

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ORDINANCE
REVISED APPENDIX D
OF THE
METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
OF GREATER CHICAGO

June 2, 2022

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METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
OF GREATER CHICAGO

Section 1. Declaration of Policy

Whereas, it is the policy of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (the "District") to ensure competitive business opportunities for small, minority- and women-owned business enterprises in the award and performance of District contracts, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, color, racial group or perceived racial group, disability, age, religion, national origin or ethnicity, sexual orientation, veteran or military discharge status, association with anyone with these characteristics, or any other legally protected characteristic in the award of or participation in District contracts, and to abolish barriers to full participation in District contracts by all person, regardless of race, ethnicity or sex;

Whereas, the District pursuant to its authority under 70 ILCS 2605/11.3, is committed to establishing procedures to implement this policy as well as state and federal regulations to assure the utilization of minority-owned, women-owned and small business enterprises in a manner consistent with constitutional requirements;

Whereas, the District is committed to equal opportunity for minority-, women-owned and small businesses to participate in the award and performance of District contracts;

Whereas, the Supreme Court of the United States in *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.*, 488 U.S. 469 (1989), has enunciated certain standards that are necessary to maintain effective contracting affirmative action programs in compliance with constitutional requirements;

Whereas, the District is committed to implementing its affirmative action program in conformance with the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Croson* and its progeny;

Whereas, in furtherance of this commitment, the Board of Commissioners directed the District staff and its outside consultants in 1990 to conduct an investigation into the scope of any discrimination in the award of and participation in District construction contracts as well as in the construction industry in Metropolitan Chicago, the extent to which such discrimination or the effects thereof has denied and continues to deny minority and women's business enterprises equal opportunity to participate in District contracts and to recommend the appropriate affirmative action steps to be taken to eliminate any such discrimination and its continuing effects.

Whereas, on June 21, 2001, the District adopted its Revised Appendix D, Notice of Requirements for Affirmative Action Program to Ensure Minority, Small and Women's Business Participation ("Appendix D"); and

Whereas, in 2006 the Board of Commissioners undertook a review of Appendix D, the District's contracting policy and operation under Appendix D and an investigation into the existence of continued discrimination against minority and women-owned businesses in the Metropolitan Chicago construction industry to evaluate the continued need for Appendix D and any necessary revisions thereto;

Whereas, the Board of Commissioners undertaken a review in 2012 of Appendix D, the District's contracting policy and operation under Appendix D and an investigation into the existence of continued discrimination against minority and women-owned businesses in the Metropolitan Chicago construction industry to evaluate the continued need for Appendix D and any necessary revisions thereto.;

Whereas, the Board of Commissioners undertook a new review in 2014 of Appendix D, the District's contracting policy and operation under Appendix D and an investigation into the existence of continued discrimination against minority- and women-owned businesses in the District's geographic and procurement market areas to evaluate the continued need for Appendix D and any necessary revisions thereto.

Section 2. Findings

The Board of Commissioners, having reviewed the 2015 report of its outside consultant finds:

1. In 2003, the U.S. District Court in *Builders Association of Greater Chicago v. City of Chicago*, 298 F. Supp.2d 725 (N.D. Ill. 2003) held that the evidence introduced at trial demonstrated that past and current discriminatory practices continue to place MBE and WBE firms at a competitive disadvantage in the award of governmental contracts and such practices have and continue to impede the growth and success of MBEs and WBEs.

2. In 2004, a study of the Metropolitan Chicago Construction Industry by Timothy Bates, Distinguished Professor, Wayne State University, concluded that the evidence that African-American, Hispanic and women-owned businesses have been, and continue to be disadvantaged in the construction industry and small businesses is strong, has remained consistent and that compelling evidence indicates that African-American, Hispanic, and women-owned businesses face barriers in the Metropolitan Chicago construction industry greater than those faced by white males.

3. A November, 2005 study of the Metropolitan Chicago construction industry by David Blanchflower, Professor of Economics at Dartmouth College, has determined that discrimination against Asian-owned businesses existed in the business community in areas of business financing and construction wages and that this, together with evidence of individual discrimination against Asian-owned construction companies, leads to the conclusion that discrimination against Asian owned businesses continues to exist in the Metropolitan Chicago construction industry.

4. In 2005, the U.S. District Court held in *Northern Contracting, Inc. v. Illinois Department of Transportation*, 2005 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 19868 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 8, 2005) that there is strong evidence of the effects of past and current discrimination against MBEs and WBEs in the construction industry in the Chicago area.

5. The trial court's decision was affirmed in *Northern Contracting, Inc. v. Illinois Department of Transportation*, 473 F.3d 715 (7th Cir. 2007).

6. In 2006, Cook County, Illinois accepted a report it had commissioned titled, "Review of Compelling Evidence of Discrimination Against Minority-and Women-Owned Business Enterprise in the Chicago Area Construction Industry and Recommendations for Narrowly Tailored Remedies for Cook County, Illinois" (Cook County 2006 Report), which concluded that there is extensive evidence of discrimination against MBEs and WBEs in the

Chicago area construction marketplace, and the participation of MBEs and WBEs in the County's construction prime contracts and subcontracts is below the availability of such firms.

7. In 2006, the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority commissioned a study for the availability of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises ("DBEs") in its geographic and procurement markets, to ensure that its DBE program was narrowly tailored as required by constitutional standard, which found 19.56% DBE availability in construction, 19.36% DBE availability in construction-related professional services, and that DBE utilization had steadily increased from 2.40% in 2004 to 24.72% in 2010.

8. Cook County commissioned a new report, entitled "The Status of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises Relevant to Construction Activity In and Around Cook County, Illinois" (Cook County 2010 Study), which found that MBEs and WBEs were not utilized in all aspects in proportion to their availability.

9. In 2010 the U.S. Department of Justice produced a report to Congress, entitled "Compelling Interest for Race- and Gender-Conscious Federal Contracting Programs: An Update to the May 23, 1996 Review of Barriers to Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses," that updated the original basis for the U.S. Department of Transportation's DBE program and concluded that discriminatory barriers continue to impede the ability of MBEs and WBEs to compete with other firms on a fair and equal footing in government contracting markets, including in the construction industry.

10. In 2012, the District commissioned a report on barriers to construction opportunities in the Chicago area market and recommendations for District efforts to reduce such barriers, which found continuing disparities in the Chicago area construction market.

11. In 2014, The District commissioned a report on barriers to equal opportunities in the District's geographic and industry market areas and recommendations for District efforts to reduce such barriers, which found continuing disparities in the District's market areas.

12. In 2015, the trial court in *Midwest Fence, Corp. v. U.S. Department of Transportation et al*, 2015 WL 139676 (N.D. Ill. March 24, 2015), held that discrimination continues to impede full and fair opportunities for disadvantaged business enterprise in the Illinois construction industry.

13. The District has determined that it has a continuing compelling interest in preventing public funds in contracts from perpetuating the effects of past discrimination and current discrimination against minority- and women-owned firms in its market.

14. The Affirmative Action Program adopted by the District and amended April 2, 2009 is hereby modified to further continue to ameliorate the effects of racial and gender discrimination in the marketplace.

15. The remedies adopted herein by the District will not overly burden non-MBE and non-WBE firms in the award of District Contracts.

16. The Commissioners shall periodically review minority-owned and women-owned participation in contracts awarded by the District to ensure that the District continues to have a compelling interest in remedying discrimination against minority and women-owned firms in the award of District contracts and that the measures adopted herein remain narrowly tailored to accomplish that objective.