

Travis County Disparity Study Frequently Asked Questions



Travis County is conducting a Disparity Study of its Historically Underutilized Business (“HUB”) program to ensure that HUBs have equal access to contracting opportunities and that the County’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 County has a strong basis for implementing race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies for its locally-funded contracts, and narrowly tailoring its HUB program. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of HUBs and their utilization on County-funded contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the Austin-Travis County area economy as a whole.

The study will further examine factors necessary for entrepreneurial success, such as access to business capital, bonding, networks, suppliers and other resources. 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 HUB program. Finally, the study will review the County’s current program and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements, including data collection to assist the County in setting its project-specific and overall goals.

Who is conducting the study?

Colette Holt & Associates (CHA), a San Antonio-based nationally recognized expert team on disparity studies and M/WBE and HUB programs, in conjunction with local partners Cultural Strategies and Beverly Silas and Associates, both certified firms.

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. 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 County. CHA will also

conduct interviews with business owners and stakeholders to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and the County’s programs. An electronic survey will also be sent to interested parties to collect additional anecdotal information.

How will the public webinar and business owner interview sessions be conducted and how do I participate?

CHA will host a public information webinar to introduce the study methodology and process. A bit later in the process, CHA will administer an online survey for business owners and host business owner small group interview sessions.

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

When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed late 2021.

Where can I find additional information?

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

Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact the Study team via email at traviscounty-study@mwbela.com or via phone 855-692-3529.

Or you may contact:

Sylvia Lopez, CCA
Travis County Purchasing Office
Travis County HUB Director
Sylvia.Lopez@traviscountytexas.gov
512-854-4561