



## PrettyNPaint, LLC (MBE/WBE)



Aaliyah Sahar Terry's path to becoming a successful businesswoman in the construction industry started when she was just 19 years old. She credits her father, the owner of a drywall finishing company, with putting the first work tools in her hands. As Terry recalls, "I only wanted to spend time with my father. I didn't know it would lead me to owning my own painting company."

Terry's on-the-job training included painting and drywall finishing for residential and commercial projects. She joined the painter's union as a third-year apprentice, and ultimately earned the title of journeyman. A course in construction management technology at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley taught her how to bid on contracts and provided an overview on how to construct and demolish buildings.

With the necessary skills and education under her belt, Terry recognized her potential to advance in the construction industry. As she started to advance, she noticed few women working on the front lines of job sites and an even smaller number of female-owned construction companies.

With this in mind, and encouragement from her entrepreneurial father, Terry decided to start her own company with a goal of helping women advance in the trade. But it wasn't until participation in a networking event to meet general contractors that Terry decided to launch her company. Terry states, "My mentor asked me, 'If you had your own company, how would you run it and what would you call it?'" I said I wanted my company to be called pretty in paint and it to be known for the quality that we would bring to clients." The name PrettyNPaint was born and reflects Terry's days as a fashion model and her love for painting.

Since starting her company in 2010, Terry has created a path to help break down the barriers that women often face in the male-dominated

construction industry. "I have four female employees: my mom who does administrative work, two other female painters who work in the field, and myself," says Terry. The company specializes in drywall finishing, painting, and final cleaning on residential and commercial construction jobs in Missouri and Illinois. The company's motto is, "Finish to Perfection."

In 2016, Terry received her M/WBE certification allowing PrettyNPaint to join general contractor Concrete Strategies in the summer of 2021 on a painting job at the Airport. As Terry states, "This was a valuable experience for us. Doing any type of government work shows how committed you are in your trade. You must have a certain level of quality to be on a large contract like that – and we were able to show our skills regarding the quality of work."

PrettyNPaint's residential business tripled when people started working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We were able to schedule and have a constant rotation of work for 40 hours a week, something that challenges a lot of construction companies," states Terry.

In addition to running her company, Terry stays connected to the community. She states, "Every year I purchase an ad for breast cancer awareness, give away free room makeovers, and offer discounts to veterans. I also mentor women in my trade and have completed work for the Urban League and Habitat for Humanity."

PrettyNPaint, LLC is helping Terry financially support her family. She is raising four girls and her oldest son who attends Washington University. As Terry boasts, "This means a lot to me personally because I came from nothing and started a business. Just the fact that someone noticed that we love what we do and that we are good at what we do, I appreciate that."