



**For Immediate Release**  
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**PORT OF HOUSTON AUTHORITY DELIVERS**  
**SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

*Reception celebrates program's successful first year*

**Houston** -- The Port of Houston Authority (PHA) will celebrate the first anniversary of the Small Business Development Program (SBDP) with a reception beginning at 5:30 p.m. on **Monday, June 16**, at The Grand Room Downtown, located at 1521 Austin St.

More than 500 invited guests, including representatives of the City of Houston, METRO, Houston Minority Business Council and the Women's Business Enterprise Alliance as well as several other political, business and civic leaders, are expected to attend. Karla [Barguiarena](#), news reporter for KTMD Channel 47 (Telemundo), will serve as mistress of ceremonies.

The SBDP was established to help PHA contractors make good faith efforts to include small business participation in eligible contracts. In its first year, the program has achieved the following milestones:

- A total of 385 businesses have registered with another 95 businesses pending approval.
- A total of 22 percent of the port's formal procurement packages have been sent to small businesses. A total of 28 percent of the responses received have been from small businesses.
- Out of the port's \$18.1 million in non-exempt contract awards, a total of \$6.3 million -- or the targeted goal of 35 percent -- were awarded to small businesses.

“The Port of Houston is a world-class port,” said Jim Edmonds, PHA Chairman. “We could never achieve the global strength and status as the sixth largest port in the world without a strong regional economy fueled by local businesses. Our small business owners and employees are a vital link in the port’s supply chain.”

“Small businesses are the leading employers in the Houston area and provide nearly half of all jobs in Texas,” stated PHA Commissioner Cheryl Thompson-Draper. “The Port of Houston Authority recognizes that a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit is vital for a strong economy and leadership in global trade and commerce.”

According to a study by Martin and Associates, the consulting firm in Lancaster, Pennsylvania that has conducted economic impact studies for 120 ports in the U.S. and Canada, nearly \$11 billion in revenue is generated annually by all businesses providing direct services at PHA.

“Small businesses that are eligible for the Port Authority’s Small Business Development Program enjoy a significant share of that revenue,” Thompson-Draper said. “We maintain aggressive goals to promote small business participation on port contracts for products and professional services.”

The SBDP helps PHA contractors make good faith efforts to include small business participation in all SBDP eligible contracts to provide goods and services to the port. Most contracts valued at more than \$25,000 are considered SBDP eligible. The exceptions include contracts for sole-source items, federally funded contracts, contracts with other governmental entities and certain contracts that are otherwise prohibited by applicable law from inclusion in the SBDP. Professional service contracts are SBDP eligible contracts to the extent permitted by law and/or Port Commission policies.

The SBDP also provides small business technical assistance and outreach by:

- Encouraging the formation of joint ventures, alliances and mentoring relationships among small and large businesses and individuals.
- Organizing training workshops and conferences led by advisors with special expertise in the requirements for successfully completing small business bids and proposals at the port.
- Participating in community-based events for small, minority- and women-owned businesses.

- Using targeted media to advertise notifications of bid and proposal opportunities at the port.
- Requiring all prospective port contractors to submit written assurances of meeting small business participation goals.
- Facilitating ways to ease the costs associated with obtaining insurance and surety bonds needed to qualify for contract bids.

Participation in the SBDP is open to all certified small businesses located in greater Houston and the surrounding areas including Harris, Galveston, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Waller, Liberty, Chambers and Brazoria counties. An individual small business owner's personal net worth must not exceed \$750,000 (excluding the business and homestead).

To participate in the SBDP, a company must complete and submit an application and vendor information form. The application must be accompanied by a copy of the company's small business certification. A company can be certified as a small business by the city of Houston, Houston Minority Business Council, METRO, U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) and the Women's Business Enterprise Alliance. Upon PHA staff review and approval of a company's application and small business certification, a company becomes eligible to participate in the program.

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**About the Port of Houston Authority**

The Port of Houston Authority owns and operates the public facilities located along the Port of Houston, the 25-mile long complex of diversified public and private facilities designed for handling general cargo, containers, grain and other dry bulk materials, project and heavy lift cargo, and other types of cargo. Each year, more than 6,600 vessels call at the port, which ranks first in the U.S. in foreign waterborne tonnage, second in overall total tonnage, and sixth largest in the world. The Port Authority plays a vital role in ensuring navigational safety along the Houston Ship Channel, which has been instrumental in Houston's development as a center of international trade. The Barbour's Cut Container Terminal and Central Maintenance Facility are the first of any U.S. port facilities to develop and implement an innovative Environmental Management System that meets the rigorous standards of ISO 14001. Additionally, the port is an approved delivery point for Coffee "C" futures contracts traded on the New York Board of Trade's Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange. For more information, please visit [www.portofhouston.com](http://www.portofhouston.com).