



December 9-11, 2025
Baird Center, Milwaukee

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Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Dear MARKETPLACE 2025 attendees:

On behalf of the state of Wisconsin, I'd like to welcome you to MARKETPLACE 2025: The Governor's Conference on Diverse Business Development.

For more than four decades, MARKETPLACE has provided Wisconsin's diverse business community with the opportunity to connect and discover new and exciting opportunities for growth and collaboration, and as your governor, I have been proud to champion this conference each year.

From retail and art to workplace and housing solutions, small businesses are the hearts of our main streets, supporting Wisconsin families, creating community spaces, and bringing unique products and services to every corner of our state. Wisconsin is home to thousands of diverse businesses, and when they succeed, our communities and local and statewide economies succeed as well.

While MARKETPLACE is three days packed with both virtual and in-person sessions designed to educate and connect businesses all across the state, advocating for Wisconsin's small and diverse business community is a top priority year-round. Whether it's educational programs, grants or loans, or statewide initiatives and networking opportunities—these essential resources will be on full display throughout MARKETPLACE.

The annual MARKETPLACE conference is also a time for all of us to celebrate the successes of diverse businesses and build upon our work to create a more prosperous Wisconsin for everyone. These companies and entrepreneurs inspire us all and exemplify Wisconsin's values of hard work, innovation, entrepreneurship, and serving our communities.

Our differences make us stronger, not weaker, and Wisconsin works best when everyone has the opportunity, support, and tools to build their dreams and achieve their goals, which is why my administration and I remain deeply committed to celebrating diversity and to building a state that works for everyone and is more equitable and inclusive for all.

I want to thank all the incredible entrepreneurs, business owners, and stakeholders who have joined us at MARKETPLACE 2025. I hope you will take advantage of the valuable wisdom of keynote speakers and make the pivotal connections to grow your business for years to come. Thank you for being here, and thank you for all you do to help move our state's economy forward.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers
Governor



On behalf of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), I am excited to welcome you to the 44th annual MARKETPLACE conference.

The Governor's Conference on Diverse Business Development is an opportunity for buyers and diverse businesses to connect, network, and learn together. It's an opportunity for businesses not only to grow but to shine.

WEDC is working to build an Economy for All where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Your dedication and creativity strengthen our communities and our entire state—because when you succeed, the ripple effects are felt everywhere.

Ensuring that everyone can prosper in our state isn't just the right thing to do—it's smart business. According to a recent study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison:

- If as many women as men owned businesses, Wisconsin would gain more than 108,000 new businesses—a 69% increase that would create more than 574,000 new jobs and generate more than \$23 billion in payroll.
- And if people of color owned businesses at the same rate as nonminority entrepreneurs, there would be an extra 47,000 businesses, adding 151,000 workers with \$4.2 billion in payroll.

These numbers show the scale of the opportunity Wisconsin has with its diverse businesses and the potential we have as a state—and they're part of the reason WEDC partners with organizations that provide the resources entrepreneurs in all corners of our state need.

To ensure access to much-needed capital, WEDC works with community development financial Institutions like Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC), Northwest Side Community Development Corporation, and First American Capital Corporation.

Our partnerships with organizations like the Hmong American Center, the Wisconsin Latino Chamber of Commerce, and BizStarts provide training, professional advice, and other resources to diverse entrepreneurs.

All these efforts are about helping more Wisconsinites thrive in our economy. As Governor Tony Evers notes, our state's strength lies in its diversity. The perspectives and skills that diverse entrepreneurs and employees bring make Wisconsin more prosperous for all.

On behalf of WEDC and our partners, I want to recognize and thank everyone participating for the work you do to make Wisconsin a great place to live, work, and grow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Ridders".

Sam Ridders
Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer

The Contracting Academy (TCA) | Virtual

This is an opportunity for businesses to grow their technical knowledge of contracting with the federal government, state and local governments, and government prime contractors. The series of workshops will benefit established businesses looking to grow and develop their government sales. This will be a full-day virtual program. [Visit the TCA website for additional details.](#)

9–10 a.m. Doing Business with the State of Wisconsin, Products and Services

Speaker: Jessica Potter, WisPro Section Chief, Department of Administration-Division of Enterprise Operations, State Bureau of Procurement

10–11 a.m. Doing Business with the State of Wisconsin, Construction, A/E & Related Services

Speakers: Audra Jervy, Enterprise Contract Officer, Division of Facilities Development and Management, State of Wisconsin
Matt Klaila, Program and Policy Analyst, Division of Facilities Development and Management, State of Wisconsin

11 a.m.–Noon Selling to Local Governments

Moderator: Aina Vilumsons, President-Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

Panelists: Brian Pittelli, Buyer, City of Madison
Michelle Kaczmarowski, Procurement & Supplier Development Manager, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Peter Patten, Purchasing Manager, Dane County
Suzanne Carter, Purchasing Manager, Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services

12:15–1 p.m. Break

1–2 p.m. Update on Government Small / Diverse Certifications

Moderator: Aina Vilumsons, President-Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

Panelists: Alex Ysquierdo, M.Sc., Director, Department of Administration Supplier Diversity Program
Dontreal Teague, Business Inclusion Program Coordinator, City of Milwaukee
Samuel Jack, Senior Counsel, Husch Blackwell
Shane Mahaffy, Lead Business Opportunity Specialist, U.S. Small Business Administration

2–3 p.m. Proposal Management in the Early Days of AI

Speaker: David Zvenyach, Founder, Tandem, CEO, MakeGov

3–4 p.m. Navigating CMMC: Practical Strategies for Defense Contractors and Subcontractors

Moderator: Aina Vilumsons, President-Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

Panelists: Andrew Green, Chief Business Officer, Strohwig Industries
Jerome Miastkowski, CEO, Aeroplicity
Matthew Frost, Government Contract Specialist, Wisconsin Procurement Institute
Megan McKinney, VP Business Development, CyberNINES

10 a.m. Check-In and Badge Pick-up Opens

10 a.m.–3 p.m. Exhibitor Move-In

Noon–3 p.m. Educational Sessions

Noon–1 p.m. Smart & Secure: Leveraging Automation and Responsible AI for Small Business Success (S103 AB)

Description: This panel session brings together multiple perspectives on how small businesses can use artificial intelligence (AI) and automation to improve everyday operations. Panelists will share practical ways these technologies are helping business owners save time, reduce costs, and work more efficiently. The session will highlight responsible ways to use AI in business while also sharing practical tips for keeping data safe. Whether you're exploring AI for the first time or looking to strengthen your digital strategy, this session offers clear, actionable insights to help you move forward with confidence.

Moderator: Elzie Flenard, Founder, Journey To Mastery

Panelists: Jen Adamski, Founder, Klario

Heather Ferguson, Program Manager, Wisconsin Small Business Development Center at UW-Madison

Katie Grillaert, Chief Strategy Officer, Assessed Intelligence

Noon–1 p.m. Expanding Your Capacity and Capabilities with Joint Ventures, Teaming, and Mentor-Protégé Partnerships (S103 D)

Description: Collaboration is the key to success. By working together, companies can achieve more than they could alone—boosting efficiency, expanding capabilities, reducing costs, and driving greater overall results. Join this panel of experienced professionals and successful businesses to learn how to identify and qualify the right partners. Panelists will also share practical insights on building strong relationships and crafting agreements that deliver mutual benefit to all participants.

Moderator: Aina Vilumsons, Executive Director/CEO, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

Panelists: Samuel Jack, Senior Counsel, Husch Blackwell LLP

Darryl "Shane" Mahaffy, Lead Business Opportunity Specialist, U.S. Small Business Administration Wisconsin District Office

Dele Ojelabi, Principal, Comcentia

Anna Steinfest, President and CEO, AFF Research

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

Alex Ysquierdo, Director, Wisconsin Department of Administration-Supplier Diversity Program

1–2 p.m. Practical Use of AI: Real-World Solutions for Small Businesses (S103 AB)

Description: This workshop explores how small businesses can actively use artificial intelligence (AI) to drive results, featuring real-world examples and practical applications. Attendees will learn how AI-powered dashboards, automation tools, and intelligent solutions are being used to improve decision-making, enhance customer experiences, and streamline operations. From marketing and inventory management to customer service and data analysis, this session highlights accessible AI tools and strategies that can be implemented today to boost efficiency and competitiveness.

Moderator: Jen Adamski, Founder, Klario

Panelists: Roger Lam, CEO and Founder, Ordify AI
Stacy Jeffers, Founder, That's Right, Sweetie
Amy Bruner Zimmerman, Senior Business Consultant, Wisconsin Small Business Development Center at UW-Madison

1–2 p.m. Building Business Credit and Financing Options: Accessing Capital for Growth (S103 D)

Description: This workshop provides small business owners with essential knowledge and tools to build strong business credit and explore financing opportunities. Participants will learn how to establish and improve their credit profile, prepare for grant applications, and access funding through microloans, traditional lending, and alternative sources. Whether you're seeking startup capital or looking to expand, this session offers practical guidance to help you become loan-ready and unlock financial resources to support long-term growth.

Moderator: Vanessa Sancha, Assistant Vice President, Business Access Advisor, US Bank

Panelists: Michael Hetzel, Director of Lending, WWBIC
Jeff Musa, Regional President, Southeastern WI, Peoples State Bank
Willie Smith, Executive Director, Northwest Side Community Development Corporation
Nelson Soler, Ph.D., President and CEO, Latino Chamber of Commerce of South Eastern Wisconsin

2–3 p.m. E-commerce and Digital Presence: Building and Optimizing Your Online Storefront (S103 AB)

Description: This workshop is designed to help small business owners create a strong digital presence and grow their online sales through effective e-commerce strategies. Participants will learn how to build and optimize an online storefront, refine digital branding, improve digital presence for end-user experience, optimize information architecture, and leverage digital tools to attract and retain customers. From choosing the right platform to enhancing search visibility and integrating payment solutions, this session offers practical guidance to help businesses thrive in the digital marketplace.

Moderator: Alex Ysquierdo, Director, Wisconsin Department of Administration-Supplier Diversity Program

Panelists: Elzie Flenard, Founder, Journey To Mastery
Toan Ly, President/Agency Principal, Rectify Services LLC
Kellie McGinnis, Marketing & Engagement Strategist, City of West Allis

2–3 p.m. Leveraging Your Business's Value for Long-Term Sustainability and Continuity (S103 D)

Description: This session is designed to help entrepreneurs unlock and maximize the value of their businesses while laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability and continuity. Learn how to assess and enhance your business's worth, identify pathways for transition, and ensure your company remains viable with or without your daily involvement. Key topics include succession planning, identifying management or buyers, and strategies for building a business that can scale, sustain itself, or successfully transition ownership. Whether you're looking to step back, sell, or secure your legacy, this session provides the strategic tools to prepare your business for the future.

Moderator: Kola Alayande, Ph.D., Associate District Director, SCORE

Panelists: Kara Gunderson, Business Education and Technical Assistance Associate, First American Capital Corp.
Cesar Jimenez, Branch Manager, PNC Bank
Stephanie Melnick, Founder, Melnick & Melnick S.C. and She Stands Tall Forward Inc.

3:15–5:15 p.m. Opening Plenary Sessions (Ballroom AB)

Welcome: Eugene Manzanet, Senior Director of Diverse Business Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Gold sponsor remarks: Danielle Bly, Vice President Supplier Diversity, WE Energies

Agency report outs: Eugene Manzanet, Senior Director of Diverse Business Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
Alex Ysquierdo, Director, Wisconsin Department of Administration-Supplier Diversity Program

> Business Opportunity Panel: Milwaukee County Does THAT?

Description: Milwaukee County offers businesses a wide range of support from helping open a brick-and-mortar location to contracting opportunities and more. Come learn from your friendly County representatives about how we help you start and stay open for business.

Moderator: Kyle Ashley, Director of Community Outreach

Panelists: Steve Taylor, County Board Supervisor, District 17
Celia Benton, Director of Economic Development
Lamont Robinson, Director of the Office of Economic Inclusion
Regina Flores, Director of Procurement

> Business and Economic Opportunity Session

Moderator: Lafayette Crump, City of Milwaukee Commissioner

Panelists: Jeff Bohlen, WisDOT Infrastructure Opportunities
Dimitri Zografi, Attorney, Husch-Blackwell (Speaking to effects of tariffs)

> Report on the Economy

Speaker: Tom Walsh, Economist with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

> Data Center Panel

Moderator: Lafayette Crump, City of Milwaukee Commissioner

Panelists: Edwin Van Velzen, Vantage
Khia Chukudebelu, Senior Director, Microsoft Cloud Operations
Ugo Nwagbaraocha, NAMC
P.J. McGreal, Project Manager, The Walsh Group

5:30–7:30 p.m. Networking Reception in Expo Hall (Ballroom CD)

Description: Join all conference attendees in the Expo Hall for networking and a chance to visit a multitude of exhibitors. WEDC and a MARKETPLACE sponsor will make brief remarks.

Emcee: Eugene Manzanet, Senior Director of Diverse Business Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

WEDC remarks: Sam Rikkers, Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Gold sponsor remarks: Vanessa Sancha, Assistant Vice President, Business Access Advisor, US Bank

7 a.m. Check-In and Badge Pick-Up Opens**8 a.m.–9:15 a.m. Breakfast Program/Panel Discussion (Ballroom AB)**

Emcee: David Lee, President and General Manager, 89.7 WUWM

Sponsor remarks: Heather Ladage, Market President and Publisher, Milwaukee Business Journal

Keynote: Mental Health for the Business Owner

Lia Knox, Ph.D., Mental Wellness Expert, Knox Behavioral Health Solutions

> Breakfast Business Panel

Moderator: Mike Ward, Senior Vice President of Business and Community Development, WEDC

Panelists: Amy Woods, Co-Owner, FAVORYT Brand

Cristina Villanueva, Owner, Ambas Financial Services LLC

Andy Woodward Sayers, Co-Founder and Filmmaker, Seadog Creative

Shakkiah Curtis, DBA, Consultant and Strategist, The Pink Hustle Firm

Jennifer Gollnick, Owner and Chief Financial Officer, Data Informed Financial Services LLC

> Wisconsin Department of Administration Awards

Speaker: Alex Ysquierdo, Director, Wisconsin Department of Administration-Supplier Diversity Program

Awards and winners: Wisconsin Department of Administration Highest Certified Spend – Architecture & Engineering Services: Kapur & Associates, Inc.

Wisconsin Department of Administration Highest Certified Spend – Construction: Hernandez Roofing, LLC

WPI remarks: Aina Vilumsons, President-Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute

9:30–11:45 a.m. Expo Hall and Buyer Meetings (Ballroom CD)**9:30–10:30 a.m. Accessing New Markets: Wisconsin Colleges and Universities (S103 D)**

Description: Wisconsin's public and private colleges and universities purchase a wide range of goods and services every year—everything from technology and facility upgrades to professional services and supplies. This session will feature purchasing representatives who will share insights into their procurement processes, upcoming opportunities, and vendor qualification requirements.

Moderator: Athena Agoudemos, Associate Director, Wisconsin SBDC Network

Panelists: Craig S. Meyer, CPSM, CSCP, Assistant Director, Purchasing, Marquette University

Tommy Zetting, Purchasing Manager, The Medical College of Wisconsin, Inc.

Sam Mahmood, Director of Contracts, Superior Equipment and Supply Co.

10:30–11:30 a.m. Strategic Connections (Outside Ballroom CD)

Description: Strategic Connections is a fast, one-hour, business-only roundtable where owners and decision-makers meet other local companies for targeted conversations. A session moderator guides the discussions, so every participant engages—no presentations, no outside agencies, just purposeful B2B networking.

Topics: Construction, technology, social media and marketing, transportation, hospitality, health and wellness

10:45–11:45 a.m. Accessing New Markets: Construction and Associated Trades (S103 D)

In this session, procurement professionals and industry experts will share how to find opportunities, understand bid requirements, and meet compliance standards. Learn strategies to showcase your capabilities, build relationships with decision-makers, and compete effectively in this high-demand market. Whether you're a prime contractor or a subcontractor, you'll gain practical insights to help grow your business in the construction and trades sector.

Moderator: Adam J. Skenandore, President, ANASA Traffic Control Services, LLC

Panelist: Keith Harenda, President, Kph Construction
London Thomas, President, White Glove Group Inc.

Noon–1:15 p.m. Luncheon (Ballroom AB)

Emcee: Diana Gutierrez, News Anchor/Reporter, WISN 12

Speaker: Cavalier Johnson, Mayor, City of Milwaukee

Gold sponsor remarks: Aaron Popkey, Director of Public Affairs, Green Bay Packers

Speaker: Kathy Blumenfeld, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Administration

Keynote speaker: Pamela Boivin, Program Manager/Chairwoman, Native CDFI Network/Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

1:30–4 p.m. Expo Hall Reopens for Exhibitors and Buyer Meetings (Ballroom CD)

1:45–2:45 p.m. Strategic Connections (Outside Ballroom CD)

Description: Strategic Connections is a fast, one-hour, business-only roundtable where owners and decision-makers meet other local companies for targeted conversations. A session moderator guides the discussions, so every participant engages—no presentations, no outside agencies, just purposeful B2B networking.

Topics: Construction, technology, social media and marketing, transportation, hospitality, health and wellness

2–3 p.m. Accessing New Markets: International Business Opportunities (S103 D)

Description: Explore the pathways to expanding your business beyond U.S. borders in this dynamic panel discussion. Experienced international trade professionals and exporters will share practical insights on identifying promising markets, navigating regulatory requirements, building global partnerships, and managing risks. Whether you're new to exporting or looking to grow your international sales, this session offers the knowledge and connections to help you take the next step.

Moderator: Koreen Grube, Director, U.S. Commercial Service Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration

Panelists: Ken Wasylik, Managing Director, E.M. Wasylik Associates
Ngosong Fonkem, Attorney, Amundsen Davis

4 p.m. MARKETPLACE concludes

BREAKFAST PROGRAM SPONSOR

**MILWAUKEE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

A/V SPONSOR

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DESIGN**
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GOLD SPONSORS



SPONSORS



Emcees



DIANA GUTIERREZ

News Anchor/Reporter, WISN ABC 12



DAVID LEE

President and General Manager, 89.7 WUWM

Sponsor representatives



HEATHER LADAGE

Publisher



AARON POPKEY

Director of Public Affairs



VANESSA SANCHA

Assistant Vice President,
Business Access Advisor



DANIELLE BLY

Vice President, Supplier Diversity

Keynote Speakers



LIA KNOX, Ph.D.

Mental Wellness Expert

Knox Behavioral Health Solutions

Lia A. Knox is a nationally recognized mental wellness expert, licensed professional counselor, and organizational health strategist whose presence instantly lifts a room. With nearly 30 years of experience, she blends clinical insight with storytelling, cultural intentionality, and just enough humor to make people feel seen, safe, and ready to grow. She helps entrepreneurs, business owners, and executives rethink success by putting well-being at the center, believing a clear mind and a strong heart are a leader's real superpowers.

The founder and CEO of Knox Behavioral Health Solutions and co-founder of Black Space Inc., Lia has appeared on The Today Show with Carson Daly, TPBS Black Nouveau, and numerous radio and print platforms. She has partnered with The New York Times, the Milwaukee Bucks Foundation, Northwestern Mutual, UWM, and the Medical College of Wisconsin, as well as with Xerox, National Association of Black Journalists, Generac, and Rockwell Automation.

Lia earned a doctorate in counseling psychology from Auburn University, a master's in counseling education from Concordia University Wisconsin, and a bachelor's in psychology from Jackson State University.



PAMELA BOIVIN

Program Manager, Native CDFI Network

Chair, WEDC Board of Directors

Pamela Boivin (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin) serves as program manager with the Native CDFI Network (NCN), where she leads initiatives to expand access to capital and strengthen the capacity of Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs), driving economic growth in Tribal communities.

She also serves as chair of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Board of Directors, providing statewide leadership to advance inclusive economic development and investment across Wisconsin's Tribal, rural, and urban communities.

Prior to joining NCN, Pamela spent 17 years with Woodland Financial Partners, a Native CDFI, including tenure as executive director. She holds a master of business administration degree from Marquette University and is recognized nationally for her advocacy and leadership in advancing Tribal and rural economic prosperity.

Breakfast Business Panel



Moderator

MIKE WARD

Vice President, Business and Community Development
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Mike Ward joined WEDC in September 2022 as vice president for business and community development. Mike has had more than 25 years of experience in banking with U.S. Bank and its predecessors, holding leadership positions in sales management, commercial lending, marketing, sales support, and underwriting—all focused on small business. Helping and learning about small businesses and the communities they support has been Mike's passion for his entire career.

Mike has done volunteer work with a number of groups including various United Ways, the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, the Waukesha Redevelopment Authority, and the Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation. He is a current board member of BizStarts and the Urban Economic Development Association as well as an active volunteer with Kiva. He also serves as a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Wisconsin Economic Roundtable.

A Madison native, Mike received his bachelor's degree in economics and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Minnesota. He and his wife live in Waukesha and have three adult children.



Panelist

ANDY WOODWARD SAYERS

Co-Founder and Filmmaker
Seadog Creative

Andy has a degree in time-based media from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, where they studied video and communication design. Nurturing an infinite curiosity for learning, Andy has found themselves expanding their professional creative abilities in industries such as advertising, higher education instruction, woodworking, and most recently camper van fabrication. A filmmaker and video editor at heart, Andy co-founded Seadog Creative with their best friend Betty Allen in 2016, a 100% queer-owned video and post-production company they operate out of their studio in Walker's Point. Andy finds the most joy in the strategy and storytelling of video production, seeking to balance creativity with a clear goal for connecting with an audience.

Breakfast Business Panel, continued



Panelist

CRISTINA VILLANUEVA

Owner

Ambas Financial Services LLC

Cristina Villanueva is an award-winning entrepreneur, community leader, and financial educator. She is the founder of Amba Financial Services, executive director of Conexiones Inc., and the visionary behind Cultura Hub and Cultura Studio, spaces created for Latino entrepreneurs and the community to learn, collaborate, and grow.

Cristina co-founded and successfully exited her first startup, Negozee, and through Conexiones, she partnered with the Mexican Consulate to launch the Ventanilla de Asesoría Financiera in Milwaukee. She has been recognized as one of Milwaukee's 40 Under 40 and among the Most Influential Latinos in Wisconsin.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Cristina treasures her role as a wife and mother. Rooted in her faith, she carries a passion for sharing God's love through her work and inspiring others to build wealth, embrace innovation, and create lasting impact.



Panelist

JENNIFER GOLLNICK

Owner and Chief Financial Officer

Data Informed Financial Services LLC

Jennifer Gollnick founded Data Informed Financial Services LLC (DataIFS) in 2023 after spending more than 20 years improving financial processes across industries. Before transitioning to finance, Jen drove trucks in the U.S. Army National Guard, where she learned the value of good intel, clear communication, and doing the hard work it takes to get the mission done. She now applies those lessons in business, helping small and growing companies implement scalable accounting systems that provide clarity, control, and confidence as they grow. In the community, Jen's volunteer work reflects her commitment to veteran, health, and education initiatives. She mentors entrepreneurs through DAV's Patriot Boot Camp, hosts a monthly Nonprofit Leadership Roundtable, and serves on the boards of the Milwaukee Consortium for Hmong Health and Notareyes Foundation. Jen is a certified public accountant (CPA) and earned degrees in accounting and finance from Milwaukee Area Technical College and Upper Iowa University.

Breakfast Business Panel, continued



Panelist

SHAKKIAH CURTIS, DBA

Consultant and Strategist
The Pink Hustle Firm

Shakkiah Curtis, DBA, is a strategic tech consultant and community leader who transforms how women and organizations approach sustainable success. Her work through the Curtis Collective challenges the grind culture by building infrastructure that creates lasting advancement without burnout for individuals and organizational systems.

As founder of the Pink Hustle and the Curtis Collective, she dedicates herself to helping women design six-figure lives and helping organizations build advancement infrastructure through proven frameworks. With doctoral research in emotional intelligence and extensive experience in business development and organizational transformation, Shakkiah is a sought-after speaker, consultant, and strategic advisor to organizations.

The mission behind her previous partnerships with BMO Bank, the Urban League, WWBIC, and others is to build advancement systems and create sustainable change in Milwaukee. Through her SCALE Framework and DRE Method, she develops women leaders and organizational infrastructure driven by evidence-based practice and her commitment to sustainable systems—and she is also developing future leaders as a mom to two girls.

Recognized as one of Wisconsin's 52 Most Influential Black Leaders in 2022, Shakkiah continues to inspire transformation and sustainable growth. Her dedication to building systems over offering inspiration and helping women and organizations achieve their fullest potential is evident in everything she does. Engaging Shakkiah as a partner promises to be a powerful experience filled with research-backed insights and actionable frameworks for sustainable success, leadership development, and purpose-driven transformation.



Panelist

AMY WOODS

Co-Owner
FAVORYT Brand

Amy Woods is the co-founder of FAVORYT Brand, a family-run skincare and wellness company based in Green Bay. Alongside her husband, she transformed their family's need for sensitive-skin-safe products into a nationally recognized brand known for clean, natural, and convenient solutions. A wife and mom of four, Amy leads with both heart and strategy — expanding FAVORYT's reach through retail, e-commerce, and wholesale partnerships across the U.S. while remaining deeply committed to community and giving back through wellness initiatives that support local families.



AINA VILUMSONS

President-Executive Director
Wisconsin Procurement Institute



ALEX YSQUIERDO

Director
Wisconsin Department of Administration-Supplier Diversity Program



CAVALIER JOHNSON

Mayor
City of Milwaukee



EUGENE MANZANET

Senior Director of Diverse Business Development
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation



JOSÉ PÉREZ

Common Council President & 12th District Alderman
City of Milwaukee



KATHY BLUMENFELD

Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Administration



SAM RIKKERS

Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation



MARKETPLACE 2025 is hosted by WEDC Vice President of Business and Community Development Mike Ward, Senior Director of Diverse Business Development Dr. Eugene Manzanet, Ph.D., Director of Diverse Business Development Seyoum Mengesha, Diverse Business Development Senior Manager Francisca Rodriguez, Diverse Business Development Intern Carson Pressley, Project Manager Dana Nielsen, Events Director Sara Beuthien Events and Administration Manager Allison Chanson, and Events Manager Megan Otto.

MARKETPLACE was coordinated by A-Mazing Events; the Wisconsin Procurement Institute (The Contract Academy, Expo Hall, and Buyer Meetings); Wisconsin Expo (Expo Hall contractor); and Events By Design (audio/video production).

MARKETPLACE partners help make this annual event a success by providing valuable guidance, promoting attendance through their networks, and more.

African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin	Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council
American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin	Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce
City of Madison	Wisconsin Chinese Chamber of Commerce
City of Milwaukee Office of Small Business Development	Wisconsin Department of Administration
Dane County	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
First American Capital Corporation	Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
Greater Milwaukee Foundation	Wisconsin Indigenous Housing & Economic Development Corporation
Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce	Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce
Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County	Wisconsin Procurement Institute
Latino Chamber of Commerce of Southeastern Wisconsin	Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce
Latino Entrepreneurial Network	Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation
Madison Black Chamber of Commerce	Woodland Financial Partners
Milwaukee County	
Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation	
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	
National Association of Minority Contractors Wisconsin	
New North Inc.	
North Central Minority Supplier Development Council	
Northwest Side Community Development Corporation	
Small Business Development Center	
The Business Council	
U.S. Commercial Service Wisconsin – U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration	



The MARKETPLACE Sponsor Hall of Fame was established to honor companies that have exhibited their commitment to the development of businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people through perennial MARKETPLACE sponsorship contributions.

PREVIOUS INDUCTEES

Associated Bank
AT&T
Forest County Potawatomi Community
Green Bay Packers Inc.
Harley-Davidson Motor Co.
Hartland Information Research
Milwaukee Business Journal
Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation
Northwestern Mutual
PNC Bank
Roundy's Inc.
Town Bank
U.S. Bank
Vanguard Computers
WE Energies
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
Wisconsin Business Development



MARKETPLACE connects private sector, federal, state, and local buyers with diverse suppliers of products and services. This list of buyers was last updated on November 26. [Please refer to the conference app for the most up-to-date list.](#)

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Marquette University
University of Wisconsin – Madison

CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT PRIME CONTRACTORS

Greenfire Management Services
HGA Architects and Engineers
Michels Corporation
Oshkosh Defense
Snap-on Incorporated
U.S. Bank
Veolia Water Milwaukee
WEC Energy Group
WPS Health Solutions

STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA),
State Bureau of Procurement
Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA),
State Bureau of Procurement, IT Sourcing Section
Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction –
Bureau of School Nutrition
Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

City of Madison
City of Wauwatosa
Milwaukee County
Milwaukee County Community Reintegration
Center
Milwaukee County Facilities Management
Architecture, Engineering & Environmental Services
Milwaukee County Transit
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)
Racine Unified School District



This list of exhibitors and resource provider tables was last updated on November 26. The numbers refer to the booth/table location as described in the map on page 23. [Please refer to the conference app for the most up-to-date list.](#)

EXHIBITORS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Telestreaming LLC | 41 McMurtry Financial Services, LLC |
| 2 Seadog Creative | 42 Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation |
| 3 Wisconsin Procurement Institute | 43 Think Pawsitive Dog Training LLC |
| 4 Gibraltar Industries Inc. | 44 Center Street Nail Tech. Academy, LLC |
| 5 Emmanuel's Mix LLC | 45 Camo Crew Responsible Junk Removal |
| 6 U.S. Small Business Administration | 46 JCP Construction, LLC |
| 9 Kickapoo Valley Guest Cabins & Cowboy David's Bakery | 47 Apple Awards |
| 10 Paradigm Media | 48 Better Business Bureau |
| 12 Presence Primary Care | 49 Associated Bank |
| 14 Mchete's African Treasures LLC | 50 Green Bay Packers Mentor-Protege |
| 15 DJ Handy Cleaners LLC | 51 Lean Design Werks |
| 16 Dane County Office for Equity and Inclusion | 52 Driven Marketing Solutions |
| 17 Evolution Marketing, LLC | 53 MalamaDoe Co-Working Community for Women |
| 18 City of West Allis | 54 AJ Development Group |
| 19 AREA Greetings | 55 Data Informed Financial Services LLC |
| 20 WHEDA | 56 Confluence Graphics |
| 21 El Conquistador Latino Newspaper | 57 Uniek, Inc |
| 22 Robotlab | 58 Snacks and Stuff Truck |
| 23 AQT Enterprise, LLC | 59 ANASA Traffic Control Services LLC |
| 24 Midwest Advantage Business & Financial Center | 60 Proto Edge, Inc. |
| 25 Digital Edge | 61 TVG-Medulla, LLC / Chiro One Wellness Centers |
| 26 WUnique International | 62 Blessed Divine Creations LLC |
| 27 Hawaii Fluid Art | 63 Events By Design |
| 28 Old National Bank | 64 WNOV |
| 29 Nurturing Generations, LLC | 65 John M Ellsworth |
| 30 Nicole Belovely F.H.P. LLC | 66 Beyond Vision |
| 31 Ordify AI | 67 Automation Bird Dog |
| 32 That's Right, Sweetie | 68 Tootsie's Tea |
| 33 Crash Box Therapy | 69 Greenfire Management Services |
| 34 Alza | 70 Community Design Studio - Lakeland University |
| 35 Domina Consulting Inc. | 71 Unique Hair Accessories & More |
| 36 Expansive Workspace | 72 Ancestral Tribe Custom Apparel |
| 37 Findorff | 73 FAVORYT |
| 38 Cream City Marketing and Chrystac | 74 Shooting Stars Personal Touch Concierge Inc |
| 39 Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) | |
| 40 Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) | |

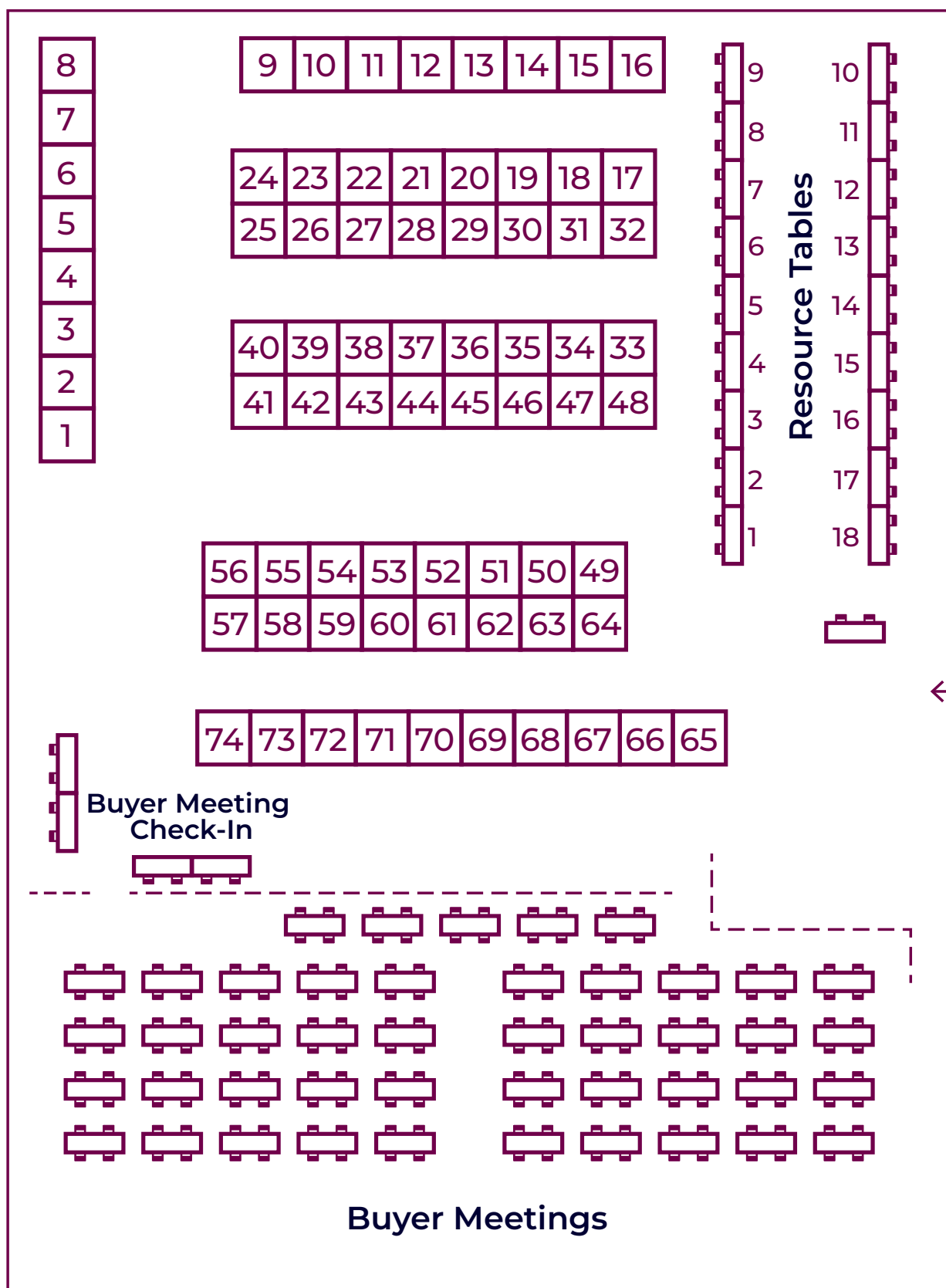
RESOURCE PROVIDER TABLES

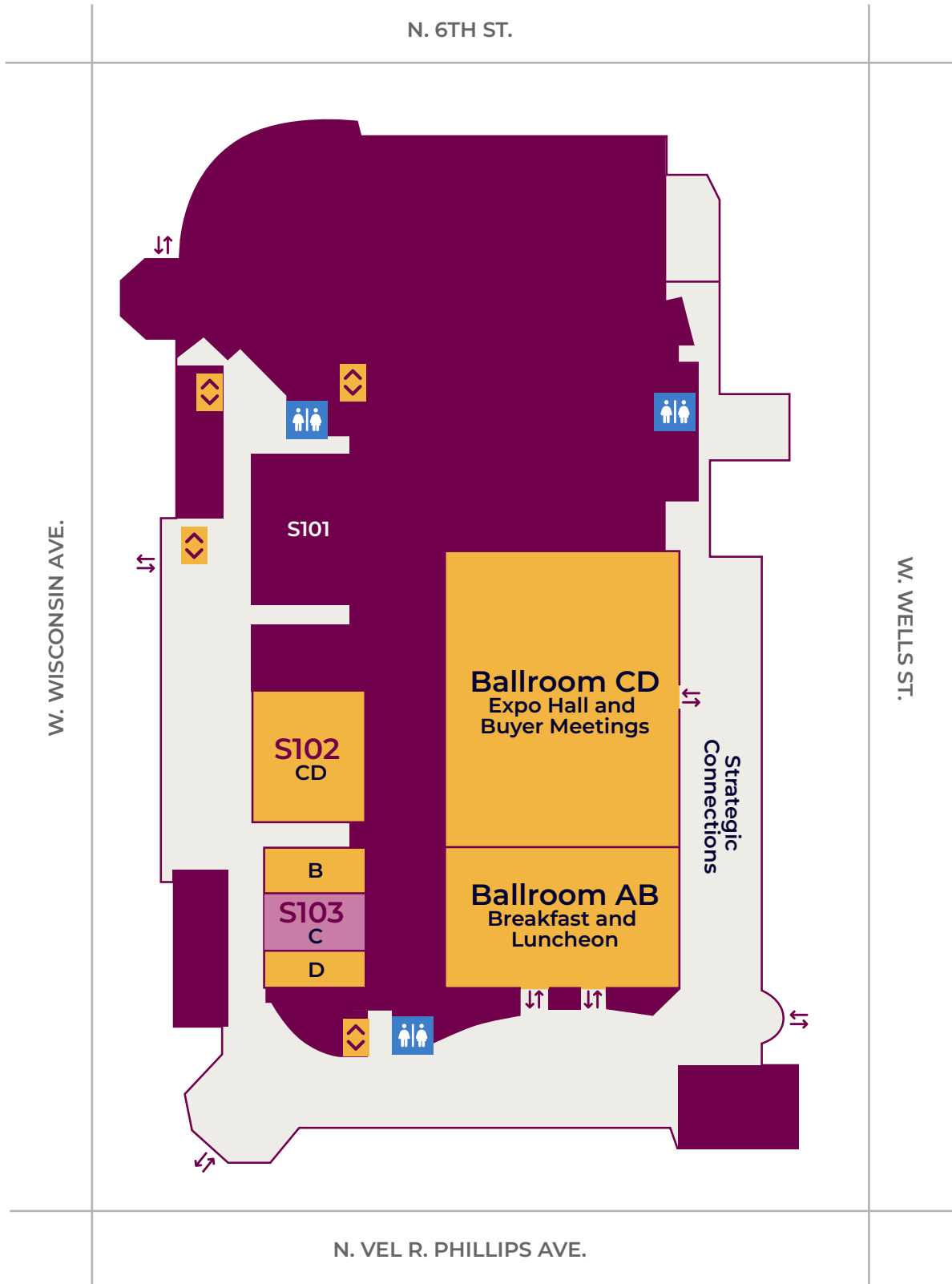
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|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | African American Chamber of Commerce of WI | 10 | Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. |
| 2 | Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce | 11 | Wisconsin Chinese Chamber of Commerce |
| 3 | Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce (WVCC) | 12 | The Business Council, Inc. |
| 4 | Wisconsin Latino Chamber of Commerce | 13 | Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) |
| 5 | Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce | 14 | Wisconsin Small Business Development Center |
| 6 | Wisconsin Indigenous Housing and Economic Development Corporation | 15 | Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) |
| 7 | Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. | 16 | SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) |
| 8 | First American Capital Corporation | 17 | Legacy Redevelopment Corporation |
| 9 | Latino Chamber of Commerce of SEW | 18 | North Central Minority Supplier Development Council |

DON'T MISS THE DIVERSE BUSINESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY!

Many resources across Wisconsin are available to help diverse businesses thrive and grow. Visit our website to access a list of organizations you can contact to learn more about funding opportunities, mentorship, technical assistance, and certification in various diverse business categories.

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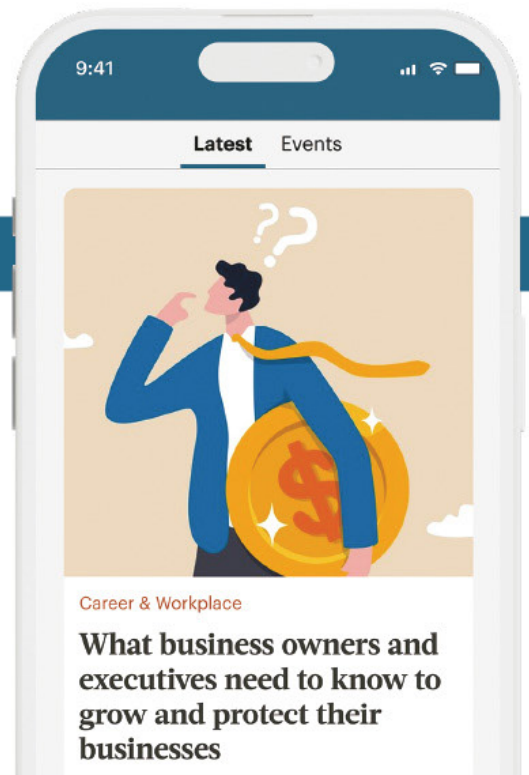
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is proud to welcome you to the 44th annual MARKETPLACE event. WEDC supports small and diverse businesses with financial and operational assistance, resources, and networking opportunities through our statewide network of other agencies, corporations, and nonprofit diverse business associations.



LOOK FORWARD ►

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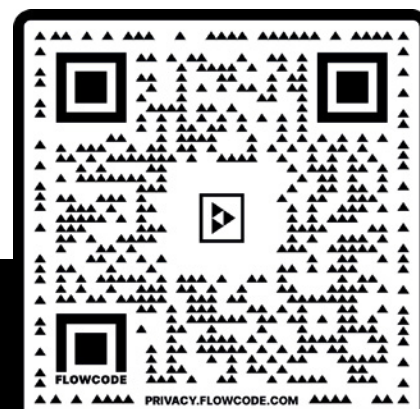


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