

# Illinois Tollway *BEP* Goods and 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 Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for goods and services contracts. The Tollway seeks to ensure that diverse, minority-owned business enterprise and woman-owned business enterprise firms have equal access to Tollway's goods and services contracting opportunities and that the Tollway's current BEP 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 BEP. This includes statistical evidence of disparities, if any, between the availability of M/WBEs and their utilization on Tollway goods and services contracts and related subcontracts and throughout the Chicago area and Illinois 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 BEP. Finally, the study will review Illinois Tollway's current BEP 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 BEP.

### 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: [tollwaybep-study@mwbelaw.com](mailto:tollwaybep-study@mwbelaw.com).

### When will the study be completed?

The study is anticipated to be completed fall 2022.

### Where can I find additional information?

For additional information, visit the study website at [tollwaybep.disparity-study.com](http://tollwaybep.disparity-study.com).

### Who do I contact with questions?

You may contact the study team via [tollwaybep-study@mwbelaw.com](mailto:tollwaybep-study@mwbelaw.com) or 855-692-3529.

Or you may contact:

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