

**Testimony Supporting Cook County Commission on Small Business and
Supplier Diversity**

To

Board of Commissioners of Cook County

Contract Compliance Committee

by

Women's Business Development Center

Emilia DiMenco, President and Hedy Ratner, President Emeritus

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

Thank you Chairman Moore; Vice Chairman Silvestri and Contract Compliance Committee members Arroyo, Butler, Deer, Garcia, Moody, Sims and Tobolski for the opportunity to present our testimony before you today.

As representatives of small business, and in particular women and minority-owned businesses, we would like to voice our support of the ordinance to be taken by the Contract Compliance Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County to establish a Cook County Small Business and Supplier Diversity Commission.

For the past 15 or more years, from 2003 or before until today, I have been working toward this day. I have tried to make this proposal a reality that would create and implement a vehicle to advise, monitor and recommend initiatives, policies and programs and services to strengthen Cook County community and economic development by expanding and enhancing access to capital, technical assistance and specifically contract opportunities for women and minority businesses in and to Cook County and its agencies and entities.

During that period of my tenacious efforts to establish such a commission/council, members of and Presidents of the Cook County board left, some have stayed, and others came on for the first time.

Most of you know my lifelong passion for the economic empowerment of women and minorities and people with disabilities through thriving business ownership.

My tenacity and persistence are infamous in this august body.

What this legislation can mean and will mean is:

- Expanding procurement and financial growth and capacity building programs and opportunities for minority, women and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities in Cook County.
- Commitment to exceed procurement goals established by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.
- Establish, implement and promote best practices and initiatives that facilitate the growth of small businesses in Cook County
- Review compliance of Cook County entities
- Review and approve or reverse certification appeals
- Monitor and report on participation of minority, women and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities on Cook County contracts and subcontracts and advise President Preckwinkle and the Cook County Board of Commissioners on participation expansion through initiatives and best practices.
- Review and address ways to overcome access to capital challenges faced by minority, women, disadvantaged and other small business enterprises

Commissioners, I know that there are many critical issues on your agenda.

I am grateful to the Cook County Board of Commissioners. I am grateful to the members of the Contract Compliance Committee. I am grateful to the President and each individual board member who have also hung in there with me.

I'm sure you have noticed that I don't have my usual energy and enthusiasm.

My husband, Mort Kaplan, the love of my life for over 50 years, has just had a second stroke and other critical health issues. My priorities and energy have gone into his recovery.

Thank you. Thank you for your commitment to this significant initiative.

The Women's Business Development Center and its collaborative partners in the minority and women's business community, thank you.

Hedy M. Ratner, Founder and President Emerita and Emilia DiMenco, President and CEO, Women's Business Development Center

September 11, 2018



WOMEN'S
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

Your growth is our business.

Proposed Cook County

Small Business Diversity Advisory Council

February 6, 2017

Cook County Small Business Diversity Advisory Council

Goals

- Expand procurement and financial growth and capacity building programs and opportunities for minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities in Cook County
- Meet and exceed procurement goals established by President Preckwinkle, the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and the Cook County Procurement office
- Establish, implement, and promote best practices and initiatives that facilitate meeting and exceeding contracting and subcontracting goals
- Review compliance of Cook County agencies
- Review and approve or reverse certification appeals
- Monitor and report on participation of minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities on Cook County contracts and advise President Preckwinkle on participation expansion through initiatives and best practices
- Review and address ways to overcome access to capital challenges faced by minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities

Cook County Small Business Diversity Advisory Council

Deliverables

- Foster utilization, growth, and development of minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities and develop and implement strategies to enhance business opportunities
- Increase participation on contracts for all commodities and services of minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities
- Improve timeliness and accuracy of vendor payments to subcontractors and develop prompt payment policies, including direct payments to subcontractors
- Create target market opportunities in selected industries, e.g., technology
- Enhance contractor reporting
- Support monitoring and compliance within County agencies
- Establish private sector utilization incentives
- Develop equitable joint venture opportunities to build more prime contractors
- Establish universal and/or reciprocity in certification
- Develop and implement mentor/protégée programs
- Foster initiatives to enhance opportunities for professional service firms and include diversity and inclusion goals in all contracts
- Develop performance measures for Council deliverables

Cook County Small Business Diversity Advisory Council

Membership Criteria

- Actively involved in procurement and lending activities and/or economic, community and business development and assistance for owners of small minority and women owned businesses
- Council members commit to attending, in person, at least half of all scheduled meetings and participate on at least one committee
- Minority and women business owners must be formally certified as MBEs or WBEs

Composition

- Select business and civic leaders; representatives of diversity advocacy, financing, and technical assistance organizations; representatives of minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises and enterprises owned by people with disabilities; majority contractors, and private sector representatives who have established exemplary diversity contracting practices
- Representatives of Cook County agencies, including Cook County Health and Hospitals System, Central Campus Health Center, Forest Preserve District, and possibly offices of the County Treasurer, State's Attorney, Assessor, and Clerk

Committees

- Compliance/Monitoring
- Certification
- Outreach
- Joint Venture/Mentoring
- Capital Access/Banking

Cook County Small Business Diversity Advisory Council

Potential Appointees

Cook County

Steven Shaw, Deputy Chief of Staff
Shannon Andrews, Purchasing Agent
Susan Campbell, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
Leticia Close, Cook County Health Services
Suzet McKinney, Illinois Medical District Commission
Kesner Bienvenu, Illinois Medical District
Arnold Randall, Forest Preserve District
Reps from County Treasurer, State's Attorney, Assessor, and Clerk Offices

Diversity Advocacy Organizations

Women's Business Development Center
Federation of Women Contractors
Association of Asian Construction Enterprises
HACIA
Minority Business Development Agency
Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Business Leaders of Color

Business/Civic Leaders

John Rogers, Ariel Investments
Ralph Moore, RGM & Associates
Joe Williams, Target Group
Sandi Llano, Sandi Llano & Associates
David Doig, CNI

Other

Prime Contractors
MBEs
WBEs
DBEs