THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 39 No. 5

November 22 - 28, 2024

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication



Maryland Black Caucus Foundation to Hold 29th Annual Legislative Weekend in November

By Ciara Blue

The Maryland Black Caucus Foundation (MBCF) is gearing up to host its 29th Annual Legislative Weekend, themed "Advancing Access and Opportunity to Black Marylanders." Scheduled for November 22-23, 2024, this highly anticipated event will take place at Maryland Live Casino and Hotel in Hanover and the Hotel at the University of Maryland in College Park.

With shifting political tides, the MBCF underscores the need to preserve and expand hard-won progress for Black Marylanders. Led by Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins (20th District) as its chair, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland is one of the largest in the United States. The Legislative Weekend serves as a platform for policy innovation, community empowerment, and crucial dialogue around equitable access to opportunities in education, healthcare, housing, and more.

Registration for the event is open at 29thlw.eventbrite.com

This impactful gathering is designed for policymakers, community leaders, advocates, and citizens alike, offering diverse programming to inspire action and foster collaboration.

With over 1,000 attendees expected, citizens have a unique opportunity to engage with elected officials, industry experts and community leaders to discuss impactful legislation to support a brighter and more inclusive future.

November 22: Virtual Sessions

Engage with citizens, elected officials, subject matter experts, and industry leaders as we craft policy, provide industry updates, and discuss legislation that impacts Black Marylanders. This full day of FREE Online Workshops (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM) will cover a range of critical topics, including:

• 9:00 am Black Maternal Health

Equity: Prioritizing Solutions for Health Disparities

° Moderated by Senator Augustine, 47th District and Delegate Pena Melnyk, 21st District

- 10:15 am Protecting DEI and Race Programs in Small Business: The Case for Supplier Diversity
- ° Moderated by Senator Hayes, 40th District and Delegate Phillips, 10th District
- 11:30 am Creating an Education Equity and Economic Pipeline: From Pre-K to Postsecondary Success
- ° Moderated by Senator A. Washington, 22nd District and Delegate Steph Smith, 45th District
- 1:00 pm Strengthening the Vitality of Black Homeownership: Addressing Appraisal Bias and Barriers
- ° Moderated by Senator Smith, 20th District and Delegate Holmes, 23rd District
- 2:15 pm Public Safety and Economic Opportunities: Addressing Disparities in Maryland's Black Incarceration Rates
- ° Moderated by Delegate Deb Davis, 28th District and Senator Muse, 26th District
- 3:30 pm Environmental Justice in Maryland: Equitable Access to Renewable Energy
- ° Moderated by Senator Brooks, 10th District and Delegate Boyce, District 43A

November 23: Networking and Celebration

- Business Over Breakfast (9:00 AM
- Noon, \$150 per person): This morning event at the Hotel at the University of Maryland invites professionals and policymakers to share strategies for enhancing economic inclusion. It features

keynote speaker Reta Jo Lewis, President and Chair of Exim Bank, moderated by Dereck E. Davis, Maryland State Treasurer, along with a distinguished panel of Maryland leaders, including:

- ^o Bruce Gartner, Executive Director, Maryland Department of Transportation
- ^o Maria Martinez, Special Secretary, Maryland's Office for Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs
- ^o Troy Stovall, Chief Operating Officer, Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)
- Awards Gala and Dinner (7:30 PM, \$250 per person): Held at the MD Live Casino & Hotel, this elegant evening will bring together influential figures to honor achievements and inspire future progress. The event includes cocktails, dinner, and dancing to music by DJ Quicksilva, host of the Ouicksilva Morning Show on Baltimore's 92Q.

"The Maryland Black Caucus Foundation works tirelessly to champion policies that uplift Black Marylanders," said Dr. Zina Pierre. Chair of the Maryland Black Caucus Foundation. "Through events like the Legislative Weekend, the organization fosters dialogue and collaboration, advancing a vision for a more inclusive and equitable Maryland."

Join the MBCF in November to be part of this significant effort to drive meaningful change in the state. Register at 29thlw.eventbrite.com

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

Chairwoman's Award:

Delegate Adrienne Jones Speaker of the House District 10

Senator of the Year Award: Senator C. Anthony

Muse District 26

Delegate Adrienne Jones

Delegate of the Year Award: Delegate Aletheia McCaskill District

Exemplary Leadership Award:

Hon. Nick Mosby President Baltimore City Council



Brian Pieninck

Courtesy photos

Maryland Black **Caucus Foundation** Awards:

Outstanding Business

Awards:

Brian Pieninck President & CEO CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield of Maryland

Emerick Peace President Keller

Williams Preferred Properties of Upper Marlboro Prince George's County

President's Harriett Tubman Award: Dr. Aminta Breaux President Bowie State University

Community Service Awards:

Dr. Amin Flowers Life Church Ministries Baltimore, MD Costello Wilson, III Creating Opportunity Within



Dr. Amin Flowers

Community (COWOC) Prince George's County, MD

Trailblazer Award: Bishop Craig Coates Craig Coates Couture Annapolis, MD













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About Those Cookies - Part 2: Managing Cookies

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

If you read my last article, you know that one of the benefits of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) is that we get to have a say about what cookies we accept on sites we visit, thereby mitigating some of the privacy concerns we may have about the data collected. So, how do we decide which cookies to accept. and what are the best practices for managing them? In this article, we'll explore some strategies for making informed decisions about cookies and maintaining online privacy.

Understanding and Making Decisions About Cookies

To effectively manage cookies, it's essential to pay attention to the different categories of cookies and their purposes. This allows us to make conscious decisions about which cookies to accept and which to decline. We have noted the categories before, but here they are listed with recommendations on how to respond:

1. Necessary Cookies: Required for the basic functioning of a website. Without these cookies, a website might not work properly, making it difficult to browse or complete a purchase. Accepting necessary cookies is generally required if you want to use a website effectively.

2. Analytics and Performance Cookies: These cookies help website owners understand how visitors interact with their site, providing valuable insights into user behavior. They collect anonymized data that allows website owners to track page visits, navigation paths, and interaction times. If you're comfortable contributing to the improvement of websites and services, you might consider accepting these cookies; however, opting out is

also a valid choice, especially if you value your browsing privacy.

3. Functional Cookies: Functional cookies are used to remember user preferences, such as language settings or font size adjustments. They provide a more personalized experience, making it easier for frequent users to navigate a site. Accepting functional cookies can be helpful if you use a particular website often and prefer the convenience of customized settings.

4. Targeting and Advertising **Cookies:** Targeting cookies are used to create user profiles and deliver personalized advertising. These cookies track user behavior across multiple websites, building a comprehensive understanding of individual interests. If privacy is a priority for you, it's wise to be cautious about accepting these cookies. Declining targeting cookies can reduce the amount of personalized advertising you receive and limit the extent of tracking across different sites.

Recommendations for Managing Cookies

One of the most effective ways to manage cookies is to choose websites that offer granular consent options. Granular consent means that you can select specific types of cookies to accept or reject, such as opting in for only essential and performance cookies while rejecting advertising cookies. Many reputable websites now provide cookie banners that allow users to manage preferences at a detailed level. Additional recommendations include:

1. Reject Third-Party Cookies: Third-party cookies are often used by advertisers and data brokers to track users across different websites. compiling detailed profiles of browsing habits and interests. If privacy is a significant concern, it's recommended you reject third-party cookies whenever possible.



Be mindful of how you manage your website cookies. Graphic Design by Karen Clay

2. Clear Cookies Periodically: Even after accepting certain cookies, it's a good idea to clear cookies periodically. This helps to reduce tracking and ensures that outdated or unnecessary cookies are removed from your device. Most browsers provide easy ways to clear cookies manually or on a schedule. By keeping your cookie store clean, you can minimize unwanted tracking and maintain a more secure browsing experience.

3. Use Browser Settings and Extensions for Privacy: Many web browsers offer settings that allow users to control how cookies are managed automatically. Privacy-focused browsers like Firefox and Brave provide enhanced cookie management features, such as blocking third-party cookies and offering stricter tracking protections. Browser extensions such as uBlock Origin, Privacy Badger, and Ghostery can help block unwanted cookies and trackers, giving you an extra layer of protection.

4. Look for Transparent Policies: When deciding whether to accept cookies on a particular website, it's important to look for transparent



Karen Clay, Clay Technology and Multimedia Courtesy, Karen Clay

cookie policies. Reputable websites should provide clear and comprehensive explanations of what each cookie does, why it's used, and how long it will remain on your device. If a website's cookie notice is vague, lacks detail, or doesn't provide clear options for managing preferences, consider rejecting those cookies.

When encountering cookies, it's important to stay informed, understand your rights, and make conscious choices based on the type of cookies and your privacy preferences. By understanding cookie categories, rejecting unnecessary third-party cookies, clearing cookies periodically, and using privacy-friendly browsers and extensions, you can maintain a safer and more private online experience. Remember, your data is valuable, and taking steps to protect it can help you navigate the web securely and confidently.







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Preparation, Preparation!

How to Legally Prepare Your Business for Holidays

By Taalib Saber

As the holiday season approaches, the nation prepares for one of the busiest sales periods of the year. Promotions, special deals, and heightened online activity make this an ideal time to attract new customers.

However, customer attraction also brings unique legal challenges. Whether you're launching seasonal marketing campaigns or handling increased sales, vou must ensure local, state, and federal compliance to safeguard your brand. Here are some key legal tips that you should consider as you navigate this terrain.

Define Clear Terms and Conditions for Promotions

Promotional deals, discounts, and limited-time offers are incredibly powerful tools that boost engagement and attract new clients. But without clear terms and conditions, they can also lead to misunderstandings and even legal disputes. To avoid any issues, be explicit about eligibility criteria, timeframes, redemption limitations, and any exclusions.

By clearly defining these terms upfront, you not only protect your business from potential disputes but also build credibility with your customers, who appreciate transparency. Any agreement you draft should have well-crafted and explicit terms and conditions to avoid ambiguity regarding your promotion.

Protect Your Brand with Trademark and Copyright Compliance

The holiday season inspires creativity. However, businesses must avoid infringing on copyrighted or trademarked materials belonging to other brands. Using copyrighted holiday graphics, music, or phrases without permission can lead to stalled sales and eventually, to costly lawsuits.

Additionally, ensure that your original content is protected, too, by registering your trademark, if applicable. Originality not only prevents legal troubles but also strengthens your brand's reputation in the market.

Prioritize Data Protection and Compliance

In today's digital age, gathering customer data is as good as gold but it is extremely sensitive information and comes with responsibility. Data breaches are costly and can damage your reputation beyond repair, especially if customer data is mishandled.

To comply with data protection laws, only collect essential information, securely store it, and have clear privacy policies outlining how data is used. Failing to protect customer data can lead to hefty fines and loss of customer trust, so taking steps to enhance your data protection practices is crucial.

Manage Increased Demand with Secure Supplier Agreements

The holiday season can put a strain on your supply chain, and managing inventory is key to keeping customers satisfied and protecting your business. Review and update your supplier contracts well before the holiday rush to clarify terms around inventory, delivery timelines, and contingencies for potential delays. If demand exceeds your expectations, having a well-refined agreement ensures you have the support needed to fulfill orders. Additionally, understanding the penalties or provisions in case of supplier defaults can save your business from unexpected costs and help you plan better.

Adhere to Advertising Laws

While it may be tempting to use bold claims to stand out, remember that advertising is subject to strict regulations. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC)



Taalib Saber

requires that businesses avoid false or misleading advertising. This means any claims you make in your holiday campaigns, from product benefits to limited-time offers, must be truthful and verifiable.

Failure to comply can result in fines, legal action, and/or a damaged reputation. Transparent advertising not only keeps your business compliant but also helps to foster customer loyalty.

Legal Readiness Strengthens Customer Trust and Brand Integrity

Preparing your business legally for holiday promotions isn't just about avoiding fines, penalties, or sanctions—it's about building a foundation of trust with your customers. When your promotions are legally sound, customers can shop confidently, knowing that your brand prioritizes transparency, safety, and reliability. In the competitive holiday market, these qualities can set your business apart.

By setting clear terms and conditions, safeguarding intellectual property, protecting consumer data, securing supplier relationships, and adhering to advertising laws, you're taking concrete steps to ensure that your holiday promotions run smoothly. Legal compliance may not seem as festive as holiday decorations, but it's the cornerstone of a successful, resilient, and trustworthy business strategy.

Taalib Saber is an attorney and owner of The Saber Firm.









Local History Remembered

"64 Years of Civil Rights History" Event Comes to Annapolis

By Andrea Blackstone

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("the Act") on July 2, 1964.

According to The White House, "The Act" outlawed segregation in business establishments, public schools, and other public places and prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in employment."

"2024 is 60 years since the signing of the Civil Rights Act and the country celebrated an entire year of events," historian and Annapolitan Janice Hayes-Williams added.

She further explained that a grant from the National Park Service was awarded to the Annapolis Anne Arundel County Visitor Center to identify 60 Sites in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County with Civil Rights History. A guide was created. https://issuu. com/visitannapolisannearundel/ docs/2024_02_04-_vaaac_final-digital

"The Graduate Hotel was nominated and is included in the guide because of the first known nonviolent civil disobedience activity in the City of Annapolis. A sit-in occurred on November 25, 1960 – at the Grevhound Bus Terminal, now the Graduate Hotel. Five residents of the City of Annapolis staged a lunch counter sit-in to protest the status quo of not being welcomed in as customers segregated facilities," Hayes-Williams explained.

In 1993, then Alderman for the City of Annapolis Carl Snowden affixed a plaque to the building of the Graduate Hotel to honor the Annapolis Five: Dr. Samuel P. Callahan: Marita Carroll: Ethel Mae Thompson: Lacev McKinney; and William Lamb" Henry Johnson.

The Chesapeake Children's Museum (CCM) will sponsor "64 Years of



Carl Snowden brings awareness to wrongs that needed to be righted in the 1970s. The upcoming "64 Years of Civil Rights History," held at The Graduate Hotel, located at 126 West St, on Monday, November 25, 2024, in Annapolis, Maryland, serves as a celebration to capture 64 years of Civil Rights in Anne Arundel County. Photos courtesy of Urcunia Films

Civil Rights History" from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday, November 25, 2024 at The Graduate Hotel, located at 126 West St, Annapolis, Maryland. The Graduate Hotel is the event's co-sponsor. A press conference to celebrate the 64 years of the people who participated in the sit-in, and the civil rights movement, will also be held at 10:30 a.m. at People's Park, 43 Calvert Street.

Hayes-Williams mentioned that during the 2024 Maryland General Assembly, the proposal was submitted to Senator Sarah Elfreth and crossfiled with Delegate Shaneka Henson to erect a Memorial on the sidewalk to tell the story of the Annapolis Five.

"The Chesapeake Children's Museum was recommended to be fiduciary for this effort. While waiting for the Memorial, the CCM decided to celebrate this year of Civil Rights," she said.

Wood, the founder and executive director of CCM, a daily museum for families and groups, explained that the upcoming event is an opportunity to forge connections with people



Youth wanted to riot after Dr. Martin Luther was assassinated. WANN radio allowed them to blow off steam to understand that there was a better way than rioting.

ŰNÍTÝ WILL OVERCOME Founding members of The Laymen's Corps. of Anne Arundel County included George Phelps, Jr., president; Reverend Leroy Bowman; John Pantelides and others.

who have lived experiences and the descendants of Civil Rights "foot soldiers" who are no longer living. These connections will help with the effort to craft future walking tours and to teach children National history in their own hometown. "64 Years of Civil Rights History" will focus on residents of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and Civil Rights activity leading up to the signing of the Civil Rights Act.

"The purpose of the event is to bring people together to keep alive the memories of what was happening locally in the struggle for Civil Rights and is the culmination of a Civil Rights Year celebrating the signing of the Civil Rights Act," she stated. "There will be a performance of songs of "Black Pride and Protest" by Wesley Beann, Michael McHenry, Gordon Henson, and other local musicians. There will be a dramatic interpretation to bring us back to 1960. Lunch is graciously provided by the Graduate Hotel."

Hayes-Williams serves as the program assistant, historian, and first interpreter for the event.

Wood mentioned that grantors include Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, Federal Institute

Museum and Library Services, and the Graduate Hotel.

"Pip and Zastrow" https://www. pipandzastrow.com/about.htm will be screened during the lunch.

Renee Spears, Director of Programs at CCM, is assisting with entertainment and other logistics for "64 Years of Civil Rights History."

While reflecting on the upcoming event, she quoted Shirley Chisholm: "Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread, and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal."

Spears added, "We want to erase the normal 'ism' instead and seek peace and love. We want to give our children the opportunity to experience equality and justice. We want the children to be able to stand up for their beliefs and become the leaders of democracy. To embrace meaningful songs, gospel and secular, like "This Little Light of Mine" and "Ain't No Stopping Us Now."

All ages may attend the free event, although it is primarily intended for older children and adults. Visit https:// www.theccm.org/event-details/64vears-of-civil-rights-history to RSVP for the free event by Friday, November 22, 2024 at noon or call 410-990-1993. Learn more about CCM by visiting www.theccm.org.





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Holiday Giving

Submissions Accepted to Win Free Car, Upcoming Gala Supports Worthy Cause

By Andrea Blackstone

Ma'lia McClain, a 2022 Cars With Care Christmas Car Giveaway winner, recalls being without a vehicle for a year before she was blessed with free wheels by a nonprofit that displays the holiday giving spirit.

"I won a Nissan Maxima," she said.
"My car has been a blessing and that's what I named her!"

Maryland-based entrepreneurs, Stephen Green and Damond Horne, founded Cars With Care nonprofit to provide wheels for families in need. Green, owner of Paintless Dent Doctor, specializes in automotive reconditioning. Horne runs a similar business called Total Recon Automotive Reconditioning.

Six members of the Cars With Care Team are helping out this year to enable someone like McClain to confidently hit the road in their own ride without the worry of financial barriers.

Michael Foy, owner of CMMobile Detailing; Eric Randall, owner of KXK Financial; Kermit Fowlkes, owner of Focus Movers; and Gabe Epps, owner of Pro-Speed Customs joined Green and Horne to lend a hand to complete tasks from custom work to car repairs and detailing for this year's contest.

"We will be giving away one fully reconditioned car this year," said Green. "Eight vehicles will have been be donated to date."

Cars With Care's 4th Annual Fundraising Gala will be held on December 21, 2024 from 9:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at La Familia Soundstage located at 836 Guilford Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland. The fundraiser will include a DJ, catered food, a cigar lounge, 360 booth, cash bar, a host and MC, and special performers.

Josh Lay, a Grammy-nominated and

Stellar Award-winning writer, producer and vocalist, and Tim Green, a Grammy-nominated and world-renowned saxophonist from Baltimore will be featured.

"I will be performing a set of instrumental music at the Cars for Care Gala, inspired by the jazz music elements featured in Nas' iconic album "Illmatic," Tim said.

He shared why gala support is vital for Cars With Care's ability to complete its mission.

"By attending and supporting this event, you are contributing to the mission of providing much-needed vehicles to those in need. These vehicles serve as a lifeline for individuals and families who may not have access to reliable transportation otherwise, enabling them to access employment opportunities, medical appointments, and essential services," Tim noted.

He added that every dollar raised at the Cars With Care gala goes towards ensuring that vehicles are made available to those who need them most.

Tim further noted, "Your presence sends a powerful message of compassion and generosity, demonstrating that we are all in this together and that no one should be left behind. So, join us at the Cars With Care gala and help make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most. Together, we can ensure that everyone has the means to access the resources and support they need to thrive."

Stephen said that the Cars With Care team donates all labor, but they depend upon the gala to fund the cause.



Cars With Care Giveaway Vehicle from 2023. Entries are now being accepted for this year's car giveaway. Photo: Stephen Green

Expenses include the purchase of the vehicle; parts and mechanical needs; car taxes, title and fees; a warranty; and a monetary donation given to the family to help to ease the initial cost of vehicle ownership.

Additionally, Stephen said the Cars With Care team is open to all sponsorships.

"We offer packages from \$100 to \$1,000. For detailed information on what comes with each package, please email us at carswithcare@gmail.com," he explained.

Gathering financial resources, the expertise of volunteers, and individuals who unselfishly give their time is a labor of love demonstrating the power of unity that positively impacts someone else's life.

"Giving away the vehicle on Christmas morning is the most fulfilling thing we do. We literally get to give someone the keys to "opportunity" in the form of reliable transportation," said Stephen.

Entrants must be Baltimore City or County residents; be a part of a family in need that consists of school-aged



(L-r): Michael Foy, Cars With Care team member; Damond Horne, Cars With Care co-founder; David Chance of Ruff Endz (rear); Eric Randall, Cars With Care team member (front); Kermit Fowlkes, Cars With Care team member; Dante Jordan of Ruff Endz; and Stephen Green, Cars With Care co-founder at the Cars With Care Gala in 2023.

Photo: Aja Green

children; have a valid driver's license; and be in good standing with the MVA.

"Each vested member of the Cars With Care team reads each entry and chooses one nominee. There's no 'exact science' to those choices. We are simply choosing a nominee that we emotionally connect with after reading their story," Stephen said. "After we choose our individual nominees, we do a drawing to decide the winner."

Learn more about Cars With Care by visiting www.carswithcare.org; visit https://www.carswithcare.org/entries to read the contest rules and enter; and purchase gala tickets from https:// Carswithcaregala2024.eventbrite.com. The entry deadline is December 20, 2024 at 9:00 p.m. If you would like to donate financially, donations can be made on the nonprofit's website.

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MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT OCT. 15-DEC. 7

New in 2025, all Medicare plans will include a \$2,000 cap on what you pay out of pocket for covered prescription drugs.

The cap only applies to drugs that are **covered** by your plan, so it's more important than ever to review your plan options to make sure your drugs are covered.

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Thanksgiving Thoughts

Reflections of Gratitude and Thankfulness

Compiled by Andrea Blackstone

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to reflect on what we are thankful for as we prepare to spend the holiday with family and friends. Six Marylanders share heartwarming thoughts and beautiful blessings.



(L-r): Leticia Nortey, founder of Expanding Boundaries International, alongside her college professor, Brenda A. Brown from Morgan State University, who supported her study abroad experience in China. Photo: Jamie Howard (Special Memories Photography)

Leticia Nortey- Baltimore County and Carroll County

"I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our community and to the amazing, selfless people who have supported us on this journey. Our volunteers and board of directors are all incredibly human beings."♥



Taneka Pack Photo: Roy Cox from Roy Cox Photography

Taneka Pack - Baltimore

"I am grateful for my support circle. Life has its way of throwing challenges our way and running a business on top of that can feel overwhelming at times. But having a circle of people who offer words of encouragement, sound advice, warm hugs, and unwavering support makes all the difference. They remind me that even the toughest hurdles can be overcome, and what once seemed impossible becomes possible."



Eric Randall Photo: Bryan Mroz

Eric Randall—Baltimore County

"As I sit back and reflect on this brisk fall evening, I look back over the year as Thanksgiving approaches and I think about how grateful I am for God's mercy. Always providing for my family, always protecting those I love, and always guiding me through life's foliage. I mean what else could explain a young, Black man at 39 years old making it out of the inner city of Baltimore to grow and have four successful businesses, a beautiful family, a home and overwhelming support?

I just pray to live long enough to see greatgrandkids and to retire in my forties. Until then, I will wait for the nostril-filling smells of familyprepared food and desserts in the next few days. The sounds of 'Say Cheese,' and other picturemaking references as we freeze a moment in time because God gave us another year..."











Danielle Young and son Photo: Danielle Young



Dr. Larry White, Sr. Photo: Dr. Larry White, Sr.

Shaleece Williams - Annapolis

"I am deeply thankful for my wonderful little family-my husband and our four children-who fill my days with energy and make every moment of life meaningful. This past year we enjoyed our first family trip and I am so grateful and looking forward to many more."

Danielle Young -originally from Annapolis, moved to Cambridge

"This year has been a challenging one to say the least, but God has truly heard a mother's prayer and blessed me and my son. I'm very grateful for the Lord blessing me and my son with a new home that we can share and enjoy with family and friends."



Dr. Larry White - Glen Burnie

"I am thankful for my family. Six months ago, I received news that my wife had breast cancer. When I first found out about the news, life was a blur! My son was graduating from high school and my niece was graduating from Harvard. My wife said, 'Do not tell anyone. I want them to enjoy their ceremonies without any distractions.' This was very difficult for me as I was not sure if I would lose my beautiful bride of 22 years of marriage. My family gathered around me and kept me strong so I could be there for my wife, children, and grandchildren.

Thank God the tumor was detected early, and my wife has almost completed her chemotherapy treatments. Soon my wife will be cancer-free. So, I am very thankful for my wife and my family. It has been a very difficult road, but God is able. Never take anything for granted.

"Iron sharpens iron." Proverbs 27

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you. From The Baltimore Times/Annapolis Times







Avoid Long-term Consequences: Manage Holiday Eating with Strategy and a Plan

By Andrea Blackstone

Thanksgiving, Christmas and even the New Year holidays are just around the corner. Food and drinks typically flow plentifully during dinners, parties, and get-togethers when memories are made. However, healthier eating habits can take a detour this time of year.

Shani Belgrave, MD, a specialist in minimally invasive and bariatric surgery runs Peachtree Surgical and Bariatrics. She provides tips to explain how to better manage hunger and holiday eating.

First, it is essential to note that hunger can be connected to more than just feeling full.

"Hunger and satiety is a complex interplay between many hormones and the gut-brain axis. How much we eat is not only dependent on our energy by requirements but can also be determined by other factors unrelated to hunger," Dr. Belgrave stated.

For example, eating snacks while watching a movie is more ritualistic. Additionally, a person may eat more at a special event where certain foods are not typically available.

She further explained that holiday event overeating can occur because it is a time of year when food is utilized in a celebratory fashion. Consequences include having to face depression because of weight gain and a weight loss struggle.

Dr. Belgrave also warned that indulging in high-sodium foods during the holidays can lead to water retention that can manifest as swelling, bloating, and increased blood pressure.

"The American Heart Association recommends consuming no more than 2,300 mg of salt per day. Consuming high amounts of salt on an ongoing basis can cause high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Excessive alcohol consumption can cause confusion, memory problems, and in some instances, death. Chronic excessive alcohol consumption can also be a risk factor for certain cancers," she said.

Dr. Belgrave stated that it is important to drink 64 ounces of water daily. Drinking water before dinner will help people to eat less, reduce hunger, and control the urge to overeat.

"Another tip is to focus on eating protein and vegetables. Good options include collards, poultry, and seafood. When choosing dessert at a party, opt for just one dessert and be mindful of the portion size,"

Dr. Belgrave also added.

One strategy to avoid holiday weight gain is to avoid keeping cakes, pies and cookies in the house.

"This relegates dessert to a treat to be enjoyed at the Christmas party rather than a daily occurrence from Thanksgiving through Christmas."

Dr. Belgrave shared that portion control is important year-round. WebMd.com (https://www.webmd. com) is a good source to learn about caloric intake guidelines. Reframing food as a fuel source helps to reduce excess.

"Avoid eating in front of the television. During meals, chew food well and eat slowly. This allows you to pick up on cues that you are full. Another tip is eating off a small plate," she stated.

Diabetics or people with dietary restrictions can offer to bring a dish to feel included during holiday meals if they plan to eat at a relative or friend's home to ensure that there

will be a healthy option. Dr. Belgrave also suggests another idea of having a small healthy snack before attending dinner in the event there is not much available to choose from.

When health-conscious cooks are putting meals together, it is best to use fresh ingredients.

"Greens are very healthy and also filling. Beans are high in protein and also filling. Seafood and poultry are also filling and a good source of protein," said Dr. Belgrave.

She added, "Limiting salt is important. Using herbs to season food and letting foods marinate is another way to add flavor. Splenda and stevia are good sugar substitutes. Even though agave is a natural sweetener it should be limited along with all sugars. The healthiest choice for sweetening foods or drinks is fresh or frozen fruit."

Other healthy options include vegetable and fruit trays. Instead of chips and dips, hummus with carrots or bell peppers can be offered to guests. Nuts are a high-protein snack, according to Dr. Belgrave.

"Even if sugar is used, you can still have a dessert, but instead of tasting several just select one and make sure it is one serving," she also said.

Diets do not always garner longlasting results. When they end, weight is regained.

"It is more advantageous to have a lifestyle change where the way one eats is an ongoing sustainable change. Instead of having dessert every day after dinner, dessert could be eaten once a week," Dr. Belgrave stated.

com and https://www.youtube. com/channel/UCp9X-3cMr7GofzAyZndzesw to learn more about Dr. Belgrave.

Visit https://drshanibelgrave.



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Baltimore's COVID-19 Unsung Heroes Honored

BMA Officially Opens 'More Than Conquerors' Art Installation

By Demetrius Dillard

Acclaimed artist LaToya Ruby Frazier has been around the world but was particularly struck by Baltimore - its people, culture, unique challenges and resilience.

Frazier's research and observations of community health workers (CHWs) in Baltimore during the COVID-19 pandemic inspired one of her most powerful and evocative art installations, which is entitled "More Than Conquerors: A Monument for Community Health Workers of Baltimore, Maryland 2021-2022."

More Than Conquerors alludes to a biblical verse in Romans 8:37 while paying homage to the character and courage of medical professionals on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19. Deeply evocative and insightful, the art exhibit features a series of portraits and related narratives mounted on 18 socially distanced, stainless-steel IV poles that celebrate community health workers in Baltimore during the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

According to the research of Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) officials. CHWs have served as an essential resource to underserved communities since the 1970s, assisting individuals in overcoming challenges to healthcare access. CHWs served a critical role during the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, sharing information and encouraging acceptance of the treatment while providing access and support.

"You will see that this monument (art installation) is a monument of triumph," Frazier said during an event hosted by BMA that previewed the exhibit. "It's a story of power and triumph."

The More Than Conquerors preview event, held on Oct. 28, 2024, drew a small crowd consisting of BMA staff,

arts community supporters and United Way staff.

BMA director Asma Naeem opened the afternoon with remarks before giving way to Frazier, who spoke at length about the background and inspiration for the art exhibit.

"We are thrilled to launch the exhibition portion of 'Turn Again to the Earth' with the presentation of LaToya Ruby Frazier's compelling and deeply resonant installation More Than Conquerors," Naeem said.

"The presentation is a singular opportunity to honor some of Baltimore's most important and under-sung heroes in our museum and to consider the complex relationships between environment, health and social inequities."

Frazier named some of the individuals included in the artwork, described the arrangement of the art and its profound significance, and reflected on the adverse impact of COVID-19 on minority communities while sharing personal experiences that somewhat laid the groundwork for More Than Conquerors.

CHWs are characterized as unsung heroes of the pandemic, and their pivotal contributions in Baltimore are only a microcosm to their importance to communities in numerous cities across the nation and beyond. Holding titles such as community health advisers, lay health advocates, outreach educators, health aides and peer health promoters – the daily efforts of CHWs, especially during the pandemic, were necessary to ensure medical justice and healthcare equity.

Frazier connected with Tiffany Scott, co-founder and chair of the Maryland Community Health Worker Association, and a group of CHWs actively involved in vaccination efforts between 2020 and 2021, thanks to the support of Johns Hopkins University educators and medical practitioners.



"More Than Conquerors: A Monument for Community Health Workers of Baltimore, Maryland 2021-2022" features a series of portraits and related narratives mounted on 18 socially distanced, stainless-steel IV poles that celebrate community health workers in Baltimore during the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

More Than Conquerors reveals local community health workers' portraits, stories and voices, "creating a poignant monument to their tireless efforts and recognizing their invaluable contributions to the lives of countless people and the health of many communities." These soul-stirring stories are illustrated on each of the 18 socially distanced, stainless-steel IV poles currently standing in BMA's Sadie A. May Wing.

"Even though there are 18 IV pole stands, everything is actually integrated in terms of their (CHWs) stories, their memories, their experiences, how they got their start, who trained who, who was inspired by who, who's had losses with whom. So, you realize it is a real interconnected network," said Frazier, also an award-winning author.

Frazier's art and scholarship intersect collaborative storytelling with social justice movements, cultural change, and the American experience through a wide range of media, including photography, video, performance, installation and books.

"My work truly is about cutting



LaToya Ruby Frazier is an awardwinning author and artist whose art installation "More Than Conquerors: A Monument for Community Health Workers of Baltimore, Maryland 2021-2022" will be on display at the Baltimore Museum of Art until March 2025. Photos: Mitro Hood

through visually [regarding] class, representing peoples' rights, human rights, workers' rights. My work is very much about civic engagement, it is about American democracy, it is about empowering people and meeting them exactly where they are," she said.

The Baltimore Museum of Art acquired "More Than Conquerors: A Monument for Community Health Workers of Baltimore, Maryland 2021-2022" in spring 2023. With the generous support of the Glenstone Museum, its presentation is now underway, marking the first time that it is on view at BMA and in Baltimore.

Open from November 3 through March 23, 2025, the More Than Conquerors installation is part of "Turn Again to the Earth," a series of initiatives unfolding at the BMA focused on modeling commitments to sustainability and fostering dialogue about environmental issues.

Following the More Than Conquerors preview event, attendees toured the exhibit and conversed with Frazier.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL -PROJECT NO. 1385R DESIGN, BUILD, FINANCE, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN DESIGN-BUILD-FINANCE-OPERATE-MAIN-TAIN (DBFOM) SLUDGE PROCESS-ING AND DISPOSAL AT THE CITY OF **BALTIMORE BACK RIVER WASTE-**WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The City of Baltimore Department of Public Works has been authorized to request the Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) to advertise Project 1385R for the design, build, finance, operate and maintain sludge processing and disposal at the Back River wastewater Treatment Plant.

It is the expectation of the City's that interested firms providing these services must demonstrate and document the following

- *Achieve sludge processing solution at the Back River WWTP to generate Class A
- *Engage the market and identify sustainable and revenue producing outlets for Class A biosolid product.
- *Establish an alternative revenue source through profit sharing from the sale of the biosolid product.
- *Maximize cost savings for the City, both present and future.
- *Improve odor conditions by eliminating or mitigating odors associated with the processing of digested sludge.
- *Develop a long-term (20 years) sustainable solution that minimizes or eliminates detrimental operational gaps and downtime at the Back River WWTP.
- *Minimize the City's carbon footprint to the greatest extent possible in its operations.
- *Establish a monitoring and reporting regime that ensures regulatory compliance.
- *Provide operational and financial transparency to foster fairness and equitable risk sharing.

In addition, the City recognizes the evolving regulatory landscape and potential market disruptions that may arise from the presence of poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). At this moment, the City does not intend to implement PFAS destruction technol-

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ogy and does not require its inclusion in the proposed RFP for heat drying. However, the proposal should include a provision for incorporating PFAS destruction technology with the proposed heat drying option in the future. The goal is to understand how these technologies could be integrated with the proposed solutions at a later date and explore innovative methods for the long-term removal of PFAS and other emerging contaminants.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project entails the design, construction, financing, operation, and maintenance of a new dewatering system followed by a sludge heat drying system at the Back River WWTP to replace the current operations. Based on current operational data, the system shall have a processing capacity starting from 45 dry tons as a guaranteed daily tonnage, with a typical processing capacity of approximately 70 dry tons per day, and up to a maximum capacity of 90 dry tons. It shall be capable of achieving a moisture content of less than 10%. The awarded service provider must process sludge regardless of its quality and other feedstock variability. Moreover, the treatment process and constructed facility shall be designed to accommodate future capacity expansion. Additionally, at the end of the contract, the transfer of equipment, maintenance records, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and other relevant documentation to the City will be required. The following tasks should be performed as part of the project:

- 1. Design and Construction
- *Design and construction of the digested liquid sludge processing facilities capable of handling the total maximum designed volume of biosolids that can be produced at Back River WWTP, including all necessary equipment, piping, and electrical systems. *The design and construction will ensure that the existing processes run efficiently without interference. The heat drying sec-
- tion will have its own dewatering facilities, which will also be included in the proposal.
- *Procurement of all necessary equipment and materials.
- *Design and construction of the system, including all necessary civil, structural, mechanical, and electrical works.
- *Commissioning of the system, including testing and tuning of all equipment and con-
- *Provide labor for sufficient operation and maintenance of the system.
- *Ensuring the centrate returns are within the operating envelope defined by the City.

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- *Ensuring continued compliance of the WWTP throughout construction and commissioning.
- *Integration with the WWTP utility (electricity, heat) and investigation of opportunities to use combined heat and power (CHP heat) and electricity to assist the dryers.
- *Obtaining all required permits to construct and start the facilities.
- *Ensuring compliance with all relevant regulatory requirements.

The service provider shall ensure that the existing operations are not affected by construction or operation activities.

- 2. Operations and Maintenance
- *Operate and maintain the facility in accordance with the design and regulatory requirements.
- *Implement an environmental management system to ensure compliance with all relevant regulations.
- *Provide routine and emergency maintenance to ensure the facility operates efficiently and effectively. Service provider shall maintain a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) to record all completed and planned work. The City shall have access to the CMMS.
- *Supply of all necessary labor, materials, and equipment.
- *Conduct and provide laboratory testing to determine the efficacy of the proposed tech-
- *Ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements for sludge disposal.
- *Report on the performance (such as, run time, production quantity, sludge quality etc.) of the system to the City.
- *Prepare and maintain an asset management program consistent with the City's software and procedures.
- 3. Marketing, Selling, and Hauling of **Biosolids Product**
- *Marketing and selling the final biosolids product with the City brand.
- *Branding, packaging, and distribution/hauling of final biosolids prod-
- *Identification of prospective customer(s) and anticipated revenue to be generated
- *Monitoring of the ongoing compliant usage and storage of the biosolids.

City Fees

*The service provider will be charged a monthly property lease fee for the duration of the contract. The City reserves the right to re-assess the fee each year.

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*The service provider is responsible for payment of all utility fees, including any water/wastewater utility fee.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria Score 25 Technical approach

- *Proposed solution
- *Incorporation of innovative technologies
- *Regulatory, environmental and safety compliance

Experience and Qualifications. Score 25

- *Company profile and experience
- *Company financials
- *Company track record
- *References and past performance

Project Management and Implementation Plan Score 10

- *Project timeline
- *Implementation plan
- *Integration with existing facilities
- *Construction plan
- *Asset availability and maintenance approach
- *Transitioning plan

Performance Guarantees Score 10 Financial Viability. Score 30

- *Comprehensive financial plan
- *Detailed cost breakdown for design, construction, and operations
- *Pricing structure and payment terms
- *Expected capital and operational cost
- *Revenue sharing model

Total 100

COSTS OF RFP RESPONSE

There will be no payment or compensation provided to individuals who participate in any part of the submission or selection process. All expenses related to the preparation of a response, including additional requested information, interviews, and any other necessary information, will be the sole responsibility of the prospective responder. The City, its staff, or its representatives will not be responsible for reimbursing any costs or expenses incurred as a result of submitting a response to this RFP.

The following timeline shall apply to this

RFP issued: Friday, November 22, 2024 Deadline for questions: Friday, December 6,

Proposal submission deadline: On or before Friday, February 7, 2025 (NOON)











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PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE/SITE VISIT

A non-mandatory pre-proposal conference (either in-person at BRWWTP or virtual) will be conducted on December 20, 2024, at 10 AM ET. If held in-person, a site visit will immediately follow the pre-proposal confer-

DPW encourages all contracting firms that have the experience and capacity to work on this scope to submit their proposals. All firms must demonstrate and document their capacity and resources to deliver the required services on time. Projects must comply with the 2006 edition of "The Specifications for Materials, Highways, Bridges, Utilities and Incidental Structures". City personnel will utilize the City of Baltimore Guidelines for the Performance Evaluation of Design Consultants and Construction Contractors for this contract/project. The extended version of this RFP including the background of the project, service provider capabilities, proposal requirement, financial capability and qualifications, and the City's right are detailed here. Should you have any questions regarding the scope of the project, please contact Mr. Mahmudul Hasan, Ph.D. (email Mahmudul. Hasan@baltimorecity.gov). subject line for the email must be "Questions for Project 1385R".

Prequalification Requirement

All firms listed in this specific proposal (SF255) / (330) for this Project must be prequalified by the Office of Boards and Commissions for each applicable discipline included in the proposal, at time of submittal for this Project. A copy of the consultants current Prequalification Certificate should be included in the bid submittal package. Information regarding the prequalification process can be obtained by calling the Office of Boards and Commissions 410.396.6883.

Submittal Process

Each Firm responding to this Request for Proposal (RFP) Project #1385R is required to complete and submit an original Standard Federal Form (SF) 255 / 330 unless otherwise specified in this RFP. Provide one (1) original submittal, along with five (5) copies to the Office of Boards and Commissions on or prior to the due date of February 7, 2025, NOON, Submittals will not be accepted after this deadline.

The Federal Standard Form (SF) 255 cannot be supplemented with additional pages, or additional information such as graphs, pho-

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tographs, organization chart, etc. All such information should be incorporated into the appropriate pages. Applications should not be bound; simply stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Cover sheets should not be included. Inclusion and/or submittal of additional material may result in the applicant being disqualified from consideration for this project.

Firms interested in submitting a proposal for this Project, shall address a "Letter of Interest" to the Office of Boards and Commissions, 4 South Frederick Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland, 21202 or you may email OBC.consultants@baltimorecity.gov). Letters of Interest will be utilized to assist small minority and women business enterprises in identifying potential teaming partners and should be submitted within five (5) days of the date of the project's advertisement. The Letter of Interest must provide the name and number of your firms contact person. Failure to submit a "Letter of Interest" will not disqualify a firm submitting a proposal for the project.

Only individual firms (including, for example, individuals, sole proprietorships, corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and general partnerships) or formal Joint Venture (JV) may apply. Two firms may not apply jointly unless they have formed a joint venture.

MBE/WBE Requirements – Mayor's Office (SMBA&D)

It is the policy of the City of Baltimore Mayor's Office of Small and Minority Business Advocacy & Development (SMBA&D) to promote equal business opportunity in the City's contracting process. Pursuant to Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code (2000 Edition) - Minority and Women's Business Program, Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) participation goals apply to this contract. Minority- and women-owned business participation goals will be determined after contractor selection.

Verifying Certification

Each firm submitting a SF 255 for consideration for a project is responsible for verifying that all MBEs and WBEs to be utilized on the project are certified by the SMBA&D prior to submitting the proposal. A directory of certified MBEs and WBEs is available from SMBA&D. Since changes to the directory occur daily, firms submitting SF 255s should call

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SMBA&D at (410) 396-3818 to verify certification, expiration dates and services that the MBE or WBE is certified to provide.

Non-Affiliation

A firm submitting a proposal may not use an MBE or WBE to meet a contract goal if:

- 1. The firm has a financial interest in the MBE or WBE
- The firm has an interest in the ownership or control of the MBE or WBE
- The firm is significantly involved in the operation of the MBE or WBE

(Article 5, Subtitle 28-41).

Insurance Requirements

The consultant selected for the award of this project shall provide professional liability, auto liability, and general liability and workers' compensation insurances as required by the City of Baltimore.

Local Law Hiring

Article 5, Subtitle 27 of the Baltimore City Code, as amended (the "Local Hiring Law") and its rules and regulations apply to contracts and agreements executed by the City on or after the Local Hiring Law's effective date of December 23, 2013, which is applicable to all vendors. The Local Hiring Law applies to every contract for more than \$300,000 made by the City, or on its behalf, with any person. It also applies to every agreement authorizing assistance valued at more than \$5,000,000 to a City-subsidized project. Please visit www.oedworks.com for details on the requirements of the law.

Additional Information

Any firm submitting a (SF255) in response to the RFP that fails to comply with the requirements of Article 5, Subtitle 28 of Baltimore City Code when executing a contract is subject to the following penalties: suspension of a contract; withholding of funds; rescission of contract based on material breach; disqualification as a consultant from eligibility to provide services to the City for a period not to exceed 2 years; and payment for damages incurred by the City.

A resume for each person listed as key personnel and/or specialist, including those from MBE and WBE firms, must be shown on the page provided within the application.

Please be advised that for the purpose of reviewing price proposals and invoices, the City of Baltimore defines a principal of a

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firm as follows:

A principal is any individual owning 5% or more of the outstanding stock of an entity, a partner of a partnership, a 5% or more shareholder of a sub-chapter 'S' Corporation, or an individual owner.

Out-of-State Corporations must identify their corporate resident agent within the applica-

Firms will not be considered for a specific project if they apply as both a sub-consultant and prime consultant.

Failure to follow directions of this advertisement, submittal due date or the application may cause disqualification of the submittal.

Deena Joyce, AEAC Executive Secretary Chief Office of Boards and Commissions

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CITY OF BALTIMORE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE OF ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION NOTICE OF LETTING

Sealed Bids or Proposals, in duplicate addressed to the Board of Estimates of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and marked for **SANITARY CONTRACT NO. 1007R-JONES** FALLS SEWERSHED INFLOW AND FILTRATION REDUCTION-AREA B will be received at the Office of the Comptroller, Room 204 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland until 11:00 A.M on January 8th, 2025. Positively no bids will be received after 11:00 A.M. Bids will be publicly opened by the Board of Estimates and can be watched live on CharmTV's cable channel (Channel 25/1085HD); charmtvbaltimore.com/watch-live or listen in at (443) 984-1696 (ACCESS CODE: 0842939) from City Hall at Noon. The Contract Documents may be examined, without charge, at Contract Administration 4 South Frederick Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202 on the 3rd floor (410) 396-4041 as of **November 22nd, 2024** and copies may be purchased for a non-refundable cost of 100.00. Conditions and requirements of the Bid are found in the bid package. All contractors bidding on this Contract must first be prequalified by the City of Baltimore Contractors Qualification Committee. Interested parties should call (410) 396-6883 or contact OBC at 4 S Frederick St., 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. If a bid is submitted by a joint venture ("JV"), then in that event, the document that established the JV shall be submitted with the bid for verification purposes. The Prequalification Category required for bidding on this project is **B02552: Sewer Construction.** Cost Qualification Range for this work shall be \$5,000,000.01 to \$10,000,000.00.

For further inquiries about purchasing bid documents, please contact the assigned Contract Administrator LWalston@baltimorecity.gov_ and dpwbidopportunities@baltimorecity.gov

A "Pre-Bidding Information" session will be conducted via Microsoft Teams, Vendor can call 332-249-0605 PASSCODE: 709405444# on December 4th, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Principal items of work for this contract include, but are not limited to:

Cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) lining of sanitary sewers;

Excavate and replace segments of sanitary sewers via point repairs;

Manhole repair and rehabilitation work;

Sewer house connection (SHC) repair and rehabilitation work;

New manhole and cleanout installation work;

This project is funded by SRF program.

The MBE goal is 22%

The WBE goal is 16%

APPROVED:

Clerk, Board of Estimates

APPROVED: Khalil Zaied

Director

Department of Public Works

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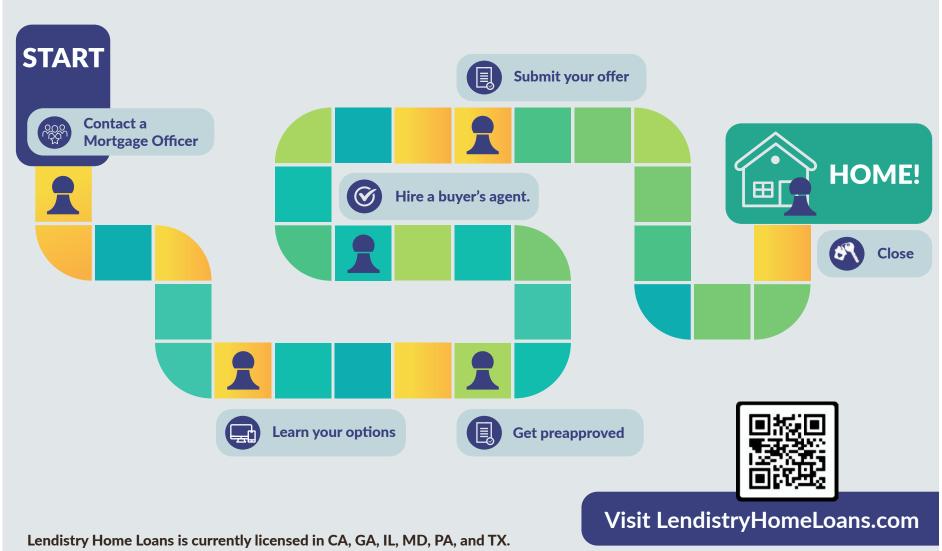






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NMLS #2453988





