

# KAREN BARBOUR

909 Baltimore Boulevard • Westminster, MD 21157

(866) 876-9610 • Karen@TheBarbourGroup.com

---

## SURETY EXECUTIVE • BUSINESS & INDUSTRY LEADER

*30 Plus Year Surety Industry Veteran. Passionate. Professional. Problem Solver. Advocate.*

---

Performance excellence, expert surety knowledge, and record of building a powerful collaborative network of business and political ties are hallmarks of a career underscored by an indelible commitment to enabling the competitive positioning and growth of client companies—from start-ups and small businesses to Fortune 1000 firms. Recognized throughout the industry for achieving results others believed to be impossible.

### **Definitive leader and recipient of numerous awards for outstanding leadership and entrepreneurial spirit**

- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) *Maryland Small Business Person of the Year*, for pioneering work in breaking down surety bond barriers for minority and women-owned construction firms. First surety professional to receive SBA's top honor – 2008
- A *Future 50 Company*, acknowledgement in *SmartCEO* magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in Greater Baltimore – 2008
- *The Daily Record Innovator of the Year Award*, recognizing passion for change. The first surety professional to receive this award – 2010
- The Greater Baltimore Committee's *Bridging the Gap Award*, for contributions to expanding growth opportunities for small business, minority and women-owned construction companies – 2007
- Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce *Business Achievement Award*, recognizing contributions to the development of Maryland's Hispanic business community – 2008
- Graduate of *Leadership Maryland*; one of 50 accomplished leaders selected to participate in the program for demonstrating personal concern and commitment to helping shape Maryland's future – Class of 2008
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of Maryland *Shining Star Award*, for fundraising efforts on behalf of MDA children and families that exceeded \$100,000 – 2010

### **Catalyst for driving passage of landmark legislation in Maryland and on Capitol Hill**

- Initiated and successfully lobbied U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin to sponsor an amendment to the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (2008) that removed prohibitive federal surety-bond program eligibility criteria, paving the way for start-up, small and minority-owned businesses around the country to compete for stimulus-funded contracts. This amendment more than doubled participation in the SBA surety bond program during the first six months
- Instrumental in the passage and implementation of Maryland House Bill 169 (2006), landmark legislation that expanded surety availability for small businesses, enabling an increase in competition on government-funded contracts and minority business enterprise (MBE) goal fulfillment. The law's sunset provision was granted in 2013.
- Assisted in drafting and passage of two Maryland House Bills: 928: which reduced retention rates on state projects from 10% to 5%; and, 1226: which eliminated proprietary specifications in school construction projects
- Initiated and successfully lobbied for Maryland House Bill 595 (2013), Subcontractor's Equal Access to Bonding Act—Effective date of new law, July 1, 2013
- Initiated and gave lead to Associated General Contractors of MD for HB Bill 403/SB826 (2016), The Change Order Fairness Act that passed the 2016 session-Effective date of new law July 1, 2016.

*"Karen Barbour is one of Maryland's most distinguished business leaders. I have worked with Karen on a number of public policy issues to help small businesses and to improve the overall economic climate and she has always brought keen insight and advice to every discussion. She clearly understands what businesses need to succeed and she is a strong and forceful advocate."* – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin; U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship**

---

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

### THE BARBOUR GROUP, LLC – Founder/President [www.thebarbourgroup.com](http://www.thebarbourgroup.com)

2002 to Present

*The Barbour Group is nationally known as one of the most knowledgeable and creative brokers, specializing in providing a comprehensive suite of surety bonds and commercial insurance risk solutions for small, medium and large government and construction contractors, as well as Fortune 1000 companies on a national and global basis.*

Agency's primary goal is to service the surety and commercial insurance needs of clients, while taking a stand as an advocate on national issues and a pioneer in breaking through bonding barriers for small businesses. Provide vision, strategy, and tactical direction that have resulted in consecutive annual sales growth of more than 45%. It is a nationally licensed insurance agency.

- Lead and direct day –today operations and oversee marketing, business development and product/service delivery
- Leverage risk-management expertise, underwriting savvy and broad access to leading national insurance and surety corporations to provide clients with customized solutions
- Promote company and industry visibility through participation in numerous professional associations, trade shows and community organizations
- Deliver presentations at state and national conferences, summits and business forums as expert on surety bonds, strategic partnerships and capacity building

### THE BARBOUR GROUP, LLC'S Corporate Milestones

- Became Maryland's first 100% woman-owned independent insurance agency specializing in surety bonds – 2002
- Entered into a surety bond consulting services agreement to provide surety bonds to subcontractors and suppliers of Hensel Phelps Construction, one of the largest general contractors in the nation. To date, The Barbour Group has provided bonding assistance in CA, CO, WV, GA, NC, MD and DC through execution of this nationwide service agreement – 2008 to Present
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) *Maryland Small Business Person of the Year and inducted into the SBA Hall of Fame*, for pioneering work in breaking down surety bond barriers for minority and women-owned construction firms by securing an amendment to the Stimulus Act that increased the SBA guarantee limits for surety bond support. First surety professional to receive SBA's top honor – 2008
- Received Ernst and Young's *Entrepreneurial Winning Women Award*—one of only nine women-owned companies in the U.S. selected. This award provides intimate access to Ernst and Young's elite network of the country's best high-growth companies, as well as participation in a customized leadership program designed to connect women entrepreneurs with the advisors, resources and insights needed to become market leaders – 2009
- Achieved *Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) Certification*, essential to marketing to Fortune 1000 companies. The Barbour Group is the only independent insurance agency in the Mid-Atlantic to achieve WBENC certification – 2009

### ALLIANCE FOR HISPANIC COMMERCIAL CONTRACTORS

2016 to Present

Newly formed in 2016, its purpose is to promote the growth, prosperity and participation of Hispanic Commercial Contractors in commercial and government procurement contracts through education, training and guidance. Expected launch of the company is December 2016 with support of Howard Hughes Development. The company has engaged an executive director who is an award winning leader in the Hispanic community, Cool & Associates. Notable construction, banking and legal minds will provide the instruction for the learning modules to be launched live and via FaceBook. Mentorship and interactive training is at the forefront of our mission to enable success and competitive fairness to grow the Hispanic owned commercial construction firms in the Mid-Atlantic region.

**BG NETWORK, LLC – Founder/President**  
[www.bgnetworkusa.com](http://www.bgnetworkusa.com)

**2014 to Present**

Company's primary goal is to provide a personalized platform to scale small business and provide them with resources and contacts that typically are only afforded to big business. BG Network is uniquely qualified and able given the vast military, political, financial, and legal backgrounds of its consultants to offer key introductions to uncover coveted contacts and sources for securing work in all sectors of construction. The primary objectives for its clients are to:

- Managing insurance, surety and contract claims and disputes effectively
- Enable better public policy and introduce clients to key political appointees and elected officials
- Secure financing through traditional financial institutions, venture capitalists, private equity firms, and other outside sources
- Maneuver set-backs through effective crisis management
- Match clients to big business contacts to win contracts through effective teaming and joint venturing
- Offer tailored advisory board services to effectively implement key strategies for growth and sustainability
- Include clients in database of BG Network vetted for internal matchmaking, networking and future introductions to business opportunities

**COALITION FOR CONTRACTING FAIRNESS – FOUNDER**

**2013 to Present**

Organization's primary goal is to seek financial support from its members to support Maryland legislation that Karen Barbour initiates for contracting fairness. In 2013, the coalition, through Karen's initiatives and the organization's lobbyist, Gil Genn, successfully passed the Subcontractor's Equal Access to Bonding Act. In 2014, the coalition was successful in gaining lead support by the Associated General Contractors of MD to lobby for Karen's initiative and draft of The Change Order Fairness Act. In 2015 the bill passed both houses but was modified by the Senate with no time to spare for House concurrence. Reintroduced in the 2016 session, HB 403 sponsored by Delegate Dan Morhaim and SB 826 sponsored by Senator Joan Carter Conway passed unanimously.

**PRIOR EMPLOYMENT**

**1994 to 2002**

Director of Surety / Assistant Vice President

- **ARMFIELD, HARRISON & THOMAS, INC.**, Leesburg, VA (1998 to 2002)
- **EARLY, CASSIDY & SCHILLING, INC.**, Rockville, MD (1994 to 1998)

Developed and implemented strategic marketing and sales plans to achieve corporate goals for delivery of bond, risk-management and corporate insurance programs. Established and nurtured relationships with key strategic partners and industry leaders and represented each firm at trade associations and organizations.

- Founded the **General Council for Construction** with the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (Baltimore Office) which facilitated roundtable discussions regarding federal construction and led to adoption of a two-step process for procuring work for DC schools (1998 to 2000)

---

**EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS**

---

**TUCK SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AT DARTMOUTH – 2010**

Tuck WBENC Executive Program

**ASSOCIATE IN FIDELITY AND SURETY BONDING (AFSB) – 2010**

American Institute for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters

**LEADERSHIP MARYLAND – 2008**

[www.leadershipmd.org](http://www.leadershipmd.org)

**MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) – 1994**

University of Baltimore

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY (dual major) – 1994**

Loyola College in Maryland (currently Loyola University Maryland)

---

## CORPORATE AWARDS

---

**Top 100 Women Award** – The Daily Record – 2014

**Most Admired CEO** – The Daily Record – 2014

**Maryland Minority Contractors Association** – Woman’s Business Enterprise of the Year – 2013

**Top 50 Most Influential Marylanders** – The Daily Record – 2013

**Best-Run Companies** – SmartCEO – 2012

**Enterprising Women of the Year** – Enterprising Woman Magazine – 2012

**MBE Hall of Fame Recipient** – The Top 100 MBEs – 2012

**Top 100 Women Award** – The Daily Record – 2012

**Innovator of the Year** – The Daily Record – 2011

**BRAVA! Women Business Achievement Award** – SmartCEO – 2011

**Entrepreneurial Winning Women Award** – Ernst and Young – 2009

**Minority Business Enterprise of the Year** – MWMCA – 2008

**Small Business Person of the Year, Maryland** – U.S. Small Business Administration – 2008

**SBA Hall of Fame** – Inducted 2010

**Carroll County Economic Development Small Business Person of the Year** – 2008

**Business Achievement Award** – MD Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – 2008

---

## COMMUNITY IMPACT & LEADERSHIP

---

**Board Member** – Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM) – 2016 to Present

**Chair, Nominating Committee** – GSCM 2014-2016

**Co-Founder** – Party For A Cure, an annual fund raising event to help children afflicted with neuro-muscular disease – 2008 to Present (in 2016 event raised \$160,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Assn of MD)

**Chair, Advisory Board** – Small Business Development Center, State Of MD – 2012 to Present

**Treasurer, Executive Board** – Women Contractors Owners and Executives (WCOE) 2014 to 2016

**Corporate Alliance Chair** – WCOE – 2012 to 2014

**Board Member** – Associated General Contractors of MD – 2012 to 2015

**Co-Chair** – Governor’s Commission on Small Business – 2011 to 2014

**Economic Development Commission Small Business Representative** – Carroll County, MD – 2009 to 2014

**Distinguished Women Award** – Girl Scouts of Central Maryland – 2013

**Shining Star Award** – Muscular Dystrophy Association of Maryland – 2010

**The Arc of Carroll County Special Appreciation Award** – 2010

**Bridging the Gap Achievement Award** – Greater Baltimore Committee – 2008

---

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC CERTIFICATIONS/NAICS: 524120, 524298, 541611

---

**WBENC** – Women’s Business Enterprise National Council

**WOSB** – Women Owned Small Business – U.S. Small Business Administration

**WBE** – Women Business Enterprise – Maryland Department of Transportation

**WBE** – Baltimore City, MD

**WBE** – Prince Georges County, MD

**WBE** – Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

**SWAM** – Small Woman and Minority Certification – State of Virginia

---

## SOCIAL MEDIA

---

<https://karenbarbour.wordpress.com>

<https://twitter.com> Karen\_Barbour

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/surety>

---

## SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

---

- **Clark Construction** Strategic Partnership Program, “Bonding For Construction,” Chicago and Boston (2014-Present)
- **Maryland Department of General Services**, “Strategies for Small Businesses to Maximize Surety Bond Capacity” (2015)
- **DC Chapter of Professional Women in Construction Event**, “Meet DC’s Successful Women & Men in Construction,” Panelist-Surety Speaker (2015)
- **Maryland Aviation Authority** Surety Seminar (2014)
- **Senator Cardin Outreach** Event, “Surety Bond Basics for Small Business” (2014)
- **Association of School Business Officials** Conference, “Demystifying Bonding,” Maryland (2014)
- **National Association of Women MBAs** Conference, “Six Key Steps in Accessing Capital, Washington, DC (2014)
- **WCOE New York City Conference**, “Strategies to Maximize Bonding Capacity” (2012)
- **Maryland Procurement** Technical Assistance Program Seminar, “Bonding for Government Contractors” (2012)
- **14th Annual Enterprising Women** Breakfast, Entrepreneurship, Baltimore Business Journal (2011)
- **Give Me 5** Webinar, “Surety Bond Strategies for Federal Contractors”, American Express OPEN & Women Impacting Public Policy, Washington, DC (2011)
- **10th Annual ATHENA Award** Women's Leadership Breakfast, “Entrepreneurship and Risk Taking” (Keynote), Harford Community College, Bel Air, MD (2011)
- **Maryland Hispanic Business Conference**, “Surety Bond Strategies for Contractors”, Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Bethesda, MD (2011)
- **“Spring Forward”** BE/SWAM 495 HLS Contractors’ Workshop, “Access to Bonding,” Virginia Mega Projects, Alexandria, VA (2011)
- **OSDBU Small Business Summit**, “Corporate Sustainability,” U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC (2010)
- **National Veteran Small Business Conference**, “Surety Bond Strategies for Federal Contractors,” Department of Veterans Affairs, Las Vegas, NV (2009)
- **S.A.M.E. National Small Business Conference**, “Surety Bond Strategies for Federal Contractors,” Department of Army, Grapevine, TX (2009)

---

## “IN THE NEWS”

---

*Building Reputation Builds Business for 2 Successful Women* – Forbes June 27, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/geristengel/2012/06/27/building-reputation-builds-business-for-2-successful-women/>

*Four Ways To Find a Great Partner for Government Contracting* – American Express OPEN Forum--July 26, 2012

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjVgKWYwJbLAhWGGR4KHeMnBrgQFggdMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.openforum.com%2Farticles%2F4-ways-to-find-a-great-partner-for-governmen%2F&usg=AFQjCNFUG8pemrdwkrfJFXO0k371aB1cw4>

*Surety Requirements 101: Best Practices to Guarantee Bonding* – Construction Executive, ABC.ORG – Reprint May 2011 (original predates 2008)

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwim9bL7wZbLAhWB2SYKHScCA0AQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fold.constructionexec.com%2Fissues%2FMay\\_2011%2FRisk\\_Management.aspx&usg=AFQjCNG3d0\\_GFLGE\\_rjmsV0i1dLFZUa2SA-](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwim9bL7wZbLAhWB2SYKHScCA0AQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fold.constructionexec.com%2Fissues%2FMay_2011%2FRisk_Management.aspx&usg=AFQjCNG3d0_GFLGE_rjmsV0i1dLFZUa2SA-)

*10 Steps to Capture Additional Bonding* – May 15, 2011

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjFztPyx5bLAhXJqh4KHd8tD3wQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.constructionbusinessowner.com%2Ftopics%2Faccounting%2Faccounting-finance%2F10-steps-capture-additional-bonding&usg=AFQjCNH4mENXqiWKMzOwQU3B8-8Eu30xtA&bvm=bv.115339255,d.eWE-> Construction Business Owner