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wide reported that over the past two decades, they have done business with corporations and the government sector through their business development programs — in many instances, these contracts represent most or all of their business.

Regardless, many minority suppliers say that in order to assist in the survival and development of their businesses, the corporate and private sectors must do more. The \$20.5 billion spent with minority suppliers represent less than 5 percent of the \$500 billion spent by the corporations cited earlier. Managers of business development programs who chose to be candid agree that ethnic minority-owned firms still aren't getting their fair share of the business pie corporations and the public sector still aren't doing enough business with minority firms.

Ethnic entrepreneurs who have established a goal to land corporate and government contracts must be prepared. They must know how to do business properly. They must properly research, plan and organize their businesses. They must know how best to take advantage of the opportunities presented by minority-owned development programs. They must find out what exactly corporations and government agencies are looking for from their minority suppliers, and they must do what is required to meet the established criteria. Basically, like any other client, what the corporate and government sectors seek from minority suppliers are: quality products and services, timely delivery and at the right price. They want companies that are reputable, are good at what they do, competitive, resourceful and can get the job done. That simple.

In today's rapidly changing and fiercely competitive, global marketplace, corporations have to struggle more than ever to remain profitable. And, in spite of the fact that the government sector is not necessarily driven by the profit motive, they are being held more accountable for how they disburse tax-payers' dollars. Subsequently, for ethnic entrepreneurs vying for lucrative procurement contracts, it is very important to not only know what a corporation or a governmental agency purchases, but to also know something about their customers, competitors, their marketplace goals and challenges.

Frankly, a better understanding of diversity among people and the global marketplace would minimize the need for minority business development programs. Parity on all levels of the playing field would exist. With the riddance of institutional racism and economic exclusion, there would no longer be a need for set-aside programs, et al.

However, until that glorious day arrives, it behooves ethnic business-owners to be on-the-ball and to take advantage of all available lucrative procurement opportunities.

Speaking of opportunities, we're moving closer to the closing date (May 16th) for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority's new Ethnic Destination & Visitors guide, titled: "Celebrating our Cultural Diversity," which is being published by my firm, Aird & Associates. The guide provides a unique opportunity to reach the 25 (See Business, Page 24)

NAACP AND YOU

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out rates and the lowest scholastic scores, 2). The recognition awarded African American students on par with the recognition awarded athletic achievers. ACT/SO is by far the greatest program addition that the NAACP has added to it's arsenal within the last 50 years of it's history.

To make ACT/SO even greater in Las Vegas the committee, headed by Mrs. Velicia Harion is now in the process of reaching out to the community saying 'We Need Your Help'. Volunteers are needed to serve as instructors, coaches, mentors and role models for our young African American youth. Additionally, she needs judges in all categories of competition. ACT/SO is an emergency declaration of war on that smothering climate of low expectations and low scholastic achievement that can destroy the African American communities of America.

Each contestant must be: 1). of African American decent, 2). in grades 9 to 12, 3). a citizen of the United States, 4). a member of the NAACP.

The categories are: HUMANITIES: Music competition, Original Essay, Play Writing, Poetry; **PERFORMING ARTS**: Dance, Dramatics, Music Instrumental Classical, Music Instrumental Contemporary, Music Vocal Contemporary, Oratory; **SCIENCE**: Architecture, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics/ Electronics, Physics/Energy, Physics/General; **VISUAL ARTS**: Drawing, Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Film Making/Video. The time for you to ACT is NOW! Your children's minds are too

precious to waste! Why Not ACT/SO? 646-1662.



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