



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
James Sanders Jr.

## Sen. James Sanders Jr. Hosts JFK MWBE Info Session to Discuss Procurement & Bonding

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 1, 2018



NEW YORK – New York State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Queens), Friday hosted an informational session on access to capital and bonding to prepare Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises for the more than \$10 billion dollars in development slated for John F. Kennedy Airport.

The Senator brought together dozens of people of various MWBEs including those in construction, energy, and professional services for a breakfast meeting at Port Authority JFK

headquarters. The Senator assembled an expert panel to discuss procurement (the action of obtaining contracts), and bonding (having a business license, proper insurance and making payments to a surety company for protection by a bond) in his mission to increase MWBE capacity certification and utilization.

“Our goal is to prepare existing MWBEs with the information needed to scale and secure contracts specifically with the JFK redevelopment,” said Senator Sanders. “This is an opportunity of a lifetime, and one must take advantage of an opportunity within its lifetime.”

When asked, which businesses held various certifications, all but two were without certifications, which demonstrated companies in the room were in a position to do business, experienced with government contracts and highly motivated to work with the airport.

An MWBE is a business that has a specific ownership composition of minimally 51 percent. Increasing the utilization of MWBE firms in state contracting is key to the success of the MWBE program. In 2014, Governor Cuomo set New York States's goal for MWBE procurement at 30 percent, the highest in the nation.

“We identify local businesses and firms that are either MWBE certified, but not with the Port Authority, and other firms that don’t have certification and encourage them to get certified,” said panelist Laura Imperiale, President & CEO of Athena Consulting. “Like they say with the lottery, ‘You have to be in it to win it’. But again, firms have to be ready.”

Business owners learned of development proposals many were unaware of until the Senator’s meeting, including proposals by air carriers, utility projects and road construction.

“To obtain the significant opportunities of the JFK development it is essential to show up,” said panelist Brian Gurski, Vice President/Managing Director of TruFund Financial Services,

Inc. “It is important that everyone remember, it’s not just about getting your foot in the door, but building the capacity to grow in the long term.”

Imperiale and Gurski were joined by panelists James Steven, P.E. Manager of JFK Physical and Plant Redevelopment, Carl Peters, MPA for Business Initiatives and Planning Analysis, Diana Reyna, Senior Partner for Athena Consulting Group, Inc. and Andis Woodlief for Surety Bond Associates.

The \$10 billion rebuild of JFK Airport could span 10 years or more and provide extensive economic opportunities for MWBE contractors in the Borough of Queens and throughout the New York Metropolitan Region.

Sanders is the father of the MWBE laws in NYC, having authored Local Law 1 and Local Law 129, types of affirmative action, during his time in the City Council.

As the MWBE Task Force Chair, Sanders heads a subcommittee that works to find innovative ways, both legislatively and in the community, to help empower these businesses and grow New York’s economy. The Senator also serves on the Labor Committee, Commerce Economic Development & Small Business Committee, among others.

In addition, Sanders is a member of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Advisory Council on MWBEs, which guides policy making and strategy to aggressively assist the city in reaching its pledge to award more than \$16 billion to MWBEs over the next ten years.

Senator Sanders is supported by Senator Leroy Comrie, Assembly Member Clyde Vanel, and Assembly Member Alicia Hyman.

TruFund Financial Services sponsored the meeting breakfast for attendees.