

SB/DVBE ADVOCATE BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2026

ISSUE 2

Your go-to resource for staying informed, connected, and supported in your role as an SB/DVBE advocate. Here's what you'll find inside:

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Advocate Resource

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Introducing a new video to help you use CalSAT

A clear walkthrough to make CalSAT easier to navigate and use.

Upcoming Outreach Opportunities

Ways to connect, learn, and strengthen your advocacy work.





Advocate Spotlight

Jessica Schwartz

*Analyst II, SB/DVBE Advocate &
SB Liaison*

Department of State Hospitals

Jessica Schwartz serves as an analyst II and SB/DVBE advocate at the Department of State Hospitals (DSH). Over the past several years, she has continued to strengthen the department's focus on supporting small businesses and disabled veteran-owned businesses in its procurement efforts.

For Jessica, this commitment is central to her responsibilities. "To me, being the advocate is foundational," Jessica explains. "It means adopting an 'SB/DVBE First' mindset in every task I undertake. I view my daily responsibilities through the lens of how we can best support small businesses and disabled veteran-owned businesses, ensuring that these opportunities are at the forefront of our procurement processes."

Jessica has developed several tools to improve accuracy and consistency in SB/DVBE reporting. One of these tools, the "Pivot Table DVQ," helps identify reporting issues early and supports more reliable data tracking. "By utilizing expected outcomes, I can quickly verify potential issues," she notes. "This process allows me to take a deeper dive into our exemptions, enabling me to filter out specific buyers and verify whether a contract is CAR reportable." She acknowledges OSDS Statewide Advocacy Support Analyst Marcella King for her guidance during this work.

“Jessica has been exemplary in her Advocate role. Her excellence has been demonstrated as her department met their SB/DVBE participation goals for fiscal year 2025-26.”

— Marcella King, OSDS statewide advocacy support analyst

As DSH manages a broad range of exemptions, Jessica also created a “CAR Yes/No” guide to help analysts determine which items require CAR reporting in FI\$Cal. This tool has improved consistency in reporting and has supported the team as requirements continue to change.

Jessica offers clear advice for new advocates entering the field: “Consistency and dedication are your greatest assets. By diligently monitoring our SB/DVBE percentages, I have been able to provide actionable guidance on our contracts, which has significantly improved our outcomes.”

She also recognizes her colleagues for their ongoing contributions. Jessica highlights statewide buyers Nathan Alteza and Paul Carrillo, along with staff across DSH, for their efforts to work with qualified SB/DVBE vendors. Their collective focus has led to increased SB/DVBE participation across key contracts, including both direct awards and subcontracting.

Jessica’s work has also extended into mentoring. She currently serves in the Advocate Partnership Program, where she shares her experience with another advocate. OSDS Statewide Advocacy Support Analyst Marcella King offered the following acknowledgement:

“Jessica has been exemplary in her advocate role. Her excellence has been demonstrated as her department met their SB/DVBE participation goals for fiscal year 2025-26. I look forward to developing a forecast method for her department's use for 2026-27! I know she will also provide great insight as a mentor in this year's Advocate Partnership Program!”

ADVOCATE RESOURCE

Statewide Advocacy Support Section

Who We Are

Established in 2023, the Statewide Advocacy Support Section (SASS) is part of the Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services (OSDS) within the Procurement Division of the Department of General Services. We work directly with department advocates across the state to strengthen SB and DVBE participation in state contracting.

47 Departments Needing Support

Focused aid and oversight provided to these departments

Departments assisted through regular meetings

SUCCESS OUTCOME

20

met both SB and DVBE
participation goals

2024–25

What We Do

SASS provides proactive, hands-on support to department advocates statewide. We meet regularly with departments to review their SB and DVBE participation data, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop strategies tailored to each department's contracting profile. Our goal is to ensure every advocate has the tools, training, and support they need to succeed. Beyond one-on-one support, we also run larger efforts across the state to share best practices.



Statewide Advocacy Support Section:

Front row from left to right; Advocacy Support Analyst Omar Randle; Advocacy Support Manager Darwin Manuel; Advocacy Support Analyst Chelsea Kang; Advocacy Support Analyst Jayla Tunstall; Research Data Specialist Alannah Chapman; Advocacy Support Program Manager Imran Chaudhary; Advocacy Support Analyst Sitara Maroof; Advocacy Support Analyst Susan Budding; Advocacy Support Analyst Ron Seto.

Back row from right to left: Advocacy Support Manager Jesse Covarrubias; Advocacy Support Analyst Edwin Acosta; Advocacy Support Analyst Julee Starkey; Reporting Analyst Luke Scholl.
Not pictured, Advocacy Support Analyst Marcella King.

What We Do (continued)

We also connect advocates with resources from across state government, facilitate peer learning, and track participation trends to celebrate progress and flag areas that need attention. Whether a department is exceeding its goals or just getting started, SASS is there to help.

What SASS Offers

Communication

We share important updates with advocates and their departments through meetings, webinars, and other communication tools.

Training

We offer ongoing training, including webinars and resources on specific topics, to build advocates' knowledge and confidence.

Technical Assistance

We offer hands-on help with CAR reporting, goal-setting, and SB/DVBE procurement strategies so departments can meet and exceed their goals.

Individualized Support

We meet regularly with departments (or on a one-time basis) to answer specific questions.

Advocate Partnership Program

The Advocate Partnership Program is one of the ways SASS builds connections across the state. This mentorship program pairs advocates from different departments so they can share strategies and solve problems together.

Our first group finished strong:

- 100% of participating departments increased their SB or DVBE participation. Over half increased both.
- All five mentee agencies met their SB/DVBE goals for the fiscal year.
- Three of the five no longer need regular visits from SASS.
- Two of those advocates are now mentors in our second group.

We received great feedback from our first group of mentors and mentees. We are excited to use their suggestions and continue growing the program. Our second group kicked off July 2026.



Want to become a mentor or mentee? Reach out to us at advocate@dgs.ca.gov.

Recognizing Achievements, Building Connections: SARA and Statewide Outreach

State Agency Recognition Awards

Each year, SASS conducts the State Agency Recognition Awards (SARA). This event celebrates and recognizes outstanding achievements in SB and DVBE contracting while honoring the hard work advocates and departments put in all year to support SB and DVBEs across California. This past April we hosted the 26th Annual SARA at the May Lee State Office Complex Auditorium. To check out past winners, [click here](#).



Statewide Outreach Events

We also support departments that want to host their own outreach events. This year, we helped the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation team up for a "Meet the Primes" event. The event connected SB and DVBEs in the IT service sector with prime contractors.

Business owners had the chance to network directly with companies like IBM, Sabot Consulting, World Wide Technology, Slalom, and RSI among other leading IT firms. The event featured a panel and a networking session.

Events like these help build lasting connections between SB/DVBE businesses and the prime contractors who can open doors to new opportunities.



If your department is interested in hosting an outreach event, reach out to us — we're happy to help. **Connect with SASS at Advocate@dgs.ca.gov.**



New CalSAT Training Video Now Available

A new training video is now available for the California Small Business (SB)/Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Atlas Tool (CalSAT). It is an online tool that can be helpful for your role. The CalSAT tool gives information that can help you locate certified SBs and DVBEs located in disadvantaged communities.

This tool helps advocates reach out to businesses by making it easier to spot certified businesses who have not yet done business with the state. CalSAT also gives useful purchasing information so advocates can see patterns, track progress, and talk with staff using clear, up-to-date information.

Leverage Data.
Discover Businesses.
Expand Opportunities.

The new training video explains what CalSAT is and shows how advocates can use it in their work. It is useful whether you are new to CalSAT or just need a quick review. The training can help you learn how to use the tool as part of your role.

Advocates are encouraged to watch the video and explore CalSAT. This tool can help improve outreach and create more opportunities for certified SBs and DVBEs.

Access the CalSAT Tool and Training Video on the DGS website



Reporting Deadlines and Best Practices



CAR DEADLINES

July 31

Last day to request CAR extension

Oct. 1

CAR deadline for FI\$Cal departments

Oct. 1

CAR intake submission from non-FI\$Cal departments

Oct. 1

Improvement Plans due

Oct. 15

Latest extension deadline



DVBE Subcontracting Report

Nov. 1 —
810D deadline



Late Payment Penalty Paid Report

Sept. 30 —
DGS PD 800 deadline



For questions on any of these reports, contact OSDSReports@dgs.ca.gov

REPORTING BEST PRACTICES

- ✓ Review data on Data Validation Query (DVQ) and correct errors throughout the fiscal year.
- ✓ Monitor progress toward SB and DVBE participation goals.
- ✓ Address reporting errors or system errors sooner rather than later.
 - Contracts reported by mistake
 - Unreported federal funding
 - Incorrect acquisition subtype
- ✓ Develop and/or strengthen internal secondary review and approval processes.
- ✓ Review SB & DVBE Subcontracting menu to ensure certifications are reflecting accurately before finalizing contracts, purchase orders, and PCard (Cal Card) purchases.
- ✓ Encourage department buyers, PCard reconcilers or State Contract & Procurement Registration System (SCPRS) processors to attend necessary training sessions.
- ✓ Complete optional fields in FI\$Cal:
 - State funded percentage
 - Acquisition subtype

Upcoming Outreach Events

OSDS helps California state departments work with Small Businesses (SBs) and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBEs). We're sharing a few upcoming events where departments can meet these businesses and talk about contract opportunities.

These events let departments speak directly with SBs and explain their future needs. They also give departments a chance to hear feedback from the businesses they want to work with. By taking part in these activities, departments can reach more vendors, learn more about the contracting process, and support SB and DVBE participation goals.

You can find the list of upcoming events here.

If you have questions about these events, please contact OSDS for more information or help.



- **September 23–24**

- League of California Cities 2026 Annual Conference & Expo**

- In person, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
[Register Here](#)

- **September 24**

- Perseverance. Power. Presence: National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO)– Los Angeles 2026 Business Conference**

- In person, The Garland, 4222 Vineland Ave., Los Angeles, CA
[Register Here](#)

- **October 8**

- 15th Annual Veteran and Small Business Trade Show**

- In person, Hosted by the Southwest Veterans' Business Resource Center (SWVBRC), 14075 Frederick St., Moreno Valley, CA
[Register Here](#)

- **October 22**

- Connecting Point 2026**

- In person, Hosted by the Sacramento Public Agency Consortium ([SACPAC](#))
For more information contact Jessica Shevlin at JShevlin@sacrt.com



CALIFORNIA CONNECT

**Advancing Diverse Supplier
Relationships for Good
Government and Better Business**



Educational Sessions and
Panel Discussions



Exhibit Booths and
Matchmaking Sessions



New Insights, Resources,
and Opportunities

SAVE

THE DATE

05.04.27

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

NEW CONNECTIONS ARE AHEAD

HOSTED BY:



Questions?

Please contact

caconnect@naspo.org