

Asian Women in Business: Procurement Opportunities for Minority / Women Owned Businesses

By [AsianInNY](#)

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[Asian Women in Business \(AWIB\)](#) gathered at the BNY Mellon for a conference about procurement opportunities for minority/women owned businesses on Tuesday, June 3, 2014. Thirty-three government and corporate exhibitors were present to share their knowledge.



The audience included diverse attendees such as men, people from different ethnic backgrounds, the young and the old, not just Asian Women in business. As Bonnie Wong, President of AWIB said, “We invite everyone because we like everyone. Everyone can do business with everyone.” Many come to network, meet other small business owners, reconnect and deepen relationships. One attendee mentioned that as a small business owner, she has four walls and her staff, so it is good to get out and meet other people.



<Maria Torres-Springer, Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services>

The keynote speaker, Maria Torres-Springer, Commissioner, NYC Department of Small Business Services noted that the department will make every effort to protect and create economic security for New Yorkers, deepen connections with the five boroughs, work harder and be more effective to do outreach to immigrant business owners and immigrant neighborhoods.



<New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer>

The other keynote speaker, New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer is also joining the fight for economic justice. The city hired its first-ever chief diversity officer, Carra Wallace to ensure diversity in city contracts. New York City spends \$16 billion on procurement budget, from paper clips to power tools, but less than 3% went to minority or women-owned businesses. The dire statistics mean less competitive prices and fewer jobs in neighborhoods that needed it the most.

The three panels, “Doing Business with Corporate America,” “Using Social Media to Market Your Business,” and “How to Get Certified”, and “Get Certified to Get Ahead” offered helpful tips. It was advised that when doing business with Corporate America, one has to know the target audience and be able to tell a compelling story as to how you can help and support clients. Be prepared with accurate information. Using social media to enter into the Federal space includes going online using the websites such as [U.S. General Services Administration](#), [Federal Business Opportunities](#), and listening to plethora of available webinars. Want to be seen? Small businesses need to use social media to their advantage, target their audience, and design campaigns for sales. Want to be considered for the big government contracts? Being certified is an advantage.

One of the highlights was the matchmaker sessions in which corporate companies such as Interpublic, John& Johnson and IBM make an appointment with a small business owner to see if there are possible procurement opportunities. As one speaker said, just because one did not receive the contract the first time, it does not mean one will not receive one in the future. Keep up with the contact. You just never know.

The AWIB event was informative and peppered with Bonnie Wong's humorous comments.



<Amy Choi, Janice Bracey, Maisha Walker>