

Give a man a fish and he eats **for a day, teach** a man to fish and he eats **for a lifetime.**

That is the essence of the supportive services the Mission 360° team provides. Our team's mission is to provide a wide range of assistance aimed at helping DBEs secure more state transportation contracts. While providing technical and business development services, the team also generates better awareness of the DBEs in the transportation community. Our motivation is to help DBEs compete for and win RIDOT work – today with our help, tomorrow on their own.



Mission 360°

Helping **Disadvantaged Business Enterprises** (DBEs) compete for and **secure** Rhode Island Department of Transportation **opportunities.**





Our Vision: To be the most intuitive, efficient government DBE support program in the nation.

Overview of Services

Many DBEs start their own business because they are experts in their trade, whether it's laying sidewalks, erecting steel trusses, creating landscapes or driving trucks. They are skilled in their area of expertise but may need assistance managing and growing a business – the bidding process, managing finances, building relationships with Primes, developing a business plan, marketing and so forth. The Mission 360° Program provides a wide range of services to enhance DBEs' business skills and increase their participation in RIDOT projects. Below is a summary of the array of services the Mission 360° team offers:

Business Skill Development As many DBEs quickly discover, additional training can greatly enhance their ability to run a successful business. Mission 360° is actively involved in the improvement of DBEs' business skills by providing a diverse range of general assistance and resources on issues encountered by business owners. We assist in many areas, including:

- Asset Management
- Business Continuity Plans
- Business Development Resources
- Business Plans
- Certifications
- Conflict Resolution
- Estimating
- Human Resources
- Prime Contractor Relationships
- Project Management
- Time Management
- Vendor Relationships

Marketing Assistance Mission 360° works with DBEs through workshops and one-on-one consulting to help them promote their businesses to Primes. The team assists with marketing initiatives and collateral material, including logos, business cards, direct mail and sell sheets, which provide valuable information about a DBE to a Prime. Since a good introduction is the first step to a great relationship, Mission 360° helps DBEs present themselves in a variety of ways to Primes, including letters of introduction and Meet and Greet events. For one large project the team developed and sent a direct mail piece describing the qualifications and services of Mission 360° DBEs to Primes bidding on the contract.

Technical Assistance Often RIDOT projects are too large for a DBE to bid on as a Prime because the scope of required services are beyond what one small business offers. So, the Mission 360° team primarily focuses on teaching DBEs how to submit bids to Primes as subcontractors. We help DBEs through all the steps of the bidding process, including understanding the scope and language of a bid, developing estimates, and accurately bidding and scheduling projects. Mission 360° also provides the much needed support with contract management, cost control and on-site management skills to ensure projects are well executed and profitable.

Financial Assistance Getting money in the door is the first step to growing a business, but strong financial management is the key to the viability and longevity of a company. Mission 360° works closely with DBEs on many financial management issues ranging from accurate record keeping, proper billing and invoicing to managing AR/AP and cash flow. Our financial specialists help DBEs convert their manual systems to software programs like QuickBooks for accurate and efficient monitoring and reporting. The team also helps a DBE prepare for and manage loans to grow their business as well as determine common types of insurance - such as key man life, liability, auto and home – which are required to protect their assets and win RIDOT jobs.

Emerging Business Assistance Program

One of the most unique elements of the Mission 360° Program is the Emerging Business Assistance Program, a trust fund established by RIDOT and administered through a third party. The Program provides affordable loans to emerging new businesses for start-up costs, purchasing new equipment as well as lines of credit for specific projects. The low interest rate and flexible conditions of these loans increase cash flow and provide greater flexibility for DBEs committed to growing their business.

Business e-Valuation

We've all heard it said – businesses don't plan to fail, they fail to plan. When a DBE enters the Mission 360° Program, we conduct an initial interview to identify its strengths, weaknesses, areas of desired growth and any major challenges to be addressed. Based on the information gathered, the Mission 360° team uses a customized web-based tool to develop the action plan, which identifies specific tasks and goals. The team tracks a DBEs progress and creates a Business e-Valuation, which is updated at least once annually. It includes metrics to determine how well the DBE is meeting its goals and identifies areas where further support is needed. The Business e-Valuation process also gives DBEs the opportunity to share the barriers they face and, as the Program progresses, provide feedback on how the Mission 360° Program can be improved.



The Mission 360° Program is an active and growing initiative, with many moving parts and an ongoing desire to improve the resources to which the DBE community has access. As we look forward, we will continue to shape the Mission 360° Program in our effort to be a national model for promoting disadvantaged business communities.



RIDOT reaches out to the DBE community

Since the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has developed an array of supportive services for the DBE community. At the same time, RIDOT recognized a select group of underutilized DBEs who possessed a strong commitment to grow successful businesses, but needed assistance to compete with more established entities. So, in 2007 RIDOT issued an RFP to help DBEs become more competitive at winning subcontracting work from the RI Prime community.



A team was selected to drive the initiative based on their collective expertise in transportation, bidding, scheduling, project management, finance, marketing and business development. This initiative was branded Mission 360° to emphasize the Program's comprehensive and complete approach to DBE business success. As a result, the team has developed one of the nation's most successful DBE Programs.



Today, our DBEs succeed with support. Tomorrow, they will succeed on their own.