



THE POWER OF the AFFILIATES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regional Affiliate Leaders Meet Key Decision Makers on Capitol Hill to Advocate for Minority-Owned Businesses

Washington, D.C., September 11, 2024. – The 23 Regional Affiliate Councils of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)—including affiliate presidents, board chairs, and Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs)—gathered on Capitol Hill this week to meet with legislators and key decision-makers. The mission: to advocate for the protection of minority-owned businesses in the face of growing legal challenges to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs.

"Our Day-On-The-Hill is a crucial component of our broader public policy strategy," said Sharon R. Pinder, President and CEO of the Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council and Chair of the Public Policy Committee. "As we navigate the local landscape, we are uniquely positioned to advocate for and educate on behalf of our minority businesses. By engaging directly with our legislators, we ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met."

The NMSDC's national network, representing over **16,000 certified minority-owned businesses**, contributes **\$482.1 billion in minority spend**, supports **\$136.4 billion in wages**, and creates **1.8 million jobs** across the country. As legal attacks against programs like the 8(a) federal contracting initiative and local diversity efforts intensify, these leaders are working to safeguard the progress made by minority businesses over the past five decades.

Facing Legal Threats to DEI Programs

The growing wave of legal actions against DEI programs is creating confusion and uncertainty for contracting officers, corporate leaders, and minority business owners. These challenges threaten to unravel the hard-fought gains that minority-owned businesses have made and jeopardize the future of supplier diversity.

"We must remain vigilant in defending the policies and programs that ensure equity and inclusion in our marketplace," said Pat Crenshaw, President and CEO of the Pacific Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council, and Chair of the Affiliate Council Presidents'. "These programs don't just benefit minority businesses—they strengthen the entire economy."

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Collectively, the 23 Regional Affiliates have been instrumental in driving economic opportunities for minority businesses. As advocates and connectors, they ensure that minority businesses have access to essential resources, partnerships, and contracts. With legal threats looming, it is crucial that public and private sector leaders continue to champion DEI policies and invest in supplier diversity.

The Critical Need for Documenting DEI Policies

During their meetings, the affiliate representatives emphasized the importance of not only adopting strong DEI policies but also documenting their justification and commitments. Government disparity studies consistently highlight the significant challenges that minority businesses face, including barriers to securing financing and contracts compared to their white counterparts. This ongoing discrimination has a negative ripple effect across the economy.

A Call to Protect Minority Business Programs

The network of regional affiliates is calling on Congress, government officials, and corporate leaders to take swift action to protect minority business programs that are crucial to the success of minority entrepreneurs and the communities they serve. These programs are not only vital for the success of minority-owned businesses, but also for fostering a stronger, more inclusive economy for all Americans.

About the Regional Affiliates

The 23 regional affiliates of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) form a dynamic nationwide network dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within corporate ecosystems. Comprising a diverse array of industries and sectors, these affiliates serve as integral connectors among Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and corporations committed to supplier diversity. With a steadfast commitment to promoting economic growth, innovation, and community empowerment, NMSDC's regional affiliates facilitate meaningful partnerships that drive business success while advancing social progress. Collectively, the MBEs certified through the regional affiliates drive more than \$482 billion in economic impact.

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