

**Background:**

Venus Windows and Doors is a window and door supplier, and installer based in South Florida. We cater primarily to contractors as a subcontractor, but we are also approved as a prime contractor. Additionally, we supply the residential industry, working directly with homeowners for their properties. We specialize in impact windows, impact doors, shutters, and garage doors. We not only supply but also install these products. Over the past year, we've started installing commercial properties and entered the government sector in September 2023.

Solution

The Business Growth and Acceleration Program (BizGap) has been instrumental. The BizGap project in FL-27 is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Focused on providing hyperlocal consulting, training and outreach to small businesses in targeted communities and commercial corridors.

They've provided networking and marketing workshops that improved our digital and social media presence by teaching us useful tips and strategies. The government workshops were where I focused most. I didn't just listen—I implemented the advice immediately. For example, if they said, "Sign up here," I was signing up. If they provided instructions on certifications, I downloaded the application, completed the documentation, and sought help when needed. This hands-on guidance was key to earning my government certifications.

Business consultants from the Florida SBDC at FIU took the time to analyze our services and helped us create a strategic growth plan. In addition, assisted with uploading documents for certifications like SBE in Miami-Dade County, MBE for the State of Florida, and DBE. As a result,

we eventually earned 11 certifications, including federal ones like Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and EDWOSB.

One of the key milestones of the growth plan was to understand the solicitation and procurement process. But most important the financials down to the small detail, this was instrumental for us landing our first government contract with Miami-Dade County Public Schools for \$35,700.

From the Owner:

Don't aim for perfection; aim for progress. Learn something new, implement it immediately, and perfect it along the way. Sign up for webinars, meet-and-greet events, and workshops. If you're entering government contracting, study your competitors and be patient.

Business Owner Name: Vickie Lopez

Company Name: Venus Windows and Doors

Location: Cutler Bay, FL