

Small Business Connections

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East Tennessee Purchasing Association's Diversity Business Alliance Committee

An essential part of business operations lies in the day-to-day functions that a Procurement team performs. Analysis, ethics, impartiality, and professionalism are good examples of the type of practices imperative for the procurement profession to have to successfully acquire goods and services. Often, a procurement professional needs to rely on peers to ask questions, develop effective practices and receive all the help and support they need in order to make good decisions. To serve this purpose, the [East Tennessee Purchasing Association](#) (ETPA) strives to establish cooperative relationships within the public procurement profession by creating a space for members to lean into one another and help each other succeed finding the resources they need.

ETPA is a non-profit organization and an official chapter of [NIGP The Institute for Public Procurement](#), a vibrant international association that facilitates a highly regarded and respected professional order for public procurement practitioners. NIGP's mission is to develop, support and promote the public procurement profession. ETPA members have access to a wealth of knowledge, professional development resources, and networking events.

The [Diversity Business Alliance](#) is a committee of ETPA member agencies with over 155 years of collective procurement experience of various levels, dedicated to supporting each other's agencies in the pursuit of increasing the amount of business conducted with companies owned by minorities, women, service-disabled veterans, persons with disabilities, and small businesses (collectively referred to as diversity business enterprises or "DBE's"). The Diversity Business Alliance is comprised of the following member agencies: [Blount County](#), [City of Knoxville](#), [Knox County](#), [Knoxville Utilities Board](#), [Knoxville's Community Development Corporation](#), [Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority](#), [Public Building Authority](#), [Tennessee Board of Regents](#), [Tennessee Valley Authority](#) and [University of Tennessee](#).

One way the Diversity Business Alliance will pursue this goal in 2023 is by hosting quarterly Meet & Greet business outreach events throughout the year, aimed at matching suppliers with agency buyers and decision makers in hopes of striking new business opportunities. The first quarter event titled "DBE Business Chill Out", was held on Tuesday, January 24th, 2023, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., in the Community Room of the City of Knoxville's Public Works Building located at 3131 Morris Ave., Knoxville, TN 37909. The focus was those businesses who registered with our ten partner agencies between January 2020 and December 2022. Our desire is to give businesses the opportunity to have 1-on-1 informal conversations with buyers and small business outreach advocates from East and Middle Tennessee.