



## **SMPS-NY announces AccessAEC Development Honorarium with Columbia University**

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The Society for Marketing Professional Services New York Chapter (SMPS-NY), an organization for marketing professionals in the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry, announced a partnership with Columbia University's CU Grow: Vendor Development Program to create the AccessAEC Development Honorarium. AccessAEC, an initiative aimed at providing XBE firms with the chapter's educational resources to help improve their branding, marketing, and external communications capabilities, will provide a year-long membership to SMPS along with educational and reputational development opportunities to the chosen individuals and their firms. XBE firms are for-profit organizations owned, operated, and controlled by a member of a socially or economically disadvantaged minority group.

"Our new partnership and honorarium program, in collaboration with Columbia University Facilities and Operations, is indicative of our chapter's ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion," said Brian Ferry, immediate past president of SMPS-NY. "Having previously implemented XBE-discounted event admission prices and sponsorship perks over the last several years, this new initiative allows the chapter to further engage typically underrepresented organizations, creating new opportunities for networking, growth, and continued education within the broader AEC industry."

SMPS-NY identified Columbia University as a potential partner for the program due to their existing efforts to uplift previously underserved communities. The University's CU Grow: Vendor Development Program is a multi-dimensional coaching program developed to assist minority, women, and locally owned (MWL) firms by expanding their existing portfolio of business and contracts with large clients. The partnership will create next-step involvement for CU Grow program graduates who receive the honorarium and provide additional touchpoints with post-graduate firms. Benefits include attending and networking at SMPS-NY events and quarterly mentoring sessions with senior SMPS-NY member professionals and CU Grow program leaders. In all, the Honorarium will provide significant growth opportunities that elevate the value and capability of underutilized businesses throughout the Tri-State area.

"By participating in this program with SMPS-NY, CU Grow alumni will have the opportunity to learn about the marketing efforts of larger design and construction companies, join a network of built-environment marketing professionals, and be mentored on how to better market their own firms," said Tanya Pope assistant vice president of Columbia University Supplier Diversity.

"Our Society has taken great strides in recognizing the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion,

and we're proud to introduce this scholarship, in tandem with a globally recognized university at the chapter level," said Nathan Reyna, current president of SMPS-NY. "SMPS-NY remains committed to amplifying the conversions and opportunities for our industry."

Applications for the grant officially opened on October 17th, and will be accepted through Friday, November 18th. Five individual applicants will be selected from the application pool and will receive a complimentary year-long membership to SMPS-NY, in addition to an accelerated program that includes mentorship opportunities, committee appointment, workshops and more. Applications are now open to all certified M/WBE, SDVOB, and select LBE firms in Columbia's catchment area.

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