

2014

Cook County Government Annual Business Diversity Report FY 2014



Toni Preckwinkle
President

Cook County
Board of Commissioners

Updated: 07/28/2015

*Message from Toni Preckwinkle
Board President of Cook County*

To the residents of Cook County:

I am pleased to present our third annual Cook County Business Diversity Report. Since taking office nearly five years ago, I have been committed to making it easier for minority and women-owned businesses (M/WBEs) to do business in and with Cook County. This report is a testament to that commitment. Notably, for the second year, we are reporting actual payments to minority and women-owned businesses along with commitments.

This report allows residents and businesses to see the goals we have set for ourselves and includes actual payments as well as contract dollars awarded. Overall in 2014, Cook County awarded 25% of its contracts to minority and women-owned businesses, while 25% of contract payments were made to minority and women-owned businesses.

In early FY2014, we updated the County's Procurement Code to improve enforcement of the M/WBE Program. This has provided us with more tools to support M/WBE firms and to promote greater inclusion of MBE/WBE firms in a more transparent procurement process.

We have also invested in the necessary tools to better monitor participation of minority and women-owned businesses on county contracts. In 2013, we implemented a web-based system to capture payment data and allow for a more efficient process to track and monitor actual subcontractor payments. Historically, the County's reporting has relied on the *commitment* in contracts for M/WBE businesses. This year, for the second straight year, the report includes actual payments on all contracts. These payments are also shared in a transparent manner with both prime contractors and sub-contractors. We are also continuing to facilitate a beginning-to-end online certification process for vendors to seek certification as an M/WBE business with the county.

We are proud of our work to date, but we know there is more to do. We continue to strive to make the county a more effective, attractive business partner for minority and women-owned businesses. We are serious about engaging in these efforts moving forward and look forward to continuing our work with all residents of Cook County.



Toni Preckwinkle
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners

COMMITMENT TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle is committed to the inclusion and expansion of opportunities for small, local, minority and woman-owned businesses. Cook County is at the heart of a dynamic metropolitan region, where we make up more than half of its population, jobs, and businesses. President Preckwinkle knows that small businesses are the engine of the economy. When we create accountable, transparent and responsive government, we help the economy grow.

Cook County's Office of Contract Compliance is pleased to present its Annual Business Diversity Report covering the period of Fiscal Year 2014 under President Preckwinkle. Historically, minority- and woman-owned businesses have been awarded government contracts in dollar amounts disproportionately lower than the availability of such businesses that are willing and able to perform these contracts. Many local governments, including Cook County, were passive participants in discriminatory practices that adversely affected the growth and full participation of minority and woman-owned businesses ("M/WBEs") in the government marketplace.

In an effort to remedy historic inequity and to facilitate greater inclusion, Cook County established goals for the participation of minority and woman-owned businesses in County contracts as set forth under the ordinances that comprise the County Procurement Code. The goals are as follows:

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

About this Report Transparency is a key mandate of President Preckwinkle and under her leadership, the County began publishing annual diversity reports for the first time to make this information available to the public. This report is the County's second annual report to include actual payments to M/WBEs. This report includes contract dollars awarded and contract payments by Cook County Government as reported by vendors. The second section includes contracts awarded and payments on Cook County Health and Hospitals System ("CCHHS") contracts as reported by vendors. This report continues to serve as a benchmarking tool in assessing M/WBE participation and identifying areas for greater inclusion. The Office of Contract Compliance tracks M/WBE participation in the following three categories (1) Goods and Services, (2) Construction, and (3) Professional Services. Data reported is based on actual payments reported by vendors.

Small Business Initiatives President Preckwinkle has made it a top priority of her administration to foster greater participation and meet M/WBE goals to the greatest extent possible. Ultimately, greater participation will allow small businesses to create jobs and stimulate growth in the regional economy. These efforts are described below:

Disparity Study. Since President Preckwinkle took office, the County has made strategic investments to lower the barriers to entry for minority and women-owned businesses, including taking measures to ensure full participation at all levels of Cook County Government. In the second half of Fiscal 2013, the Cook County Board of Commissioners retained the services of Colette Holt & Associates to conduct a Disparity Study of the County's M/WBE Program.

A Disparity Study is a periodic evaluation of a municipality's M/WBE efforts. The term "disparity" refers to the difference between the number of M/WBEs who are able to provide the services a municipality is procuring and the number of firms who are actually working with the municipality. 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 M/WBE program if that program is challenged in the courts.

Nationally, it's considered best practice to conduct regular Disparity Studies. Other local agencies that have done this include the City of Chicago and the Illinois Department of Transportation. However, this effort will represent Cook County's first Disparity Study.

The Study includes a comprehensive statistical analysis based on the County's procurement history. The consultant will collect, sort, research, and analyze data and will use Custom Census methodology recommended in the National Disparity Study Guidelines to accurately estimate M/WBE availability estimates. The consultant will also calculate a Disparity index using regression analysis. The Disparity Study is expected to be completed in fiscal 2015.

Diversity Management System. President Preckwinkle has made achieving full M/WBE participation in County procurement a key goal of her administration. During the end of FY 2013, the Office of Contract Compliance implemented a new web-based contract compliance and Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE), Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE), Veteran-owned Business Enterprise (VBE), and Service Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (SDVBE) certification system. As part of its mission and mandate, it seeks to capture, monitor and report contract performance based on actual spends. Historically, M/WBE participation was tracked solely on commitments. The key benefits of implementing the Diversity Management System include:

- Transparency and accountability measures for all stakeholders
- Service improvement to local small businesses
- Streamlined process - Certifications including supporting documentation will be submitted electronically
- Promotes the County/City Collaborative reciprocal certification process
- Sharing of information with sister agencies including City of Chicago

Emerging Business Development Loan. Additional strides to build capacity to the M/WBE community for Cook County contracts include leveraging our relationships with firms in the private sector to help build the capacity of our small businesses. The Cook County Emerging Business Development Loan (EBDL) Program, which was developed by the administration of Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, provides interim financing for certified Cook County minority and woman owned businesses that have direct and indirect contracts with the government of Cook County. Loans will typically be used to finance short-term capital needed to provide construction, procurement, or public services to public or institutional users.

The program is available to qualified certified minority and/or woman owned businesses that have been awarded a Cook County contract or project. The company must be in business at least three (3) years and show credit worthiness via a formal bank commitment. The company must create/retain jobs or conduct work in a blighted area. Technical assistance (accounting, legal, and/or business mentoring) to support the loan may be required as part of the County's approval of the EBDL for the Applicant. Applicants must be a Cook County Certified minority and/or women owned business or enterprise, and the loan must be directly related to work being performed on a Cook County government project or contract.

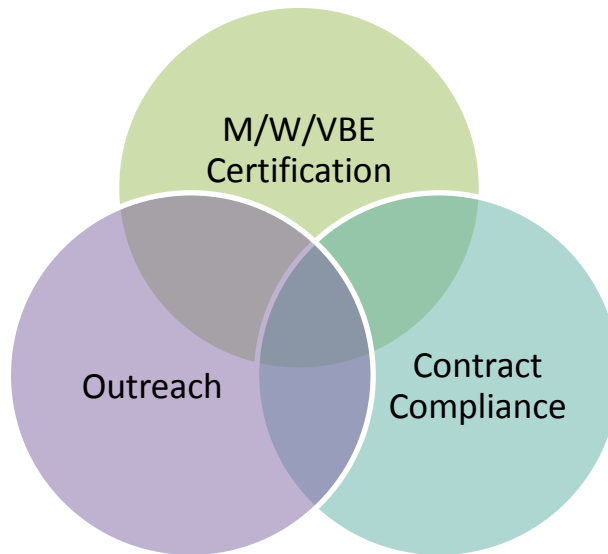
Reciprocal Certification. Cook County and the City of Chicago continue their reciprocal Minority and Women Business Enterprise initiative. This initiative allows Minority and Women-owned Businesses ("M/WBEs") to be certified by either the County or City, and have that certification apply to both agencies. This combined effort by the County and City lessens the financial burden and streamlines the certification process by providing a "one-stop shop" for MBE/WBEs interested in participating in County and City procurement opportunities.

Increasing Small Business Participation. We continue to seek opportunities to increase participation of Cook County's small, minority and women owned businesses on County procurements. In Fiscal Year 2014, these efforts included developing and offering solicitations that limited the competitive pool to only small, minority and women owned businesses. Our work began internally in fiscal year 2014 and came to fruition in fiscal year 2015 with our first solicitations where small, minority and women owned businesses had the opportunity to bid as primes directly with the County.

Local Community Hiring. President Preckwinkle recognizes the importance of fostering and impacting local communities through County contracts. This year, we intend to propose a Resolution regarding local hiring in Public Works Projects. We have begun our efforts towards this initiative with the Stroger Campus Redevelopment Project, whereby local hiring goals have been set to promote employment among the residents of the project area community.

OFFICE OF CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

The Office of Contract Compliance supports minority and women-owned business by offering a certification program, ensuring M/WBE inclusion in the County's contracting processes, participates in outreach events, and reports on supplier diversity participation to the President and Board of Commissioners.



Program Administration

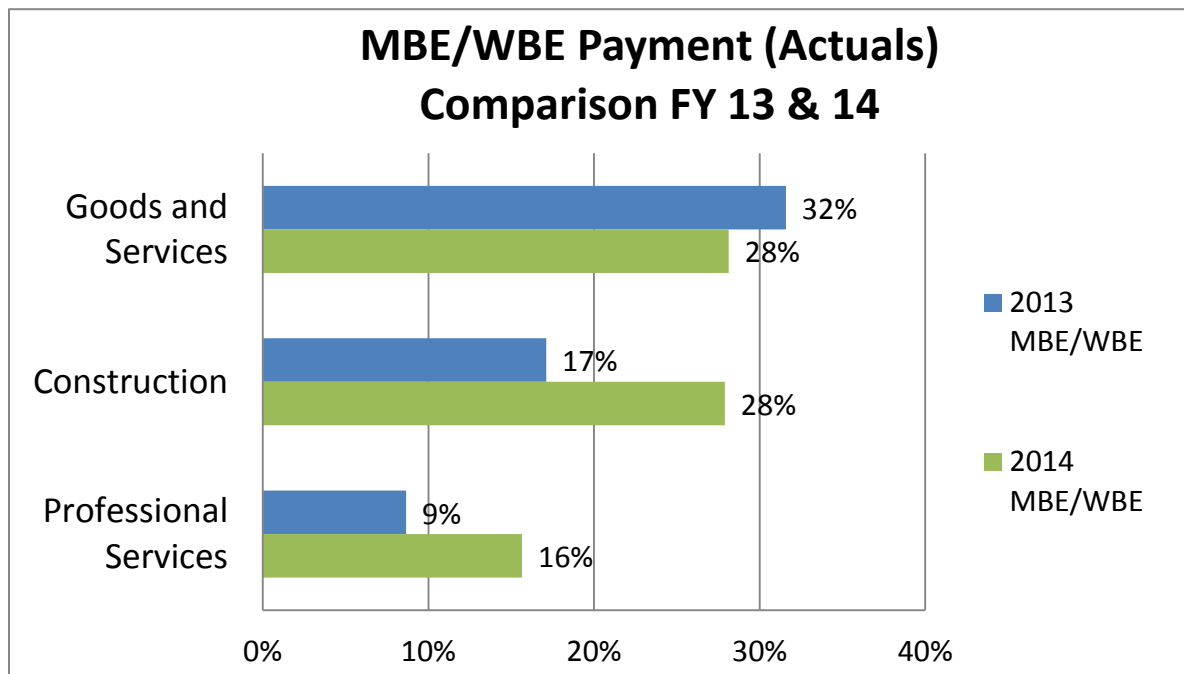
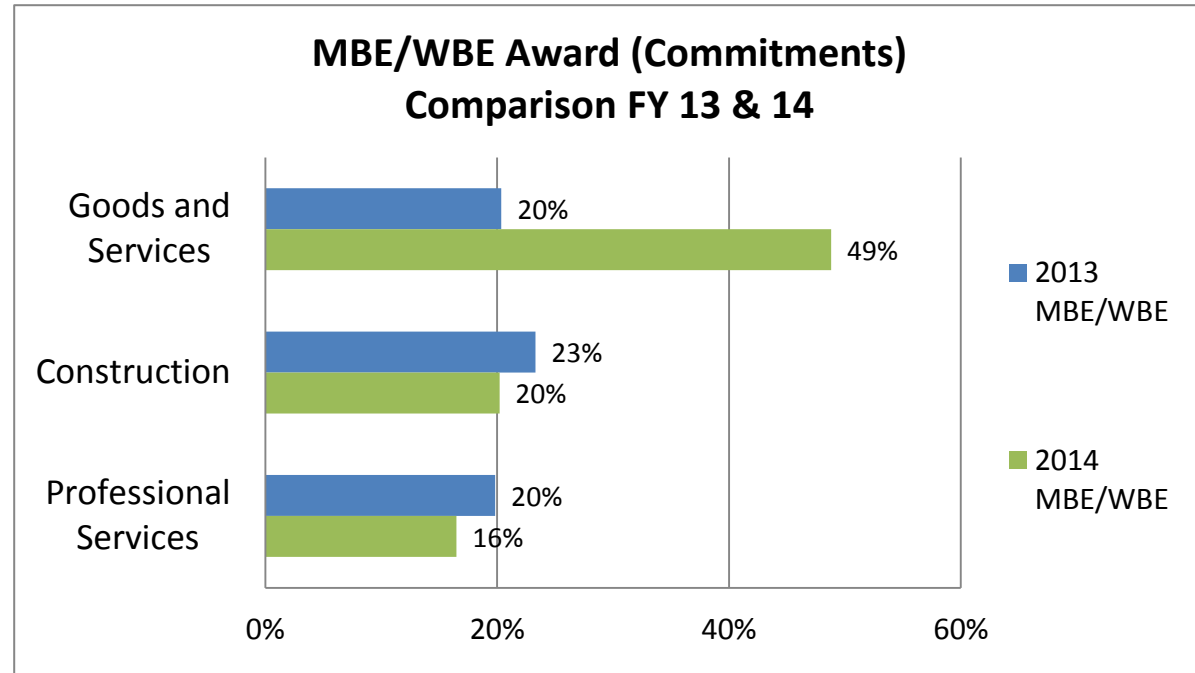
The Office of Contract Compliance administers Cook County's M/WBE Program as set forth in the County Ordinance under Division 8 of Article IV of the Procurement Code. The Ordinance can be found online at www.cookcountyil.gov/contractcompliance. The responsibilities of the Office of Contract Compliance include:

- (1) Formulating, proposing and implementing rules and regulations for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Program, certification process, recertification process, and no-change affidavits, including time limitations for the submission of documents and information regarding certification applications and contract participation. The Contract Compliance Director ("CCD") is authorized to collect certification and recertification processing fees in the amount of \$250.00 per Application; the collection of said processing fees shall be transacted by the CCD through the Department of Revenue.
- (2) Providing information and assistance to Small Businesses relating to the Program, and serving as a liaison to community, contractor, professional and supplier groups, as well as associations and organizations.
- (3) Establishing uniform procedures and criteria for certifying, recertifying and decertifying M/WBEs, accepting certifications by other agencies, and maintaining a directory of Certified

M/WBEs. Such procedures and criteria shall include non-certification or decertification for the willful submission of false or inaccurate material information and the failure to submit complete and accurate information to the CCD regarding certification or a procurement on a timely basis, and shall relate to both PCEs and PCE owners.

- (4) Establishing contract specific goals based upon the availability of M/WBEs to provide the supplies, materials and equipment or services required by the Contract.
- (5) Monitoring contracts to evaluate compliance with Contract Specific Goals and commitments.
- (6) Cooperating with and providing assistance to Using Agencies to facilitate participation by M/WBEs in Procurements.
- (7) Reviewing, approving or rejecting utilization plans for achievement of contract specific goals, and evaluating the extent to which goals were achieved.
- (8) Monitoring contracts to ensure compliance with Section 34-388, Prompt Payment of M/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 County's progress towards program goals.
- (12) Reporting to the Contract Compliance Committee, at its request, information regarding the administration of the program and its progress toward achieving program goals.

Comparison Summary of M/WBE Participation between Fiscal 2013 and 2014

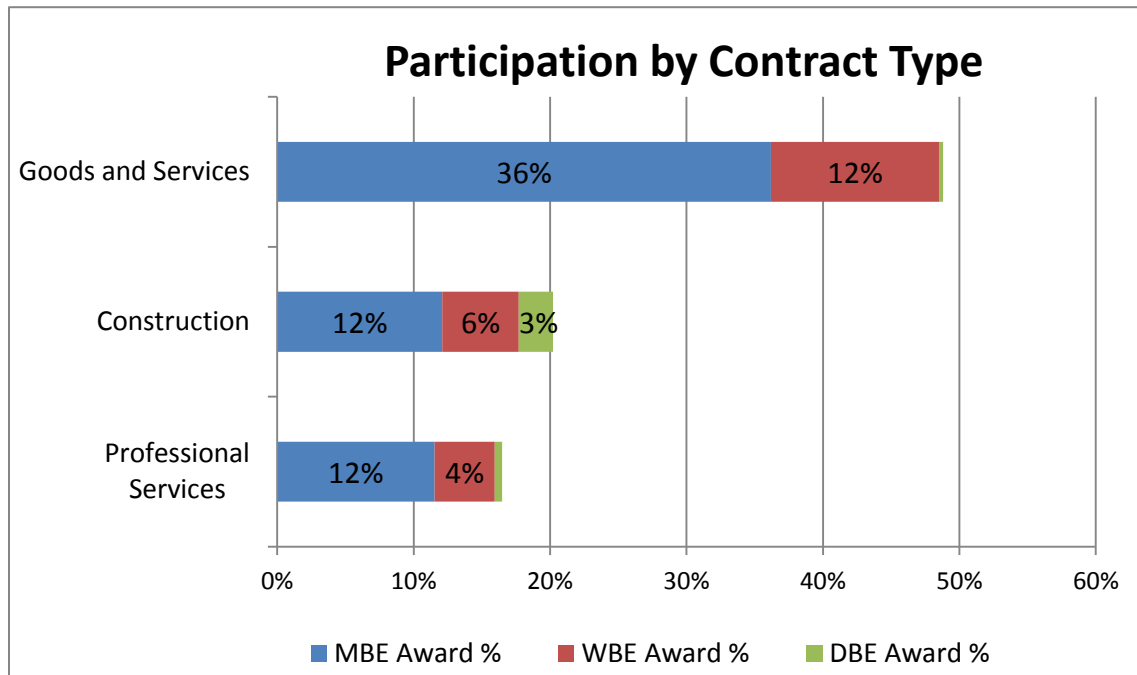


Overall, in FY 2014, M/WBE participation increased by 4% to 25% in contracts awarded and by 3% to 25% in actual payments.

Cook County Government FY 2014 MBE/WBE/DBE Award (Commitments) Summary

	<i>MBE Award</i>	<i>WBE Award</i>	<i>DBE Award*</i>	<i>Non-M/WBE Award Amount</i>	<i>Total Contract Awarded in FY 2014</i>
Goods and Services	\$28,478,764	\$9,714,865	\$214,718	\$40,288,069	\$78,696,416
Construction	\$7,915,431	\$3,661,871	\$1,636,180	\$52,198,152	\$65,411,634
Professional Services	\$19,901,109	\$7,647,372	\$917,798	\$144,254,575	\$172,720,854
Total	\$56,295,304	\$21,024,108	\$2,768,696	\$236,740,796	\$316,828,904

**DBE participation applies to federally funded contracts*



In FY 2014, the County awarded:

49% M/WBE participation on Goods and Services

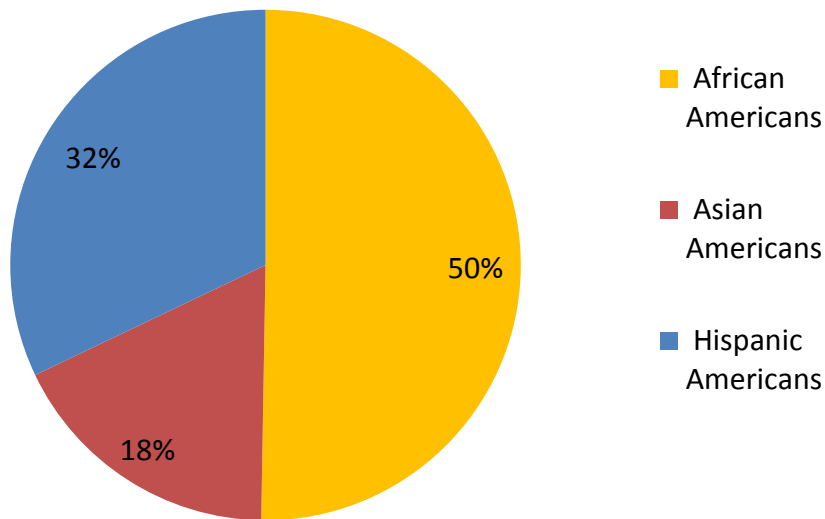
20% M/W/DBE participation on Construction Projects

16% M/WBE participation on Professional Contracts

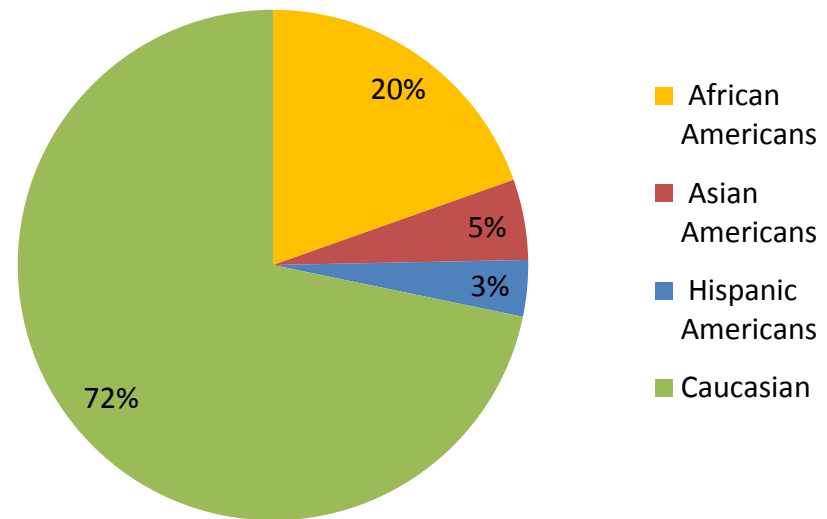
Cook County Government FY 2014 MBE/WBE Awards (Commitments) by Ethnicity

Contract Type	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Caucasian	Total WBE
Goods and Services	\$13,880,597	\$5,375,659	\$9,222,508	\$28,478,764	\$2,151,583	\$52,800	\$0	\$7,510,482	\$9,714,865
Construction	\$2,496,654	\$108,044	\$5,310,733	\$7,915,431	\$410,138	\$919,748	\$721,132	\$1,610,853	\$3,661,871
Professional Services	\$11,921,903	\$4,448,791	\$3,530,415	\$19,901,109	\$1,554,985	\$100,000	\$29,190	\$5,963,197	\$7,647,372
Total	\$28,299,154	\$9,932,494	\$18,063,656	\$56,295,304	\$4,116,706	\$1,072,548	\$750,322	\$15,084,532	\$21,024,108

MBE Participation* Committed by Ethnicity



WBE Participation* Committed by Ethnicity



*Participation by ethnicity is based on total MBE and WBE participation.

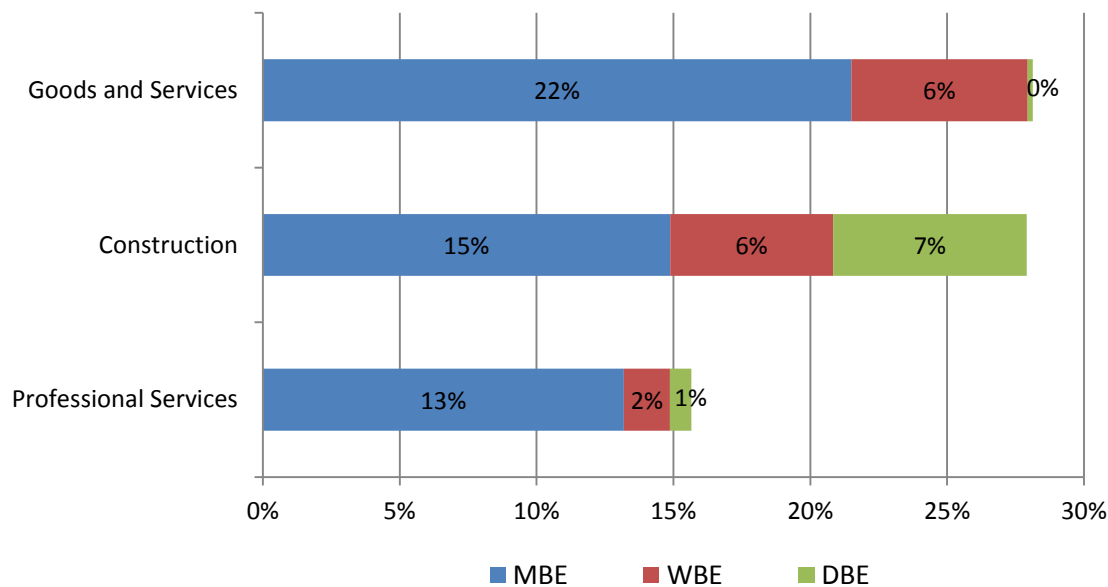
Cook County Government MBE/WBE/DBE FY 2014 Payment (Actuals)* Summary

	<i>MBE Payment</i>	<i>WBE Payment</i>	<i>DBE Payment**</i>	<i>Non-M/W/DBE Payment</i>	<i>Total Payments</i>
Goods and Services	\$17,849,787	\$5,348,715	\$156,329	\$59,664,191	\$83,019,022
Construction	\$14,406,105	\$5,766,776	\$6,843,027	\$69,796,070	\$96,811,978
Professional Services	\$6,541,752	\$830,856	\$391,233	\$41,825,223	\$49,589,064
Total	\$38,797,644	\$11,946,347	\$7,390,589	\$171,285,484	\$229,420,064

**Participation is based on payments reported by vendors (Primes and Sub-contractors); the contracts for which payments are made in FY2014 include contracts awarded in previous years as well as a portion of those awarded during FY2014. Excludes Sole Source Contracts.*

***DBE participation applies to federally funded contracts*

Participation by Contract Type



In FY 2014 Payments made on Cook County contracts represented*:

28% M/WBE participation on Goods and Services

28% M/W/DBE participation on Construction Projects

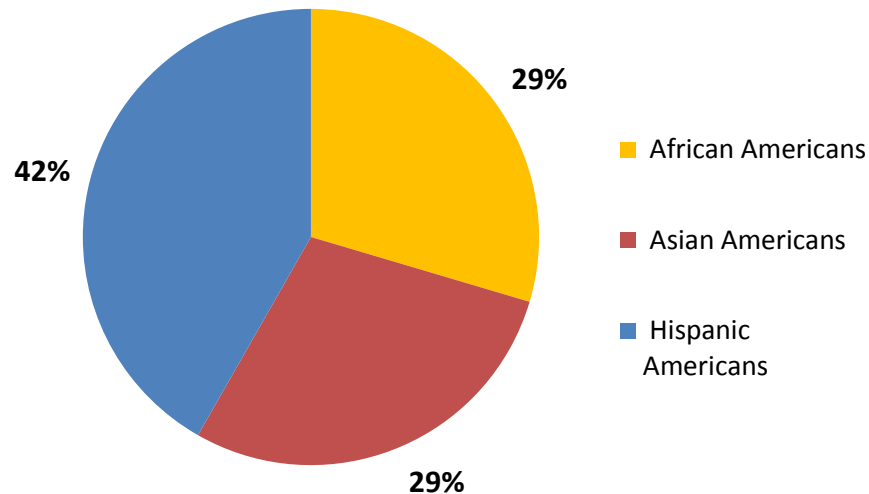
16% M/WBE participation on Professional Contracts

Cook County Government MBE/WBE FY14 Payments by Ethnicity (Actuals)*

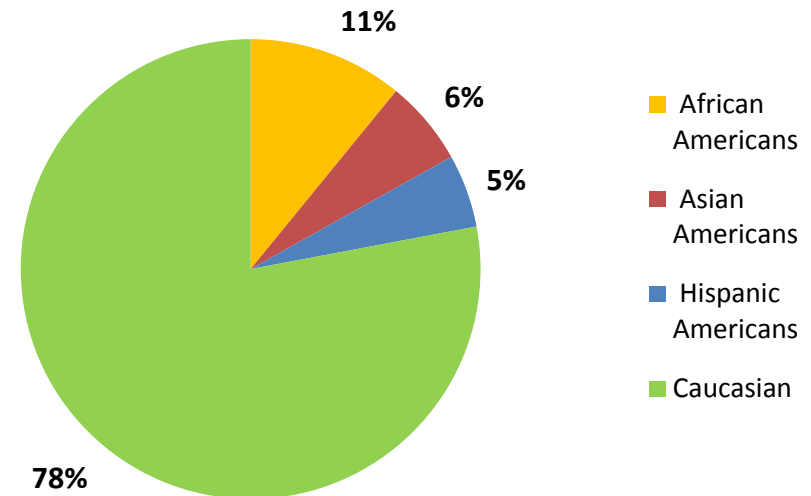
	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
Contract Type	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Caucasian	Total WBE
Goods and Services	\$5,215,913	\$8,545,705	\$4,088,169	\$17,849,787	\$706,250	\$203,632	\$510,549	\$3,928,284	\$5,348,715
Construction	\$3,834,682	\$402,893	\$10,168,530	\$14,406,105	\$193,901	\$511,446	\$48,535	\$5,012,894	\$5,766,776
Professional Services	\$2,423,289	\$2,224,533	\$1,893,930	\$6,541,752	\$402,329	\$0	\$56,036	\$372,491	\$830,856
Total	\$11,473,884	\$11,173,131	\$16,150,629	\$38,797,644	\$1,302,480	\$715,078	\$615,120	\$9,313,669	\$11,946,347

*Participation is based on payments reported by vendors (Primes and Subcontractors)

MBE Participation** Committed by Ethnicity



WBE Participation** by Ethnicity

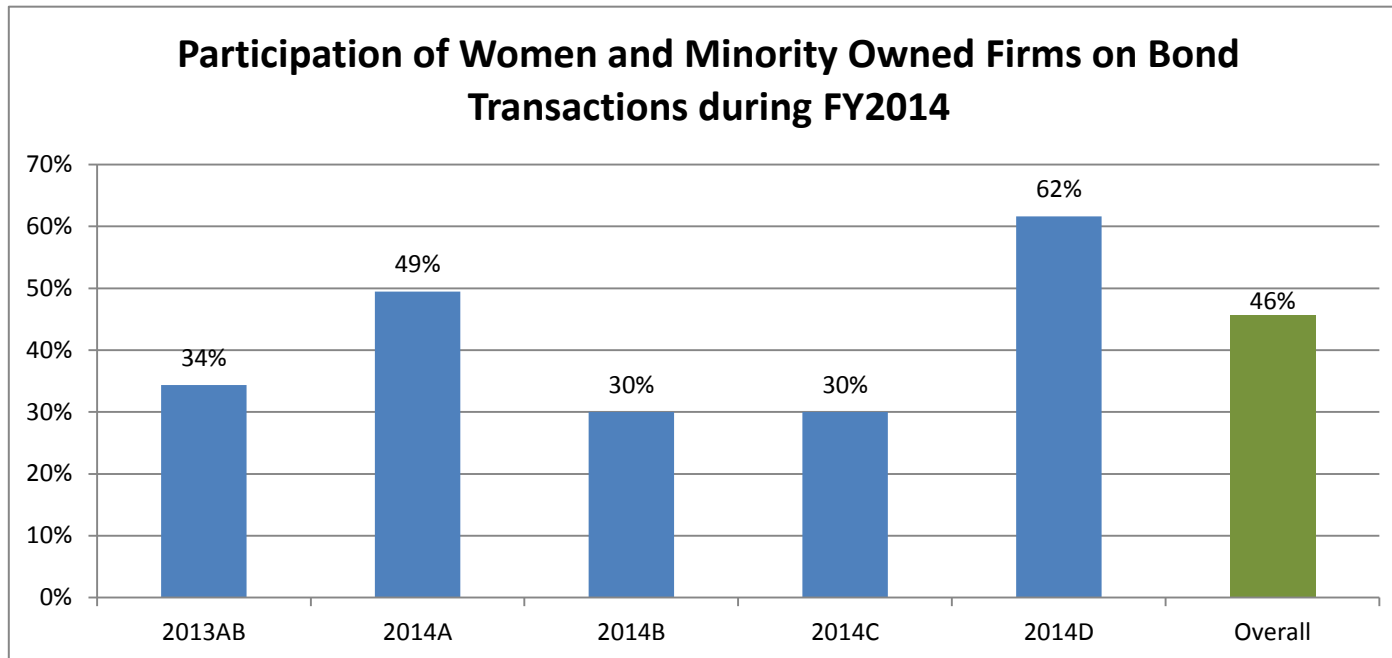


**Participation by ethnicity is based on total MBE and WBE participation.

Cook County Government

Minority- and Women-owned Firm Participation on Bond Transactions

In 2013, the Cook County Code of Ordinances was amended to codify past and current practices regarding the inclusion of minority and women owned firms' participation in bond transactions. The amendment established a formal goal of 35% participation from firms that are at least 51% owned and controlled by women and minorities on professional services regarding financial advisory and legal services work, and a similar 35% goal for such firms in the underwriting liability on all bond transactions. The Ordinance amendment also requires 35% participation for firms that are owned or controlled by women for bids solicited from broker-dealers on investments of bond proceeds. These changes reflected the first time that such goals had been codified, and were done to recognize the historic under-representation of women and minorities in financial services.



Cook County Health and Hospital Systems



Cook County's Office of Contract Compliance ("OCC") also administers the Cook County Health and Hospital System's M/WBE Program. OCC participates in the Hospital's Finance Committee and Board Meetings and works with the Hospital System to achieve MBE/WBE participation goals. OCC works closely with the Hospital's Supply Chain Management Department, which functions as the procurement arm by strategically sourcing goods and services across all major spend categories throughout the health system.

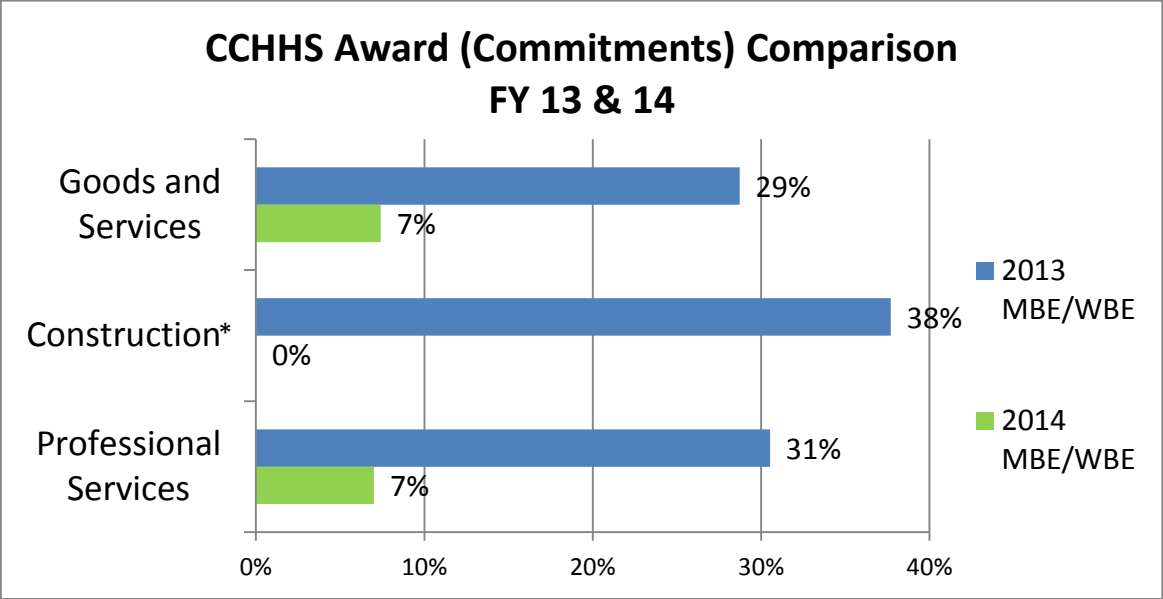
This section includes contract awards by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System ("CCHHS") during FY2014 and actual payments made to minority and women owned businesses. Actual payment amounts are based on data reported by vendors. The Office of Contract Compliance tracks CCHHS M/WBE participation in the following three categories (1) Goods and Services, (2) Construction, and (3) Professional Services. The M/WBE goals are set as follows:

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

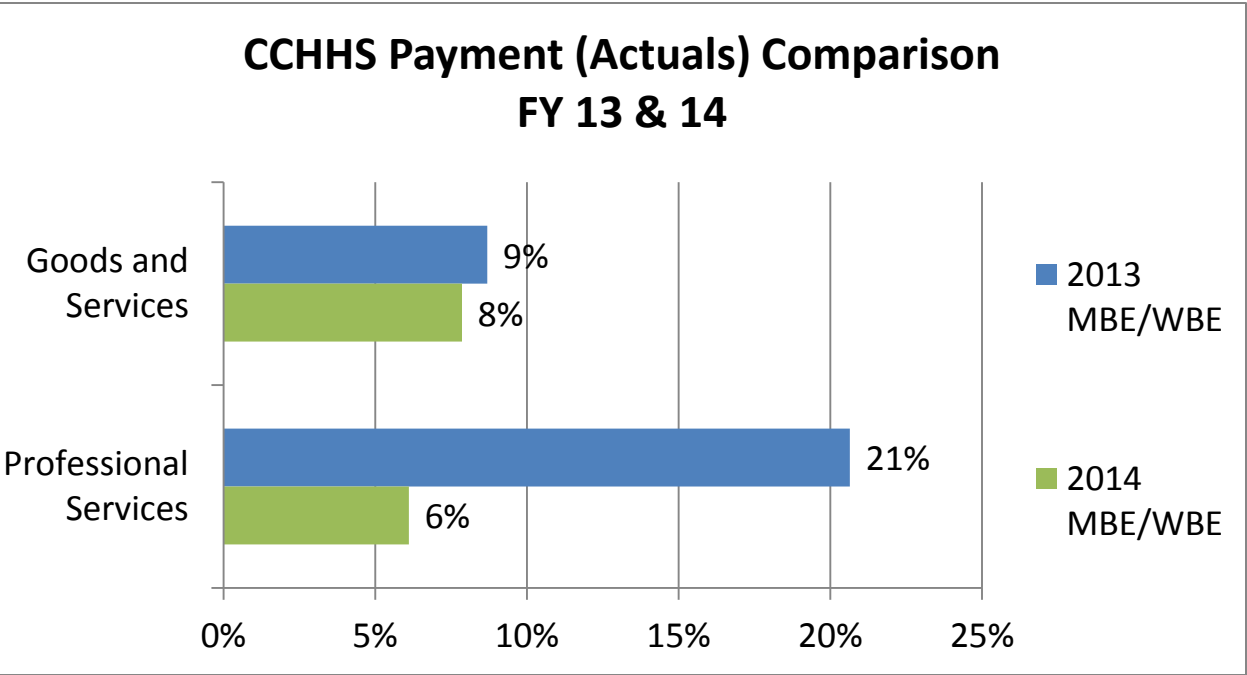
Overall in Fiscal Year 2014, the Cook County Health and Hospitals System awarded 7% of contracts to minority- and women-owned businesses. Additionally, in the same fiscal year, 7% of contract payments were made to minority- and women-owned businesses.

Comparison Summary of M/WBE Participation between Fiscal 2013 and 2014

In awarded contracts, M/WBEs represented 7%, a decrease of 23% compared to last fiscal year.



**Construction represents a single awarded contract during FY2013. No construction contracts were awarded in FY2014 by CCHHS.*



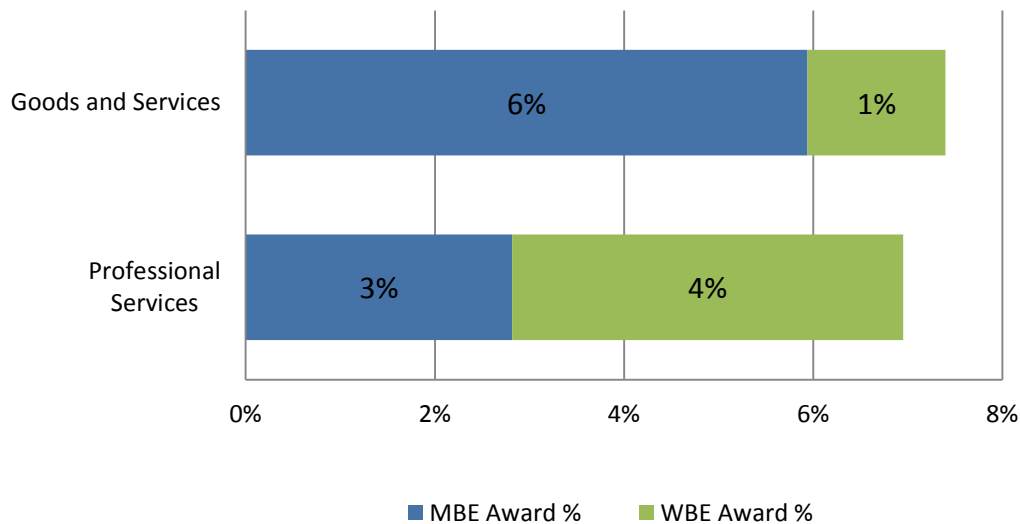
Overall M/WBE participation based on actual payments represents 7%, a decrease of 7% compared to last fiscal year.

Cook County Health and Hospital Systems M/WBE FY 2014 Awards (Commitments) Summary*

	<i>MBE Award</i>	<i>WBE Award</i>	<i>Non-M/WBE Award Amount</i>	<i>Total Contract Awarded</i>
Goods and Services	\$2,396,589	\$587,273	\$37,352,364	\$40,336,226
Professional Services	\$14,955,578	\$21,937,428	\$493,839,748	\$530,732,754
Total	\$17,352,167	\$22,524,701	\$531,192,112	\$571,068,980

*Excludes sole source contracts and pass-through claim dollars.

CCHHS FY14 Awards to MBE/WBE



Overall, in FY 2014 CCHHS awarded:

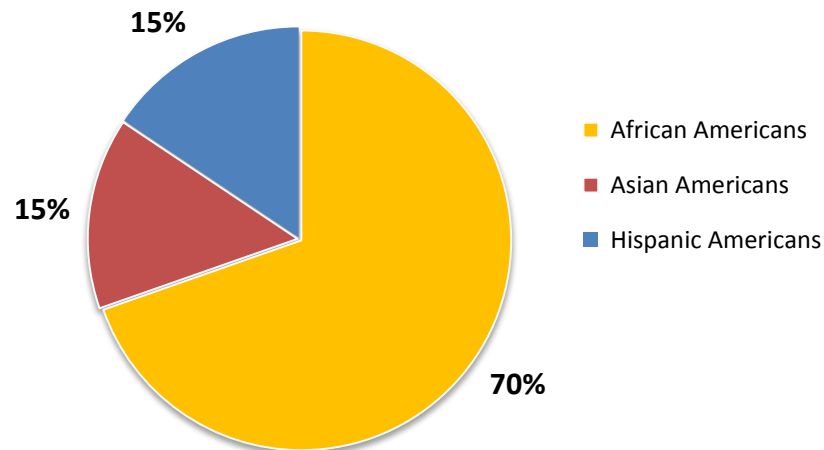
7% M/WBE participation on Goods and Services

7% M/WBE participation on Professional Contracts

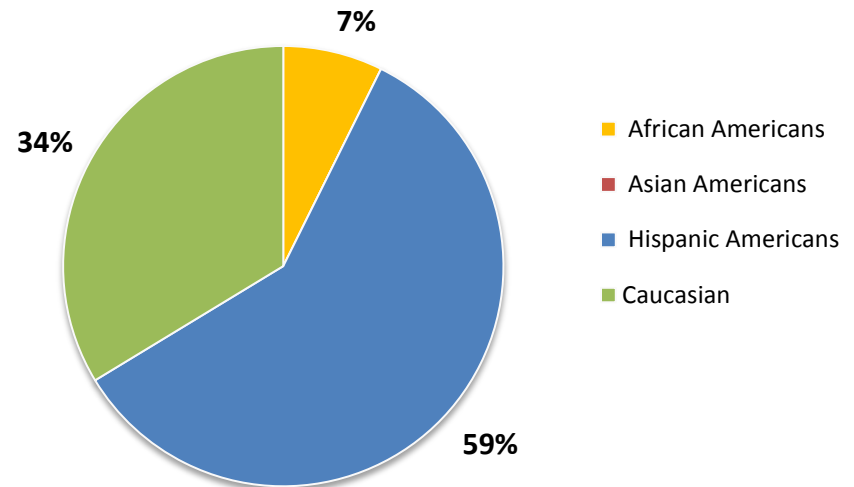
Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) MBE/WBE FY 2014 Awards (Commitments) by Ethnicity

Contract Type	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Caucasian	Total WBE
Goods and Services	\$1,906,380	\$107,728	\$382,481	\$2,396,589	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$587,273	\$587,273
Professional Services	\$10,176,577	\$2,451,398	\$2,327,603	\$14,955,578	\$1,650,611	\$0	\$13,287,455	\$6,999,362	\$21,937,428
Total	\$12,082,957	\$2,559,126	\$2,710,084	\$17,352,167	\$1,650,611	\$0	\$13,287,455	\$7,586,635	\$22,524,701

MBE Committed by Ethnicity



WBE Committed by Ethnicity

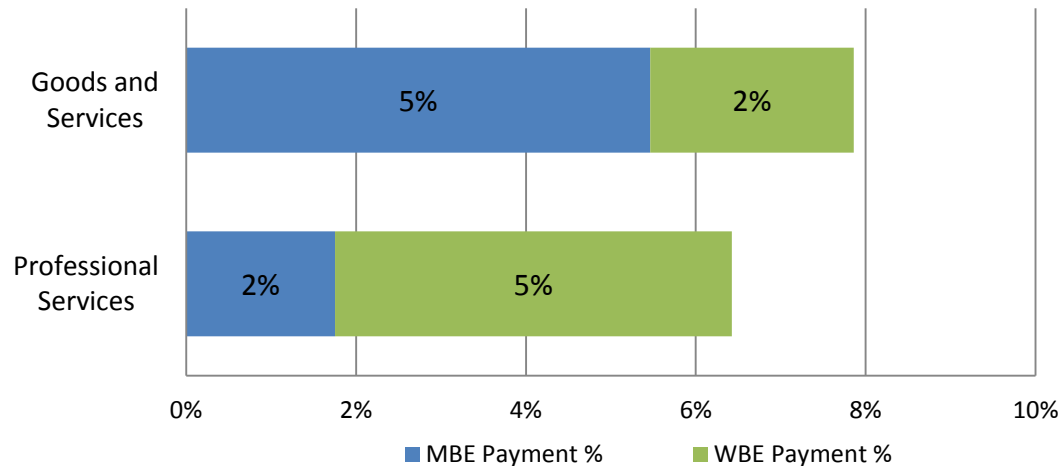


Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) FY 2014 Contract Payment (Actuals)* Summary

	<i>MBE Payment</i>	<i>WBE Payment</i>	<i>Non-M/WBE Payment</i>	<i>Total Payments</i>
Goods and Services	\$6,466,279	\$2,836,445	\$109,063,363	\$118,366,087
Professional Services	\$6,674,867	\$17,794,966	\$356,519,318	\$380,989,151
Total	\$13,141,146	\$20,631,411	\$465,582,681	\$499,355,238

**Participation is based on payments reported by vendors (Primes and Subcontractors;) the contracts for which payments are made in FY2014 include contracts awarded in previous years as well as a portion of those awarded during FY2014. Excludes Sole Source Contracts and pass-through claim dollars.*

CCHHS FY14 Payments to MBE/WBE



FY 2014 payments made on CCHHS contracts represented*:

8% M/WBE participation on Goods and Services

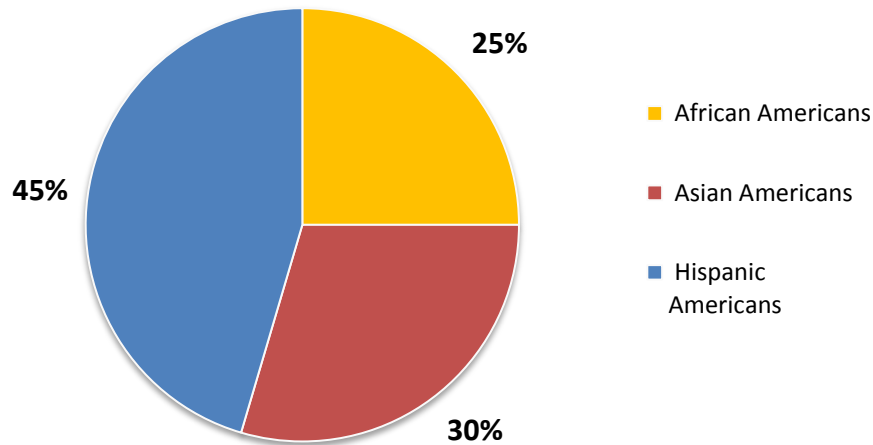
6% M/WBE participation on Professional Services Contracts

Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) MBE/WBE FY 2014 Payments (Actuals)* by Ethnicity

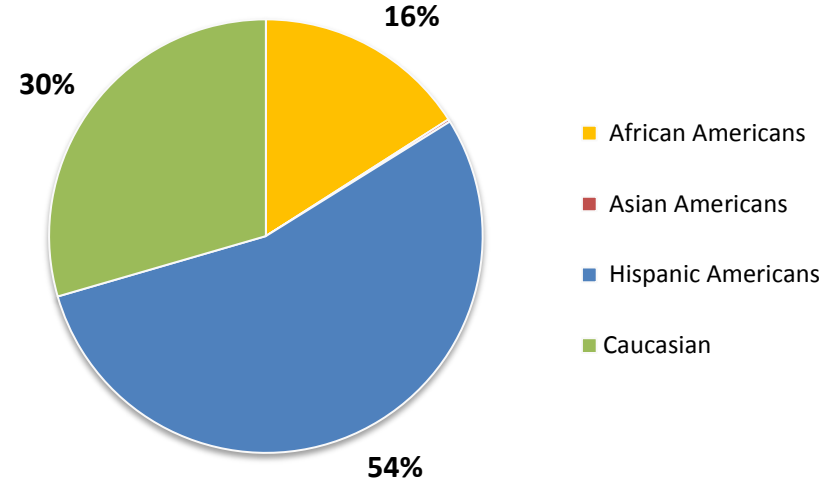
Contract Type	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Dollars				Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Dollars				
	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Total MBE	African Americans	Asian Americans	Hispanic Americans	Caucasian	Total WBE
Goods and Services	\$2,047,365	\$3,788,846	\$630,068	\$6,466,279	\$56,333	\$37,980	\$0	\$2,742,132	\$2,836,445
Professional Services	\$1,238,070	\$96,084	\$5,340,713	\$6,674,867	\$3,233,894	\$1,604	\$11,216,560	\$3,342,908	\$17,794,966
Total	\$3,285,435	\$3,884,930	\$5,970,781	\$13,141,146	\$3,290,227	\$39,584	\$11,216,560	\$6,085,040	\$20,631,411

**Participation is based on payments reported by vendors (Primes and Subcontractors)*

MBE Participation* by Ethnicity



WBE Participation* by Ethnicity



2014 Outreach Activities

The Office of Contract Compliance (“OCC”) participates in various outreach events throughout the year to market the County’s upcoming contracting opportunities and encourage potential vendors to consider learning more about doing business with the County. OCC participated in the following events during FY2014:

- *28th Annual Women’s Business Development Council (WBDC) Entrepreneurial Women’s Conference*
- *2nd Annual Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce Technology Conference*
- *19th Annual Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce “Project Awareness”*
- *47th Annual Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council (CMSDC) Chicago Business Opportunity Fair*
- *Make a Connection: “Connecting Communities to Illinois Business Opportunities” – Central Management Services, State of Illinois*
- *23rd The Annual Millennium Builders Awards & Business Expo 2014 - United States Minority Contractors Association*

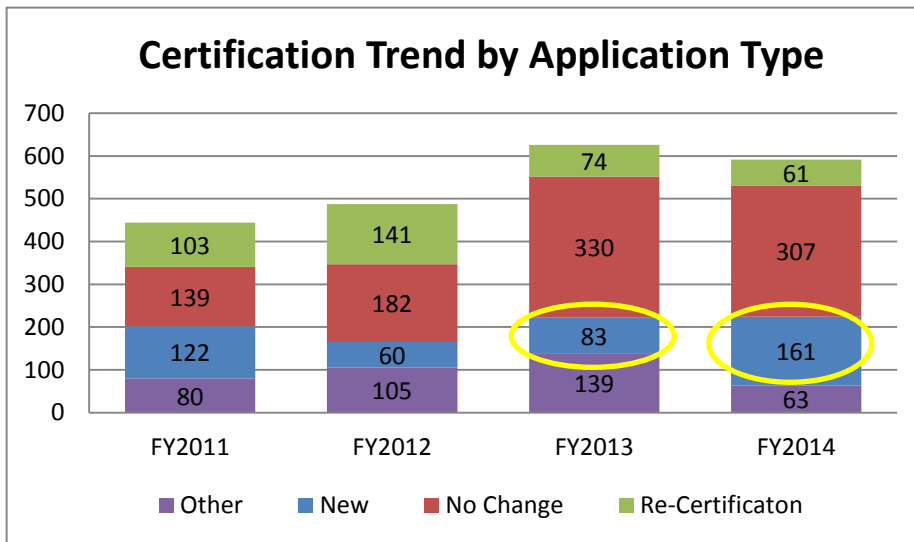


- *Cook County Veteran Affairs Outreach*
- *Cook County and City of Chicago Vendor Fair*
- *Chatman Business Association Monthly Membership Meeting*
- *Contractor Development Program - Chicago Urban League*
- *Elite Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Network Meeting*
- *Government Procurement Compliance Forum Monthly Meetings*
- *African American Contractors Association Networking Event*
- *Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce Monthly Membership Meetings*
- *2nd Annual Construction Summit- City of Chicago*
- *Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (H.A.C.I.A.) Monthly Membership Meeting*
- *Latin American Chamber of Commerce Business Meeting*
- *American Contract Compliance Association (ACCA) Training Institute*
- *Grainger vendor Outreach- Cook County*

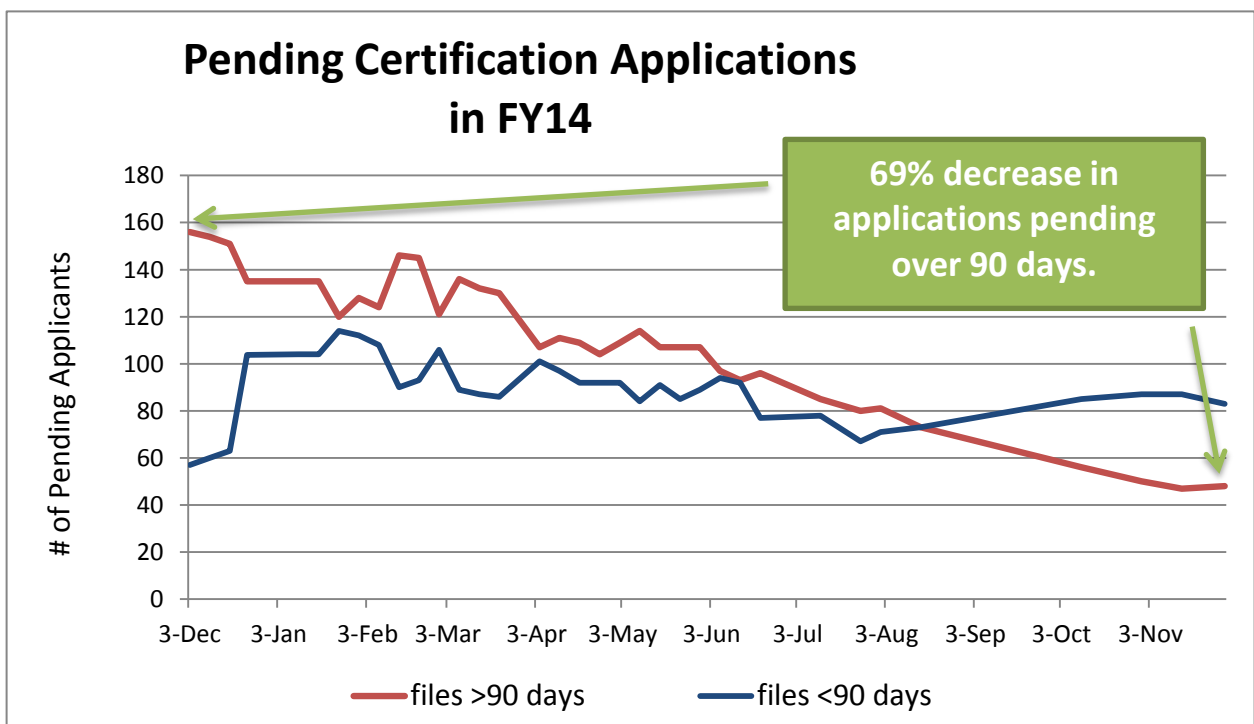
Certification

Cook County certifies businesses that are at least 51% owned, operated and controlled by one or more individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged as set forth in the provisions of the County Code. The Office of Contract Compliance thoroughly investigates and periodically reviews all applications to ensure certification eligibility.

During Fiscal Year 2014, OCC received a total of **549** applications and processed a total of **594** consisting of the following: **161** New (Schedule A) Applications, **307** (No Change Affidavits), **61** Re-Certifications, and **63** Other (includes denials, withdrawals, and expansion requests).



94% increase in New Certification Applications since last fiscal year



A Glance Ahead...

- During the second quarter of FY2015, the County's Disparity Study Consultant nears completion of the Study. This is Cook County's first disparity study. It includes a comprehensive statistical analysis based on the County's procurement history. This Study will provide us with critical information about the County M/WBE Program, which may lead to continued improvements and changes to the Program. The Disparity Study is expected to be completed in 2015.
- In FY2014, changes were made to the County's Procurement Code that enforces the M/WBE Program. We continue to execute President Preckwinkle's commitment for greater transparency in the procurement process and greater participation of MBE/WBE firms. These updates give the County more tools to promote and enforce the M/WBE Program. By adding reinforcement measures to the code, the County will have more tools to support the President's mission and assist in developing a stronger procurement process and promoting greater inclusion of MBE/WBE firms.
- The Office of Contract Compliance continues to capture payment data on County contracts via a web-based system, which allows for a more efficient process to capture, track and monitor actual subcontractor payments.
- The Office of Contract Compliance continues to host monthly certification workshops to provide an overview of the M/WBE Certification process. These workshops allows for vendors to ask questions directly to our Certification Officers and provide the opportunity to learn more about doing business with Cook County Government.
- Over the last year, we have seen a significant increase in new M/W/VBE certification applications mainly as a result of our continued service improvement and our collaborative efforts with the City of Chicago. We continue our combined efforts with the Reciprocal Certification Initiative. Firms currently certified by both agencies are not required to submit dual applications to both the County and City, which in turn translates to cost-savings to small businesses via a single application fee in addition to creating a more streamlined process for small businesses.
- Over the next year, we will focus on building upon current initiatives and adding new strategies and programs for greater inclusion of local M/WBEs in the County procurements.



TONI PRECKWINKLE
PRESIDENT

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