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## **The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Announces Formation of Vendor Advisory Team**

*Initiative established to assist small business to prepare for arrival of expanded gaming industry*

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission announces the formation of a Vendor Advisory Team to consist of statewide business development agencies and organizations that can assist and support small businesses seeking to conduct business with the proposed Category 1 (resort-casino) and Category 2 (slots-parlor) gaming facilities.

The group has also met with MassGaming staff to discuss and review proposed vendor licensing regulations and how the team could work with local communities and chambers of commerce to offer assistance, financing and technical assistance to help small businesses prepare for opportunities created by the development of the casinos and slot parlor facilities being planned in the Commonwealth.

“This may be a first but we plan to work with key statewide organizations and government agencies to help our eventual licensees provide support to Massachusetts small businesses who may need resources to be sustainable vendors,” stated MassGaming Chairman Steve Crosby. “We want to make sure that our applicants can keep commitments to spend locally if they are awarded a license. Our applicants have certainly reached out to the businesses in their community and we believe this team can support their efforts to connect with qualified and capable small businesses.”

The team will meet quarterly with MassGaming with responsibilities that include developing recommendations on an ongoing basis regarding programmatic and regulatory concerns affecting small businesses. The Vendor Advisory Team will focus on assisting Category 1 and Category 2 licensees and local chambers with additional support to (1) Identify needed businesses, (2) Provide technical business assistance and (3) Assist with any needed financing.

“We would offer this assistance to any other major employer coming into Massachusetts so we should make sure that our casino operators have that same level of support to make sure we meet everyone’s expectations,” stated Jill Lacey Griffin, MassGaming Director of Workforce, Supplier and Diversity Development.



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“We have been engaged with members of the team for almost a year and they are all enthusiastic about participating where they can be helpful.”

The MGC Vendor Advisory Team includes the following organizations and government agencies:

- Associated Industries of Massachusetts
- Center for Women in Enterprise
- Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council
- General Services Administration– Small Business Procurement
- Hispanic-American Chamber Institute
- Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
- MA Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (MACCE)
- MA Department of Fish and Game
- MA Minority Contractors Association
- Mass Development
- MA Office for Access and Opportunity
- MA Office of Business Development
- MA Office of Energy Resources
- MA Office of Small and Local Business
- MA Supplier Diversity Office
- MA Department of Veterans Services
- Mass Growth Capital Corporation
- MA Gaming Diversity Coalition
- Minority Business Development Agency- Boston Business Center
- NAACP, New England Area Conference
- MA District Office- US Small Business Administration
- Small Business Association of New England
- Urban League

In addition, on January 9, 2014 at a MassGaming public meeting, the Commission voted to approve a \$20,000 grant to fund a pilot Small Business Capacity Building Program for the immediate or surrounding communities where a slots parlor is awarded. The purpose of this effort is to develop a pilot program to assist small businesses with the technical assistance needed to enhance their management capacity that comes with expected growth and to meet the supplier requirements of large anchor institutions. The program will engage economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, business associations and other stakeholders in the communities of licensed applicants. These local organizations would partner with the Vendor Advisory Team members to provide a program to assist local businesses who are potential slot parlor vendors.

The three main program goals would be to: 1) clearly identify the target audience, 2) involve all key local organizations, 3) and plan a comprehensive program that demonstrates how they will assist local entrepreneurs to win and maintain a contract with the Category 2 licensee.



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