



CPPI

**SUPPLIER
DIVERSITY
PROGRESS
REPORT**

**20
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Technical Brief: Supplier Diversity in Commercial Construction, and Ducere's Role with CPPI

What supplier diversity programs actually are and why prime contractors run them; how a working program is structured (outreach, matchmaking, mentoring, teaming); the measurable results from a live commercial project; and the part Ducere plays as CPPI's Supplier Diversity Consultant on the Savannah project

Executive summary

On large public and institutional construction projects, owners increasingly require the prime contractor to open subcontract work to small and diverse local firms. That requirement is easy to write into a contract and hard to deliver in the field: diverse and startup subcontractors routinely face systemic barriers to large commercial work, including bonding capacity, insurance limits, estimating sophistication, and simple lack of access to the prime's decision makers. A compliance-only approach (send a few bid invitations, document the attempt) satisfies the paperwork and changes nothing. The approach that produces real participation treats supplier diversity as a capacity-building operation. **CPPI**, a commercial construction manager and general contractor, runs its Savannah project this way, and **Ducere Construction Services serves as CPPI's Supplier Diversity Consultant on that project**. CPPI's Spring 2021 Supplier Diversity Progress Report (the cover of which opens this brief) documents the program: a 20% diverse-business utilization commitment, outreach to 313 certified local MWBE firms yielding 12 bid submissions, a matchmaking event, and four mentor teams in place against a target of eight. This brief explains the model, reads the published numbers honestly, and describes how Ducere's role fits.

20%

CPPI's diverse business utilization commitment for the project

313 to 12

certified local MWBE firms contacted vs. firms that submitted bid documentation

4 of 8

mentor/prime teams formed so far vs. CPPI's stated goal

41%

diverse participation in current Cost of Work billings, vs. the 20% goal

1. Why supplier diversity programs exist

Supplier diversity is the deliberate development and use of a diverse supply chain: businesses owned by minorities, women, and other underrepresented groups, and small local firms generally. On construction projects it is usually driven from the top. Government owners, school systems, not-for-profits, and private institutional clients write participation goals into their contracts, and the prime contractor has to meet them. CPPI frames its own commitment this way: supplier diversity is the core of its social responsibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy, and the objective is a diverse supply chain that is responsive to the project's demands while also meeting the calls of government, not-for-profit, and private partners for local inclusion in procurement.

The economic argument is straightforward. Money paid to local firms recirculates locally: job creation, higher wages, and increased tax revenue. For a project owner, the program turns a large construction spend into community economic development. For the prime contractor, a real program also widens the bidder pool, which tends to sharpen pricing and expose capable firms the prime would never have found through its usual bid list.

2. The real barrier is capacity, not intent

CPPI's report states the underlying problem plainly: despite the best intentions of community leaders, startup businesses, especially diverse startups, keep running into unique and systemic barriers that keep them out of large commercial projects. In practice those barriers are concrete and mostly the same everywhere:

Insurance. General liability, umbrella, workers' compensation, and additional-insured endorsements at the limits a large owner requires are expensive for a small firm to carry.

Bonding. Surety capacity is built over years of financials and completed work. A capable firm with a short track record can be unbondable on a project it could easily build.

Estimating. Pricing a large commercial scope accurately, against full drawings and specifications, is a different discipline than pricing small jobs. Under-priced bids fail projects and firms.

Access. Subcontract awards are made through relationships and bid lists. Firms outside those networks never see the opportunity, or see it too late.

This is why CPPI's program targets exactly those three functions in its education sessions: insurance, estimating, and bonding. Fixing the capacity gap is the program; the participation numbers are the result.

WHY "INVITE AND DOCUMENT" FAILS

Sending bid invitations to certified diverse firms and keeping the log satisfies a good-faith-effort checklist. It does not produce awards, because the barriers sit after the invitation: the firm cannot bond the scope, cannot meet the insurance requirement, or cannot price the work. A program that stops at outreach measures effort. A program that adds coaching, matchmaking, and mentoring measures results.

3. How a working program is structured: the CPPI model

CPPI's report describes a layered program, each layer aimed at a specific failure point.

PROGRAM ELEMENT	WHAT CPPI DOES	WHAT IT FIXES
Outreach and education (weekly)	Business development updates on the project, plus education on the core functions that keep small firms from winning large commercial work: insurance, estimating, and bonding. Virtual and in person.	Access and capacity: firms learn what the project needs and how to qualify before bid day.
One-on-one coaching (monthly)	Individual sessions on each firm's business challenges and requirements, focused on preparing for contract opportunities and checking in with firms already working on the project.	Firm-specific gaps that a group class cannot address.
Project manager meetings (quarterly)	In-person meetings between vendors and CPPI project managers to discuss contracting opportunities, whether direct or through a prime partner.	Access to the people who actually make award decisions.
Targeted matchmaking	Strategic sessions pairing local MWBE firms with larger prime subcontractors, structured to deliver both a contract opportunity and training on scaling a sustainable construction business.	Bonding and credibility: a small firm working under or beside an established prime borrows capacity while building its own.
Mentoring	Mentor/protege relationships that run for the life of the project; CPPI's own diverse partner and diversity consultant came out of a mentor/protege program.	Long-term capacity: the relationship outlasts one contract.
Teaming agreements	Agreements with local partners that let MWBE firms perform separate but sizable scopes of work while CPPI mentors them toward greater capacity.	Scale: the firm works a meaningful scope, not a token one.

4. Reading the published results

The Spring 2021 progress report gives specific, checkable numbers. Reading them carefully matters, because the report is candid about what has and has not been achieved.

4.1 Outreach. On 11/20/20, CPPI took part in a school-system outreach event aimed at certified local MWBE subcontractors, contacting firms by phone and email. 313 certified local MWBE firms were contacted; 12 submitted bid documentation. That is a response rate under 4%, which is typical for cold outreach to a certified-firm list and is the clearest evidence for why outreach alone is not enough. The 12 bidding firms include B&B; Demolition, Bridges Wood Products, Clifton Construction, Cyntechs, GPK LLC, Mastercraft Flooring, JT Maddox Concrete, R. J. Hall Construction, ELP Landscape Service, GMA Masonry, Ogeechee Steel, and SSE & Associates, spanning demolition, wood products, concrete, masonry, steel, flooring, landscape, and engineering scopes.

4.2 Participation against the goal. CPPI's goal is 20% diverse participation. The report tracks three measures: current Cost of Work billings at 41%, current prime contract participation at 11%, and four prime/sub partnerships (dollar value being tracked). The 41% Cost of Work figure is well above the 20% goal; the 11% prime-contract figure is below it. These measure different things, and both are reported rather than only the favorable one. The gap between them is the program's remaining work: moving diverse firms from participating in the cost of the work to holding larger prime-level scopes.

4.3 Matchmaking and mentoring. The first matchmaking event was held May 12, 2021, inviting nine firms: JT Maddox Concrete Experts, Brownstone Construction, Economy Masonry, Henry Plumbing, The Polote Corporation, Barrier One, Southeastern Contracting, Mock Mechanical, and Quinco Electric. Three of six subcontractors were partnered with a prime subcontractor. Four teams are listed: Southeastern with GMA Masonry and Economy Masonry; Forest Concrete with JT Maddox and CCP&C; Quinco Electric with Cyntech; and CPPI with Brownstone. CPPI's stated goal is eight mentor teams, so the program is at the halfway point and says so.

FIGURE 1 - CPPI SAVANNAH PROJECT: DIVERSE BUSINESS UTILIZATION VS. GOAL (SPRING 2021)

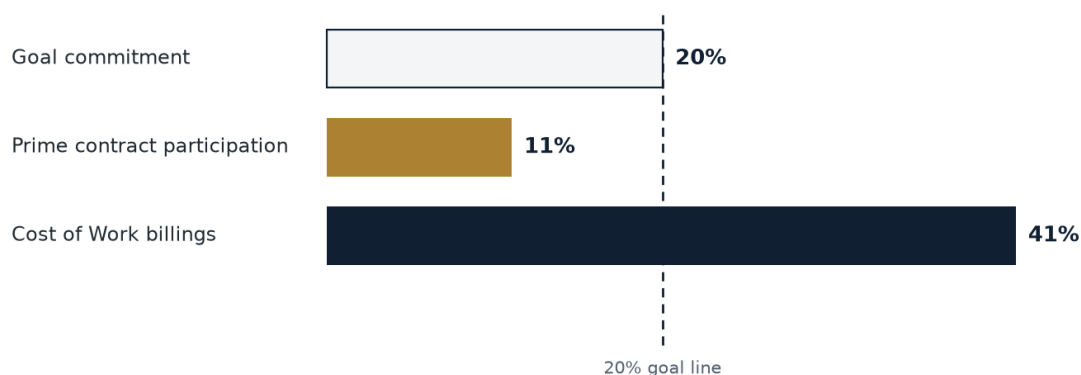


Figure 1 - Diverse-business utilization on the CPPI Savannah project against the 20% commitment, from CPPI's Spring 2021 Supplier Diversity Progress Report. Cost of Work billings (41%) exceed the goal; prime contract participation (11%) does not yet reach it. Prime/sub partnership dollar value was still being tracked at the time of the report.

5. Ducere's relationship with CPPI

Ducere Construction Services serves as CPPI's **Supplier Diversity Consultant** on the Savannah project. The consultant role is named on the contact page of CPPI's progress report: Markesia Akinbami, Supplier Diversity Consultant, is listed alongside CPPI's VP/Regional Manager David Hamilton as the program's two points of contact, and the report's closing note thanks the community for its support of the effort to use small and diverse businesses in Savannah.

The role is operational, not ceremonial. A supplier diversity consultant is the person who makes the program's elements actually run: building and maintaining the list of certified local firms, running the outreach, preparing firms for bid day through the insurance, estimating, and bonding education, coordinating the matchmaking events, tracking the participation metrics the report publishes, and reporting results (and challenges) to the prime contractor each quarter. CPPI's own report

is explicit that the program reports both successes and challenges in its quarterly reports, and the consultant is the one who keeps that data honest.

Why a construction company is the right consultant. Ducere is a licensed general contractor, not a consulting-only firm. That matters because the barriers listed in section 2 are construction-specific. A consultant who has priced scopes, carried the insurance, met the licensing requirements, and managed subcontractor compliance can coach a small firm on exactly those hurdles from experience rather than from a checklist. Ducere's own subcontractor program is built on the same fundamentals the CPPI program teaches: documented licensure, active insurance with proper endorsements, current W-9s, and written agreements before work starts. Teaching a small firm to meet those standards is the same discipline Ducere applies to its own vendor base.

THE DUCERE POSITION

Supplier diversity done properly makes the supply chain stronger, not just more varied. A diverse subcontractor who is properly insured, bonded where required, and priced realistically is a better subcontractor than one who is none of those things, whoever owns the company. The CPPI program's emphasis on insurance, estimating, and bonding is the same emphasis Ducere puts on compliance in its own subcontractor onboarding. Capacity building and risk control point in the same direction.

6. Where programs like this succeed or fail

Drawing on the structure of the CPPI program and Ducere's own field experience, the factors that separate a program that produces results from one that produces paperwork:

6.1 Sustained contact beats one-time events. CPPI's weekly, monthly, and quarterly rhythm is the right shape. A single outreach event produces a spike of interest; steady coaching produces qualified bidders.

6.2 Teaming works when the scope is real. Partnerships where the diverse firm performs a separate, sizable scope build capacity. Partnerships where the diverse firm is a pass-through do not, and owners and auditors increasingly look for that distinction.

6.3 Measure the right things. The CPPI report tracks outreach contacts, bid submissions, billings share, prime-contract share, and partnership count. Tracking several measures guards against declaring success on the easiest number. A 41% billings share alongside an 11% prime-contract share is exactly the kind of honest spread that shows where to focus next.

6.4 Compliance does not stop at the door. Bringing a small firm onto a large project raises the stakes on insurance, lien waivers, and documentation, not lowers them. Programs that relax those requirements for diverse firms set the firms up to fail. The better practice, and the one CPPI's education focus reflects, is to teach firms to meet the standard.

6.5 Report challenges, not only wins. CPPI commits to reporting both. A program that only reports success is a marketing document; one that reports gaps is a management tool.

7. Quick reference: frequently asked questions

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is supplier diversity?	The planned development and use of a diverse supply chain, including minority-, women-, and locally owned small businesses, driven by owner requirements and the prime contractor's own commitments. On construction projects it appears as participation goals in the contract.
What is CPPI?	A commercial construction manager and general contractor. Its Spring 2021 Supplier Diversity Progress Report documents the program on its Savannah project, including a 20% diverse business utilization commitment.

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is Ducere's relationship with CPPI?	Ducere Construction Services serves as CPPI's Supplier Diversity Consultant on the Savannah project, with Markesia Akinbami named as the consultant on CPPI's progress report contact page.
What did the program actually achieve?	Per the Spring 2021 report: 313 certified local MWBE firms contacted, 12 bid submissions, a May 12, 2021 matchmaking event, four mentor/prime teams against a goal of eight, 41% diverse share of Cost of Work billings and 11% of prime contract participation against a 20% goal.
Why is the response rate to outreach so low?	12 of 313 is under 4%. The barriers are insurance, bonding, and estimating capacity, which an invitation does not fix. That is why CPPI layers coaching, matchmaking, and mentoring on top of outreach.
Does supplier diversity mean lower standards?	No. The sound approach teaches small firms to meet the same insurance, licensing, and documentation standards as everyone else. Relaxing standards puts the firm and the project at risk.
Who are the contacts?	Markesia Akinbami, Supplier Diversity Consultant, markesia@ducereconstruction.com, 404.565.0631; David Hamilton, VP/Regional Manager at CPPI, as listed in the report.

Sources: CPPI Supplier Diversity Progress Report, Spring 2021 (cover reproduced from that report; all outreach, participation, matchmaking, mentoring, and contact figures are taken from it and are as of its publication date). Program-design commentary reflects general industry practice and Ducere's own subcontractor compliance experience. CPPI and its logo are the property of CPPI, reproduced here with the cover of its report to identify the program discussed. Informational only. Participation figures are point-in-time and will have changed since the report date.