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Supplier Diversity Makes History in Washington Township

School District Partners with Firms Owned by Women, Minorities, Veterans, and the Physically Challenged on Over \$100M in Contracts

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 16, 2023) – Thanks to the support of the locally elected Washington Township School Board, the District's leadership was able to implement a successful **Supplier Diversity Program** during the extensive construction season that has touched every building in the District and built two new Elementary schools, one new middle school, an Early Learning Center, and the Paul Loggan Field House.

"Our supplier diversity program reinforces our commitment to being a truly inclusive school district," said Superintendent Dr. Nikki Woodson. "The partnerships established by this success will have a profound impact not only on our District but the entire State of Indiana. Our students have better facilities, thanks to the support of voters in Washington Township and the outstanding work of our partners on these capital projects."

The program was designed and managed by the Winston/Terrell Group, an Indianapolis-based firm with considerable experience in supplier diversity and participation in disparity studies. Elements of the program included but were not limited to a Resolution affirming the District's commitment to supplier diversity unanimously approved by the School Board; development of a Vendor Portal (msdwtvendorregistrationform.com) creating ease of access for private sector partners to promote their firm and to receive procurement information on a regular basis; initial teaming and outreach meetings designed to develop effective partnerships between majority-owned firms and firms owned by women, minorities, veterans, and the physically-challenged (XBEs); hierarchical support for the XBE program by the School Board and the District's leadership as firms prepared responses to proposals and bids procurements; and complete transparency, including monthly reports by the District's leadership.

Using that impetus resulted in partnerships with the private sector, District officials, and members of the School Board who are proud to announce that \$100.7M has been directed to firms owned by women, minorities, veterans, and the physically challenged (XBEs) on projects approved by the public school referendum process in 2016 and 2020.

"Our firm remains proud to partner on this successful endeavor," said Robin Winston of Winston/Terrell. "Never again will firms owned by women, minorities, veterans, and the physically challenged be told that they lack the requisite skills to compete for work. Thanks to the support of the School Board and the District's leadership, including Superintendent Nikki Woodson, Director of Operations Angela Britain-Smith, and Capital Projects Manager Jim Boots, we have leveled the playing field for this and future generations."

Supplier Diversity Program Highlights

- Over \$470M in improvements, including new construction, renovations, and energy and environmental upgrades were approved by residents of the Washington Township Schools community.
- Of the funds directed to diverse firms, \$57,311,216.31 was secured by firms owned by minorities; \$38,154,492.57 by women-owned firms; \$4,857,086.93 by veteran-owned businesses; and \$437,555.49 by firms owned by the physically challenged.
- The MBE with the largest spend allocated was Smoot Construction, at \$10.2M.
- The WBE with the largest spend is Business Furniture, at \$11.7M.
- The VBE with the largest spend is J.C. Ripberger at \$2.6M.

"Smoot Construction has a demonstrated record helping to rebuild communities," said Adam Wilensky, Senior Project Manager. "We are so pleased to be part of the successful efforts to provide outstanding educational facilities for the students and the Washington Township Schools community. We are particularly proud of being the Construction Manager of the new Early Learning Center that will support generations of future students. Partnerships and diversity matter with Smoot Construction," concluded Wilensky.

"Business Furniture enjoys working with the leadership of the Washington Township Schools to create spaces that will contribute to the overall academic and social support for the 11,000 students in the District," said Mary Beth Oaks, CEO/Owner of Business Furniture. "Our woman-owned firm successfully partnered with others to reinforce our commitment that culture drives positive results."

"We are proud to be part of this historic effort to build and renovate the schools in Washington Township," said William L. Ripberger, Jr., President of J.C. Ripberger Construction. "Our veteran-owned firm has been in the Indianapolis community since 1958. Working with Washington Township afforded our firm the chance to be part of tangible projects that will make a difference for generations of students and residents of the community."

"We knew when we started that getting to \$100M of spend was a lofty goal but we persevered, kept our focus and implemented new strategies that resulted in success," said Bill Turner, Washington Township School Board Secretary. "The firms that worked with us on the myriad of projects in Washington Township not only helped us but now can compete for jobs across Indiana and in fact, the US."

Washington Township is pleased and proud to have achieved such an important milestone in the arena of Supplier Diversity.

For interview opportunities, contact Ellen Rogers at 317-435-0746.