

## Competitive Choice, Inc.



**Aundrea Williams Young**  
Photo by Barry Gatlin

Aundrea Williams Young is the owner and founder of Competitive Choice, Inc. Started in 2003 as a one-woman company, Competitive Choice started as a specialty industrial chemical and safety solutions company. Today they are a diversified minority woman-owned company with divisions in general construction and specialty chemicals. Young's energy, organizational skills and forward thinking approach to all projects makes Competitive Choice the perfect outlet for her training, talent and business acumen. Young has a communications degree from Texas Southern University with a minor in construction management.

Young worked for many years in the same industry as a local sales rep for a large corporation. When the company filed bankruptcy, she decided to start her own business. Young's existing customers followed and supported her which eased the transition of becoming a business owner. Competitive Choice sells industrial maintenance chemicals such as degreasers, solvents, HVAC plumbing, and drain openers to various industries including construction, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical. In 2008 after much demand from her customers, Young formed the general construction division. Her business began taking off so she added five more employees. Some of her customers include Exxon Mobil, the City of Houston, school districts, and universities. Competitive Choice holds certifications from the SBA, State of Texas HUB, HMBC, City of Houston, Port of Houston Authority and WBEA.

Due to the decline in the economy, she downsized to three employees and had to rely on credit cards after running the company debt free for 5 years. "My customers are not buying as much. They're buying only what they need and not stocking up," said Young. In September 2009, she got a big break with her first 8(a) contract with NASA. Young had applied and was approved for SBA's 8(a) program two years earlier. The 8(a) Program offers a broad scope of assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged firms, helping entrepreneurs to compete in the Federal contracting arena and to take advantage of greater subcontracting opportunities available from large firms as the result of public/private partnerships. This nine-year program includes counseling and training, as well as potential Federal procurement opportunities. "The contract came at the perfect time," said Young. This contract was funded under the 2009 Recovery Act. The Recovery Act requires agencies to provide maximum opportunities for small businesses to compete for contracts. SBA's Procurement Center Representatives worked with federal agencies to ensure that small businesses get their fair share of the prime and subcontracting opportunities from the Recovery funds.

Despite the economic conditions, Young's perseverance and hard work is paying off. Competitive Choice was chosen in October, 2010 by Harris County Hospital District to assist in Work Order Maintenance Projects and in February, 2011, they and Joint Venture

partner, Gen-Tech was one of 5 awardees chosen by NASA to share in an award under a \$49 million solicitation to perform general construction and repair work for minor projects at NASA facilities in Houston and in New Mexico. The 8(a) multiple award indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity contracts will cover construction, modification and repair work including architectural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, civil, structural, roofing, partial building renovations, building demolition and environmental support. The work will be performed at Johnson Space Center, Ellington Field and the Sonny Carter Training Facility in Houston and the White Sands Test Facility in Las Cruces, N.M. The firm fixed-price contract has a base period of five years with no options.

In March 2011, the Federal Detention Center selected Competitive Choice to upgrade their HVAC system. They are also assisting in on-going work order maintenance projects at the VA Hospital in Houston, TX.

In addition to the SBA 8a program, Young also received assistance from SBA's local resource partners, SCORE and the SBDC. Both SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) and the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) offer consultation and training to new and existing small businesses. She advises anyone starting a business to have a business plan, stay focus and on course, and make sure to have a savings. Young was born and raised in Houston, Texas and is currently pursuing her Executive MBA from University of Houston. She is a member of Wheeler Avenue Church and is involved with the Fort Bend Junior League, a non-profit to assist women.

For more information about Competitive Choice visit [www.competitivechoice.net](http://www.competitivechoice.net). Information about SBA's program and services can be found at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov). For information about the local SCORE chapter and the SBDC visit [www.scorehouston.org](http://www.scorehouston.org) and [www.sbdc.uh.edu](http://www.sbdc.uh.edu).