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Pritzker Administration Announces FastTrack Certification Option for Minority-Owned Businesses in Chicago and Cook County Available July 1

COOK COUNTY, IL - The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) today announced a new expedited option for certification through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for small and medium sized minority-owned businesses. FastTrack certification will recognize certifications from both the City of Chicago and Cook County in compliance with Public Act 101-601 in an effort to expand opportunities for prospective State of Illinois (State) vendors.

“CMS is committed to supporting the economic development of underserved communities and minority-owned businesses, especially as they confront the pandemics of both COVID-19 and systemic racism,” said CMS Director Janel L. Forde. “FastTrack certification is just one of the many ways we’re working to eliminate the red tape and support entrepreneurs towards a pathway to success and wealth generation, while providing services and goods for the benefit of Illinois residents.”

Through the new FastTrack certification process, the BEP will recognize the certification of businesses owned by minorities, women, or persons with disabilities, who are certified by the City of Chicago or Cook County, with a single affidavit, leading to full certification in seven business days.

CMS has also committed to doubling the State’s minority vendor pool by 2,020 new participants in calendar year 2020. Expanding certification recognition will not only support the diversification of the State’s vendor pool, but also increase opportunities for minority vendors to receive State contracts.

CMS and the BEP will continue to explore new partnerships with local governments and partner agencies offering certification to expand opportunities for recognition in the future.

The BEP was created in 1984 to drive procurement access and opportunities for small businesses owned by minorities, women, and people with disabilities. Through engagement and collaboration with State agencies and institutions of higher education, the BEP vendor community, and other stakeholders, the State of Illinois continues to push for new ways to expand the program’s impact. In 2019 BEP vendors were awarded contracts totaling $649 million in FY19, up from $607 million in FY18.

Vendors seeking Fast Track BEP certification can visit www.cms.illinois.gov (http://www.cms.illinois.gov/) to apply beginning July 1, 2020.

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