

SD NEWSLETTER | March

DEPARTMENTAL NEWSLETTER ° UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA OFFICE FOR
SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

The Association of Women Contractors

By N. Simmons, Program Specialist

The Association Makeup.

The Association of Women Contractors (AWC) is a trade association representing women and minority owned businesses in the construction industry. Started in 1995 by a handful of highway heavy construction companies owned by women, the AWC has flourished in Minnesota. They have over 220 members in total with 120 of them women owned businesses. Women of color make up 25% of that number which has grown significantly over the past 8 years. The membership performs roughly 60% Commercial, 30% Highway Heavy, and 10% Residential construction. AWC hired Barb Lau as a full time Executive Director in 2008. Barb's marketing and organizational management experience gave her a unique perspective on how to tailor the organization to the needs of the members. She explained "My knowledge as a member of multiple associations was that you never got what you paid for. I wanted this group to be different and asked them what their priorities were in structuring our services".

Relationship Building.

AWC focuses on networking for their members with general contractors and owners, as well as with each other. Barb says, "Observably women tend to market differently than men. They don't want to discuss the next project or take the checkbook out and buy services. They want to develop a relationship and trust and then they will do business with you. The women in AWC work hard to raise each other up which you can feel in any event you attend". A large initiative began just over a year ago, "It Starts With Us". This is a challenge to members to use each other for any service they need. Whether it is construction contracting, home remodels, or professional services like legal or financial advising – AWC has competent members to provide the service. Inclusion of members needs to be intentional at all levels.

The Support Given.

Since 2001, AWC has raised funds for scholarships to support women in construction careers. Offering both Aca-



AWC Executive Director Barb Lau and the 2023 board members

dem and Apprentice scholarships the AWC has awarded over \$240,000.00 to women in the construction industry. The application period runs from February 1st through April 30th annually, and can be found online. "Our biggest struggle is getting women to apply", says Barb. "We have money to award to our top scorers but since COVID the number of applicants has decreased". Scholarship recipients have gone on to do amazing things and many remain connected AWC. We have had a board member that was a past scholarship recipient, and this year a scholarship recipient has her own contracting business. The Scholarship Golf FUNdraiser is held annually in June and the funds raised support the women in this industry. You can support the scholarships through sponsoring, Donating to the Silent Auction or golfing in the tournament. Registration will open mid-April and fills up quickly. To make sure you get the information you can ask Anna to add you to our mailing list at admin@awcmn.org.

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Office for
 Supplier Diversity

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The Office for Supplier Diversity works with businesses owned by women, minorities, and persons with disabilities, and with other underserved businesses, to facilitate their integration into the University supply chain. By providing support to underserved local businesses and connecting them with University purchasers, The Office for Supplier Diversity leverages the University's resources to build powerful economic partnerships in our communities.

Advocacy

AWC is also committed to advocating for our members. We work with owners on equity and goal setting focused on long term growth strategies and changes that take the industry's unique nuances into consideration, rather than applying change that will ultimately fail. Unintended consequences due to broad brush change can hurt the small business. Additionally, AWC works with its businesses on capacity building, understanding impacts of legislation, providing education on business and construction related topics and even assisting with general contractor disputes if appropriate. AWC has partnered with the University of Minnesota for their construction inclusion of women and minorities for nearly twenty years. AWC was recognized as Association of the Year by the University in 2015. They offer feedback regularly on how to look at their contracting in a way a small business does. "We've always done it this way" is the roadblock to change and inclusion.

> [Learn more about the Association of Women Contractors at www.awcmn.org](http://www.awcmn.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS

CERT Virtual Workshop - Wednesday May 17th, 2023

CERT Event:

Hosted by The Central (CERT) Certification Program, these workshops are aimed at assisting the owners of established small businesses to apply or re-apply for CERT Certifications through a hassle-free, expedited process. The workshops are primarily for obtaining assistance with your application through a Q&A session, but will also include a PowerPoint Presentation about the CERT Program. There is NO APPLICATION FEE, the Workshop is FREE.

Event Details:

As an added resource to business owners, the CERT workshop will also have

representatives from the following Procurement Departments: Ramsey County, Hennepin County, City of Saint Paul, and City of Minneapolis to provide information about their online vendor portals and the bidding process for each respective organization. Also present will be representatives from the St. Paul SCORE program (Service Corp Of Retired Executives) and LegalCORPS, a free legal service for non-litigation matters to assist business owners with any general business question, need, or request for assistance.

For any questions regarding this event,

please contact Serena Boyce at 651-266-8904 or serena.boyce@ci.stpaul.mn.us

CERT



Want to register? Click the link below
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cert-virtual-workshop-wednesday-may17-2023-tickets-577682512947>

UNIVERSITY FINANCE | CONTROLLER'S OFFICE

Amazon Business Moving to U Market

Amazon Business will be added as a U Market punchout supplier on March 27, 2023.

The only way to shop on Amazon Business moving forward will be through U Market.

This change will lead to a dramatic decrease in Amazon PCard purchases as all staff and faculty will be able to shop Amazon Business through U Market. Special note, if a PCard is associated with a shared ID/departmental ID Amazon account, be aware that shared Amazon accounts will not be allowed moving forward. Amazon Business must be accessed via U Market, and shared/departmental IDs cannot be used to access U Market.

This change is not a push to drive more business to Amazon—staff and faculty are still expected to purchase from other U Market suppliers when possible. The change will create a streamlined shopping experience, takes advantage of the benefits of U Market, and eliminates the related PCard reconciliation work for Amazon orders that comes with using the PCard.

