

August 17, 2021

Session 3 - A ROADMAP TO DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL TEAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

About the Speakers



Anisha Jackson - Supplier Diversity Manager **American Family Insurance**

Anisha Jackson joined American Family Insurance in September 2020 to launch their Supplier Diversity Program. She has broad finance, sourcing & procurement experience in the telecom industry through various roles with H&R Block, CenturyLink, Ericsson and T-Mobile (formerly Sprint). Her passion for diversity and inclusion, and desire to make a difference in her community led her to build a best-in-class supplier diversity program for Ericsson while also serving as Co-Secretary on the board of the Technology Industry Group. Under her leadership, Ericsson's supplier diversity program received multiple awards from national organizations recognizing the program's contributions and leadership in advancing supplier diversity.



Eric Ness - District Director **U.S. Small Business Administration**

Eric Ness is the director for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Wisconsin District Office, one of 68 SBA field offices nationally. He is responsible for the delivery of SBA programs and services throughout the Badger State, helping small businesses start, grow, expand, and recover from adversity. Ness began his SBA career in 1990 as a commercial loan officer, working on both processing and liquidation of loans. He has served as finance chief and assistant district director for economic development. He was selected for his current position in December 2001. In spring 2014 he served as acting regional administrator for the SBA's six-state Great Lakes region for several months.



Adonica Randall – President and Chief Problem Solver **Abaxent, LLC**

Adonica Randall is President and Chief Problem Solver of Abaxent, LLC, an 18 year-old certified MBE/WBE technology solutions company. With over 35 years of technical and business experience she has specialized in development of business startups, new services and process improvement, with experience across a variety of industries including healthcare, insurance, manufacturing and construction. She is a well-recognized as a thought leader that speaks widely on the future of women and minorities in STEM careers. Adonica is a Professor Emeritus from Alverno College Business School - Computing and Information Technology and Business Analytics.

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Jean Marie Thiel - President and CEO Belonger Corporation, Inc.

Jean Marie Thiel owns and operates a specialty trades Mechanical Contracting Company including all HVAC/R aptitudes, waste-water, plumbing, and medical gas, and also providing services in Construction Management, Facility Management, and Energy Based Performance Contracting. Experience in construction and services industry going on 33 years, specializing in federal agency procurement emphasis on contract compliance with joint venturing and mentoring opportunities. Ms. Thiel founded Belonger Corporation, a mechanical and plumbing firm in March 2000.



Pete Coffaro - Deputy Director, Community Outreach and Business Engagement Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

Pete Coffaro oversees District contracting and works to align procurement opportunities with social responsibility policies, such as diverse business participation and local workforce goals. His team also manages the Workforce and Business Development Resource Program to help develop local workers and small, diverse businesses to participate on District projects. Pete is also responsible for leading the District's workforce equity and inclusion efforts in all District procurement. For the prior five years, Pete served in several leadership capacities at Employ Milwaukee, the State of Wisconsin's largest workforce board.



Tim Connelly – Government Contract Attorney Tim Connelly Law PLLC

Tim Connelly is an experienced government contract attorney serving the legal needs of large, medium and small businesses in all areas of federal, state, and local government contracts. He helps businesses with all aspects of negotiation, administration and compliance typically associated with government business agreements of all kinds. He uses his extensive background in government contract law and administrative law to provide his clients creative, cost-effective and practical approaches to the most important legal opportunities and challenges. Tim is past president of the Twin Cities Chapter of the National Contract Management Association and a member of the Public Contract Law Section of the American Bar Association.

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Yvette Stevens, P.E., PMP – Vice President **Gilbane Building Company**



Gilbane is a global integrated construction and facility management services firm. Our clients entrust us to deliver the projects that will build their futures. From sustainable building to the latest in Lean construction technology and management, above all else, we are advocates for our clients. We'll make your goals our own, and strive relentlessly to exceed them. Still a privately held, family-owned company, we know a thing or two about loyalty, stability, and trust. At the heart of our success is our team of employees across the world whose passion, commitment, experience, and integrity are a central part of every project we deliver.



Yvette Stevens is the director of economic inclusion and community affairs at Gilbane Building Company. In this national leadership role, Yvette leads the planning and execution of Gilbane's corporate economic inclusion strategies to support our commitment to marketplace inclusion and diversity. Prior to her current role, Yvette was an active builder with over 20 years of experience in engineering, program/project management, quality management and contract administration.

Karen Goldner, Managing Director of Established Business Services **Women's Business Development Center**



Karen Goldner is Managing Director of Established Business Services at the Women's Business Development Center. She leads the WBDC's established business practice, providing counseling to established businesses including certified Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), as well as start-up and emerging entrepreneurs. Her passion is helping entrepreneurs reach their dreams.

Karen has spent twenty years working with, in and for small businesses. She has worked in for-profit and non-profit early stage investment organizations, including creating and managing the first for-profit technology-focused angel fund in Northeast Indiana, and supporting the creation of a statewide innovation system in Indiana. Karen served as Interim President of a \$6 million defense manufacturer that was owned by her investors. Prior to that, she managed a community development loan program for the City of Fort Wayne and served as Fort Wayne's Director of Economic Development.

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**Jessie Leonard - Associate Director, WBE Certification
Milwaukee**

Women's Business Development Center

The Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) is a 501(c)(3) nationally recognized leader in the field of women's economic development. The organization was founded in 1986 to provide programs and services to support and accelerate women's business ownership and strengthen the impact of women on the economy by creating jobs, fueling economic growth, and building strong communities. The mission of the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) is to support and accelerate business development and growth, targeting women and serving all diverse business owners, in order to strengthen their participation in, and impact on, the economy.



Aina Vilumsons - CEO

Wisconsin Procurement Institute

WPI Assists businesses in creating, developing and growing their sales, revenue and jobs through Federal, State and Local Government contracts. WPI offers: Individual Counseling at our offices, at client's facilities or via telephone/GoToMeeting; Small Group Training through workshops and webinars; Conferences to include one-on-one or roundtable sessions. Last year WPI provided training at over 100 events and provided service to over 1,200 companies.