

Phila.'s largest minority-owned vendor seeks continued commitment for services

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The City of Philadelphia's Office of Public Property has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a contract that currently accounts for nearly 15 percent of the municipal government's total women and minority owned business inclusion.

The contract, currently held by PRWT/U.S. Facilities, calls for operations, maintenance and support services at the Philadelphia Triplex, which consists of nearly 1.5 million square feet of public property including the Municipal Services Building, Juanita Kidd Stout Center for Criminal Justice and One Parkway Building.

"U.S. Facilities, Inc. seeks to continue its commitment to the city by providing high-quality, professional services for the City of Philadelphia," Malik Majeed, CEO and general counsel of U.S. Facilities said in a news release.

"As the city's largest minority-owned vendor, we pride ourselves on performance and social responsibility for Philadelphia."

The Mayor Jim Kenney's administration and members of City Council raised concerns over low rates of minority participation in city contracting. According to the City's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) FY17 Annual Report, the contract for management of the Philadelphia Triplex, currently held by U.S. Facilities, Philadelphia's largest Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MBE), accounts for 14.5 percent of the municipal government's total women- and minority-owned business inclusion.

U.S. Facilities' Triplex contract accounted for \$36 million of the city's \$249 million awarded to minority businesses in fiscal year 2017. It amounts to almost 5 percent of the city's total 35 percent goal for awarding minority contractors.

"We provide employment opportunities for the disenfranchised, and we have been fortunate to have turned that premise into a very successful business," Majeed said.

"We make every effort to pay our success forward by mentoring diverse firms and providing those firms with the support and/or opportunities to enable those companies to grow and overcome challenges."

Philadelphia lags behind its peer major cities in terms of MBEs, ranking 10th among the nation's 30 largest cities.

PRWT was founded in 1988 by Willie Johnson, who serves on the board of The Philadelphia Tribune. The company is the city's largest minority business enterprise and one of the nation's 40 largest minority-controlled corporations. The company supports nearly 100 organizations/charities in the greater Philadelphia region each year, including scholarship programs with the Urban League of Philadelphia and the United Negro College Fund.

The new contract will take effect on April 1, 2018 and could cover up to a four-year span, ending on March 31, 2022 with options to renew at the end of each year. Interested applicants are expected to submit proposals by Dec. 15.