

2025 Monthly MWDBE Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: December 17, 2025

Time: 1:05 PM

Meeting Type: Regular Monthly Meeting

Location: Virtual

Status: Draft

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by Holly Douglas, Vice President of Cosmos Technologies and Chair of the MWDBE Advisory Committee.

Roll Call / Introductions

Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

Cynthia Oliver, Duquesne University Small Business Development Center (SBDC), confirmed attendance after initial audio clarification.

Approval & Handling of Prior Meeting Minutes

Discussion occurred regarding the October meeting minutes and the process for drafting, correcting, and posting official minutes.

Key points clarified:

- Meeting minutes are posted to the county website after finalization.
- Draft minutes may contain minor errors (e.g., spelling, speaker attribution).
- Corrections should be made before posting, not retroactively after publication.
- The committee agreed that accuracy is essential, as minutes represent the official record of what transpired.

It was noted that no formal vote was required on this clarification, as it reflects standard administrative practice.

Committee Knowledge-Sharing Initiative

The Chair noted that the committee recognized a need for members to better understand each other's roles, organizations, and resources. As a result:

- Members have begun taking turns presenting their organizations.
- Both county and private-sector representatives are included in this effort.

Presentation: Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council (EMSDC)

A presentation was delivered outlining the work of the Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council (EMSDC), including:

- EMSDC certifies Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs).
- Service coverage includes Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Southern New Jersey.
- Certification spans multiple industries, including professional services and manufacturing.

The presenter emphasized the value of cross-cultural competency in business development and expressed interest in collaborative partnerships.

Discussion: Cultural Nuances & Global Business Collaboration

Committee members engaged in discussion regarding:

- Partnering with ethnic chambers of commerce, including the Asian American Chamber and African American Chamber.
- Sharing cultural nuances to improve business relationships, communication, and market entry.
- Supporting international market expansion, particularly in Asia and emerging global markets.

Examples highlighted:

- Existing collaborations with the Asian Indian Chamber in New Jersey.
- Recent relationship-building efforts in Mexico.
- Past Global Business Forum hosted in Marseille, France.
- Plans for an upcoming Global Business Forum in Philadelphia.

It was emphasized that Asia is not a monolithic market and requires localized understanding due to its regional, cultural, and economic diversity.

Partnership & Resource Sharing

The committee affirmed the importance of:

- Working closely with ethnic chambers to ensure “boots on the ground.”
- Leveraging shared resources to enhance market penetration, especially for minority-owned businesses.
- Continuing collaboration across chambers to strengthen MWDBE participation locally and globally.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by:

Cynthia Oliver

Duquesne University Small Business Development Center