

City of Baltimore MBE/WBE Disparity Study FAQ

The City of Baltimore is currently conducting a disparity study for its Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) Program for City procurement and contracting activities. To determine that this Program remains legally defensible and administratively successful, the City has undertaken this study to gather and analyze the type of evidence required by the federal courts.

What is a “disparity study”?

A disparity study gathers evidence required to determine whether the City of Baltimore has a strong basis for implementing race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies. This includes statistical evidence on disparities between MBE and WBE availability and their utilization on City contracts and subcontracts, and throughout the Baltimore-area economy as a whole, as well as on factors necessary for business success, such as access to business capital, formal and informal networks, and suppliers. The study will also gather qualitative information directly from MBE/WBE and non-MBE/WBE business owners regarding their experiences with discrimination as well as everyday challenges and successes doing business in the Baltimore market area. The study will also evaluate the City’s current MBE/WBE Program and related policies and make recommendations to the City for future initiatives and enhancements.

Who is conducting the study?

The contract to conduct this study was awarded through a competitive Request for Proposal process to NERA Economic Consulting, led by NERA Senior Vice President Dr. Jon Wainwright, one of the nation’s foremost experts on disparity studies. The NERA team is proud to include two Baltimore-based MBE/WBE firms—CR Dynamics & Associates, Inc. (www.crdynamics.com) and Keller Professional Services, Inc. (www.kellerproservices.com).

How can business owners get involved?

The participation of business owners is critical to the study’s success. Interested persons can be part of the process in two ways:

Mail Surveys. If you receive a mail survey, please complete it online or return it by mail. This short 14-question survey will be mailed out to a statistically representative cross-section of area businesses. Since the survey period will only be open for responses for a limited time, please complete and return the survey as soon as you receive it.

Business Owner Interviews. NERA will also be conducting personal interviews with business owners to gather information on your experiences and insights. Invitations will be sent to all identifiable City vendors, contractors, and subcontractors as well as to a cross-section of area business owners at large. Since space will be limited, it is important that you RSVP to confirm your attendance when you receive the invitation.

The schedules for surveys and business owner interviews will be posted on the City's web page, as soon as they are available, at the following URLs:

[http://www.baltimorecity.gov/
Government/AgenciesDepartments/Law/
MinorityandWomensBusinessOpportunityOffice.aspx](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Law/MinorityandWomensBusinessOpportunityOffice.aspx)
or

[http://www.baltimorecity.gov/
OfficeoftheMayor/MayoralOffices/
MinorityandWomenOwnedBusinessDevelopment.aspx](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/OfficeoftheMayor/MayoralOffices/MinorityandWomenOwnedBusinessDevelopment.aspx)

What if I don't receive a survey or can't attend a business interview session?

We welcome your comments by email at businessinterviews@nera.com. Comments will be accepted throughout the course of the study.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

From NERA Economic Consulting:

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From the City of Baltimore:

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About NERA

NERA Economic Consulting (www.nera.com) is a global firm of experts dedicated to applying economic, finance, and quantitative principles to complex business and legal challenges. For over half a century, NERA's economists have been creating strategies, studies, reports, expert testimony, and policy recommendations for government authorities and the world's leading law firms and corporations. We bring academic rigor, objectivity, and real world industry experience to bear on issues arising from competition, regulation, public policy, strategy, finance, and litigation.

NERA's clients value our ability to apply and communicate state-of-the-art approaches clearly and convincingly, our commitment to deliver unbiased findings, and our reputation for quality and independence. Our clients rely on the integrity and skills of our unparalleled team of economists and other experts backed by the resources and reliability of one of the world's largest economic consultancies. With its main office in New York City, NERA serves clients from more than 20 offices across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific.