

City of Chicago Construction Disparity Study Frequently Asked Questions



The City of Chicago is conducting a Disparity Study of its construction program for Minority-owned Business Enterprises ("MBEs") and Women-owned Business Enterprises ("WBEs"). The City is conducting this research to ensure that M/WBEs have equal access to construction contracting opportunities and that the City's current program remains legally defensible and administratively successful.

What is a "Disparity Study"?

A disparity study involves compilation of evidence to determine whether the City has a strong basis for implementing race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies, and narrowly tailoring its program. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of M/WBEs and their utilization on the City's construction contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the Chicago area economy as a whole.

The study will further examine factors necessary for entrepreneurial success, such as access to business capital, bonding, networks, suppliers, etc. The study also will gather anecdotal evidence of any continuing effects of past or present race and sex discrimination, and the impact of the current M/WBE program. Finally, the study will review the City's current program and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements, including data collection to assist the City in setting its project-specific and overall goals

Who is conducting the study?

Colette Holt & Associates (CHA), a Chicago-based, nationally recognized expert team on disparity studies and M/WBE programs. CHA is partnering with Sandi Llano & Associates, Inc., a recognized and respected leader in the Chicago area on supplier diversity programs.

How can business owners and other interested parties be involved?

The participation of business owners and other interested parties such as assist agencies, trade associations, and community organizations is critical to the study's outcomes in two important ways. The study team will contact businesses to confirm information on specific contracts and/or to

receive additional contract information that is currently not available to the City. CHA will also conduct interviews with stakeholder organizations and business owners to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and whether the City's program remains narrowly tailored. An electronic survey will also be sent to interested parties to collect additional anecdotal information.

How will the small group interview sessions and electronic survey be conducted and how do I participate?

CHA will host stakeholder sessions and business owner small group interviews in late Spring and the Summer of 2020. A bit later in the process, CHA will administer an online survey for business owners to fill out.

Participants who are unable to attend the meetings or the interviews but who would like to provide input to the study are encouraged to return the survey and submit written statements to the study email: chicago-study@mwbelaw.com.

When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2020.

Where can I find additional information?

For additional information, visit the study website at chicago.disparity-study.com.

Who do I contact with questions?

Colette Holt & Associates

You may contact the study team via chicago-study@mwbelaw.com.

Or you may contact:

City of Chicago

Department of Procurement Services
312-744-9757