

## Increased Audits Also Planned for 2014

HARRISBURG, Pa., Jan. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- State General Services Secretary Sheri Phillips said today the department will continue to build on its first-year efforts to inform and educate contractors and subcontractors about the Public Works Employment Verification Act.

Under the Act, contractors and subcontractors who work on any public construction project using \$25,000 or more in state funding must verify the employment eligibility of each newly hired employee through the federal government's E-Verify® system. The act went into effect on Jan. 1, 2013

"When the program launched last year, we focused on ensuring that contractors and subcontractors were aware of the law and provided them with an online information resource," Phillips said. "We also met with other state and local government entities to outline their responsibilities as part of our effort to raise awareness of the new law."

The department established a webpage on its site that included the Statement of Policy outlining the department's administration and enforcement of the act, the required verification form and a link to the federal government's E-Verify® system.

The department also sent mass emails to local construction and business organizations as well as school districts. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry's Bureau of Labor Law Compliance teamed up with the department for on-site educational meetings with construction industry employers. In addition, the department held three regional informational presentations for contractors and subcontractors.

Moving ahead, the department will aim for better coordination of efforts between its Public Works Employment Verification Compliance Office and its Bureau of Small Business

## Oversight for Year Two of Public Construction Employment Verification Act to Focus on Outreach

Written by Australian Business

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Opportunities (BSBO). This coordination will incorporate information on the act into the Small Business Workshops that are frequently conducted by BSBO throughout the state.

"Our focus for the year ahead is on expanding the number of face-to-face meetings with businesses and organizations so they can have their questions answered and understand what our office can do to help them be in compliance with the act," Phillips said. "We also plan on increasing the number of audits we conduct to measure the effectiveness of our outreach efforts and look for areas of improvement."

The department's Public Works Employment Verification Act Compliance Office conducted a total of 42 random compliance audits of contractors and subcontractors in 2013, with 26 found in compliance and 16 found to be in violation of the act. Civil penalty collections totaled nearly \$ 15,000 as a result of the audits.

"We feel the more opportunities we have to inform and educate contractors and subcontractors, the closer we'll move toward an even better compliance rate," Phillips said.

Business and organizations interested in learning more about the Public Works Employment Verification Act can schedule a presentation by calling 717-787-6648, or visit the website at [www.dgs.state.pa.us](http://www.dgs.state.pa.us), click on "Construction and Public Works" in the left navigation pane and then click on "Public Works Employment Verification."

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