



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2026-119
IN CITY COUNCIL
May 4, 2026

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see attached a memo regarding a supplier diversity update.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





Supplier Diversity Update

April 2026

Departments:

- Community Development (CDD)
- Information Technology (IT)
- Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI)
- Law
- Purchasing

Background

The City of Cambridge has been actively implementing recommendations from its 2023 Disparity Study, expanding procurement access for historically underutilized businesses through a new eProcurement system, enhanced outreach, certification support, policy changes, and technical assistance. Early results show increased engagement with diverse vendors, ongoing legislative efforts to simplify contracting for disadvantaged businesses, and growing participation in supplier diversity programs and events. This report provides an update on the City's efforts. Departments plan to report annually to Council.

Overview of Procurement Efforts and Contract Data

eProcurement Portal

The City of Cambridge rolled out a new digital procurement platform in November 2024. The eProcurement system has streamlined purchasing processes, making the response process more accessible and intuitive, as well as broadening vendor reach overall.

Vendor Management

List of vendors subscribed to sourcing opportunities.
Vendors can subscribe by visiting <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/cambridgema> and clicking the "Subscribe" button.

[@ Invite Vendors](#)

[All Vendors](#) [Vendor Lists](#) [Vendor Certifications](#) [Manage Invites](#)

Vendor Certifications by Type

This data is based on vendors subscribed to sourcing opportunities from your organization. This chart is only showing vendors who have identified one or more certifications (verified and/or self reported).

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Certification Type	Number of Vendors	% of Total Vendors
Certified Small Business	234	9%
Minority Business Enterprise	136	5%
Woman Business Enterprise	132	5%
Minority Women Business Enterprise	37	1%
US DOT Certified DBE	33	1%
Veteran Owned	28	1%
Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise	19	1%
Micro Business	11	0%
LGBTQ+ Owned	11	0%
Airport Concessions Disadvantage Business Enterprise	9	0%

Graph shows number of vendors in the e-procurement system by certification type.

Forecasting and Unbundling Contracts

To make more contracts available to more vendors, the Purchasing Department continues to review contracts to determine whether unbundling is feasible. Some of this initial work has been on converting larger contracts to become multi-award contracts. This strategy has had mixed success.

Purchasing is working with ITD and Communications to post a forecasting of some anticipated upcoming bids for FY27 on the City's website. Forecasting of anticipated bids will allow vendors to be aware of and prepare for potential upcoming contract opportunities.

Advertising Updates

To cast a broader net and increase the messaging of City bid opportunities, Purchasing has added the Bay State Banner to its advertising mechanism for Goods and Services Invitations for Bid and Requests for Proposals.

The City has extended the period for which it advertises bids and proposals for goods and services to three weeks as the standard length of time rather than the two weeks required by state statute. This new period is subject to adjustment to meet the operational needs of the City when necessary.

The City has also become a member of the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA) as a way to increase connections to potential vendors.

Supplier Diversity Programs

The section describes the different programs and initiatives City Departments use to help support and engage small, local, and diverse businesses to help increase the number of qualified vendors.

Certification

In the fall of 2024, CDD entered into an agreement with the City of Boston's Department of Supplier Diversity to allow Cambridge-based businesses to become certified through Boston. With this agreement, Boston and CDD work together to support and assist diverse Cambridge-based businesses and increase the number of certified businesses in the Greater Boston area. CDD staff attend Boston's Certification Office Hours and conduct targeted outreach to non-certified women-, veteran-, minority-, and LGBTQ+ - owned Cambridge businesses. The partnership also provides opportunities for cross promotion of events and contract opportunities.

Since FY25, 13 (Thirteen) Cambridge businesses have received one-on-one certification assistance through EOD.

Policy Development and Implementation

City staff meet regularly with a variety of external and internal organizations to better understand policies and initiatives that can be implemented to improve our supplier diversity efforts.

Internal Engagement

2024

In fall 2024, Purchasing and Community Development Departments presented to Citywide leadership on the Disparity Study. The presentation included information on the Study's findings, how to find diverse vendors, upcoming changes to the procurement process, and engaging with the Purchasing Department before setting up bids and written proposals.

2025-2026

In October 2025, CDD, Purchasing, and the Office of Equity & Inclusion hosted an internal buyer conversation. 36 buyers from 17 departments discussed ways to create more access to City bids, contracts, and other resources and opportunities. A second buyer conversation is scheduled for spring 2026 and will continue exploring ways to increase contracting with diverse businesses. Part of future internal conversation is regarding payment to vendors, which is key for diverse and small business vendors. This conversation aims to create a shared understanding of city payment processing and ways to keep the system efficient in order to pay vendors timely.

Inclusive Quote Contract Home Rule Petition

In March 2025, the City Council supported the Inclusive Quote Contract Law home rule petition (Bill H.4157). The goal of this petition is to raise the sound business practices and written quote contract thresholds when those contracts are with certified disadvantaged businesses. If passed, first by City Council, then by the state legislature, the new law would allow a City department to use sound businesses practices for items purchased up to \$20,000 (currently the threshold is \$10,000) and request three (3) written quotes from certified disadvantaged businesses for contracts valued up to \$250,000 (current threshold is \$50,000).

In July 2025, the City provided written testimony in support of H.4157 to Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government, Rep. Jack P. Lewis, which was received favorably. In August 2025, H.4157 moved from second to third reading. At the end of March 2026 the

City's Law Department confirmed with the office of Rep. Marjorie Decker (H.4157 sponsor) that it is in contact with staff of the House Committee on Bills in the Third Reading and will be in touch with updates.

Comparing this process to the current Request for Proposals or Invitation for Bids process, the requests for written quote(s) contract is significantly simpler and cost-effective for both small, local businesses and City departments.

Minority Business Enterprise Program (MBE)

Since 1983, the City of Cambridge's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program has actively promoted economic inclusion for all. This initiative requires general contractors bidding on city construction projects to allocate at least 10% of their contract value to certified minority-owned businesses, fostering equitable participation in public contracting.

The Office of Equity & Inclusion closely monitors and reviews construction contract bid submissions to support full access for all qualified MBEs certified by the Commonwealth's Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) to compete for contract opportunities. By maintaining a rigorous yet accessible approval process, the Office reviews contractor submissions to support the inclusion of qualified MBEs, strengthening their role in Cambridge's economy. Through these efforts, the MBE Program advances diversity, supports local businesses, and reinforces our city's commitment to equitable growth. In FY25, nearly \$3,250,566 (13%) has been allocated to qualified minority business owners.

Technical Assistance and Other External Support

In addition to policies, City Departments provides local, small, and diverse businesses with a variety of other supports.

Supplier Diversity Events and Programming

CDD hosts a wide variety of programs and events to help support the capacity and financial literacy of Cambridge entrepreneurs and small business owners. Since 2023, the City of Cambridge has hosted an annual Supplier Diversity Fair. The Fair connects buyers from a variety of local and regional institutions and organizations with vendors in the community. The goal is to promote diverse businesses and build relationships between procurement agencies and business owners. Since 2023, 267 regional businesses have attended the Supplier Diversity Fair.

In addition to the Fair, the City offers a variety of access to capital and capacity training events for business owners. Recent events include an SBA Financial Matchmaker Event, pitching your business, and the recently completed "Doing Business in the City" Workshop Series. A little over 120 business owners attended training in FY25. In spring 2026, we will be offering training around how to use AI for finding contract opportunities, access to capital for contracting, and a new annual procurement forum to help small businesses connect directly to procurement opportunities.

Lastly, CDD's Economic Opportunity and Development Division, along with Purchasing, provide direct technical assistance to help business owners navigate the new eProcurement Portal, find relevant City contracting opportunities, and access the City's key programs and small business

grants. In FY25, 83% of Cambridge business owners who received a small business grant from CDD self-identified as an MBE, WMBE, WBE, or LGBTQ+ owned business.