

For Immediate Release
March 7, 2013

Ohio Development Services Agency Increases Emphasis on Minority Business Assistance

COLUMBUS – Today Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) Director Christiane Schmenk announced further improvements to the Agency's efforts to support Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) with the decision to elevate the Minority Business office to full division status, reporting directly to the Agency director, and to re-establish its own funding line item in the Agency's budget. The moves are in response to suggestions from minority business owners and legislators on how ODSA can better support Ohio's minority business community.

"Ohio succeeds best when all of Ohio benefits from that success. That's the goal behind our ongoing efforts to provide better service to Ohio's minority business community and these changes support that," said Christiane Schmenk, Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

Based on an Agency review by the TechSolve consulting firm and feedback from stakeholders, ODSA began organizational changes that aligned MBE support efforts with the Agency's other suite of programs and services that support entrepreneurs and small businesses. Minority leaders urged modifying that approach, however, and preserving MBE efforts in a distinct division given the unique needs of these businesses and the Agency agreed.

In addition, the Kasich Administration, through the Department of Administrative Services, is working to increase participation by minority businesses in state contracts. It is creating new MBE set-aside opportunities for contracts with pre-approved pricing and those with a third party administrator.

*The **Minority Business Development Division** leads the state's efforts to create, grow and develop minority-owned businesses resulting in job creation and a strengthened Ohio economy. Both internally and through 10 Minority Business Assistance Center locations across the state, the division provides a variety of business development services to new and existing business owners.*

*The **Ohio Development Services Agency** works with partners across business, government, academia and the nonprofit sector to build strong communities that support job creation. Development provides financial, informational and technical assistance to those making an investment in Ohio, ensuring a vibrant economic future for all Ohioans. Visit www.development.ohio.gov. Also, follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/OhioDevelopment and Twitter www.twitter.com/OhioDevelopment.*

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