

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is conducting a disparity study to ensure that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) have equal access to contracting opportunities and that TxDOT's current DBE and HUB programs remain legally defensible and administratively successful.

What is a “Disparity Study”? A disparity study involves compilation of evidence to determine whether TxDOT has a strong basis for implementing race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies on state contracts and narrowly tailoring any race- and gender-conscious remedies. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of HUBs, and their utilization on state-funded TxDOT contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the area economy as a whole.

The study will further examine factors necessary for entrepreneurial success, such as access to business capital, bonding, networks, suppliers, etc. The study also will gather anecdotal evidence of any continuing effects of past or present race and sex discrimination, and the impact of the current DBE and HUB programs. Finally, the study will review TxDOT's current programs and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements.

Who is conducting the study?

Colette Holt & Associates (CHA), a nationally recognized expert team on disparity studies and DBE and HUB programs, in conjunction with local partners Nervi' Strategic Solutions, LLC (DBE), Sylvia Cavazos Public Relations/Public Affairs, LLC (DBE), Pink Consulting/Reach Out Austin! (DBE), Lopez PR & Marketing Group, Inc. (HUB), and Gabriel Communications (DBE).

How can business owners and other interested parties be involved?

The participation of business owners and other interested stakeholders (trade associations, professional organizations, community groups, etc.) is critical to the study's outcomes in two important ways. First, the study team will contact businesses to confirm information on specific contracts and/or to receive additional contract information that is currently not available to TxDOT. Second, the study team will host public meetings, stakeholder listening sessions and group interviews with business owners to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and TxDOT's DBE and HUB programs.

Persons who are unable to attend the meetings or the interviews but who would like to provide input to the study are encouraged to submit written statements at the study email: txdot-study@mwbela.com.

When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed by May 2019.

Where can I find additional information?

For additional information, please visit the study website at txdot.disparity-study.com or visit the TxDOT Civil Rights Division's website at <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/civil-rights.html>

Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact the study team via txdot-study@mwbela.com, or you may contact Sarah Blackburn, Civil Rights Division, TxDOT Disparity Study Contract Manager Sarah.Blackburn@txdot.gov or (512) 416-4700.