



Forest Preserves of Cook County Annual Business Diversity Report FY 2024

Toni Preckwinkle
President

Forest Preserves of Cook County
Board of Commissioners

Eileen Figel
Interim General Superintendent

*Message from Eileen Figel
Interim General Superintendent of
Forest Preserves of Cook County*

To the residents of Cook County:

I am pleased to present the Forest Preserves of Cook County's Annual Business Diversity Report. It is a top priority of the Forest Preserves to foster inclusion of minority- and women-owned businesses. The District has established a Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) program, supported and approved by the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners in September 2012. For the eleventh time in the District's history, we are reporting contractual commitments and actual payments to minority- and women-owned businesses. This report is a testament to our goal of being more transparent and our commitment to the long-term success of minority and women-owned businesses. It also allows residents and businesses to see the goals we have set for ourselves by reporting on contract dollars awarded and paid to MWBE businesses.

From the inception of the ordinance, we've made significant improvements to our MWBE program. To implement this important initiative, we revised the District's procurement code, which gave us the ability to create the MWBE program. By adding reinforcement measures to the code, we have more tools to support MWBE firms and promote greater inclusion of them in a proactive and transparent manner.

In 2014, we enhanced our website by providing direct links to solicitations from our partner organizations, the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Chicago Zoological Society. We also increased the awareness of the Districts' MWBE program by hosting workshops and participating in a number of other outreach events to directly reach minority and women-owned firms.

In 2015, we further strengthened our program by implementing best industry practices of recommending MWBE participation goal recommendations on all District solicitations on a contract-by-contract basis, engaging the user departments to break down their projects by work categories, and analyzing the availability of certified minority- and women-owned business in Cook County and the surrounding five collar counties.

2024 Accomplishments

This report allows residents and businesses to see the aspirational goals we have set for ourselves and includes actual payments as well as contract dollars awarded by the Forest Preserves. Overall, in fiscal year 2024, the District:

- 61% of contracts were awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses.
- 50% of contract payments were made to minority- and women-owned businesses.
- The District participated in nineteen outreach and workshop conferences, many in collaboration with various Government entities and Assist Agencies.
- The Forest Preserves Contract Compliance Administrator participates in mandatory and non-mandatory Pre-bid meetings to highlight and explain the MWBE participation goals, answering questions and educating vendors on how to meet the goals set forth for contracts.

We have also invested in new tools to better monitor participation on minority and women-owned businesses on District contracts. In 2016, we implemented a web-based system to capture payment data and allow for a more efficient process to track and monitor in real-time, and actual subcontractor payment. In 2018 prime contractor's payment reporting begun its automated phase by interfacing with the new Oracle system, and in 2019 this phase was improved by transmitting the data on a monthly basis. Previous reporting relied solely on *commitments* and methodologies that were vulnerable and susceptible to human error in the calculation and compilation of data. Payment information is now also shared in a transparent manner with both prime contractors and subcontractors.

By ensuring inclusion of minority- and women-owned businesses we are staying true to our goal of welcoming potential businesses to partner with the District and adhere to our fundamental mission “to acquire, restore and manage lands for the purpose of protecting and preserving public open space.” With the support and leadership of President Preckwinkle and the District's Board of Commissioners we have made tremendous strides in becoming a more transparent and effective government agency, but there is more to do. We will continue to strive to make the District a more transparent and attractive business partner for our minority- and women-owned businesses.

We look forward to continuing our work with both residents and businesses as we endeavor to provide outstanding opportunities to enjoy nature close to home and support entrepreneurs and enterprises that reflect the diversity of Cook County.

OUR COMMITMENT TO MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

The District is pleased to present its eleventh Annual Business Diversity Report covering the period of Fiscal Year 2024 under President Preckwinkle. The President is committed to the inclusion and expansion of opportunities for small, local, minority and women-owned businesses.

Program Background In the absence of legislative authority to establish the type of provisions referenced via the Program to Government Contracts, the District experienced a significantly low level of participation by MWBEs in its Government Contracts. It procured goods and services in a non-inclusive marketplace and without the authority to establish MWBE goals. Historically, minority- and women-owned businesses have been awarded government contracts in dollar amounts disproportionately lower than the availability of such business that are willing and able to undertake these contracts. Under new leadership, the District sought to provide a level playing field and equal access for all prime contractors and subcontractors to participate in government contracts.

In July 2012, Governor Quinn signed legislation allowing the Forest Preserves of Cook County (District) to establish provisions to address the underuse of minority and women-owned businesses with respect to procurement contracts with the District.

An ordinance establishing the program's parameters and guidelines was passed by the Forest Preserves' Board of Commissioners in September 2012. This new initiative is significantly benefitting the residents of our County by increasing the pool of qualified minority and women-owned businesses that have the opportunity to be selected for contracts awarded by the District each year.

In an effort to remedy historic inequity and to facilitate greater inclusion, the District established aspirational goals for the participation of minority and women-owned businesses in District contracts over \$25,000 as set forth under the ordinances that comprise the Forest Preserves of Cook County Municipal Code. The aspirational goals are as follows:

Contract Type	Aspirational Goals	
	MBE	WBE
Construction	24%	10%
Goods and Services	25%	10%
Professional Services	35% Overall	

About this Report Under the leadership of President Preckwinkle, the District began publishing annual diversity reports for the first time, making this information available to the public. This report is the District's eleventh annual report, and the ninth using the contract Compliance Reporting System (CRS); it details the District's efforts to ensure minority and women-owned business have greater access to public contracting opportunities. It includes contract dollars awarded and contract payments by the Forest Preserves as reported by our Accounts Payable system- Oracle, the vendors, and corroborated by their MWBE subcontractors. The reporting period covers the program accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2024 (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024).

The report summarizes annual program activity, prime contract and subcontract utilization data for certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs). It continues to serve as a benchmarking tool in assessing the MWBE participation and identifying areas for greater inclusion. The District tracks MWBE participation in the following three categories (1) Construction), (2) Goods and Services, and (3) Professional Services. Data reported is based on actual payments reported by the District's accounts payable - Oracle System, the vendors, and confirmed by the subcontractors, including MWBEs.

MWBE FY 2024 Initiatives Since the passage of the Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises Program, President Preckwinkle has made achieving full MWBE participation in District's procurement a key goal of her administration. The District has undertaken a number of efforts to reduce barriers for minority- and women-owned businesses that are competing for contracts and currently doing business with the District. Our efforts and accomplishments during FY 2024 are described below:

- Participated in nineteen outreach and workshop conferences, many in collaboration with various Government entities and Assist Agencies
- 61% of contracts were awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses
- A total of 50% of contract payments were made to minority and women-owned businesses
- Project specific analysis on all solicitations to establish appropriate MWBE participation goals
- Collaborated with Enterprise Resource Planning staff to continue to ensure the Oracle system is effectively transmitting payment data to our Compliance Reporting System (CRS)
- Encouraged the participation of MWBEs in contracts where there are no apparent subcontracting opportunities by including in the evaluating process, proposer's good faith efforts.
- Sent targeted email invitations of bids to new District vendors to attract, inform and encourage the active participation of vendors in procurement and contracting opportunities.
- Actively participated in mandatory and non-mandatory pre-bid meetings to ensure the participation of MWBEs on all District contracts
- Chairing the Compliance and Certification subcommittee of the Government Procurement and Compliance Forum (GPCF), which is a strategic partnership of over 30 government agencies and non-profit assist agencies representing small businesses to drive bold, cross-agency improvements to make the region a benchmark for procurement, certification, and compliance processes that are streamlined, standardized, equitable and transparent.
- Actively participated in other government agency's virtual pre-bid meetings, in an effort to create awareness of the District contracting opportunities and encourage vendors to register and participate in the District's procurement process.

Disparity Study Since President Preckwinkle took office, the District has made critical and strategic investments to overcome the barriers that minority- and women-owned businesses encounter while pursuing contracting opportunities, including taking measures to ensure their full participation at all levels of the District.

In June of 2013, Cook County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement with Colette Holt & Associates to conduct a Disparity Study of the County and the Forest Preserve's MWBE Program. The purpose of the study was to identify measures to be implemented to ensure full MWBE participation.

A Disparity Study is a periodic analysis and evaluation of a municipality's MBE/WBE efforts. The term "disparity" refers to the difference between the number of MBE/WBE's who are able to provide the services a local government is procuring and the number of firms who are actually working with the local government. The study looks at whether the organization is meeting its goals with regards to access to procurement opportunities and provides recommendations to improve its efforts. Disparity studies also provide a legal defense of an MBE/WBE program if that program is challenged in the courts.

Nationally, it's considered best practice to conduct periodic disparity studies. Other local agencies that have done this include the Cook County, the City of Chicago, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Water Reclamation District, and the Illinois Tollway, among others. As a critical initiative under this administration, we have implemented best-industry practice by conducting the District's periodic Disparity Studies and will continue to do so.

In February of 2021, the Cook County Board of Commissioners approved again an agreement with Colette Colt to conduct an updated Disparity Study to determine whether the District has a continuing compelling interest in remedying discrimination against MWBEs in its marketplace.

This Disparity Study was successfully completed in FY 2022 and provided recommendations for program enhancements to ensure we continue to maintain a sound, strong and defensible program. We are proud to inform that since 2015, the District has implemented best-industry practices of determining project-specific-MWBE participation goals on a contract-by-contract basis. As we continue to improve the management and administration of our program, we will refer to this very important tool to implement additional recommendations.

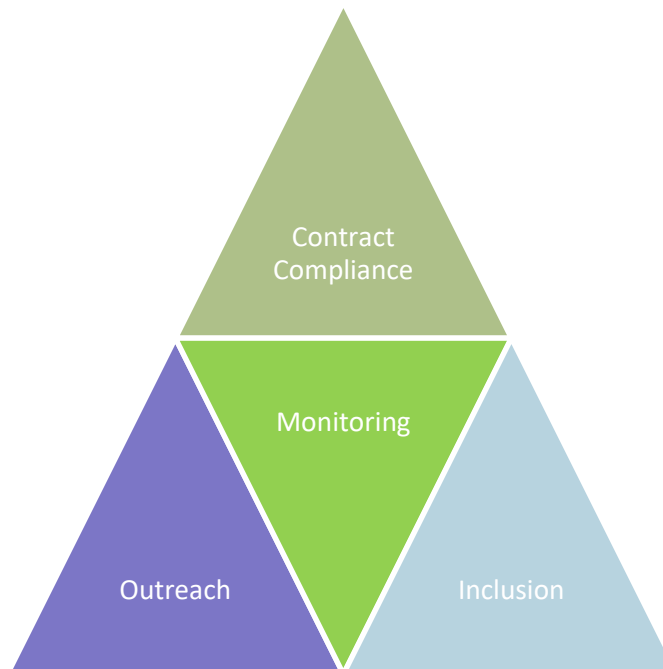
The Study included a comprehensive statistical analysis based on the District's procurement history, including contracts awarded between FY2016 through FY2020. The consultant collected, sorted, researched, and analyzed data and used Custom Census methodology recommended in the National Disparity Study Guidelines to accurately estimate MBE/WBE availability estimates. The consultant also calculated a Disparity index using regression analysis.

Compliance Reporting System President Preckwinkle has made achieving full MBE/WBE participation in the District's procurement a key goal of her administration. In July of 2016, the Office of Contract Compliance implemented a web-based MBE/WBE contract compliance system (CRS). As part of its mission and mandate, it seeks to capture, monitor and report contract compliance and performance, based on actual spend in real time. In the past, previous reporting relied on a cumbersome methodology that was vulnerable to human error in the calculation and compilation of data and information; and in 2018 and 2019 we incorporated Oracle ERP to transmit payment data to the CRS. The key benefits of the Compliance Reporting System include:

- Transparency and accountability measures for all stakeholders, including prime contractors and subcontractors
- Communication improvement to minority-and women owned businesses
- Streamlined process- user friendly reporting process- for both prime vendors and subcontractors
- Accessibility- all reporting is conveniently performed online and is always available

ROLE OF CONTRACT COMPLIANCE ADMINISTRATOR

The Contract Compliance Administrator (CCA) advocates for minority and women-owned business by ensuring the application and enforcement of the District's MBE/WBE Ordinance. The CCA is responsible and accountable for administration of the District's Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises Program. Some duties include ensuring MWBE inclusion in the District's contracting processes by determining appropriate MWBE participation goals on a contract-by-contract basis; monitors the participation of MWBEs on all active contracts throughout the life of the contracts; collaborates with User Departments and encourages Prime Contractors to maximize the utilization of MWBEs on Utilization Plans, Change Orders, Contract Modifications, including extensions and amendments; participates in outreach events; assists in the resolution of payment issues to MWBEs; and reports on supplier diversity participation to the President and Board of Commissioners.



Program Administration

The District's MBE/WBE Program as set forth in the Forest Preserves' Code of Cook County, Title 1 Administration under Chapter 8 – District Finances 1-8-5: Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. The Code can be found online at [TITLE 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE | Forest Preserve | Cook County, IL | Municode Library](#). The responsibilities of the CCA include:

- (1) Establishing contract specific goals on all solicitations on a contract-by-contract bases; analyzing the availability of MBE/WBEs to provide the services, supplies, materials, or equipment required by the Contract.
- (2) Formulating, proposing, and implementing rules and regulations for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the MBE/WBE Program.
- (3) Providing information and assistance to vendors and to MBE/WBEs relating to the Program, and serving as a liaison to community, contractor, professional and supplier groups, as well as trade associations and organizations.
- (4) Cooperates with and provides assistance to internal departments to facilitate and maximize the participation of MBE/WBEs in procurement opportunities.
- (5) Monitoring contracts to evaluate compliance with Contract Specific Goals and commitments.
- (6) Cooperating with and providing guidance and assistance to Assist Agencies to facilitate participation of their MBE/WBEs members in current and/or upcoming procurements.
- (7) Reviewing, approving, or rejecting MWBE Utilization Plans (UP) for achievement of contract specific goals, and evaluating the extent to which goals were achieved.
- (8) Monitoring contracts to ensure compliance with regards to the Prompt Payment of MBE/WBEs.
- (9) Receiving, reviewing, and acting upon complaints and suggestions concerning the program.
- (10) Evaluating the effectiveness and utility of the program.
- (11) Monitoring the program and the District's progress towards program goals.
- (12) Assist in resolving MWBE participation issues on contracts, including resolving shortfalls in participation.
- (13) Collaborate with internal departments and vendors to maintain and/or exceed aspirational MWBE participation goals affected by contract amendments and change orders.

- (14) Encourage the participation of MWBEs in contracts where there are no apparent subcontracting opportunities, by including in the evaluating process, proposer's good faith efforts to engage MWBEs.
- (15) Reporting to the District's Contract Compliance Committee, at its request, information regarding the administration of the program and its progress toward achieving program goals.
- (16) Make recommendations to amend the Procurement and Compliance Codes to continue to use best industry practices and policies and striving to increase the participation of minority- and women-owned business in the District's contracts.

Office of the Procurement Department

The mission of the Forest Preserves' Director of Procurement (DP) is to acquire quality goods and services for the District at the best price possible by promoting competition and implementing best industry practices.

With the purpose to achieve this goal, the DP is committed to implement open and transparent procurement methods to increase the participation and encouragement of vendors to participate in this process, while lowering costs to taxpayers. As the contracting authority for the District, the DP has established an open and transparent environment where competitive bidding is fair to all. In addition, the DP works closely with the Contract Compliance Administrator (CCA) to ensure that the MWBE business community has all the necessary tools, knowledge, and resources to be successful in bidding on District contract opportunities.

How-to-do business with the Forest Preserves of Cook County

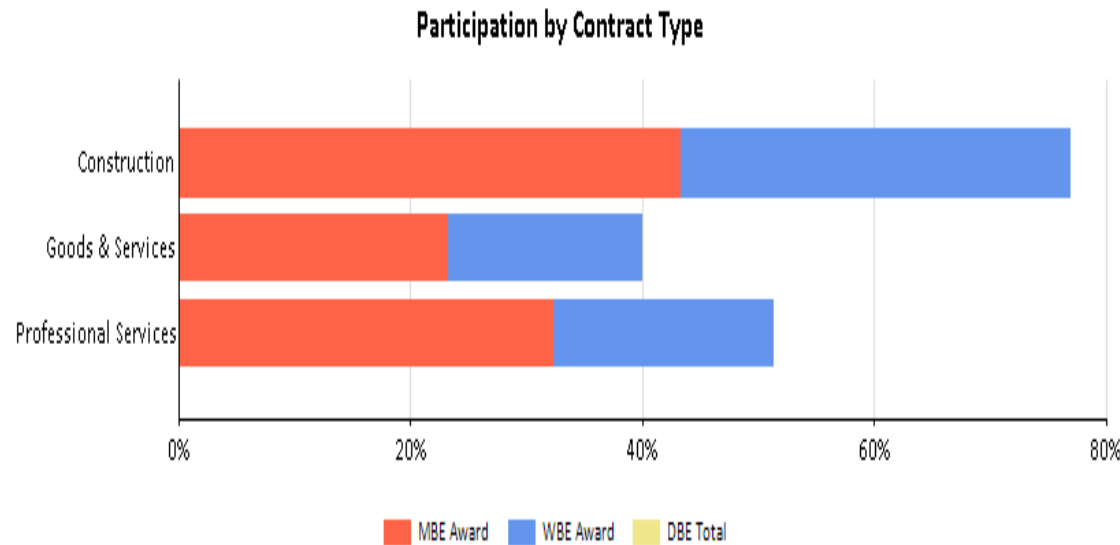
During this past year, we held several workshops, some of which were virtual, in collaboration with Cook County. In addition, we partnered with many local agencies and assist agencies, providing seminars and presentations to hundreds of entrepreneurs and existing businesses on how-to-do business with the District. Instructing in detail our procurement process, resources, and expert advice on how to become a successful participant in government contracting.

Businesses interested in pursuing contracting opportunities with the District may view and download bid solicitations and bidding contracting opportunities which are listed in the District's Purchasing website.

Once firms complete a very simple enrollment process, they may view, download, receive automated bid notifications and amendments, as well as view the listing of other vendors that have downloaded a specific bid opportunity. The ability to view all other plan holders fosters the ability of all interested parties to engage in partnerships, subcontracting/sub consulting activities.

Forest Preserves of Cook County MBE/WBE FY 2024 Award (Commitments) Summary

	<i>MBE Award</i>	<i>WBE Award</i>	<i>Non-MBE/WBE Award Amount</i>	<i>Total Contract Awarded in FY 2024</i>
Construction	\$3,571,747	\$2,779,664	\$1,900,797	\$8,252,208
Goods & Services	\$1,057,136	\$764,634	\$2,727,775	\$4,549,545
Professional Services	\$1,352,113	\$789,860	\$2,031,892	\$4,173,866
Total	\$5,980,997	\$4,334,158	\$6,660,464	\$16,975,618



In FY 2024 the District awarded 61% of its contracts to MBE/WBEs:

77% MBE/WBE participation on Construction Contracts

40% MBE/WBE participation on Goods and Services Contracts

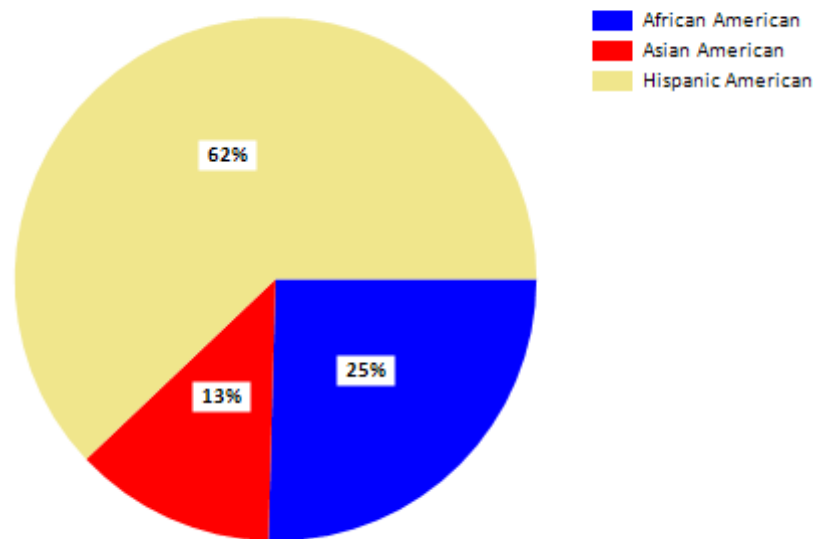
51% MBE/WBE participation on Professional Services Contracts

Forest Preserves of Cook County MBE/WBE FY 2024 Awards (Commitments) by Ethnicity *

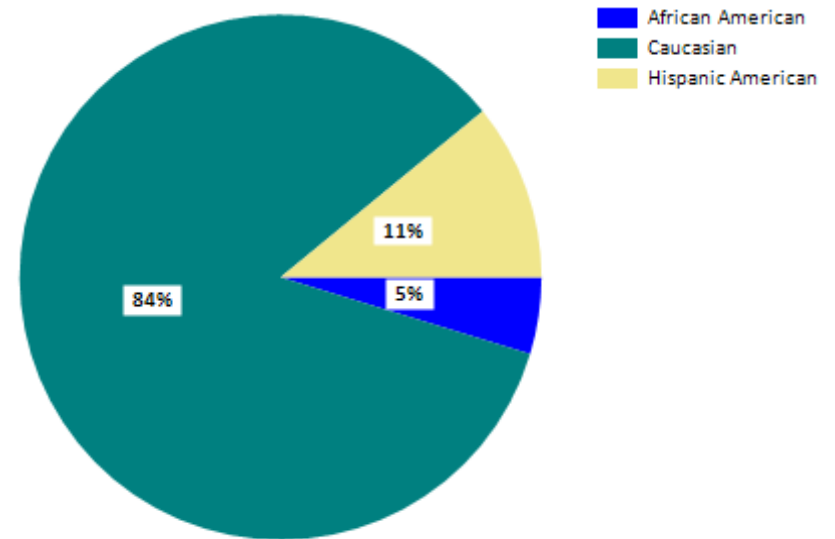
	All Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				All Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
Contract Type	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Caucasian	Total WBE
Construction	\$418,956	\$227,607	\$2,925,184	\$3,571,747	\$179,340	\$0	\$137,055	\$2,463,269	\$2,779,664
Goods and Services	\$762,136	\$25,000	\$270,000	\$1,057,136	\$0	\$0	\$260,000	\$504,634	\$764,634
Professional Services	\$340,006	\$495,164	\$516,943	\$1,352,113	\$25,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$689,860	\$789,860
Total	\$1,521,098	\$747,771	\$3,712,127	\$5,980,997	\$204,340	\$0	\$472,055	\$3,657,763	\$4,334,158

*Participation by ethnicity is based on Total MBE and WBE participation commitments. Percentages shown in the graphics below were automatically rounded by the Compliance Reporting System (CRS).

MBE Participation* Committed by Ethnicity



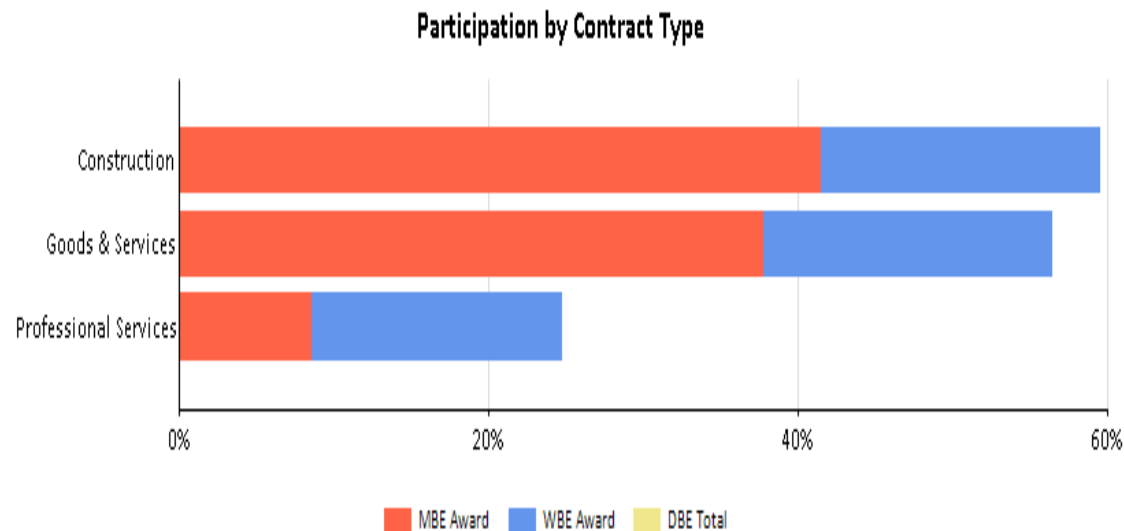
WBE Participation* Committed by Ethnicity



Forest Preserves of Cook County MBE/WBE FY 2024 Payment (Actuals) Summary *

	MBE Payment	WBE Payment	Non-MBE/WBE Payment	Total Payments Made in FY 2024
Construction	\$6,775,846	\$2,935,882	\$6,581,522	\$16,293,250
Goods and Services	\$3,189,202	\$1,571,901	\$3,653,988	\$8,415,091
Professional Services	\$744,784	\$1,396,776	\$6,446,365	\$8,587,925
Total	\$10,709,832	\$5,904,559	\$16,681,875	\$33,296,265

**Participation is based on payments automatically loaded data by Oracle and reported by vendors (Primes and Sub-contractors), and excludes Sole Source Contracts, GPOs and Grants; the contracts for which payments are made in FY2024 include contracts awarded in previous years as well as a portion of those awarded during FY2024.*



50% of payments made on District contracts went to MBE/WBEs*:

60% MBE/WBE participation on Construction Contracts

57% MBE/WBE participation on Goods and Services Contracts

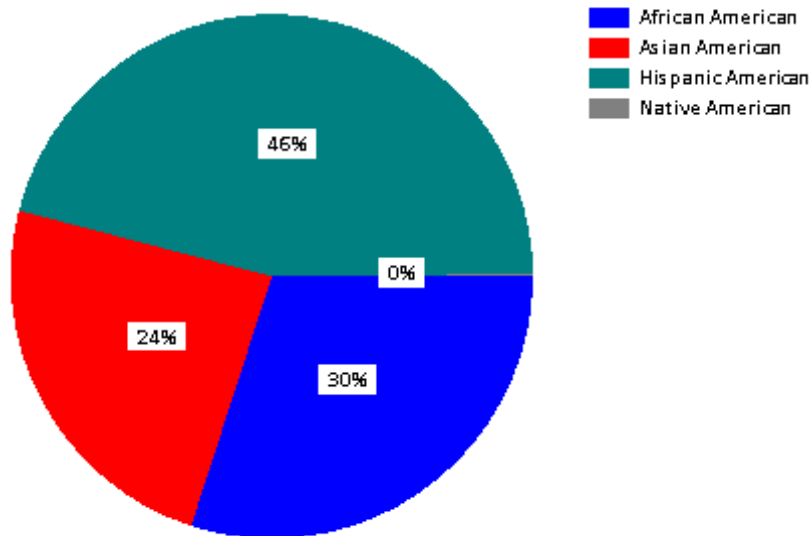
25% MBE/WBE participation on Professional Services Contracts

Forest Preserves of Cook County MBE/WBE 2024 Payments by Ethnicity (Actuals)*

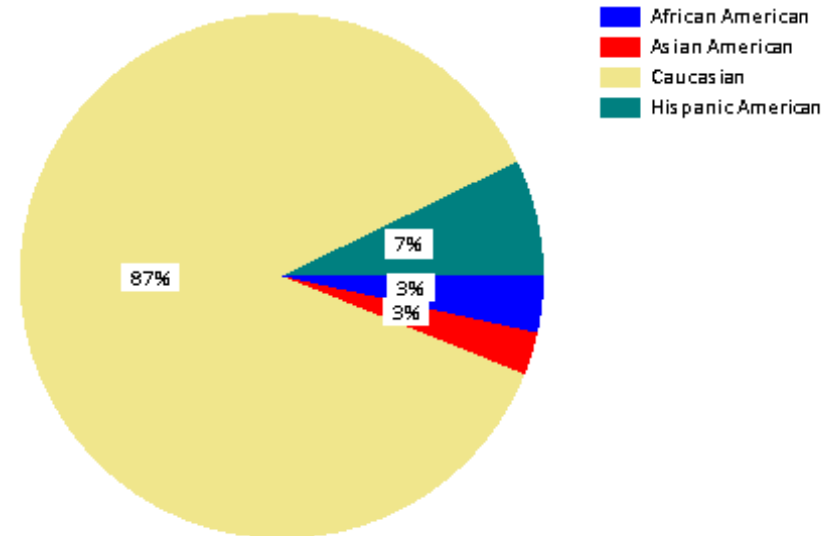
	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
Contract Type	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Caucasian	Hispanic Americans	Total WBE
Construction	\$404,894	\$1,989,376	\$4,381,576	\$6,775,846	\$167,092	\$0	\$2,528,958	\$239,831	\$2,935,882
Goods and Services	\$2,790,430	\$60,030	\$338,742	\$3,189,202	\$13,123	\$0	\$1,488,020	\$70,758	\$1,571,901
Professional Services	\$34,100	\$526,126	\$184,558	\$744,784	\$25,000	\$154,659	\$1,103,381	\$113,736	\$1,396,776
Total	\$3,229,424	\$2,575,532	\$4,904,876	\$10,709,832	\$205,215	\$154,659	\$5,120,359	\$424,325	\$5,904,559

*Participation is based on payments automatically loaded data by Oracle and reported by vendors (Primes and Sub-contractors), and excludes Sole Source Contracts, GPOs and Grants; the contracts for which payments are made in FY2024 include contracts awarded in previous years as well as a portion of those awarded during FY2024. Percentages shown in the graphics below were automatically rounded by the Compliance Reporting System (CRS).

MBE Participation* Payments by Ethnicity



WBE Participation* Payments by Ethnicity



2024 Outreach Activities

The District both participates in and sponsors a vast number of business outreach events throughout the year to market the current and upcoming contracting opportunities and encourage potential vendors to learn more about doing business with the District. The District participated in the following events during FY 2024:

- **Southwest Side Small Business Feria- Commissioner Alma Anaya, 7TH District on 2/2/24**
- Chicago Construction Summit 2024- City of Chicago on 2/22/24
- Midwest Government Contracting Summit- Illinois Apex Accelerator on 3/19/24
- 2024 Pathways to Cook County Summit- Cook County on 4/9/24
- The Connection Session- Public Building Commission on 5/2/24
- **MENA Fireside Chat- Commissioner Donna Miller, 6th District on 5/21/24**
- Doing Business with the FPDCC- Greater Southwest Development Corporation on 5/30/24
- Doing Business with the FPDCC- African American Contractor Association on 5/31/24
- Annual Supplier Diversity Fair- McCormick Place on 7/17/24
- Business Matchmaking event- Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on 7/18/24
- 2024 Procurement Symposium- City of Chicago on 9/5/24
- Annual Diverse Business Summit- MWRDGC on 9/6/24
- Annual Business Expo, Conference & Matchmaking Sessions- IHCC on 10/3/24
- 2024 B.I.G. Technology Summit- Bush Infotech Group, Inc on 10/8/24
- Doing Business with the FPDCC- U.S. Minority Contractors Association on 10/9/24
- Chicago Construction Expo 2024- Chicago Build Expo on 10/23/24
- Contracting with Government -A Roadmap for Bus. Opport. - Illinois Tollway on 11/8/24
- Partnering with our Veteran Businesses- Veterans Elite Event 2024 on 11/21/24
- Capital Construction Summit- Chicago Public Schools on 12/17/24

MBE/WBE Additional Outreach Initiatives

In addition to hosting and participating in Business Seminars and conferences, the CCA provided individual assistance to vendors seeking to get certified as MBEs and WBEs with Cook County and the City of Chicago, including on how to do business with the District, Cook County and various government agencies.

- In 2024 the District also periodically used all its social media platforms to promote upcoming workshops and outreach opportunities for businesses to register and participate.

- In an effort to further expand and attract diverse vendors, the CCA participated at other organizations pre-bid events and meetings, such as by the Illinois Tollway. The District was allowed the opportunity to give a brief introduction of the FPCC and to provide information on how to do business. So far, this practice has allowed us to attract many vendors that had not previously pursued contracting opportunities with the District.

This initiative has already produced a significant increase and tangible participation of new MWBE vendors pursuing and participating in the District's procurement process. New MWBE vendors to the District are viewing, downloading and bidding on FPD contracts that had not previously pursued contracting opportunities with the us and/or historically were unaware of the procurement opportunities available at the FPCC, the CBG or the CZS. This has significantly impacted the diversity, competitiveness and quality of the services and goods our organizations purchase.

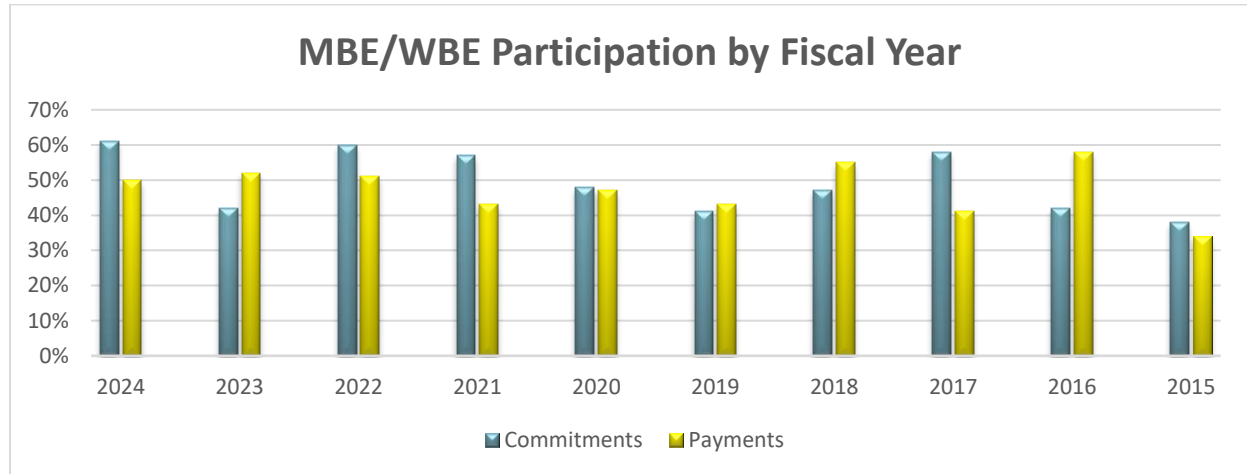
A Glance Ahead...

- We will continue monitoring via the CRS that automated payments to prime contractors in the database via Oracle ERP is accurately uploading data, ensuring that payment information is always correct and up to date. CRS allows for a more efficient process to track and monitor actual payments to M/WBE subcontractors in real time. Contract data management is a critical component of our services, which will ease the process of reporting actual spending in all categories. Our continued goal is that uploading payment information be done in the first week of the month.
- We will continue to post workshops and outreach opportunities to vendors and entrepreneurs to attract and encourage MWBEs to consider doing business with the District, as well as to connect with us via LinkedIn and the use of our social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) and the Forest Way consistently throughout the year.
- The Procurement department will continue to work on developing a data portal which will contain all District awarded contracts. This important tool is in line with President Preckwinkle's ongoing directive for transparency, while providing access to public information and assistance to the business community for easy access to current and historic awarded contracts. In addition to minimizing the need for and processing FOIA requests.
- Continue to seek opportunities to provide virtual and in-person workshops and training seminars in collaboration with Cook County and sister agencies to firms seeking to get certified as MWBEs and learning how to do business with the District and other government agencies. These workshops will include information on how to properly complete all paperwork related to the Utilization Plan and Letters of Intent.
- We will renew the possibility of posting quarterly advertising on statewide and local newspapers, publications and online with the collaboration of the Director of Procurement on how to do

business with the FPCC. This would attract business owners not familiar with the District's procurement opportunities, and also diverse entrepreneurs seeking to venture into public contracting in niche areas such as many of the District's needs. The legal notices would provide guidance on how to register with the District and learn about outreach and networking events as well.

- We will continue to collaborate with other government agencies to host virtual workshops targeted at businesses that need assistance and for entrepreneurs seeking new ventures and markets. The main objective of these efforts is to educate, guide and create awareness in the business community of the specific business requirements and qualifications such as licensing, permitting and other related resources needed for businesses to successfully participate in the District's procurement process as a Prime contractor and/or subcontractor in the maintenance of our Forest Preserves. Various departments will be asked to collaborate by informing participants of the District's specific requirements and best practices.
- Continue to participate in the District's mandatory and non-mandatory pre-bid meetings, as well as to participate in other government agencies' virtual pre-bid meetings for contracts related to the goods and services that the District purchases, with the objective of engaging vendors, respond to questions, establish expectations and encourage to participate in our procurements.
- We will continue to foster greater participation and encourage the MBE/WBE business community to pursue specialized and niche District procurement opportunities as Prime Contractors and Subcontractors, through focusing on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies and programs. Ultimately the greater participation of MWBEs will economically impact our local community by creating jobs and stimulating growth in the regional economy.
- Provide ongoing assistance to the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Chicago Zoological Society in an effort to increase its participation of diverse firms in these organization's contracts. This effort includes technical assistance, best industry practices and overall guidance on how to encourage the participation of the minority business community on the Garden and the Brookfield Zoo's procurement process. Recommendations have already been made, and we will seek to continue to assist them and help them implement these in FY2025.
- The CCA will continue to lead the Compliance and Certification committee of the Government Procurement and Compliance Forum (GPCF) as its appointed chairman. The GPCF is a strategic partnership of over 30 government agencies and non-profit assist agencies representing small businesses to drive bold, cross-agency improvements to make the region a benchmark for procurement, certification, and compliance processes that are streamlined, standardized, equitable and transparent. The District will learn of creative and new alternative approaches to further maximize the opportunities of small and diverse businesses on District Contracts.

MBE/WBE Commitment and Payment results for the FY 2024 to FY 2015.



2024

- Awarded contracts achieved 61% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 50% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2023

- Awarded contracts achieved 42% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 52% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2022

- Awarded contracts achieved 60% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 51% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2021

- Awarded contracts achieved 57% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 43% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2020

- Awarded contracts achieved 48% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 47% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2019

- Awarded contracts achieved 41% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 43% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2018

- Awarded contracts achieved 47% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 55% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2017

- Awarded contracts achieved 58% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 41% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2016

- Awarded contracts achieved 42% minority and women-owned businesses participation
- 58% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses

2015

- Awarded contracts achieved 38% minority and women-owned businesses participation

- 34% of contract payments were made to MBE/WBE businesses



**TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT**

Forest Preserve District of Cook County Board of Commissioners

**DONNA MILLER
Chairwoman, Contract Compliance Committee**

**FRANK J. AGUILAR
ALMA E. ANAYA
SCOTT R. BRITTON
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BILL LOWRY
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MICHAEL SCOTT, JR.
TARA S. STAMPS
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**Eileen Figel
Interim General Superintendent**

**Damon Howell
Chief Financial Officer**

**Thomas J. Conlon
Director of Procurement**

**Sergio Silva
Contract Compliance Administrator**