

Federal Aviation Administration DBE Program Disparity Study

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program?

The intent of the DBE Program is to create a level playing field for firms owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals on projects that receive US Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funds. Organizations that receive these funds are required to set an overall DBE goal, or a percentage of the FAA funds they anticipate will be contracted to DBE firms.

What is a Disparity Study?

A disparity study involves compilation of evidence to determine if the agency has a sufficient basis for implementing race- and gender-conscious contracting remedies and narrowly tailoring any race- and gender-conscious remedies. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of minority- and women-owned business enterprises and their utilization on FAA-funded contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the area economy as a whole.

This DBE Program Disparity Study will evaluate contracting data for 64 airports in Washington State and determine the availability versus utilization of minority and women owned firms on these airport projects. The study will provide these airports with sufficient evidence to implement their DBE Program in line with current legal and regulatory standards. The study will further examine factors necessary for entrepreneurial success, such as access to business capital, bonding, networks, suppliers, etc. The study also will gather anecdotal evidence of any continuing effects of past or present race and sex

discrimination, and the impact of the current DBE program. Finally, the study will examine airports' current DBE programs and activities and make recommendations for future initiatives and enhancements.

Why is WSDOT conducting this Disparity Study for the Federal Aviation Administration?

WSDOT has experience conducting Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Disparity Studies. WSDOT completed studies in 2005, 2012 and 2017. Given this experience, the Federal Aviation Administration requested that WSDOT manage this project on behalf of the FAA.

Why is a Disparity Study needed?

This study is to make sure all airports in Washington State have all the tools needed to properly implement their DBE Programs. Without a Disparity Study some airports will not be able to determine if they should be using race-conscious or race-neutral approaches to ensure equal access to Aviation related contracts. This study will also help the airports set their overall DBE goals.

How is this different from the 2017 WSDOT Disparity Study?

The scope of the 2017 WSDOT Study encompassed highway and transit related construction and consulting contracts let by WSDOT and subrecipients of FHWA and FTA funds. The scope of the FAA Study will be to evaluate Aviation related construction and consulting contracts let by the 64 airports during Federal Fiscal Years 2012 through 2016.

Who is conducting the Study?

The disparity study will be conducted by a consultant, Colette Holt & Associates (CHA), which has conducted numerous disparity studies nationwide.

When will this Study start?

The consultant will hold a public Disparity Study Informational session in early 2018.

How can I participate or learn more?

The participation of stakeholders and business owners is crucial to the Disparity Study's success in two 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 airports. The Study team will also conduct a public informational meeting, listening sessions with stakeholder groups, and group interviews with business owners to collect information regarding discriminatory barriers and the airports' DBE programs.

Persons who are unable to attend the meeting or the interviews but who would like to provide input to the Study are encouraged to submit written statements at the study email: wsdot-faa-study@mwbelaw.com.

When can we expect to see the results of the disparity study?

Due to the amount of time needed to conduct interviews, evaluate anecdotal data and to analyze large amounts of data, the Disparity Study is anticipated to take approximately 18 months to complete.

Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact Colette Holt & Associates at wsdot-faa-study@mwbelaw.com or call (855) 692-3529. You may also contact Michael Carpenter, WSDOT Disparity Study Assistant Project Manager, at carpenm@wsdot.wa.gov or call 360-522-0848.

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

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