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## MCDP® SPOTLIGHT: ZION CONTRACTING, LLC



*This issue's MCDP® Spotlight is on Zion Contracting, LLC, of Hempstead, NY. President Hely Duarte participated in a U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT)/SFAA Bonding Education Program (BEP).*

Hely Duarte always wanted to run his own business. Even when he graduated as a civil engineer in his native Dominican Republic in 2002, Hely wanted to build himself up as

an entrepreneur. Destiny would bring him to the New York in 2006, and although he had no knowledge of English, he was an educated man with a dream to fulfill. He worked for a consulting company as an engineer and learned the construction trades and its nuances. In 2009, Hely took the leap and formed Zion Contracting, LLC, which would specialize in painting, lead abatement, and fire proofing. Very soon, Zion Contracting was a general contractor doing concrete and masonry work.

Hely was satisfied with the company's performance, but he was dissatisfied with the lack of opportunities available to him in public contracting. He kept hearing about the need to have bonding and attended several bonding courses, but, as he puts it, "the information was there, but it was not easy to access it." Then, in 2011, he received an email inviting him to participate in the USDOT's BEP, an eight-workshop course, with one-on-one counseling,

based on SFAA's Model Contractor Development Program (MCDP)®, in response to low participation of emerging and minority businesses in the bonding process. Hely particularly was drawn to the program by one of the BEP's features: to be paired with a bond professional who was willing to work with his company to get Zion Contracting bonding capacity.

Hely completed the program right before Thanksgiving in 2011. By 2012, he had qualified for a bid bond he would use on a New York City Transit project. He did not get the job, but he had gained access to bonding that he could not get before participating in the BEP. Then in 2013, he qualified for a performance bond of up to \$2 million. Hely credits the USDOT/SFAA BEP because, "I got it," he says. "I understood what I needed to do and why I needed to do it as it all related to the way I managed by business."