



Legislation Text

File #: 0220X-2019, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND: This resolution accepts the findings of the City of Columbus 2019 Disparity Study (Disparity Study) and requests that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion develop an implementation plan to address the disparities identified within the Disparity Study.

In 2016 the Office of Diversity and Inclusion advertised and solicited formal bids via RFQ002943 for an independent disparity study to determine whether statistical disparities exist between the City's procurement with businesses owned by minority groups or women. Specifically, the study evaluated if there is a disparity between the availability of minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBs) and the City's utilization of those businesses. The City's previous disparity study was conducted over a decade ago, over which time Columbus has seen tremendous economic growth.

Mason Tillman Associates, LTD was selected as the contract vendor for the City's 2019 Disparity Study. Mason Tillman Associates, LTD is a nationally recognized African American owned consulting firm that has conducted disparity studies for numerous cities throughout the country. Mason Tillman Associates has conducted more than 140 studies.

The City of Columbus 2019 Disparity Study included the following analysis and findings:

- The purchasing areas that the Disparity Study evaluated were prime contract utilization in the construction, professional services, and goods and services industries, along with subcontractor utilization in the construction and professional services industries.
- The Disparity Study compared the percentage of utilized contractors to the percentage of contractors available to perform the work in the relevant market areas.
- The Disparity Study found that statistically significant disparities exist in the City of Columbus' utilization of businesses owned and operated by specified minority groups and women in comparison to their availability for purchasing and contracting in all categories examined.
- The Disparity Study included an analysis of anecdotes reported by minority, women, and non-minority business owners that alleged both active and passive participation in discriminatory practices in the marketplace by the City.
- The Disparity Study found that those practices have impeded minority and women business owners from the opportunities generated by the City's procurement.
- The Disparity Study included a list of over twenty recommendations of policies and procedures the City may consider to the address the identified disparities.

The findings of the Disparity Study will guide and inform the City's work to ensure full and equal business opportunity to all persons doing business with the City.

To accept the findings of the City of Columbus 2019 Disparity Study and the conclusions regarding minority and woman-owned business enterprises and to request that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion develop an implementation plan to

address the disparities identified within the Disparity Study.

WHEREAS, small businesses are major contributors to jobs and revenue growth in the City of Columbus; and

WHEREAS, businesses owned and operated by minorities and women make significant contributions to the City of Columbus economy; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus is committed to addressing any evidence of discrimination, whether active or passive, found to exist within its procurement practices; and

WHEREAS, public spending to leverage small business development is a priority for the City of Columbus leadership and part of a larger strategy to make Columbus a city that provides opportunity for all residents; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the Office of Diversity and Inclusion retained Mason Tillman Associates, LTD to conduct a disparity study for the City of Columbus in order to determine whether minority-and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES) were underutilized in City procurement activities; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Disparity Study was completed in July 2019 and found that statistically significant disparities exist in the City of Columbus' utilization of businesses owned and operated by specified minority groups and women in comparison to their availability for purchasing and contracting in all categories examined;

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City to remedy the effects of any discrimination identified and to reduce or eliminate any other marketplace barriers that adversely affect the contract participation of small, minority, or women-owned businesses and improve the City's economic viability; **now, therefore:**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That Columbus City Council hereby accepts the findings of the 2019 Disparity Study conducted by Mason Tillman Associates, LTD, and requests that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion develop an implementation plan to address the disparities found within the Disparity Study.