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**ADRIAN
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HARRIS COUNTY MOVES TO EXPAND SUPPORT AND INCLUSION OF BUSINESSES THAT HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY OVERLOOKED

After Commissioners Court action, new guidelines for small, minority, women-owned, and underutilized/disadvantaged businesses to be enacted

Harris County, TX — TODAY, Commissioners Court moved to enact new guidelines for minority and women-owned businesses (MWBE's) to receive project contracts from Harris County, a move championed by Commissioner Adrian Garcia since being elected as Commissioner in 2019.

Harris County recently established an Office of Equity and Economic Opportunity which has been tasked to follow Court-established guidelines in creating a county-wide policy for businesses that have historically been overlooked by Harris County, including those owned by women and racial and ethnic minorities. The policy, once finalized and approved by Court, will aggressively increase the amount of participation MWBE's for county projects, [righting an egregious wrong discovered by a previous disparity study performed for the county](#).

According to a July 2020 *Houston Chronicle* article:

Harris County doles out millions of taxpayer dollars every year to pay for roads, parks, buildings and other public projects.

Disproportionately few of those dollars go toward minority- and women-owned businesses, according to a study sponsored by the Harris County Commissioners Court, with Black-owned businesses receiving by far the smallest share relative to their numbers.

For every \$100 paid to private businesses by the county, just 50 cents went to businesses owned by Black men and women.

“Creating opportunities for our local small businesses is the first step to rebuilding our economy, it leads to more hiring, a stronger tax base and quicker economic recovery. Mandating certain designated organizations get opportunities to receive county business not only helps lift up folks that traditionally haven’t had a fair shot at establishing their businesses, it also ensures we spend taxpayer dollars in a way that represents the diversity of Harris County,” Commissioner Garcia said. *“I am proud of the direction we in Harris County are headed. It’s more than overdue.”*

Commissioner Garcia’s dedication to increasing participation of MWBE and HUB businesses goes back to his days on Houston City Council (serving as the Mayor White’s Chair of the Council Committee of Minority/Women Business Enterprises) and in the Harris County Sheriff’s Department (where he created a Small Business Advisory Committee - the first time the Sheriff’s Department ever had such a group to engage area small businesses in contract opportunities).

Under Commissioner Garcia’s leadership in less than 2 years in office, Precinct 2 has increased participation of businesses with these distinctions to close to 38% of Precinct 2 project contracts.

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