

Illinois Tollway *DBE* Construction and Professional Services Availability and Disparity Study

Frequently Asked Questions



Colette Holt & Associates (CHA) is conducting an availability and disparity study for the Illinois Tollway of its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program DBE for construction and related professional services contracts. The Tollway seeks to ensure that disadvantaged, minority-owned business enterprises and woman-owned business enterprises have equal access to Tollway's contracting opportunities and that the Tollway's current DBE Program remains legally defensible and administratively successful.

What is an Availability and Disparity Study?

An availability and disparity study involves compilation of evidence to determine whether the Illinois Tollway has a strong basis for to continue to implement race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies for its contracts, and if so, how to narrowly tailor its DBE Program. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of D/M/WBEs and their utilization on Tollway construction and related professional services contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the Chicago area and Illinois construction economy as a whole.

The study will further examine factors necessary for entrepreneurial success, such as access to business capital, bonding, networks, suppliers and other resources. 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 Program. Finally, the study will review Illinois Tollways' current DBE Program and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements, including data collection to assist the Tollway in setting its project-specific and overall goals.

Who is conducting the study?

Colette Holt & Associates, a nationally recognized expert team on disparity studies and D/M/WBE programs, in conjunction with local partners Sandi Llano & Associates, Inc, and L. Binder, Inc.

How can business owners and other interested parties be involved?

The participation of business owners and other interested parties such as assist agencies, trade associations, advocacy groups, etc., is critical to

the study's outcomes in three important ways. 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 the Illinois Tollway. Second, an electronic survey will be sent to interested parties to collect additional anecdotal information. Finally, CHA will also conduct interviews with business owners and stakeholders to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and the DBE Program.

How will the public informational webinar, electronic survey and business owner/stakeholder interviews be conducted and how do I participate?

CHA will host a public information webinar to introduce the study team, methodology and process. A bit later in the process, CHA will administer an online survey for business owners. CHA will also host small group business owner/stakeholder interviews.

Participants who are unable to attend the webinar or the interviews but who would like to provide input to the disparity study are encouraged to return the survey and to submit written statements at the study email: tollwaydbe-study@mwbelaw.com.

When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed summer 2022.

Where can I find additional information?

For additional information, visit the study website at tollwaydbe.disparity-study.com.

Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact the study team via tollwaydbe-study@mwbelaw.com or 855-692-3529.

Or you may contact:

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