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Contractor Spotlight: R.B. Pest Solutions Makes the Leap to Prime Contractor

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Robiar Smith, known as “Robi,” grew up on the south side of Chicago. A product of Chicago Public Schools, she has friends and relatives have live in Chicago Housing Authority properties. When she arrives to address her customers' pest issues, she often defies their expectations.

“I walk into apartments, and the little girls look at me like, ‘You’re a technician?’” Smith laughs. “Yes, I’m your ‘she-ro’ and you can be one too!”

But Robi is more than just a technician; she is the owner of R.B. Pest Solutions, one of Chicago’s leading pest control companies. Recently, her company secured a significant pest control contract with CHA, following years of service as a subcontractor.

CHA’s partnership with RB Pest Solutions exemplifies the agency’s commitment to contracting with vendors who share its values for inclusive and equitable contracting opportunities. Last year, CHA spent \$115 million in direct spending with MWDBE Businesses and \$72 million in direct spending with Section 3 Businesses.

“CHA is proud of its contracting and diversity goals and RB Pest Solutions is a perfect example of how we help resident- and minority-owned businesses grow,” said Debra King, CHA’s Director of Contract Compliance, Procurement and Contracts.

Smith is deeply passionate about her work and believes that low-income and public housing families deserve to live pest-free.

“I take it personally; these are my people,” she said. “They should not have to coexist with pests. This is a very personal mission for me. I hope that CHA continues to provide opportunities like the CHA contract to people who look like me....All we ask for is the opportunity and a chance to succeed in our own communities.”