




Office of The Chief Administrative Officer  
**CHRISTINE ANDERSON**

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Steuart Pittman, County Executive

FROM: Christine Anderson, Chief Administrative Officer 

SUBJECT: County Disparity Study Executive Summary - August 2023

DATE: August 29, 2023

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The County contracted with Colette Holt and Associates to perform a disparity study to review the Small, Woman or Minority Business Enterprise (SWMBE) Program relative to the County's overall purchasing policies and procedures. The objective was to determine which spending categories had low utilization of SWMBE firms so that the County could formulate a strategy going forward to increase spending in those categories with SWMBE firms. This report is attached. Staff have also provided a summary of actions taken previously to increase disadvantaged business participation in County spending programs, actions underway currently, and future actions planned.

### **Past Actions**

Prior to the study the County had already implemented a number of measures to increase spending with SWMBE firms. Some examples are:

- Implementation of IT solution to better track spending with minority firms
- Implementation of IT solution to better identify which firms are SWMBE or small businesses
- Initiated One on One meetings with vendors to assist with filing procurement forms for snow contracts
- Vendor fairs with agency buyers to ensure agency staff know of minority and women owned firms that provide commonly purchased goods and services
- Institution of new policy requiring ALL purchases under \$100,000 where 3 quotes are required to include at least 1 quote from a SWMBE firm.
- Contracted for language access services to remove communication barriers

### **Actions in Progress Now**

- Development of an SWMBE strategic plan and guiding policy to focus the County's program.
- Redevelopment of the SWMBE program to ensure continued progress towards more equity and inclusion in County procurement spending.

## County Disparity Study Executive Summary - August 2023 Continued

- Increased targeted outreach opportunities for SWMBE vendors to work with the County

### **New Actions**

- Additional data analysis by industry/market to identify where SWMBE vendors are available but not yet working with the County
  - Review ALL spending data - contract, Purchase Orders, and P-Card - by major category of expenditure to identify areas of opportunity to increase spending with SWMBE vendors
  - Review all registered businesses in the County and in the State by major category of expertise to identify opportunities for participation in County contracts
- Creation of a Disadvantaged Business Coordinating Council to continue to develop programs and policies to expand SWMBE procurement opportunities
- Conduct open houses and reverse trade shows to communicate County needs for suppliers in the market based on budgeted projects/dollars.
- Develop recommendations for County Code changes to allow for consideration of race in vendor selection.

cc: Susan Herrold, Director, Office of Central Services  
Asha Smith, Director, Office of Equity and Human Relations