

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Metra to host DBE certification workshop July 20**

*Free event will help small, minority- and women-owned businesses*

CHICAGO – (July 12, 2016) – Metra’s Office of Business Diversity and Civil Rights will host a free certification workshop for small, minority- and women-owned businesses from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Wednesday, July 20 on the second floor of Metra’s headquarters, located at 547 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago.

Designed for small business owners, construction firms, professional service firms and suppliers, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Certification 101 Workshop will explain how a minority- or women-owned business can become a certified DBE firm. While there are similarities, the DBE certification is separate and distinct from WBE, SBE, or MBE certifications. The DBE workshop will also provide an in-depth explanation of how to complete the certification application, including what documents are needed and how to avoid common mistakes. All questions regarding the process are welcomed during this workshop.

“Our goal is to offer anyone who wants to do business with Metra a fair chance at the many lucrative contract opportunities we offer,” said Executive Director/CEO Don Orseno. “We are dedicated to assisting small businesses throughout the process to ensure strong participation among women and minorities.”

The workshop also will give insight on the advantages of DBE certification and how it can be used as a resource when doing business with Metra and the four other Illinois Unified Certification (IL UCP) members: the Chicago Transit Authority, Pace, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the City of Chicago.

All non-minority small businesses are welcome to attend, as well, to learn about the Metra’s new Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program.

Metra’s DBE program was established in 1984. Since that time, the program has made numerous strides in creating a level playing field for small, minority- and women-owned businesses. Over the past 30 years, Metra’s DBE program has sponsored and participated in hundreds of workshops, training sessions and exhibitor fairs that provide access and opportunities throughout Illinois.

Over the past three years, Metra has committed \$104.4 million in contracts to DBE firms, with more than half, or \$69 million, going to women-owned firms, 32 percent going to African American-owned firms, 26 percent going to Hispanic-owned firms and 12 percent going to Asian

or Asian-Pacific American-owned firms. Metra has also worked to grow the number of DBE firms who serve as prime contractors for the agency, with 71 DBE primes in 2010 and 131 in 2015.

To register for the event and for more information, contact DBE Community Liaison Romaine Newton at [newton@metrarr.com](mailto:newton@metrarr.com) or 312-322-6587.

***About Metra***

*Metra is one of the largest and most complex commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane and McHenry counties in Northeastern Illinois. The agency provides service to and from downtown Chicago with 241 stations over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles and approximately 1,200 miles of track. Metra operates more than 700 weekday trains, providing about 300,000 passenger trips each weekday.*

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