

SUMMER 2016



Chicago  
Minority Supplier  
Development Council

**BRIDGET CARTER  
AND CAESARS  
ENTERTAINMENT  
DOUBLE DOWN  
ON TRINIDAD  
CONSTRUCTION**

**PLUS:**

HIGHLIGHTS  
FROM CBOF49  
& MBE2MBE  
EXCHANGE

HOW  
IMMIGRATION  
VISAS CAN HELP  
FINANCE YOUR  
BUSINESS



# BRIDGET CARTER BETS ON BRIAN ORTIZ... AND WINS BIG

**M**inority business, like all business, is about who you know. Bridget Carter, Manager of Supplier Diversity for Caesars Entertainment, is one person you'll want to know and ChicagoMSDC is the place to meet her and other supplier diversity professionals who can help you navigate the system and identify new opportunities.

When you think about Supplier Diversity programs that truly make a difference, Caesars Entertainment quickly comes to mind. One of the key reasons Caesars leads the way for supplier diversity program development and implementation is their Manager of Supplier Diversity, Bridget Carter.

Bridget is accountable for creating, implementing, and managing Caesars' supplier diversity initiatives across the Central Region, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Iowa. She initially worked in the Louisiana area and in 2012 was asked by Caesars' management to relocate to Chicago to head up the Midwest Central Region. She currently manages supplier diversity programs for Harrah's Joliet, Horseshoe Hammond, Horseshoe Southern Indiana, and Harrah's North Kansas City.

Upon arrival in Chicago in 2012, Bridget hit the ground running, organizing matchmaking events and face-to-face meetings between minority business enterprise owners and



BRIDGET CARTER, MANAGER OF SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FOR CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT, AFTER RECEIVING THE ANDERS C. RASMUSSEN JR. AWARD AT THE 2014 MBEIC SHARING SUCCESS AWARDS AT THE 47th ANNUAL CHICAGO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FAIR.



PHOTOGRAPH BY POWELL PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

BRIDGET CARTER, MANAGER OF SUPPLIER DIVERSITY FOR CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT HOSTS MEETINGS WITH MBEs DURING THE CBOF49 CORPORATE ONE-ON-ONE POWER PITCH EVENT. BUYERS FROM HARRAH'S METROPOLIS AND HARRAH'S JOUJET MET WITH SEVERAL MBEs SEEKING A WIDE VARIETY OF GOODS AND SERVICES.

key property buyers and managers. Ms. Carter was also instrumental in helping facilitate and build relationships with representatives from the State of Indiana's Department of Administration, Minority and Women Business Enterprises Division (MWBE). This effort has proved to be most beneficial in helping reduce the certification process lead-time and providing minority business enterprises training and assistance with required certification documents.

In her position as Manager of Supplier Diversity, she focuses on conducting external outreach to MWBEs to promote procurement project partnership opportunities, which include mentoring, "How to Do Business" training, and providing ongoing support for internal sourcing managers and buyers. She has established a system that helps small and diverse businesses navigate through the company, which operates in a highly competitive and regulated industry. Bridget has also led the effort to establish a process for tracking attendance at events, an online supplier registration portal, and a supplier vetting process matching suppliers to sourcing opportunities.

Bridget is active in a number of organizations including the ChicagoMSDC CBOF Program Planning Committee. She

has been recognized by ChicagoMSDC for her exemplary efforts in supplier diversity with the Anders Rasmussen Award, as well as being highlighted in *Diversity Plus Magazine*.

Tricia Wynn, Project Director, Northwest Indiana MSDC, has been working closely with Bridget since her arrival in 2012 and has witnessed firsthand the benefits Bridget's efforts have provided to the MBE community. "Bridget Carter is a driving force in the success of Caesars' diversity program. She is the real deal. She takes a personal interest in each MBE she works with and makes certain that they have all the resources necessary to succeed. She never fails to assist anyone seeking her support and guidance. She takes supplier diversity development personally and is an advocate to all. It is an honor and privilege to work with her," states Wynn.

One of Bridget's success stories is Trinidad Construction. President, Brian Ortiz, started his full-service General Contracting firm in 2011. Having grown up in the industry, he appreciated the value of minority certification and the pitfalls of depending solely on public sector work. He immediately sought MBE certification and called on his contacts at ChicagoMSDC and the MBDA Business



ENTRANCEWAY TO THE VIP DIAMOND LOUNGE AT HARRAH'S JOLIET.



THE BUFFET AT HARRAH'S JOLIET REMODELED BY TRINIDAD IN 2014.



FLAVORS THE BUFFET AT HARRAH'S JOLIET.

Center-Chicago to facilitate introductions to targeted corporate members to broaden his private sector network. Through his participation in CBOF and other ChicagoMSDC events, Brian met Bridget, Rona Fourté, Walgreens' Director of Minority Certification, James Stocks, Macy's Senior Manager, Supplier Diversity and Vendor Development, and other key supplier diversity professionals who would later become some of his largest clients.

Ortiz credits ChicagoMSDC for creating a space for minority entrepreneurs to make valuable connections in the private sector. In his words, "ChicagoMSDC certification can facilitate introductions and opportunities that a new or small business might not typically have. It helps you get your foot in the door, and it's up to you to take advantage of the opportunities." He continues, "Be patient but persistent, take what's given to you. Do a good job and your patience will be rewarded." And indeed, Brian's patience and quality of service have been rewarded. He began doing small maintenance work and other projects that might have been outside of what he expected to be doing with his business. "The key is to get on the vendor list, and show what you're capable of." That strategy has paid off with Harrah's and for several other large corporate clients.

At Harrah's Joliet Casino, Trinidad was given its first opportunity in 2011. Oscar Bergasse, Facilities Manager, recalls being approached by Ortiz when he first established Trinidad, "Knowing Brian and his dedication to providing a good product, I knew that he would be worth a shot. Little did I know at the time, that when giving him the opportunity to create the Casino High Limits Slots Expansion project, that Harrah's would be providing him with his very first purchase order. As an immigrant and minority myself, I knew the opportunity given to Trinidad Construction by Harrah's would not be wasted."

For the next few years, Trinidad was given



BRIAN ORTIZ, PRESIDENT, TRINIDAD CONSTRUCTION ON SITE AT HARRAH'S JOLIET CASINO WHERE HE IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A MAJOR REMODEL PROJECT.

increasingly higher profile opportunities, and in 2016 was awarded its largest project to date – a major renovation project that includes building a new restaurant, remodeling the steakhouse, and renovating the hotel. "Now here we are from a small \$35,000 project in 2011 to a multi-million brand new restaurant and hotel suites conversion, just five years later. In between those years Trinidad Construction has continued to strengthen our relationship by always providing a great product, from remodeling the Flavors restaurant to much smaller projects such as door replacements or concrete work. It continues to be a pleasure to be working with Brian Ortiz and his team of professionals," muses Bergasse.

In Brian's words, "Caesars was there for me since the beginning. They were our first corporate client, and Bridget's team has made a consistent effort to stay in touch, and support us over the years."

This slow and steady approach has proven successful with many other clients. Trinidad has performed

remodel projects at over 400 Walgreens stores in ten states; will be breaking ground in summer 2016 on a new 23,000-square foot training facility for another corporate client; is nearing completion on a \$9MM Food Plant renovation; has completed several large tenant improvement projects in downtown high rises; and has remodeled Chicago's most iconic downtown department store.

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- BRIAN ORTIZ  
PRESIDENT  
TRINIDAD CONSTRUCTION

Brian's success has kept him mindful of the importance of "paying it forward." He is conscious of hiring minority workers and second tier firms, and regularly speaks at outreach

events encouraging MBE firms to pursue private sector work. He also mentors a student from Providence Englewood Charter School. Whether it's encouraging an underprivileged student to ambitiously pursue their education, or a fellow MBE to go after a big account, Brian says, "It's all about not being afraid to take a swing at it. Take the opportunities you're offered, no matter how small or insignificant they might seem, do good work, treat people right, and your patience and persistence will be rewarded!"



**CAESARS**  
**ENTERTAINMENT®**

For more information on how to do business with Caesars, please see the Procurement Luncheon article on page 40 of this issue.