



The Private Sector

Snapshot: The Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council

The Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC: www.camsc.ca) is not a government body. It is a non-profit member group made up of multi-national private-sector companies operating in Canada. The CAMSC promotes and facilitates procurement opportunities for aboriginals and visible minorities, to increase both employment and economic development.

The council is led by a board of directors that includes 3M, Chrysler, Cisco, EDS, RBC Bank, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Xerox and Office Depot. It's corporate members include (among others) BMO Bank of Montreal, Acklands Grainger, Boeing, CIBC, The Coca-Cola Company, ConAgra Foods, Dell, Grand & Toy, Kellogg's, Merck, Michelin, Johnson Controls, Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, MasterCard, Manpower, Pepsico, Pfizer, Pratt & Whitney Canada, TD Canada Trust and Wal-Mart.

Through its national information and referral network, members actively encourage aboriginal- and visible-minority-owned firms to promote their products and services. And by certifying all interested aboriginal and visible-minority businesses, the CAMSC can assure its members that certified firms offer a minimum level of competency and capability.

The CAMSC has developed standardized procedures to review and certify businesses owned by aboriginals and visible minorities. To qualify, the business can be of any size, and must be for profit, be owned (i.e., by at least 51%) and operated in Canada by aboriginals or visible minorities and be able to provide products and services to other businesses. The applicant must be a Canadian citizen.

The CAMSC, which advocates on behalf of aboriginal and minority businesses, conducts trade fairs, seminars and education programs. Members work to offer financial assistance to aboriginal and visible-minority business that need capital, as well as investment opportunities for companies looking to invest in them. The council also maintains an information centre and a national database of certified suppliers.

The council is associated with the National Minority Supplier Development Council in the U.S. (www.nmsdc.org), which, since it was chartered in 1972, has been promoting supplier diversity in the private sector. Today, it has 3,500 corporate members across the U.S., including Fortune 500 companies. For Canadian aboriginal and visible-minority

companies to access that network, as well as opportunities with the Canadian member companies of the CAMSC, they first need to be certified by the CAMSC.

Speaking at the September 2006 Aboriginal and Minority Procurement Policy Conference in Ottawa, Orrin Benn, President of the CAMSC, emphasized that, “The full participation of aboriginals and visible minorities in the Canadian economy is crucial for Canada's competitiveness and our place in the global economy. This diversity holds great potential for the Canadian economy. Many aboriginals and visible minorities are already active entrepreneurs. They are tremendous contributors to Canada's private sector ... ”

According to Statistics Canada, aboriginals and visible minorities will make up more than 25% of Canada's population by 2017.

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