



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 19, 2012

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL AND DEPARTMENT OF PROCUREMENT ANNOUNCE INTERACTIVE  
M/WBE FORUM AND RECORD 40% M/WBE PARTICIPATION ON CONTRACTS  
AWARDED IN 2012**

*Emanuel Administration Reports Participation on City Contracts;  
Continues Advances for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses by Creating  
Online Procurement Forum*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, in collaboration with the City of Chicago Department of Procurement, today unveiled an online forum to encourage participation by minority- and women-owned businesses for City contracts. The website will provide information, resources and tools to increase M/WBE participation in the City's procurement process.

"To succeed as a city we must encourage a diverse marketplace, not just for goods and services, but also for ideas. That is exactly what the M/WBE forum aims to do," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "Making it easier for minority- and women-owned businesses to compete for city contracts will help make our city even more efficient and save our taxpayers money, while creating a brighter future for many of our residents."

The M/WBE forum was created to foster networking and information sharing between the city's diverse vendors. Once MBEs and WBEs register for the site they will have access to procurement forums. The forum's topics include: primes looking for subcontractors, subcontractors looking for jobs, suggestions & feedback and news & announcements.

"This website will be a great resource and networking tool for minority and women owned businesses in the city of Chicago," said Jamie Rhee, Commissioner of the Department of Procurement Services. Rhee continued, "One of our goals has always been to make sure

that these businesses can continue to grow, and find a stable place in the market. The forum will allow MBEs and WBEs to connect with contractors and collaborate with each other to be even more competitive when it comes to city contracts.”

Once registered, forum users are able to post questions or comments regarding procurement. Other users can respond to these comments or questions publicly. Users will also be able to send private messages and look up information on posters.

“This program will help our women and minority owned businesses find projects and opportunity and work together to improve their communities. I am enthusiastic about any and all measures we can take to create opportunity in these communities,” said Chairman Carrie Austin, 34<sup>th</sup> ward.

“By using technology to bring people together, we will make sure that more minority and women owned businesses are aware of opportunities and can compete on a level playing field. This forum will help our businesses form coalitions and partnerships that will help transform our neighborhoods,” said Alderman Mary O’Connor, 41<sup>st</sup> Ward, herself a small business owner.

In addition to launching the online forum, DPS announced the M/WBE contract participation numbers for the year to date.

Through the first eight months of 2012, a record 40% (as compared to 34% in 2011 and 37% in 2010) of the \$1.2 billion in City contracts awarded went to M/WBEs, with 35% awarded to minority owned firms and 5% awarded to women owned firms. African Americans were awarded \$193 million, or 21% of all contract awards, compared to \$96 million or 8% during the same time period in 2011. Hispanics were awarded \$118 million or 13% compared to \$201 million or 16% during the same time period in 2011. Asian Americans were awarded \$35 million or 4% compared to \$52 million or 4% during the same period in 2011 and non-minority Women Business Enterprises were awarded \$26 million or 3% compared to \$14 million or 5% during the same time last year.

Additionally, as announced last year, DPS has also begun tracking and reporting actual dollars spent on M/WBE contracts at contract closeout. This reporting on contract closeout spend, in addition to awards, acts as a check and balance, providing additional information to help determine exactly the amount of resources being distributed. With reference to payments confirmed at contract closeout by minority and women vendors who performed on City contracts, DPS reported the following: Between January 2012 and September 2012,

a review of 20 contracts was completed. Of the \$773.5 million paid out, 21% went to MBEs and 5% went to WBEs. The following numbers represent actual dollars paid to M/WBE firms on these contracts. African Americans were paid \$90 million or 12%; Hispanics were paid \$60 million or 8%; Asian Americans were paid \$9 million or 1% and Women (non-minority) were paid \$39 million or 5%.

Since taking office, Mayor Emanuel has been focused on increasing opportunity for minority- and woman-owned businesses:

- In October 2011, the mayor announced the Diversity Credit Program to encourage Chicago's large prime contractors to work with minority- and woman-owned businesses in the private sector as well as the public sector by offering up to 5% City M/WBE participation credit to those primes who used a M/WBE on a private sector job.
- In February 2012, Mayor Emanuel allocated \$11 million from the Allied Waste settlement to develop and improve compliance within the city's M/WBE programs. This was an important step in showing the city would not tolerate abuses that harm the interests of women- and minority-owned businesses.
- In March 2012, the city council established an incremental phase out of participation credit for M/WBE program graduates. By allowing participation credit to phase out gradually after three years, instead of drop off all at once, the city helped ease organizations' transition into "established businesses" once they leave the M/WBE program.
- Also in March, the Mayor and the Cook County board president announced M/WBE certification reciprocity between Chicago and Cook County. As this project is completed, the governments will save MBEs and WBEs time and money as well as provide potential new business opportunities by eliminating this redundancy.
- Earlier this month, Mayor Emanuel announced a M/WBE mentorship program that provides a 5% credit for contractors who agree to enter into a mentor/protégé relationship with a M/WBE. This program gives small M/WBE business owners the guidance needed to become more competitive and self-sufficient.

The M/WBE forum website launched earlier this week. To learn more about this website all contractors interested in working on city projects are encouraged to visit

[www.cityofchicago.org/procurement](http://www.cityofchicago.org/procurement).

# # #