

City of South Bend Disparity Study Frequently Asked Questions



The City of South Bend is conducting a Disparity Study to ensure that minority, women, business enterprise (MWBE) have equal access to contracting opportunities.

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 for its contracts. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of MWBEs and their utilization on City contracts and related subcontracts, and throughout the 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. The study will review the City’s current policies and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements.

Who is conducting the study?

Colette Holt & Associates (CHA), a nationally recognized expert team on disparity studies and MWBE programs.

How can business owners and other interested parties be involved?

The participation of business owners and other interested parties such as trade associations, advocacy groups, community organizations, etc. is critical to the study’s outcomes in two important ways. First, 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. The study team will also conduct interviews with business owners to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and the City’s policies.

How will the public meeting and business owner interviews be conducted and how do I participate?

CHA will host a public information meeting on June 8, 2018, to introduce the study methodology and process. A bit later in the process, CHA will host small group interviews of business owners.

Participants who are unable to attend the meetings or the interviews but who would like to provide input to the study are encouraged to submit written statements at the study email: southbend-study@mwbelow.com.

When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed by Spring 2019.

Where can I find additional information?

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

Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact the study team via southbend-study@mwbelow.com or you may contact:

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