



## Small business open house

You're invited  
3 to 6 p.m.  
Tuesday, Feb. 22

Oregon Convention Center  
777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Do you operate a minority-owned, woman-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned or emerging small business?

Join us at this special small business event to find out how your company can compete for contracts with Metro and Multnomah County.



### Let's get down to business

Register at  
[metro-multco-openhouse.eventzilla.net](http://metro-multco-openhouse.eventzilla.net)

Contact Metro procurement staff at  
[bidsandproposals@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:bidsandproposals@oregonmetro.gov)

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# Martin Luther King Visited Here

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the church's historian, was responsible for having the church listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

"It's a very storied site," explains Burell, whose passion for preserving the church's narrative stems from his own upbringing within its active community, and its importance to the black community of Portland.

Burell, who has dedicated an untold amount of time as a church volunteer and local expert on black history, says that the impetus behind the historic designation was "the preservation of a culture."

Portland's black community has a very layered and intricate history, he told the Portland Observer, "There's so little documentation... That's really what thrust me to do it."

The church was founded in 1944 by the Rev. James Brown during the time of World War II when Portland's black community grew. Under the stewardship of the Rev. Oliver Booker

Williams, the church's population went from a handful of parishioners to more than 1,200 in 1955.

"These were very active participants, so it became quite the place," Burell explains.

Over the years, the church has not only met the spiritual needs of its community, but it has served as one of the city's social and cultural centers, drawing a large number of historical figures through its doors.

"Anytime anyone of significance on a national level visited Portland, they spoke here," Burrell says. In addition, he says Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church played a tremendous role following Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, by holding a city-wide memorial service.

Burrell's efforts to place the church on the National Register of Historic Places took nearly seven months. "Even though I knew the history, it was just putting it into context," he explains. The final document was

more than 130 pages, and detailed the church's rich history.

The church's new national recognition will help it survive in a rapidly gentrifying stretch of North Portland.

"It just puts it in a different place in terms of recognition and preservation... By having it deemed a national landmark, it's much more important to the community," Burell says.

Burell, whose family has attended Vancouver Avenue First Baptist for four generations, traces his interest in history to his own familial genealogy.

"It really gave me perspective for who I am as a being," he explains. Similarly, he says, his work documenting the history of the church, "Celebrates who we are as a culture. It helps people to say, 'our culture matters.'"

Burell says that reaction to the historical listing has been overwhelmingly positive.

People were just beaming with pride," says Burrell, who is being honored by the World Arts Foundation for his efforts to list the building.

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

— Martin Luther King, Jr.



**At Home Forward**, we are committed to answering Dr. King's urgent question. We support participation of minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses on Home Forward projects. Contact us to learn more about what we are doing for others and how you can get involved.

For more information, contact:

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hope. access. potential.