolving issues her client's face. She strives to ensure that subcontractors are receiving timely payments from primes and intervenes when a prime wants to terminate a contract for no reason other than to take on the work themselves. She also helps potential customers understand how the BDD evaluates the documentation for certification and, most importantly, educates people that the reason diversity programs exist is to address the historical discrimination that exists for minorities and women in contracting.

Ms. Gooding is admired for her thoroughness and responsiveness and is most proud of her team's ability to process certification faster than ever before through automation, operational improvements and efficiencies they have worked to achieve. Shorter certification times means business owners can market their DBE/MWBE designation sooner and effectively grow their businesses.

When Ms. Gooding is not at the office, she is an NFL superfan. Not knowing much about football before she met her husband twenty years ago, she realized that she had to get up-to-speed quickly if she were to marry an NFL professional. It's all football, all the time now for Ms. Gooding – her favorite morning radio show is Sirius XM's "NFL Radio 88" and she subscribes to the Sunday Ticket so she can tune-into multiple NFL games taking place all around the country.

**Barbara Carter**, the Administrative Assistant III of the BDD for 21 years, has served as Ms. Gooding's strong right arm on the team. Ms. Carter is the heartbeat of the office, overseeing the clerical staff, all administrative duties and managing the No Change Affidavit process for vendors. She enjoys talking to vendors every day and answering their questions about their No Change Affidavit applications, how they navigate the B2Gnow system and how to upload required documents. This allows her to exercise her abilities of patience, organizational and problem-solving skills.

Ms. Carter also served as the Event Coordinator at the Airport for a time. In that role, she helped clients create their special events – weddings, receptions, proms, etc.

that were staged in what is now STL's Aero Event Space. She enjoyed taking on that task and developing a detailed plan outlining the actions needed to reach the client's goal.

Previously, Ms. Carter was a Program Supervisor in the Traffic Violations Division in City Court. Supervising a team of 11, she was responsible for overseeing all parking ticket/court payments, warrant cancelation fees and bond money. Ms. Carter was interested in working for the BDD because of her desire to help minorities and disadvantaged people become successful in their business endeavors. When Ms. Carter is not at work, she enjoys traveling, reading, entertaining at home and the outdoors, especially if it involves a pool or beach.

---

**Carrie Bagwell**, a member of the BDD team for seven years, serves as the Program Manager of the Compliance side of the department. Before working for the BDD, Ms. Bagwell worked in finance and grant administration and compliance at a local nonprofit providing housing for people living with HIV and AIDS. However, she was always interested in working for the city of St. Louis. When she learned about the City's M/WBE and federal DBE/ACDBE programs, she was eager to serve on the front line of working to counteract discrimination.

As the Program Manager of Compliance, Ms. Bagwell enjoys seeing genuine minority and women-owned businesses grow and access opportunities that they otherwise would not likely have access to. She is inspired by seeing firms create relationships and reputations that

allow them to excel even where there are no diversity goals or programs. On the job, she is most proud of her contributions in helping get B2Gnow online for both the compliance and certification modules. In addition, her role often requires the ability to integrate technological solutions into processes to improve efficiencies and accuracy. She also is relied upon to solve access problems for DBE/MWBE firms and tends to be one of the department's "go-to" team members for resolving technical issues. When Ms. Bagwell is not at the office, she enjoys reading, papercrafts and taking in a variety of live entertainment.

**Stephanie Smith** is a newer addition to the BDD office, serving as a Contract Compliance Officer, and brings a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership degree to the table. Before joining the BDD, she managed Washington University's Supplier Diversity Initiative; co-managing a \$350M design/build public utility project which had achieved 40 percent DBE/MWBE participation.

---

Ms. Smith was drawn to the challenge that the BDD compliance department offers. She works diligently to counteract the under-utilization of DBE/MWBE firms by actively working to ensure they have access to meaningful contracting opportunities. When Ms. Smith is not at work, she enjoys travel, writing and puzzles.

**Tynetta Bruce** serves as a Contract Compliance Officer for the BDD and is a newer addition to the team. Before joining the department, she worked in real estate and decided to make the move to the BDD because she wanted to be part of a team that assisted minorities while being a part of the growth in St. Louis.

When Ms. Bruce is not at the office, she likes to spend time with her family. She is also interested in construction, seeing a project from beginning to end and her hobby is assisting women who want to start a business and bring it to life.

Ms. Bruce is always willing to assist her fellow team members and to help solve problems while learning new things along the way.

---

**Marie Yancey** served as a Public Information Officer at the Airport prior to joining the BDD as a Contract Compliance Officer. Her tenure in this role dates back to 2004 when was asked to join the team. At that time, it was still referred to as the DBE Programs Office, right before the City's local DBE/MWBE certification program was transferred to the Airport.

as a Diversity Champion. She is a team player that enjoys assisting applicants who are trying to adjust to the BDD's paperless online system. When Ms. Yancey is not at the office, she enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Yancey enjoys working with people who want to know more about how to become certified and was recognized by the St. Louis Council of Construction Consumers in 2012

**Jackie Taylor** works on the BDD team as a Contract Compliance Officer and finds it rewarding to see small, disadvantaged firms complete the review process and receive their applicable certifications. Before joining the department, Ms. Taylor worked four years as a Special Loans Analyst with Citicorp Mortgage, Inc., and was drawn to the BDD to have the opportunity to help small businesses in the community.

Ms. Taylor assists applicants in navigating the online certification system and brings a wealth of historical knowledge of the implementation of the Federal DBE and Local M/WBE programs to the department. In 2015, she received MOKAN's Public Sector Executive of the Year Award for her work in helping companies get certified and maintain their certification status. When Ms. Taylor is not at work, she likes to relax and take road trips.

---

**Georgetta Vann** has served as a Contract Compliance Officer on the BDD team for two years. Before that, she worked as the Certification Manager with the St. Louis Minority Business Council for 15 years. Ms. Vann welcomed the opportunity to work for the BDD so she could help DBE/MWBE businesses maneuver through the certification process. She enjoys seeing small business enterprises take their businesses to the next level and takes special care to

help them understand the benefits of the various certifications. She has successfully built a good rapport with applicants that are assigned for her review and works to resolve any questions or concerns applicants may have in a timely manner. Ms. Vann is known for her caring attitude and always helps people feel comfortable when seeking assistance from the BDD. When Ms. Vann is not at work, she enjoys entertaining friends and bowling.





## Contact Us

---



10701 Lambert International Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63145-0212 U.S.A.



314.426.8111



[businessdiversity@flystl.com](mailto:businessdiversity@flystl.com)

[flystl.com/bdd](http://flystl.com/bdd)



ST. LOUIS LAMBERT  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.