



EQUITY IN CITY CONTRACTS

*Five-Year Supplier Diversity Program Review
(FY21 - FY26 Q1 - Q3)*



Economic Opportunity
and Inclusion



Supplier Diversity



Procurement

Equity in City Contracts:

City of Boston

Five-Year Supplier Diversity Program Review

FY21 - FY26 (Q1 - Q3)

Prepared for

The People of the City of Boston

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BACKGROUND

In February 2021, the City of Boston completed a disparity study to fully understand the barriers that minority- and woman-owned businesses face in the Boston marketplace and in competing for City contracts and procurements. The disparity study found that minority- and woman-owned businesses were substantially underutilized and documented statistical and anecdotal evidence that these businesses face significant barriers in the Boston marketplace that make it harder for them to compete for City work.

The 2020 disparity study analyzed over 47,000 contracts, including construction, construction design, professional & support services, and goods and supplies, that the City awarded during the study period of fiscal years 2014 - 2019. The study found that the availability of minority- owned businesses *ready, willing, and able* to perform City work in the Boston market area was 5.7% of the City's total contract award value, while utilization was 2.5%. Only 1.2% of this contract award value went to Black and Hispanic-owned businesses, with 0.4% going to Black-owned businesses. The availability for non-minority woman-owned businesses was 11.2% of the City's contract award value, while utilization was 8.5%. Overall, the study found that 16.9% of minority- and woman-owned businesses in the relevant geographic market area were available to perform work but received only 11% of City contract and subcontract award value.

Based on disparity study findings, the City determined that there was a compelling governmental interest and sufficient statistical evidence to remedy the past and present effects of discrimination, disparities, obstacles, and barriers in the local marketplace that inhibit the ability of minority- and woman-owned businesses to work with the City. Following the publication of the disparity study, an *Executive Order Establishing Equitable Procurement Goals in Support of Minority and Woman-Owned Businesses* was signed in 2021 requiring the City to develop a Supplier Diversity Plan and formally establish the City's Supplier Diversity Program.

INTRODUCTION

This year, the Supplier Diversity Program reaches its five-year milestone. This supplemental report complements the annual Equity in City Contracts Report series by providing a comprehensive program update on the objectives noted in the 2021 Executive Order and the recommendations included in the 2020 Disparity Study. The report outlines the programs, policies, and tools created since the Executive Order and 2020 Disparity Study and reviews how these reforms have contributed to increasing participation with certified minority- and woman-owned businesses, including the City's overall progress towards the verified 16.9% availability detailed in the Disparity Study. The report also looks ahead and identifies areas in which the City still has additional work to eliminate the documented disparities found in the Disparity Study.

FY26 SNAPSHOT (Q1 - Q3)

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Quarters 1-3 (July 1, 2025 to March 31st, 2026), the City of Boston broadly achieved the following results:

- In FY26 Q1-Q3, City spending with certified minority- and woman-owned businesses (MBEs, MWBEs, and WBEs) reached \$105.8 million, or 12%¹ of all City of Boston discretionary spending.
 - Certified minority-owned businesses (MBEs, MWBEs) received \$82.7 million, or 9% of all City discretionary spending.
 - Certified woman-owned businesses (WBEs)² received \$23.1 million, or 3% of all City discretionary spending.
- The City of Boston awarded 10% of contracts in FY26 Q1-Q3 to certified minority- and woman-owned businesses (MBEs, MWBEs, and WBEs), a total of \$104.3 million in contract award value out of \$1 billion in contract award value.
 - Certified minority-owned businesses (MBEs, MWBEs) received \$86.7 million in contract award value (9% of all contract award value)
 - Certified woman-owned businesses (WBEs) received \$17.5 million in contract award value (2% of all contract award value)

¹ Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. All dollar values reported are rounded to 1 decimal place.

² WBEs refer to businesses who are at least 51% owned by a non-minority woman. This aligns with the methodology used in the 2020 Disparity Study, which categorized businesses by *minority-owned businesses* and *non-minority white woman-owned businesses*.

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM UPDATE

The Equitable Procurement Initiative is a collaboration between the Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Cabinet, the Finance Cabinet, the Department of Innovation and Technology (“DoIT”), and the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet. Through this initiative, the City of Boston has worked to develop and implement a Supplier Diversity Plan, consistent with the requirements outlined in the 2021 Executive Order to promote citywide adoption of supplier diversity programs, improve overall procurement practices, bring down traditional silos, and enable fair and equitable access to City contracting opportunities for diverse businesses.

The 2020 Disparity Study provided several programmatic recommendations on how the City could encourage the participation of certified businesses, including: A) Establishing an Overall Aspirational Goal, B) Setting Contract-Specific Goals, and C) Adopting Race and Gender-Neutral Measures. Over the last five years, this interdepartmental group has developed and launched multiple programs, tools, and policies aimed at integrating these recommendations, as well as the expectations of the 2021 Executive Order, into City procurement processes.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 1: OVERALL ASPIRATIONAL GOAL

The Disparity Study recommended that the City use the availability analysis to establish an aspirational goal for working with minority- and woman-owned businesses. The analysis indicated that diverse businesses are potentially available to participate in 16.9% of the City’s procurement contract value awarded. Using the availability analysis as a starting point, the 2021 Executive Order, established a 25% City-wide aspirational goal, with a goal of 15% utilization for woman-owned businesses and a goal of 10% utilization for minority-owned businesses.

While the City has made significant gains in increasing its participation with certified minority-and woman-owned businesses, reaching as high as 15% in contract awards in FY23 and 12% spending in FY25, the City has yet to meet or exceed the goals identified in the Disparity Study and Executive Order. This demonstrates the ongoing importance of prioritizing programs and policies committed to advancing supplier diversity. The Overview of Contract Award & Spend Data section of this report provides further detail on the City’s progress towards reaching the 16.9% availability goals identified in the Disparity Study.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 2: CONTRACT-SPECIFIC GOALS

The Disparity Study recommended that the City consider using M/WBE participation goals to award contracts on an individual basis. The recommendation was that goals be set on a contract-by-contract basis and be based on the availability of M/WBE businesses in the market area for the types of work that would be procured for the project. The prime contractor selected for the project would be required to meet these goals as a condition of their contract, and would meet the goals by making subcontractor commitments with certified M/WBE firms. The commitments would be included in the prospective prime's bid, or, at least demonstrate that they made good faith efforts to meet the goals. The study recommended the City consider setting goals on either all relevant contracts and procurements, or only on particular contracts.

Based on this recommendation, the 2021 Executive Order established a policy creating contract-specific goals where the City would select contracts to set M/WBE participation goals on, evaluate prospective prime contractors ability to meet the goals, and monitor goal compliance. To date, the City has set contract-specific goals on six City construction projects since FY21. These participation goals to date have been implemented on a select group of construction contracts where significant opportunity for M/WBE subcontractor participation exists.

For example, the City-owned East Grandstand portion of the public-private partnership **White Stadium Renovation Project** has already achieved meaningful participation with \$18.3M in awards going to M/WBEs and local businesses, accounting for 20% of the total contract dollars awarded as of June 2026. The City has aimed to ensure the project's private partners are committed to increased engagement of M/WBEs and local businesses, as well. Boston Legacy Football Club (BLFC), which owns the West Grandstand portion, has also set goals for diverse and local businesses. As of June 2026, the West Grandstand has reached \$43M awarded or committed to M/WBE and local firms, accounting for 49% of committed and awarded contracts so far.³ The project is still ongoing so award values will continue to change as the project progresses.

³ "Awarded" contracts refer to contracts that have been fully executed with a chosen subcontractor. "Committed" contracts refer to contract commitments made by selected prime subcontractors (Tier 1) to award a portion of their contract to lower-tier (Tier 2) M/WBE or local subcontractors. A prime subcontractor may be selected before they have identified their Tier 2 subcontractors, resulting in committed contracts that will soon become awarded.

While most of the six designated projects have successfully reached their M/WBE subcontractor participation goals, the City has significant work left to do in order to systematically and effectively implement this policy towards a wider pool of City construction projects.

PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 3: RACE- AND GENDER-NEUTRAL MEASURES

In addition to recognizing the race- and gender-neutral technical assistance and workshops already offered by the City, the Disparity Study recommended a wide range of additional race- and gender- neutral reforms to the City's procurement policies and programs (see [Appendix A](#) for a full list of recommendations and implementation status). The City has made significant efforts to implement several of the named reforms included in the study, while also creating new distinct programs and strategies aimed at strengthening supplier diversity in the City's procurement processes.

Summarized below are initiatives the City has accomplished since the publication of the 2020 Study and 2021 Executive Order, grouped into four key areas of work: A) Policy Development & Implementation, B) Capacity Building Programs, C) Vendor Tools & Outreach, and D) Data Collection, Reporting, & Monitoring Progress.

A. POLICY DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- **Diversity & Inclusion Plan Language for Requests for Proposal (RFP):** In October 2020, the City approved RFP criteria that could be used to evaluate the efforts that prime contractors have or would take to utilize small and diverse subcontractors on work performed on City contracts. The City has since incorporated the language into its standard RFP solicitation template for goods and services.
- **EOI Cabinet Approval for RFP:** When departments seek to release an RFP (as opposed to an IFB), they must request permission from the City's Chief Financial Officer (CFO). In FY23, the City amended this process to include the Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Cabinet (EOI) as a co-approver for RFPs for contracts valued at \$250,000 or more.
- **Passage & Implementation of the Inclusive Quote Contracts Legislation:** In 2022, Mayor Wu filed a home rule petition via the City Council entitled "A Petition for a Special Law Re: An Act Relative to 30B," which in turn was sent to the Massachusetts State Legislature after unanimous passage by Council

members. The bill was later approved by the Legislature in July 2022. **As of the publication of this report, the City has awarded 81 Inclusive Quote Contracts (IQCs) totaling \$11.4M to certified businesses in the four years since its passing.**

- **Standardized Procurement Guides & Template:** In FY26, the Procurement Department, in collaboration with the Department of Supplier Diversity (“DSD”) and the Law Department, published comprehensive procurement manuals outlining how to execute Chapter 30B procurements, including RFPs, IFBs, and WQCs/IQCs. These guides also reflect policies, processes, and best practices that are specific to the City of Boston, including Supplier Diversity requirements. Clear templates that are standardized across departments make it easier for all businesses to engage with the City’s procurement process.

B. CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

- **Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund:** From FY21 - FY23, certified businesses were eligible to receive ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant funding through the annual Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund (BCOF). The fund provided grants of up to \$15,000 to certified MBE, WBE or SLBE businesses based in Boston for capacity building investments that bolster their operational capabilities. **Of the 51 businesses chosen to receive funding in FY23, 8 went on to receive City contracting opportunities.**

Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund Awards by Fiscal Year

FY	TOTAL APPLICANTS	TOTAL AWARDEES	TOTAL AWARDED
2021	164	56	\$805,000
2022	151	71	\$1,048,951
2023	240	51	\$746,000

- **SCALE Program:** In 2025, the Department of Supplier Diversity selected 27 businesses to participate in the Supplying Capital and Leveraging Education (SCALE) program. The SCALE program was open only to small, local, disadvantaged businesses certified by the City or the Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Office (SDO). Grantees selected received up to \$200,000 in grant funding and six months of industry-specific technical assistance. In FY26 all recipients completed the SCALE technical assistance program and

received their final grants. **Since completing the SCALE Program in October 2025, four SCALE grantees have gone on to win eight City contracts and one space lease totaling \$1.3M in contract awards.**

C. VENDOR TOOLS & OUTREACH

→ **Equitable Procurement Buying Plan:** In FY21, the Procurement and Supplier Diversity teams, in partnership with the Office of Budget Management, began collecting Equitable Procurement Plans from City departments outlining the procurement opportunities they plan to issue in the upcoming fiscal year. The City has [published this data](#) annually since FY22, and has made significant improvements to its data collection process to ensure the procurement information is comprehensive and accurate.

This year, the FY27 Buying Plan was published in March 2026, highlighting planned opportunities for July 2026 through July 2027. This Buying Plan represented an 82% increase over the prior year's plan in the estimated dollar value of opportunities, representing a more comprehensive data collection process and increased transparency into planned procurements. Postcards with Buying Plan information were also sent to all City-certified businesses. This has been a key tool in the City's efforts to give small businesses as much lead time as possible to prepare competitive bids.

FY27 Buying Plan Summary

TOTAL OPPORTUNITIES	NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS	EST. TOTAL VALUE
688	56	\$808,315,004

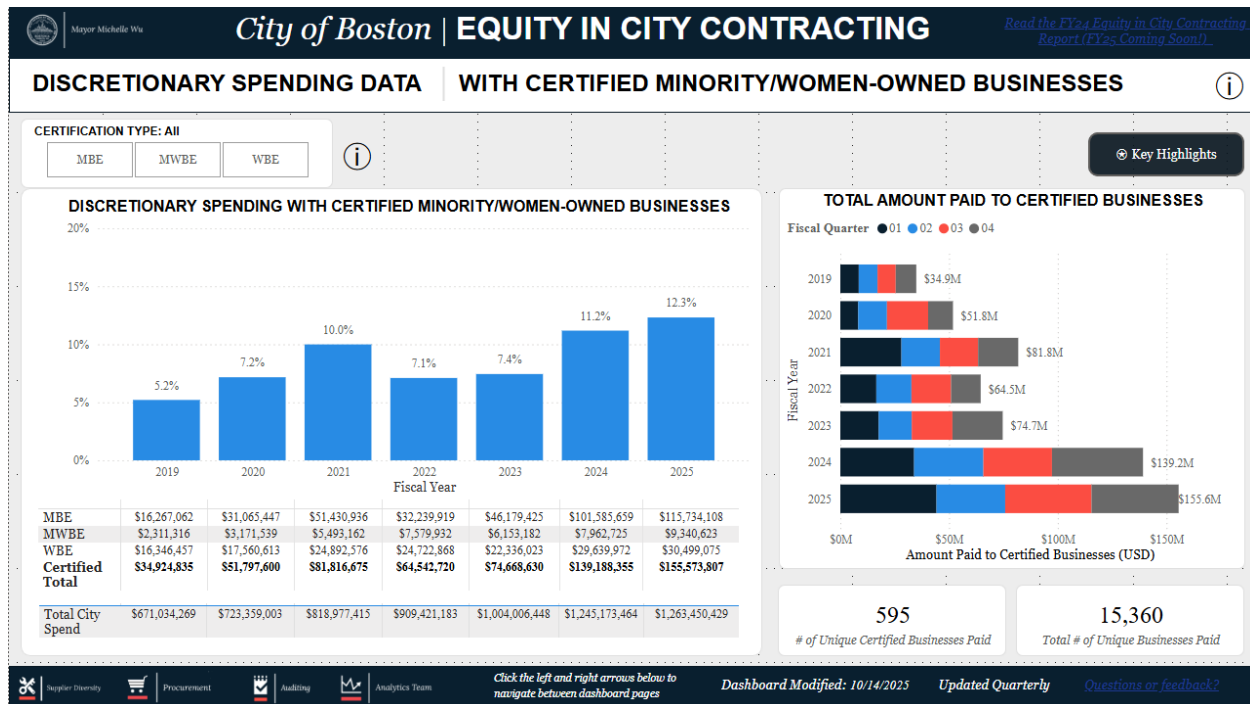
→ **Contracting Opportunity Fairs & Events:** DSD hosts annual programs and events such as the Contracting Opportunity Fairs and Supplier Diversity Week to help raise awareness of opportunities for certified businesses to engage with the City. These fairs and other outreach events connect businesses with City suppliers and external partners and remain a valuable resource for diverse businesses seeking to connect with the city and learn about upcoming public and private contracts. In addition to the Contracting Opportunity Fairs, DSD hosts an annual "City of Boston Supplier Diversity Week," a week-long event that features important announcements and workshop opportunities to support small, local, diverse business participation in City contracting. The week features a combination of in-person and virtual education events and programs designed to foster

collaboration, engage with diverse businesses, and promote a more inclusive business environment. In the last two years, there have been 100+ attendees at in-person events during Supplier Diversity Week.

- **Office Hours:** The Department of Supplier Diversity hosts weekly virtual office hours for business owners on Wednesdays for close to 100 hours of support to prospective certified businesses each fiscal year.
- **Technical Assistance:** The DSD team, along with the Vendor Support team in the Procurement Department, provides direct technical assistance to help businesses create vendor accounts, get certified, and navigate the Supplier Portal, find relevant City contracting opportunities, and access key programs and grants. The DSD team also works closely with the City's Office of Small Business to connect certified firms with the Office of Small Business and their contracted multi-industry Technical Assistance ("TA") providers. The Office of Small Business and their TA providers provide free tools and support to vendors in order to start, strengthen and expand their businesses.

D. DATA COLLECTION, REPORTING, & MONITORING PROGRESS

- **Equity in City Contracting Reports, Dashboard & Open Data:** Since FY23, the City has published the [Equity in City Contracts Report](#), an annual look at the City's progress towards meeting its supplier diversity goals and contract award and spending with certified diverse businesses. In FY25, the City published the [Equity in City Contracting Dashboard](#), for the first time publicly visualizing the City's progress towards meeting its supplier diversity goals. The dashboard is updated quarterly and reports on the information included in this report while allowing users to search, filter, and drill down to contract award and spending transactions at a higher level of granularity. Updated data sets are also available through the City's Analyze Boston Open Data Hub.



→ **Adoption of B2GNow M/WBE Compliance Tracking Software:** In FY21, the City issued a Request for Proposals seeking a Supplier Diversity Vendor Management and Compliance Tracking System. The City selected the software system B2GNow and fully implemented the system in FY22. This software allows the City to track contracts with M/WBE participation goals and to track a Prime contractor's compliance with goals by confirming regular payments are going to M/WBE subcontractors. The software is pivotal to ensuring contracts with M/WBE goals stay on track and allow the City to store subcontractor information in one online workspace.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES: RACE- AND GENDER-CONSCIOUS POLICIES & PROGRAMS

Building on the recommendations included in the Disparity Study, the City developed and launched one additional race- and gender-conscious program focused on expanding access to City contracting opportunities.

→ **Adoption of the Sheltered Market Program:** The Disparity Study recommended that the City consider setting aside prime contracts for small businesses to encourage participation of minority- and woman-owned businesses as contractors. Massachusetts General Law Section 18 of Chapter

30B permits municipalities to establish Sheltered Market Programs to reserve certain contracts for disadvantaged businesses.

In December 2021, the City piloted the Sheltered Market Program and later reauthorized it for an additional three years. Contracts designated in the program continue to follow a competitive bid process, but only certain minority-and woman-owned businesses are eligible to respond to the opportunity. This program sunset in June 2025, but is under consideration for renewal, provided that a new Disparity Study is completed. **The City of Boston designated seven (7) contracts under its fully authorized Sheltered Market Program totaling \$1.6M going to certified minority-owned businesses.**

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY CERTIFICATION TYPES AND PROCEDURES

The Department of Supplier Diversity (“DSD”) is responsible for processing certification applications and maintaining the [City’s Directory of Certified Businesses](#). Figures 1-1 to 1-3 provide an overview of the different certification types offered and recognized, as well as the eligibility criteria a business must meet to qualify for each certification.

Figure 1-1.
Ownership-based certification types*

CERTIFICATION TYPE**	CRITERIA
Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)	51% or more is owned by a person of color
Woman Business Enterprise (WBE)	51% or more is owned by a non-minority woman
Minority and Woman Business Enterprise (MWBE)	51% or more is owned by a woman of color

**Businesses applying for ownership-based certifications are evaluated based on the process and procedures outlined in the City’s Supplier Diversity Program Certification Regulations.*

***Throughout the report, this group of certifications are referred collectively as Minority- and-Woman-Owned Businesses or by the shorthand M/WBE.*

The 2020 Disparity Study found that Minority- and Woman-owned Businesses (M/WBEs) were underrepresented in the City of Boston’s contract awards and spending relative to their availability. Because these two groups were found to be underutilized, the City monitors and focuses our reporting on contracts awarded to and spending with M/WBE businesses as a means of assessing our progress towards equity in procurement.

Figure 1-2.
Size- and location-based certification types*

CERTIFICATION TYPE	CRITERIA
Small Business Enterprise (SBE)	The Small Business Administration (SBA) assigns a size standard to each NAICS code (type of economic activity). The City of Boston uses a size standard that is 75% of the SBA average gross receipts of sales standard and also fewer than 20 employees.
Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE)	An SBE that is located in Boston.

*Businesses applying for S/LBE certifications are evaluated based on a 2003 Executive Order on Small and Local Business Development signed by then-Mayor Thomas M. Menino.

Figure 1-3.
Other certification types*

CERTIFICATION TYPE	CRITERIA
Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VOSB)	A small business owned by a veteran of the American armed forces.
Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE)	A small business owned by a veteran with a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

*The City of Boston does not directly certify businesses as Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VOSB) or Service Veteran Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE). However, DSD actively conducts outreach and recognizes businesses that have been certified under those designations by the U.S. Small Business Administration or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. These businesses are included in the Certified Business Directory.

Figure 1-4 illustrates the total number of active certified businesses by each fiscal year and certification type. It is important to note that when added, the number of active certifications in a given fiscal year in each certification category above (i.e. MWBE, SLBE, VBE, etc.) may not be equivalent to the count of total active certified businesses for that fiscal year. This is because businesses may apply for multiple types of certification across both ownership and size/location-based categories. For example, a business can be both an MBE and an SBE. The total SBE and SLBE certifications in Figure 1-4 count businesses only certified as either SBE or SLBE - it does not count businesses that have multiple certification designations. The actual

total number of SBEs and SLBEs in the directory at any given time is higher than the number of SBE-only and SLBE-only totals.

Since the 2020 Disparity Study, the City has made significant improvements to the certification application and process. For example, the City moved away from a paper-based application to an online application. These improvements have impacted the ease of certification and directly correlate with the growing numbers of active certifications each fiscal year.

Figure 1-4.

Total Active Certified Businesses by Fiscal Year and Type

Fiscal Year	MBE	MWBE	WBE	SBE-only	SLBE-only	VBE	TOTAL
2021	155	76	157	9	15	10	412
2022	230	145	191	11	22	14	599
2023	325	230	219	9	25	16	808
2024	351	264	242	14	29	16	916
2025	402	314	261	22	42	19	1,037
2026 Q1-Q3 ^{*4}	391	304	272	14	23	14	1009

^{*}Figures presented for Fiscal Year 2026 represent the first three quarters of the Fiscal Year (July 1st, 2025 through March 31st, 2026). Final figures for the entire fiscal year will be published in the fiscal year end report.

⁴ For FY25 and FY26 Q1-Q3, a new method was used to calculate the total active certifications per fiscal year. Certification records were reviewed to determine which businesses were certified at any point during the fiscal year. A certification is considered “active” if certification was valid at some point in the given fiscal year. This methodology will be used going forward in future reports. FY21-FY24 values are consistent with methodology used in previous reports.

OVERVIEW OF CONTRACT AWARD AND SPEND DATA

This section provides an overview of the data related to all procurement contract awards (see Appendix B for more information on what contracts are included) and discretionary spending with certified minority- and woman-owned businesses (“M/WBEs”) as compared to awards and spending with non-certified businesses.⁵ Contract awards are the total dollar value of a contract that a given supplier has been selected for (awarded). The supplier can be paid **up to** that amount over the life of the contract, so award value can be an early indicator of future spending. The spend data looks at the total payments made to a supplier for contracted work.

This report uses the availability calculated in the 2020 Disparity Study for minority- and woman-owned businesses to perform City work as a benchmark to measure the City’s progress on contracting with diverse businesses. The study calculated the estimated percentage of the City’s contracting and procurement dollars that diverse businesses would be expected to be awarded relative to the work they are able to perform, as shown in Figure 2-1 below.

Figure 2-1

Overall availability estimates by diverse business ownership, as a percentage of the City’s total awarded contract value

DIVERSE BUSINESS OWNERSHIP	% AVAILABILITY (% OF TOTAL CONTRACT AWARD VALUE)
Minority-owned businesses	5.7%
Non-minority woman-owned businesses	11.2%
Total minority-owned and woman-owned businesses	16.9%

Comparing availability to actual contract award across fiscal years shows that while the City has made meaningful progress towards closing documented disparities, the City has yet to reach the overall 16.9% availability detailed in the Disparity Study.

⁵ The certified businesses this report tracks are in the categories of Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Minority- and Woman-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE), and Woman Business Enterprise (WBE). “M/WBE” covers all three designations.

Five important notes about the data - and in particular, in the relation of the City's data to that of the 2020 Disparity Study - are:

1. **The City's procurement data only reflects the total amount of contracts awarded to and spending with certified minority- and woman-owned businesses.** The data in this report only incorporates businesses certified with the City's Department of Supplier Diversity and/or the Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Office. Businesses who may have been awarded a contract with the City but are not certified are not included.⁶ Availability data from the Disparity Study includes data from *any* business that is minority- or woman-owned, whether or not that business was certified, based on extensive qualitative surveying to businesses conducted as part of the study.
2. **Subcontracts⁷ may also contribute to total awards and spending with diverse businesses, but are not included in this data.** The data disclosed in this report only captures awards and spending through the City's prime contracts. The availability and utilization data from the Disparity Study includes awards from subcontracts, in addition to prime contracts.
3. **This report does not contain detailed information on awards or spending by race/ethnicity, i.e. if a business is Black-owned or Asian-owned, or the primary industry of the business.** The availability indicators from the Disparity Study were further disaggregated by the race/ethnicity of the business owner and the primary industry of the business's work, drawing from the qualitative surveying performed during the study.
4. **The City's contracting and procurement data considers work with businesses independent of where they are located or headquartered.** In contrast, the Disparity Study only considered available businesses within the City's geographic market area, defined in the Disparity Study as Norfolk, Suffolk, Plymouth, Middlesex, and Essex counties in Massachusetts.

⁶ Through the supplier registration process, businesses have the option to indicate whether they believe they are eligible for Supplier Diversity Certification. DSD conducts outreach to these businesses to encourage them to get certified.

⁷ Subcontracts are formed when a prime contractor, who has been awarded a contract by the City, hires a business to complete a portion of the work required by that contract. Indirect spending with diverse businesses occurs when the prime contractor hires a certified business (MBE, MWBE, or WBE) to perform work on a City-awarded contract. For example, the City may award Firm A, which is not certified, a \$100,000 contract to produce a research report. Firm A may then hire Firm B, an MBE, to produce the design of that report. Our data only reflects the original \$100,000 contract awarded to Firm A, and will not capture that a certified vendor also worked on the project.

5. **Spending and contracting data will exhibit minor degrees of fluctuation from year to year** due to contract amendments and data reconciliation. Therefore, the contract award and discretionary spending reported for previous fiscal years in this report may vary slightly from past “Equity in City Contracting” reports. The City has included updates to data in prior fiscal years here to provide the most accurate picture of awards/payments, including any corrections.

I. DISCRETIONARY SPEND WITH CERTIFIED MINORITY- AND WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

In FY26 Q1-Q3, the City paid certified minority- and woman-owned businesses (M/WBEs) **a total of \$105.8 million or 12% of its overall spending**. These payments represent contracted work awarded through contracts in the first three quarters of FY26 or in previous fiscal years. Figure 2-2 shows the total dollar value of discretionary spending with certified M/WBEs as compared to the share of overall discretionary spending those values represent, expressed as a percentage.

Figure 2-2.

Discretionary Spending Across M/WBE (MBEs, MWBEs, & WBEs) Certification Types

Fiscal Year	Discretionary Spend with MBEs, MWBEs, and WBEs	Total Discretionary Spending	Percentage of Discretionary Spending with MBEs, MWBEs, and WBEs
2020	\$51.8 million	\$723.4 million	7%
2021	\$81.8 million	\$819.0 million	10%
2022	\$64.5 million	\$909.4 million	7%
2023	\$74.7 million	\$1.0 billion	7%
2024	\$139.2 million	\$1.2 billion	11%
2025	\$155.6 million	\$1.3 billion	12%
2026 Q1-Q3*	\$105.8 million	\$901.7 million	12%

*Figures presented for Fiscal Year 2026 represent the first three quarters of the Fiscal Year (July 1st, 2025 through March 31st, 2026). Final figures for the entire fiscal year will be published in the fiscal year end report.

Figure 2-3 shows the total spending to M/WBEs per fiscal year broken down by fiscal quarter. Comparing fiscal year 2026 Q1-Q3 to previous fiscal year's 3rd quarter activity, total spending to M/WBEs is slightly higher than in FY 2024 Q1-Q3 (\$97.3M) and below spending to M/WBEs in FY25 Q1-Q3 (\$115.5M).

Figure 2-3.

Total Discretionary Spending Across M/WBE (MBEs, MWBEs, & WBEs) Certification Types by Fiscal Year and Fiscal Quarter

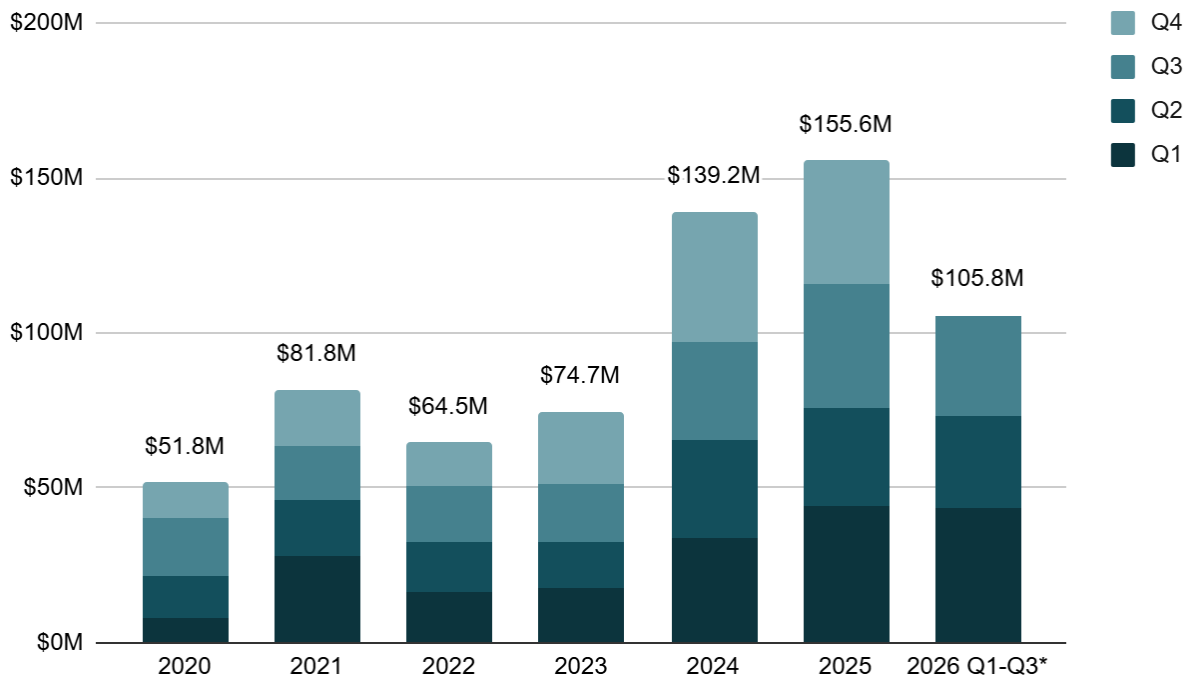
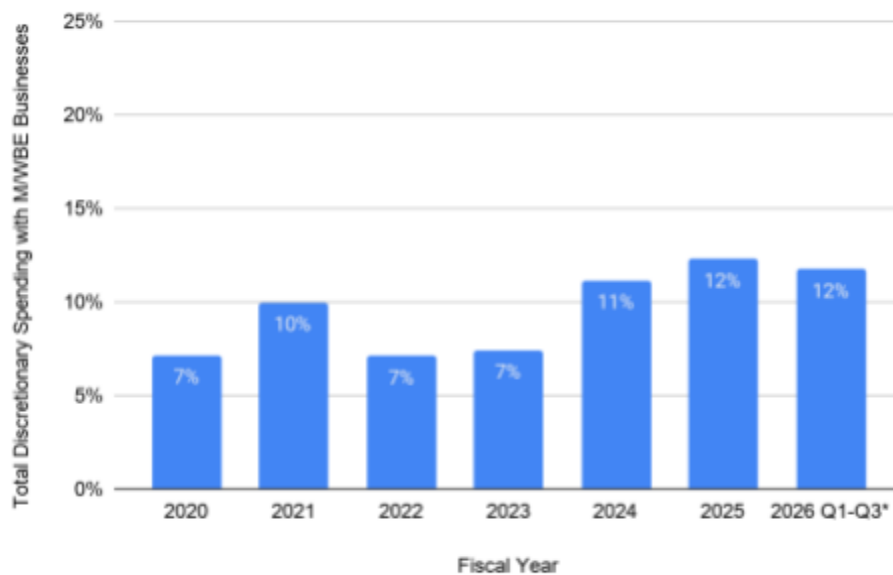


Figure 2-4 shows the percentage of discretionary spending to M/WBEs from Fiscal Year 2020 up to Fiscal Year 2026 Q3. The figure demonstrates a general upward trend in City spending with minority- and woman-owned businesses.

Figure 2-4.

% of Total Discretionary Spending to M/WBEs per Fiscal Year



II. CONTRACT AWARD VALUES WITH CERTIFIED MINORITY- AND WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

In FY26 Q1-Q3, procurement contracts awarded to certified minority- and woman-owned businesses (M/WBEs) **totaled \$104.3 million dollars or ten (10%) percent of all contract award values** in this time period. Figure 2-5 shows the total percentage of contract award value to M/WBEs and the total percentage of the number of contracts to M/WBEs by fiscal year.

Figure 2-5.

Award Value And Contracts Across M/WBE (MBEs, MWBEs, & WBEs) Certification Types.⁸

Fiscal Year	Number of Certified Contracts	Percentage of All Contracts	Certified Contract Award Value	Percentage of All Award Value
2020	108	8%	\$67.3 million	6%
2021	125	9%	\$81.6 million	9%
2022	152	9%	\$85.1 million	6%
2023	181	10%	\$160.3 million	15%
2024	224	12%	\$239.0 million	12%
2025	226	12%	\$237.5 million	12%
2026 Q1-Q3*	169	12%	\$104.3 million	10%

Figure 2-6 represents the count (number) of contracts awarded to certified M/WBE businesses, broken down by fiscal year and fiscal quarter. The figure demonstrates that the number of contracts to M/WBEs in FY 2026 Q1-Q3 (169 contracts) is down from the same period in the previous two fiscal years (193 contracts in FY 2025 Q1-Q3 and 177 contracts in FY 2024 Q1-Q3).

⁸ Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2-6
Count of Contracts Awarded to Minority/Woman-Owned Businesses by Fiscal Year and Quarter

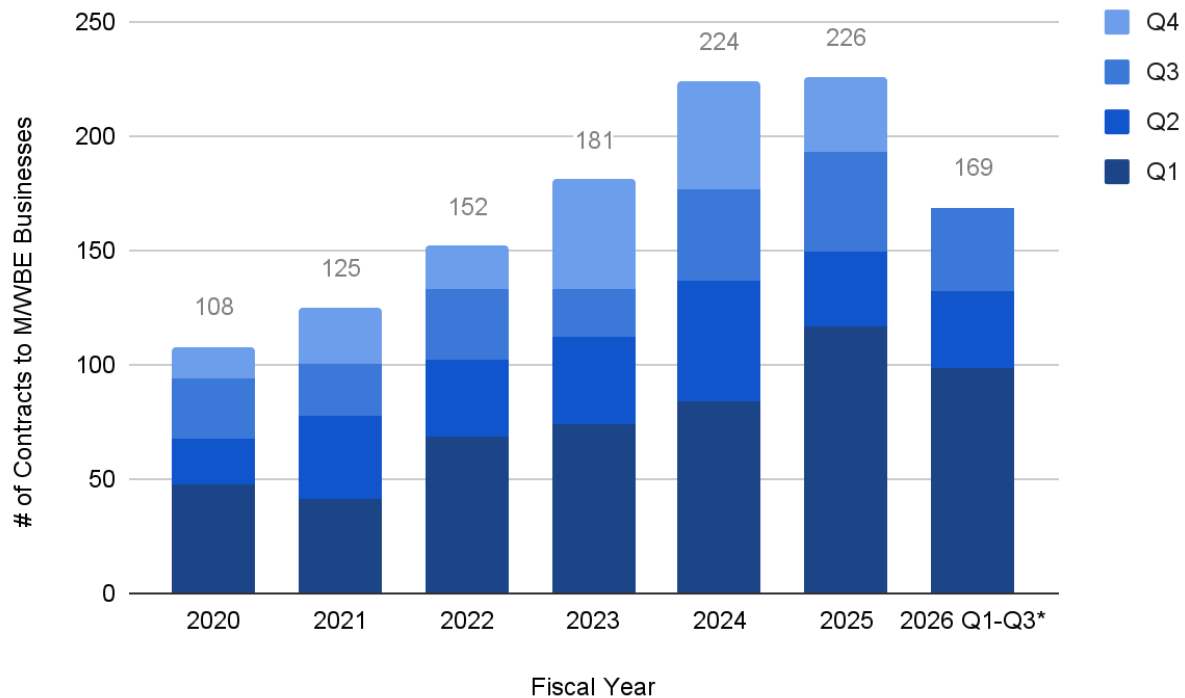
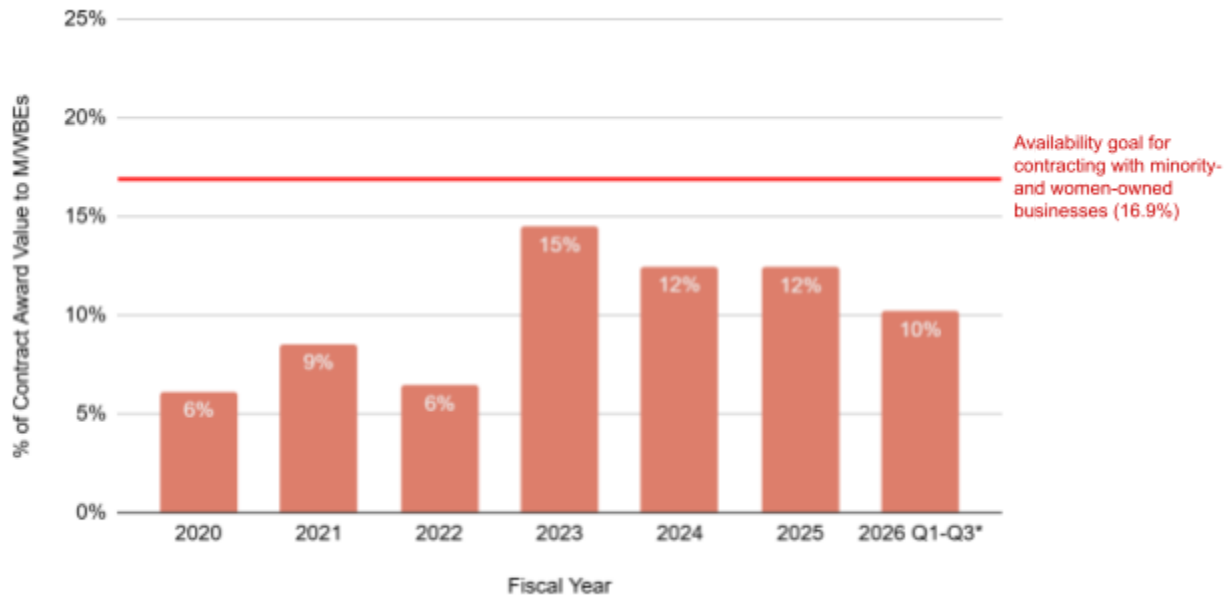


Figure 2-7 represents the award value for procurement contracts awarded to certified M/WBEs from FY20 to FY26 Q1-Q3 as a percentage of the total award value awarded to all businesses in that fiscal year. As stated in an earlier section of this report, award values represent the total dollar value of a contract that a given business is awarded. That means that the business could be paid up to that amount over the life of the contract.

As noted in the above data overview, the 2020 Disparity Study showed that the availability of minority- and woman-owned enterprises considered together (MBEs, MWBEs, & WBEs) to perform work the city contracts for was at 16.9% of the City's awarded contract value. Figure 2-7 demonstrates that the percentage of award value to certified businesses is down from FY2024 and FY2025. It also shows that the City remains below the 16.9% M/WBE availability goal set in the Disparity Study.

Figure 2-7.
% of Total Contract Award Value to M/WBE (MBE, MWBE, & WBE) Certified Businesses⁹



III. DISCRETIONARY SPEND WITH CERTIFIED MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Discretionary spending to certified minority-owned businesses (MBEs, MWBEs) **totaled \$82.7 million dollars or nine (9%) percent of all discretionary spending** in FY26 Q1-Q3. Figure 2-8 shows spending with certified minority-owned businesses by fiscal year, expressed as both a dollar value and as a share of the total value of all spending with all businesses. Not all spending associated with those contracts mentioned above is reflected here, as many will be paid out over the course of several years.

⁹ Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number

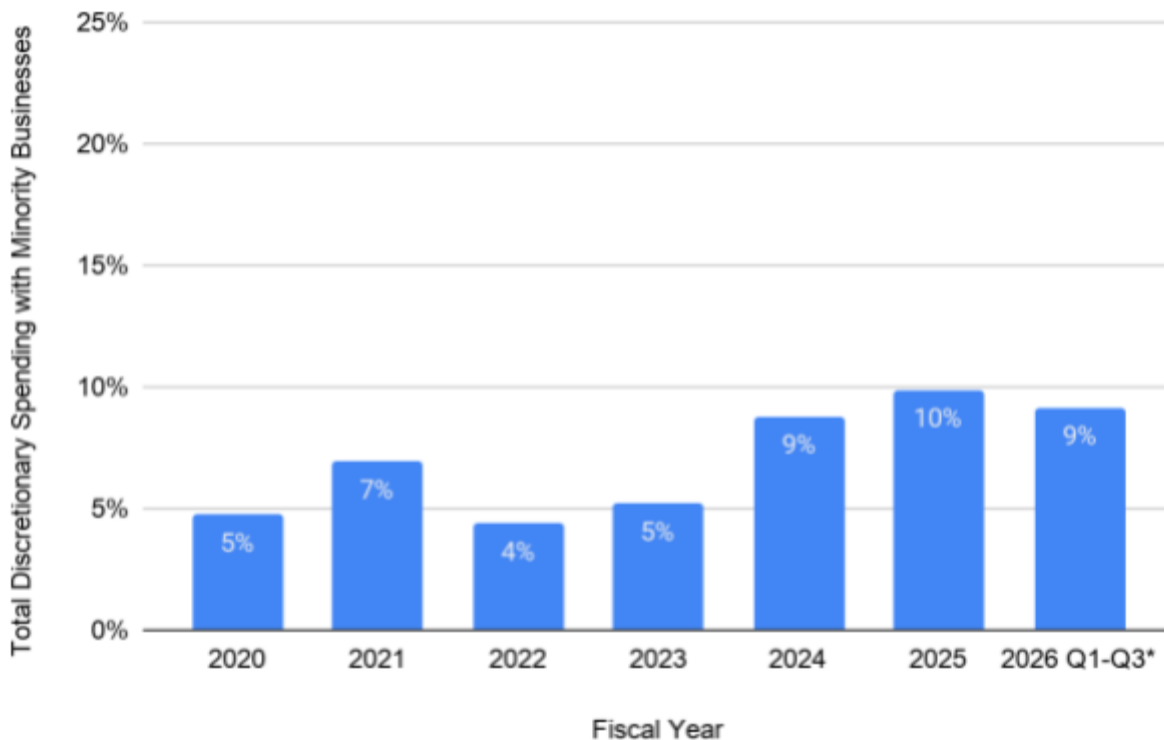
Figure 2-8.
Discretionary Spending With Certified Minority-Owned Businesses (MBE, MWBE)¹⁰

Fiscal Year	Discretionary Spend with MBEs and MWBEs	Total Discretionary Spending	Percentage of Discretionary Spending with MBEs and MWBEs
2020	\$34.2 million	\$723.4 million	5%
2021	\$56.9 million	\$819.0 million	7%
2022	\$39.8 million	\$909.4 million	4%
2023	\$52.3 million	\$1.0 billion	5%
2024	\$109.5 million	\$1.2 billion	9%
2025	\$125.1 million	\$1.3 billion	10%
2026 Q1-Q3*	\$82.7 million	\$901.7 million	9%

Figure 2-9 shows the percentage of discretionary spending to minority-owned businesses as a percentage of all discretionary spending from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2026 Q3.

¹⁰ Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2-9.
% of Total Discretionary Spending to MBEs¹¹



The figure demonstrates that the percentage of the City’s discretionary spending to minority-owned businesses has trended upward over time. While the City’s increased spending with minority-owned businesses is laudable, there are some caveats to note. First, much of these gains is concentrated in large-dollar contracts in high-spend areas (construction, transportation, and large-scale food services). These concentrated contract awards do not represent equitable access to opportunity across all qualified businesses, including smaller minority-owned businesses. Additionally, this data does not disaggregate based on race/ethnicity or industry, where additional disparities may exist.

¹¹ Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number

IV. CONTRACT AWARD VALUE WITH CERTIFIED MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

As shown in Figure 2-10 below, **contract award values to minority-owned businesses totaled \$86.7 million in FY26 Q1-Q3, representing 9% of all contract award values** in this time period. The figure shows awards to certified minority-owned businesses by fiscal year, expressed as both a dollar value and as a share of the total value of all awards to all businesses. Likewise, the figure shows the number of individual contracts awarded to certified minority-owned businesses as well as the share of all contracts that value represents.

Figure 2-10.

Award Value And Amount Of Contracts Awarded To Certified Minority-Owned Businesses (MBE, MWBE)¹²

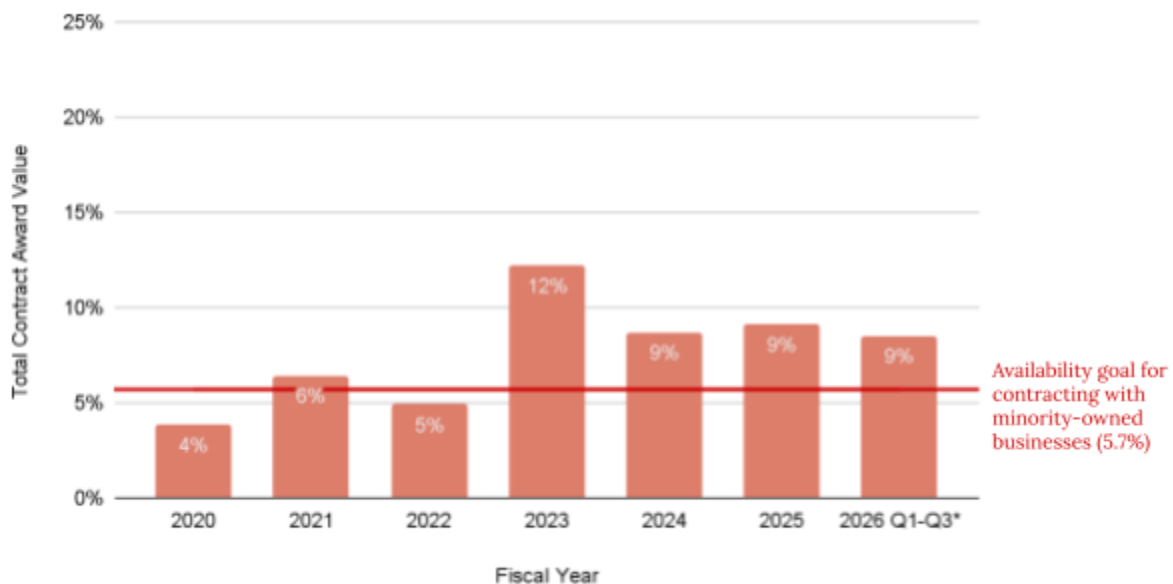
Fiscal Year	Number of Certified Contracts	Percentage of All Contracts	Certified Contract Award Value	Percentage of All Award Value
2020	52	4%	\$42.3 million	4%
2021	68	5%	\$61.5 million	6%
2022	65	4%	\$64.5 million	5%
2023	89	5%	\$135.2 million	12%
2024	114	6%	\$166.8 million	9%
2025	131	7%	\$174.1 million	9%
2026 Q1-Q3*	108	8%	\$86.7 million	9%

¹² Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2-11 shows the percentage of the City's total contract award value awarded to minority-owned businesses. The figure demonstrates significant progress in contract awards to minority-owned businesses in recent fiscal years that exceeds the availability goal of 5.7% to minority-owned business enterprises set in the 2020 Disparity Study. As with the City's spending with minority-owned enterprises, this progress reflects the success in the City's efforts to address inequities, but may obscure remaining disparities in contracting with minority-owned businesses within business size, race/ethnicity, and industry.

Figure 2-11.

% of Total Contract Award Value to MBEs compared to % M/WBE availability¹³



¹³ Percentages for this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

V. DISCRETIONARY SPENDING WITH CERTIFIED WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

Discretionary spending to woman-owned businesses (WBEs) reached **\$23.1 million in the first three quarters of fiscal year 2026, representing 3% of all discretionary spending** in that time period. As in Figure 1-2, a woman-owned business is a business that is 51% owned by a woman who does not identify as a woman of color or other racial/ethnic minority. The tables below do not include minority woman-owned businesses (MWBEs) as these businesses are included in the values for minority-owned businesses.¹⁴

Figure 2-12.

Discretionary Spending With Certified Woman-Owned Businesses (WBEs)¹⁵

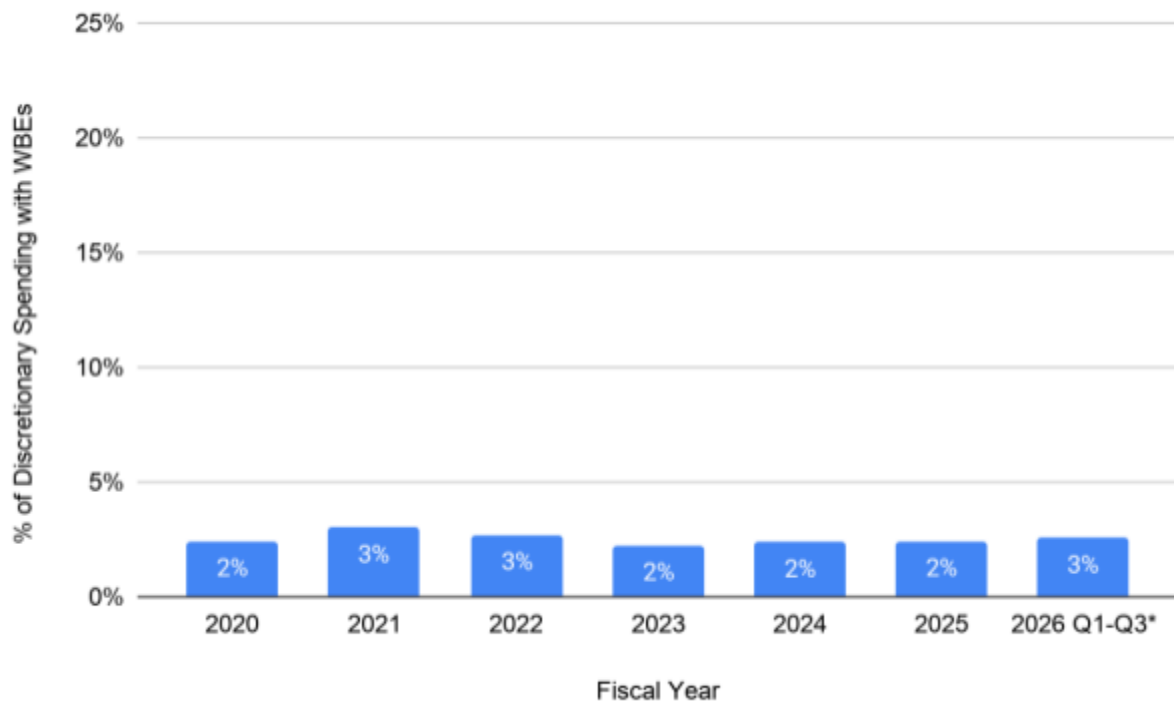
Fiscal Year	Discretionary Spending with WBEs	Total Discretionary Spending	Percentage of Discretionary Spending with WBEs
2020	\$17.6 million	\$723.4 million	2%
2021	\$24.9 million	\$819.0 million	3%
2022	\$24.7 million	\$909.4 million	3%
2023	\$22.3 million	\$1.0 billion	2%
2024	\$29.6 million	\$1.2 billion	2%
2025	\$30.5 million	\$1.3 billion	2%
2026 Q1-Q3*	\$23.1 million	\$901.7 million	3%

¹⁴ This grouping of businesses by race/ethnicity and gender aligns with the methodology used in the 2020 Disparity Study, which collated businesses by *minority-owned businesses* and *non-minority white woman-owned businesses*.

¹⁵ Percentages for this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2-13 shows the percentage of discretionary spending to non-minority woman-owned business enterprises from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2026 Q3. This figure shows that spending to non-minority woman-owned businesses hovers between 2 and 3%.

Figure 2-13.
% of Total Discretionary Spending to WBEs¹⁶



¹⁶ Percentages for this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number

VI. CONTRACT AWARD VALUE WITH CERTIFIED WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

In FY 2026 Q1-Q3, *the City awarded \$17.5 million in contract award value* to non-minority woman-owned business enterprises, comprising **2% of all contract award value in the first three quarters of the fiscal year**. This is down from FY24 and FY25, where WBEs were awarded 4% and 3% of all contract award value, respectively.

Figure 2-14.

Award Value And Amount Of Contracts Awarded To Certified Woman-Owned Businesses (WBEs)¹⁷

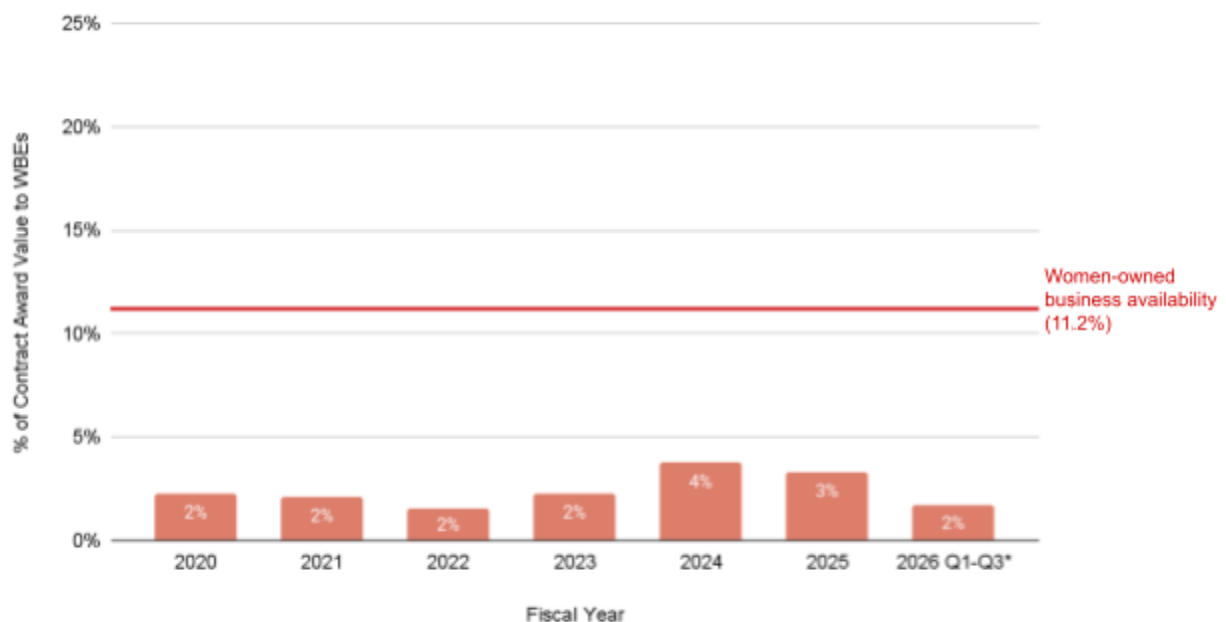
Fiscal Year	Number of Certified Contracts	Percentage of All Contracts	Certified Contract Award Value	Percentage of All Award Value
2020	56	4%	\$25.0 million	2%
2021	57	4%	\$20.1 million	2%
2022	87	5%	\$20.6 million	2%
2023	92	5%	\$25.2 million	2%
2024	110	6%	\$72.2 million	4%
2025	95	5%	\$63.4 million	3%
2026 Q1-Q3*	61	4%	\$17.5 million	2%

¹⁷ Percentages in this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2-15 shows the availability of WBEs to perform work the city contracts for, at 11.2% of the City's contract award value. It demonstrates that the contract award value to WBEs has not achieved this goal and suggests that disparities in contracting with WBEs remain.

Figure 2-15.

% of Total Contract Award Value to WBEs compared to % WBE availability¹⁸



¹⁸ Percentages for this figure are rounded to the nearest whole number

CONCLUSION

The 2020 Disparity Study served as a basis for the programs and policies outlined in this report and provided the foundation for the 2021 *Executive Order Establishing Equitable Procurement Goals in Support of Minority and Woman-owned Businesses*. The executive order and subsequent policies and programs greatly contributed to the progress made by the City to close some of the disparities that diverse businesses face in contracting with the City of Boston.

This report makes clear that the policies and tools implemented as well as the increased public transparency and accountability have helped the City make significant progress in equitable contracting. While significant progress has been made to close disparity gaps and create more opportunities for small, local and diverse businesses, the City still has work to do in rectifying disparities highlighted by the study. The City has not yet reached the 16.9% availability of M/WBE firms for City contracts as determined by the Disparity Study and should continue to implement new policies while improving existing policies in order to reach that goal. Given that the goals presented by the Study have not been met, the City should consider renewing or extending the 2021 Executive Order in tandem with an updated disparity study. Continuation of these goals will help to maintain the important policies and programs the order granted. Without this, the City is at risk of faltering on progress and possibly widening still existing disparities.

The Department of Supplier Diversity and Procurement Department are committed to continuing the work of increasing access and opportunity for small, local and diverse businesses and intend to further pursue the goal of closing disparities in City contracting and spending.

APPENDIX

A. DISPARITY STUDY PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

This table outlines each programmatic recommendation in the 2020 Disparity Study, its implementation status, and the City's policy implementation approach.

Definitions:

- **Implemented:** The City substantially executed the program consideration, or the City completed the program objectives through an alternative strategy.
- **Partially Implemented:** The City has implemented some aspects of the program consideration, but either additional progress is needed, or achieved the objectives through an alternative strategy.
- **Not Yet Implemented:** The program consideration has not yet been implemented.

DISPARITY STUDY PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	DESCRIPTION OF CONSIDERATION	STATUS	POLICY IMPLEMENTED
PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 1: OVERALL ASPIRATIONAL GOAL			
<i>Establish an Overall Aspirational Goal</i>	Recommendation to establish a base figure goal for the participation of Minority- and Woman-owned businesses among all contracts and procurements.	<i>Implemented</i>	The City established a 25% overall aspirational goal in the 2021 Executive Order.
PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 2: CONTRACT-SPECIFIC GOALS			
<i>Set Participation Goals on Individual Contracts</i>	Establish contract participation goals for specific procurements. Goals would be set based on availability and project scope and should be met via M/WBE subcontractor commitments.	<i>Implemented</i>	Contract-specific goals for some 149/149A and 30/39M construction procurements

PROGRAM CONSIDERATION 3: RACE- AND GENDER-NEUTRAL MEASURES

A. PROCUREMENT POLICIES

<i>Purchases worth less than \$10,000</i>	Consider establishing more detailed policies to encourage diverse business participation other than “sound business practices” for procurements under \$10k.	<i>Not Yet Implemented</i>	
<i>Minimum Solicitation of Quotes</i>	Recommendation to increase minimum number of quotes for purchases between \$10k-\$50k from the current three quote minimum.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	While the City did not increase the minimum quote threshold, the City’s Equitable Procurement form adds a step in the procurement process where departments must attempt to identify at least one certified business to invite to bid on contracts over \$10k.
<i>Advertising and Outreach</i>	Expand advertising and outreach for contracts beyond the minimum requirements established by Ch. 30B - the City should establish additional requirements for specific types of procurement.	<i>Implemented</i>	The City has increased advertising and outreach for all City contracts (not limited to 30B). These increased measures include, but are not limited to: • Buying Plan • Opportunity Fairs • Equitable Procurement Form • City Record
<i>RFP Language</i>	Consider adding stronger language to RFP and contracting documents effectively articulating the City’s commitment to promoting equity in contracting.	<i>Implemented</i>	The City approved RFP criteria that can be used to evaluate efforts to subcontract with small and diverse businesses on work performed on City contracts, and added the criteria to its standard solicitation templates.
<i>Small Business Set Asides</i>	Consider setting aside small prime contracts for small business bidding to encourage M/WBE participation as primes.	<i>Implemented</i>	In 2021, Mayor Wu filed a City Council order allowing the City to create a Sheltered Market Pilot Program, designating 7 contracts as procurements for M/WBE businesses only. Following Pilot completion, the City

			Council authorized a full Sheltered Market Program in Boston. The Sheltered Market Program was sunsetted in June of 2025. ¹⁹
<i>Unbundling Large Contracts</i>	Unbundle large contracts, and subcontracts, to make them more accessible to small businesses.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	Unbundling is recommended by Procurement and DSD as a best practice, and applied to specific projects including public works and technology contracts.
<i>Prompt Payment</i>	Establish prompt payment processes and requirements to ensure payments to prime and subcontractors occur in a timely manner.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	The City has required departments to follow Net 30 terms to pay prime contractors. This year, the City issued invoice guidance for vendors to help businesses new to working with the City understand invoice requirements. Additional work is needed to set clear expectations for subcontractor payments.
B. PROGRAM POLICIES			
<i>SLBE Office (now the Department of Supplier Diversity)</i>	Expand staff capacity to better assist businesses with certification and support City staff in increasing their participation with small and diverse businesses.	<i>Implemented</i>	In FY21, the City created the Supplier Diversity Program. This program added new staff capacity to the SLBE Office, focused on improving equitable procurement practices at the City. In FY23, the office formally became the Department of Supplier Diversity.
<i>Program Manual</i>	Develop a comprehensive program manual to help City staff understand supplier diversity program objectives, requirements, and resources.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	In FY26, the City published comprehensive Chapter 30B Process Guides that include supplier diversity requirements and best practices.

¹⁹ The SMP was a race- and gender-conscious set aside program for M/WBE business only, deviating from the Disparity Study's race- and gender-neutral recommendation of set asides for small businesses.

<i>Capacity Building</i>	Launch various technical assistance, business development, mentorship, and joint venture programs to help businesses build the capacity to compete for large City contracts.	<i>Implemented</i>	Boston Contracting Opportunity Fund, SCALE program, Technical Assistance
<i>Networking and Outreach</i>	Continue and broaden networking and outreach efforts to include additional partnerships. Tailor events to specific industries and business groups to foster deeper connections amongst participants.	<i>Implemented</i>	Supplier Diversity Week, Opportunity Fairs, Certified Business Directory
<i>Data Collection</i>	Collect comprehensive subcontractor data, regardless of business certification status, on <i>all</i> subcontracts.	<i>Not Yet Implemented</i>	
<i>Growth Monitoring</i>	Annually collect business information from certified businesses to establish metrics on whether the program is helping businesses grow.	<i>Not Yet Implemented</i>	
<i>Subcontracting Minimums</i>	Require prime contractors to subcontract a minimum amount of project work to create opportunities for small and diverse businesses.	<i>Not Yet Implemented</i>	
<i>Utilization of Different Businesses</i>	To mitigate business concentration in contracting, encourage departments to solicit vendors with which they have never worked before, and encourage prime contracts to do the same with subcontractors.	<i>Partially Implemented</i>	The DSD employs Program Monitors who regularly meet with departments and upcoming contracting opportunities. These staff are dedicated to encouraging departments to evaluate new businesses and consider ways to decrease barriers to M/WBEs.
<i>Bidder Certification</i>	Consider how the City could ease the burden of certification requirements, particularly on construction contracts.	<i>Not Yet Implemented</i>	

<i>Bonding Assistance</i>	Offer bid deposit and bonding assistance to small businesses pursuing City work. Partner with local organizations to make bonding assistance more accessible.	Not Yet Implemented	
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B. PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

Procurement contracts²⁰ are an important tool for building the capacity, reputation, and experience of local, small businesses. Awarding contracts to Boston's small businesses can support their financial growth and ability to grow large enough to hire more residents, pay family-sustaining wages, provide meaningful benefits, and stabilize our neighborhoods. In addition, the participation of more new businesses in the City's bidding processes signals a healthy procurement system—increasing competition and reducing costs.

To award these procurement opportunities to businesses and other suppliers, the City solicits and issues contracts in accordance with Massachusetts Public Procurement Laws.²¹ Depending on the applicable laws governing the procurement, City departments use distinct solicitations (quotes, bids, or proposals) and award methods to establish a procurement contract. Figure 2-1 includes further information for the procurement contract types included in this report.

Figure 2-1.
Procurement Contract Category Definitions

Procurement Contract Category	Definition
Competitive Procurement Contract	A City contract is awarded after a competitive evaluation of quotes, bids, or proposals . The City can either publicly invite suppliers or selectively invite several suppliers to submit a response.
Limited Competition Procurement Contract	A City contract for an item or service that is not subject to all of the requirements outlined in Mass Public Procurement laws. This includes exempt, sole source, and emergency procurements.

Contracts that follow competitive processes are designed to help the City obtain the highest value based on price and/or quality. Figure 2-2 notes that the vast majority of procurement contracts from FY20 to FY26 Q3 follow a competitive process, with 86% of the City's contracts falling in this category.

²⁰ For the purposes of reporting on the City's award and spending, the definition of "procurement contracts" is any agreement(s) between the City of Boston and a supplier to acquire supplies or services of over \$10,000, which follow a competitive or limited competition procurement process. Procurement contracts do not include grants with non-profits, government-to-government agreements, loans, health insurance, and revenue contracts.

²¹ Public Procurement in Massachusetts is subject to various statutes, including MGL Ch. 30B, Ch. 149, Ch. 30§39M, and Ch. 7C.

State procurement laws outline and establish clear use cases and exemptions for when municipalities can utilize procurement methods that are not subject to all of the same requirements as competitive procurements. In these circumstances, the City uses sole source, emergency, or exempt procurements to enter into contracts where vendor availability and competition is limited. From FY20 to FY26 Q3, 14% of the City's contracts fell within the limited competition category.

Figure 2-2.

Procurement Contract Award Counts From FY20 - FY26 Q3 by Category Type

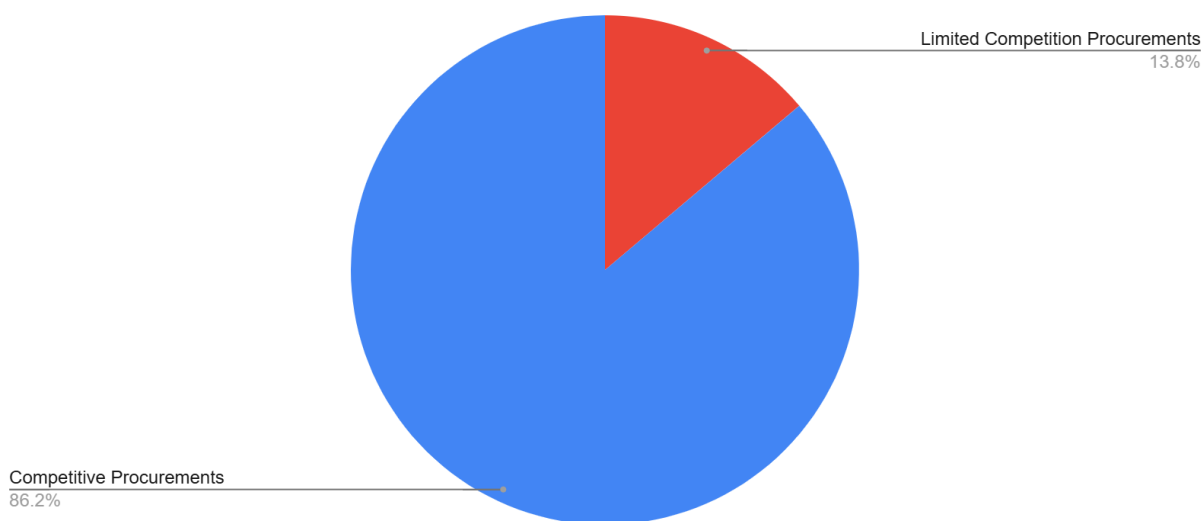
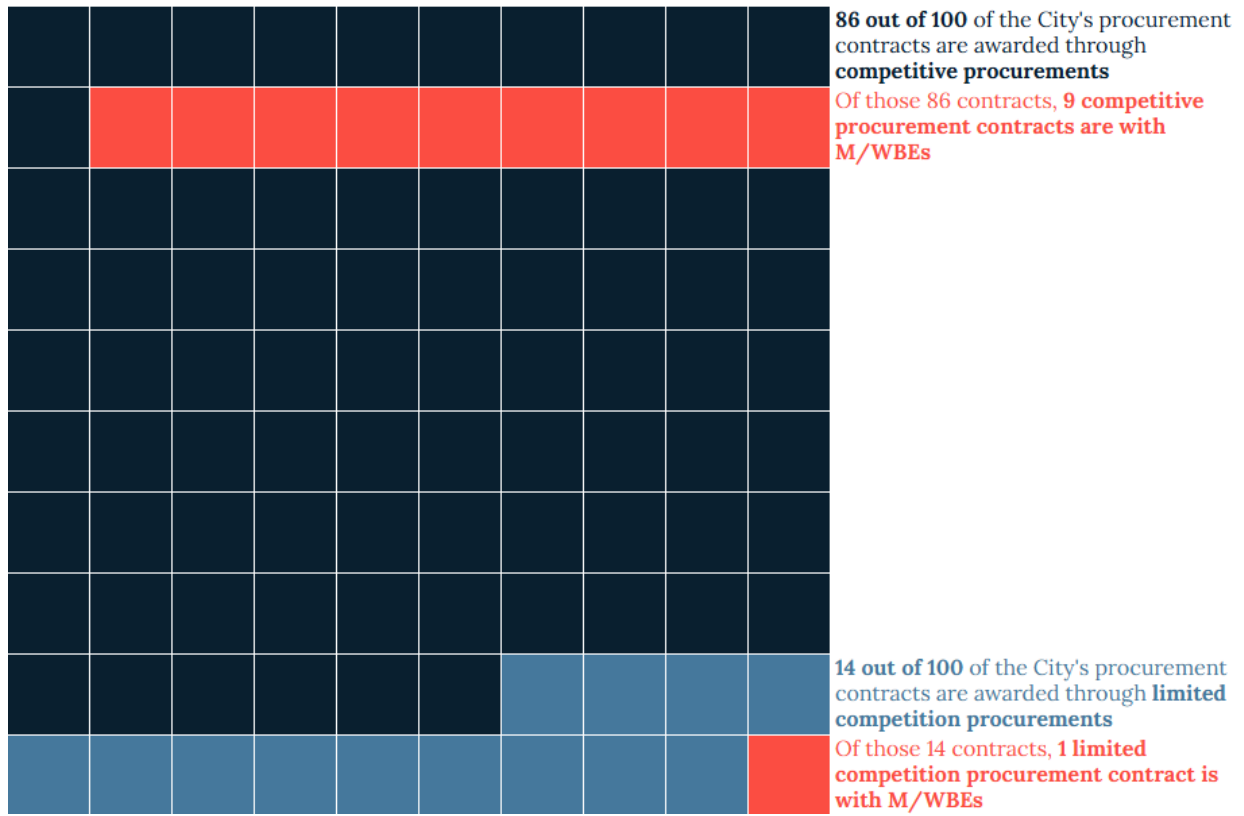


Figure 2-3 demonstrates that procurements that follow a competitive evaluation of quotes, bids, or proposals comprise the vast majority of the City's work with certified businesses, and where certified businesses have the most opportunity and latitude to work with the City.

Figure 2-3.

Procurement Contract Relative Count From FY20 - FY26 Q3

For every 100 procurement contracts...



1 square = 1 contract out of 100

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www.amplifylatinx.com

Asian Business Empowerment Council

Black Economic Council of Massachusetts

www.becma.org

Boston Impact Initiative

www.bostonimpact.org

**Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership
Initiative**

www.cityleadership.harvard.edu

Center for Women & Enterprise

www.cweonline.org

CommonWealth Kitchen

www.commonwealthkitchen.org

Foundation for Business Equity

www.fbequity.org

**Greater New England Minority Supplier
Development Council**

www.gnemsdc.org

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City

www.icic.org

Lawyers for Civil Rights

www.llawyersforcivilrights.org

**Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of
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www.malgbtcc.org

Massachusetts State Legislature

www.malegislature.gov

Office of the Inspector General

www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-the-inspector-general

Open Contracting Partnership

<https://www.open-contracting.org>

