

## City of Portland Disparity Study | Overview and History

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The City of Portland encourages utilization of minority- and women-owned firms on City contracts as part of its fair contracting and small business support programs. In 1995, the City was the lead agency in the Oregon Regional Disparity Study that examined public construction contracting methods.

The 1995 Study found that:

- minority and women-owned businesses were underutilized at the prime contracting level; and
- there were steps the City could take to ensure that public contracting dollars benefited the entire community.

Based on the 1995 Study's findings and recommendations, the City adopted a Fair Contracting and Employment Strategy.

The City periodically evaluates the utilization of minority- and women-owned firms in City contracts and the effectiveness of existing programs. In 2009, the City and the Portland Development Commission (PDC) decided to update the portion of the original disparity study related to contracting.

This new Study analyzed and evaluated:

- the effectiveness of race and gender-neutral practices in public construction and construction-related professional services contracting;
- relevant City policies and practices; and
- options for continuing and further developing City strategies.

The City and PDC engaged BBC Research & Consulting to perform the Disparity Study. F.M. Burch & Associates, Group AGB, Ltd., Montesi & Associates, Holland + Knight, and Customer Research International were involved as part of the study team. For the study period of July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2009, the Disparity Study team analyzed:

- procurement and contracting procedures;
- Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business programs, utilization, availability and disparities;
- the legal framework governing race and gender-neutral practices in public construction;
- marketplace conditions; and
- possible explanations for any disparities.

The City will review the relevant findings and recommendations from the 2009 study and evaluate options for improving City contracting policies and related programs.