

Letter from the President:

Council Position:

“Foster an Environment that Creates Equitable Opportunity and Builds Economic Value” is the mission and purpose of the Northwest Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council (NWMMSDC). We exist to: grow the value of revenue spent with Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs); Support members funnel spend to certified MBEs; build fairness and equity in the contracting process; level the contracting playfield; and create economic wealth within our communities of color. The NWMMSDC acts in accordance with its core values: Deliver Value, Forward Thinking, Diversity of Thought, and Passion. By consciously acting in accordance with our mission and purpose and consistently living within the parameters of our value structure we help our entire community. We are working to create generational wealth, thus building a better world for our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. We must commit to transform our businesses to one of inclusion if we want to be part of a bigger societal reform. Part of this self-reformation is our commitment to nonviolently resist the authority we see as unjust.

The NWMMSDC supports the ongoing protests across our country and abroad. After a decade long civil rights movement of the 50’s and 60’s, and after 57 years post the March on Washington, disparity, racial inequalities, and racism continue to permeate the fabric of our country. The advancements we made over the last 50 years have unraveled before our very own eyes. This unraveling has caused levels of unrest only likened by the events of the 50’s and 60’s.

Council Perspective:

Everyone is entitled to basic human rights as members of humanity and a free society. As community members we are expected to act in accordance with the societal norms. Arguably, this is impossible because of the inequity, racism, and prejudice that infuse society. This problem occurs due to individual behavior as well as like-minded community and institutional behaviors. Our institutions have set up disparate processes, policies, practices, infrastructures, and systems which favor the wealthy and privileged, squeeze the life out the of middle class, and neglect the poor. Our institutions have failed to provide fairness, equity, equality, and justice for our community.

Today’s demonstrations are symptomatic of a failed institution, more importantly failed collection of institutions. Institutional budgets are uncontrolled and wasteful. The economy is inequitable. Our institutions favor the majority, to the exclusion of diverse and minority owned firms. This puts many people at risk of losing their automobiles, homes, and jobs thereby leading to more homelessness. Homelessness directly affects poverty, mental illness, and substance use disorders. Housing has failed our community and contributed to higher incidence of COVID-19 due to the inability to socially distance. Mental Health Institutions continue to get defunded placing doctors, nurses, patients, and communities at risk. Our Medical System, designed to save lives, is constrained by the insurance industry. We have a failed educational system where black and latino students drop out at unprecedented rates and the privileged class of students excel continuing to expand the educational and wealth gap. Most schools in

this country place the burden on teachers to fund their education out of their own pocket. The welfare system has failed our community - instead of helping recipients advance, it contains and controls our community. These continuous failures are exposed in how we as a country deal with institutionalized disparity.

There are currently 2.3 million individuals incarcerated within our prison system. The rate of incarceration is disparate towards people of color:

Population	White	Black	Latino/Hispanic	Native American/Alaska Native	Asian
US Census	62%	12.6%	16.9%	3.3%	5.2%
Incarceration	26.97%	38%	31.1%	2.32%	1.52%

Disparity in incarceration rates. Blacks are incarcerated at five times the rate of whites. Latinos are incarcerated at twice the rate of whites.

Another significant symptom of our institutional failure is evidenced by the lack of trust in our Criminal Justice System. The failed institutions put people at risk. It creates an environment where more people of color than non-minorities are killed by Police Officers. This trend continues to increase year-over-year.

Year	Total	White	Black	Latino/Hispanic	Other	Unknown
2017	987	457	223	179	44	84
2018	996	399	209	148	36	204
2019	1,004	370	235	258	39	202
2020 Thru May	429	172	88	57	14	98

Other & Unknown: Native American/Alaska Native, Two or More Races, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islanders, Some Other Race, Asian

The downstream effect of a failing Criminal Justice System is significant. The effect creates single parent households impacting the growth and maturity of children. It is these failing institutional practices, its symptoms, and the vicious cycle we as an organization fight against every day.

By accepting accountability for our institutions inherent weakness and inherently racist policies impact on our communities, we can begin to bring forth change for our community. Our minority community has been severely impacted because of the global pandemic COVID-19 both economically and medically. This COVID-19 crisis is aggravated by the death of Mr. George Floyd, justly erupting in behaviors to effectively counter unjust actions.

It is necessary that we as an organization, lead the efforts between the public and private business community to reverse current trends and develop a path forward where fairness, equity, and real (not superficial) respect for everyone becomes part of the new societal fabric. Our Council came to being due to the institutionalized prejudice in contracting and the growing wealth gap. It would be naïve of us to believe we will rid every one of their personal history, upbringing, prejudices, and willingness to embrace diversity and inclusion. However, our effort must continue if we are to build a better place for generations to come.

The Opportunity to Be First!

To effectively change we must ask ourselves, are we a conscientious business community? If so, are we willing to “Be First” to change ourselves and our organizations so we can create change in our community?

We must also ask ourselves “are we going to be the generation and society that really changed the world to one of equity, equality, social justice, and respect for social and human dignity, or, are we going to be the generation and society that allowed this moment to flee and return to the current state of comfort and institutionalized inequity?”

The NWMMSDC by its very nature is a multi-cultural and inclusive organization. This does not mean we know everything. What it does mean is that we must: continue to the pursuit of equity; continue to intentionally and consciously live and behave in accordance with our values; live diversity and inclusion; and continuously improve ourselves. The NWMMSDC is committed to developing minority businesses, support members that are earnestly inclusive - challenge those that are not; and strengthen our community.

Building fairness and equity into our society requires wealth growth in all our communities. We can accomplish this by executing three short and long-term concurrent strategies: 1. Develop and Grow Minority Business Enterprises; 2. Participate and Support Development of Private and Public Sector Growth in Diversity and Inclusion; and 3. Support Growth and Development of our Communities. At the foundation of these three concurrent strategies is education. Education is the foundation to building a fair, equitable, and just society.

First, Develop and Grow Minority Business Enterprises. Engaging and contracting with MBEs will ensure business owners provide employees and their families with the ability to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. As we collaborate, partner, and engage in business with MBEs, we create a pathway to Health, Safety, and Welfare by driving livable wages, providing medical and retirement benefits, and ultimately creating wealth. MBE commitment to their employees, position their children to complete basic education, achieve a college education, and eventually join the community of entrepreneurs or professionals in the workforce.

Second, Participate and Support Development of Private and Public Agency Members' Diversity and Inclusion Efforts. The Council is an integral element of private and public sector growth in diversity and Inclusion. Supply chains must be inclusive in every aspect of supply chain contracting with MBEs, enabling community wealth development. Additionally, the Council can support private and public sector with recruitment of experienced professionals to join their leadership (Decision-makers and Board of Directors) ranks. Experience is a key in this formula because experience brings empathy. Continued recruitment of the "privileged-of-the-privileged" to leadership roles brings no value. Leadership must truly understand the meaning, impact, and effect of diversity and inclusion. Continuing current recruitment and placement practices will not achieve the desired outcome of impactful diversity and inclusion efforts.

The entire leadership must be educated in supplier diversity, diversity and inclusion, plus conscious and unconscious bias. This is where experienced leadership will contribute significant value vs that of the "privileged-of-the-privileged" who will resist change to the existing state. It is not possible for an inexperienced leader to be introspective, truthfully seek to understand, genuinely inquire into their blind spots, nor drive change. Creating a collaborative effort within our respective organizations to effectively lead a diverse and inclusive enterprise, consciously supporting wealth creation, and contributing to the health, safety, and wealth of our communities, this is where society changes.

Third, Support Growth and Development of our Communities. We must continue to demonstrate how diversity and inclusion impacts community development and growth. Demonstrate the value of a diverse and empowered community. Recruit of employees and professionals from these communities. Again, education is a key element of our community success.

The NWMMSDC exists to "create equitable opportunity and build economic value" in contracting with ethnic minority owned businesses, thus building a thriving, inclusive economy, and community. This is a short-term (economically support immediate needs) and long-term (invest in education at all levels and invest in community development) commitment. Considering the stress our community is presently under with COVID-19 and civil unrest, we must be intentional in creating a culture of diversity and inclusion to build a better world within which we and our future generations live and thrive.

The bottom line is, "Be the First" to transform as a person, organization, and community and do not let this moment to effect societal change flee!

