



Purchasing Quarterly

Winter 2013, Volume 13, Issue 1 A Publication of the Travis County Purchasing Office, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., CPPO, Purchasing Agent

County Considers Disparity Study

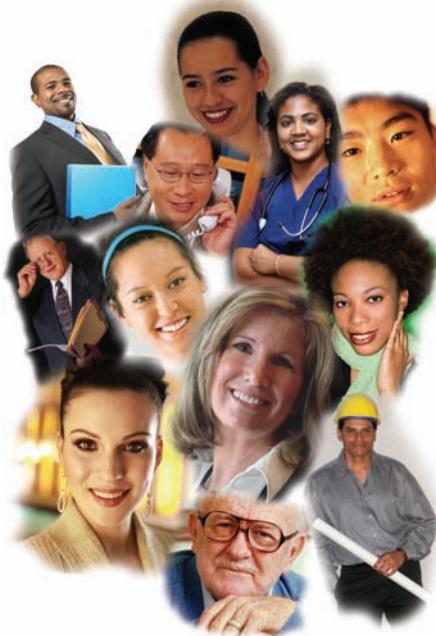
By Jerome T. Guerrero

"In May 1994, the Travis County Commissioners Court unanimously passed a resolution creating the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program within Travis County. The primary objective of the program is to ensure that minority and woman-owned businesses receive a fair and equal opportunity to participate in the county's procurement process." (from the Travis County Purchasing Office web site, HUB Program)

Since 1994, Travis County has had a Good Faith Effort (GFE) Based Program to include minority and women-owned businesses (M/WBE) and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) in the County's procurement process. Since the County's program is based on GFE, many of the goals and percentages the County achieves in its projects have fallen short of the stated goals. One of the primary reasons is that the County cannot enforce the goals without a defensible disparity study.

There is a balance between a local government entity's responsibility to purchase goods and services at the most competitive price, or best value, and using M/WBE businesses. Many non-minority and M/WBE have a misconception about the concept of the program. One of the biggest is that the program is a "set-aside." None of the local government programs, including the City of Austin's M/WBE program, are set-asides. The intention of the program is to create a level playing field and to reduce the obstacles that are inherent in any government bidding.

Travis County is one of five Texas counties that has dedicated staff to assist the M/WBE and HUB community. HUB Staff attends pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences encouraging prime vendors to utilize HUB subcontractors.



HUB language is included in all County solicitations encouraging the use of HUB subcontractors. However, because the program is GFE-based, the County is obligated by law to award to the "low, responsive, responsible bidder."

The County and other local entities were contacted by the City of Austin in early 2012 to inform them of the City's intention to partner or share some of the City's data cost in their next disparity study. In October, Cyd V. Grimes, HUB Staff and City Staff discussed in more detail the City's issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a disparity study. The City offered to share data from their study with the County. This could result in a substantial savings for the County. The contract language will include a provision for the County and other local government entities to "co-op" the contract that the City awards. This will save time for the County by allowing the County to negotiate with the winning consultant without having to issue another RFQ.

During the Budget Session in August 2012, the Court budgeted \$200,000 for the cost of the County's potential cost of a disparity study. The Commissioners Court held a Work Session on November 15, 2012 to discuss participating in the disparity study. At that time, the City had not issued the RFQ. Representatives from the City of Austin's MBE/WBE program spoke about their upcoming disparity study. The Court had many questions about the final cost and participation with other local entities such as

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Purchasing Agent

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Purchasing Plays Major Role

Staff Contribution

The Purchasing Office plays a major role in making sure all County departments have the needed goods and services to fulfill their missions. The list of the activities and accomplishments of the Purchasing Office to support other County departments is extensive.

The Purchasing Office works with multiple County departments to develop standards and specifications that will be applicable throughout the County. On a single procurement there can be up to three or more departments working together to ensure a procurement is written and implemented properly.

One of the bigger projects taking place is the Ned Granger

Administration Building Renovation and Improvements. The larger rehabilitation plan includes updates to the infrastructure systems, renovation of the second floor as well as exterior cleaning and painting. This is one of several construction projects at the County.

Construction is not the only area that Purchasing is involved. The physical inventory of County assets has been transformed this year. Bar code readers are used to collect, store and process departmental inventories. The improved process allows better access to verify and account for approximately 40,000 County assets. Annual inventory will be an easier process for all! Ω

Continuous HUB Partnerships

By Sylvia Lopez

As part of the County's continuous efforts to support the development of small, minority and women-owned business enterprises, Travis County Purchasing Office staff attended a "Purchasing Agents and Supplier Diversity Directors Roundtable" held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 8am-10am in San Antonio, Texas, sponsored by the Bexar County Purchasing Department.

The roundtable was held

to discuss diversity program best practices and gather input on developing new outreach efforts and programs.



Renee Watson (center), Program Manager for Bexar County's Small Minority & Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program discusses their program and disparity study experience with Travis County Purchasing Agent, Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., CPPO (right) and HUB Program Specialist Betty Chapa (left) (Present but not pictured, Sylvia Lopez & Jerome Guerrero)

Then, in late January, Travis County Purchasing Agent and HUB staff met again with Renee Watson of Bexar County to discuss in more detail HUB strategies. For a complete copy of Bexar County's Disparity Study, go to: <http://gov.bexar.org/smwbe/disparitystudy.html>.

html. Ω

700 Lavaca CMAR Project Wins Award

The renovation of the Travis County Commissioners Court at 700 Lavaca Street earned an Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Central Texas Chapter Excellence in Construction award for the Texas Division of Flintco, LLC.



from across Central Texas and were judged on complexity, attractiveness, unique challenges overcome, completion time, workmanship, innovation, safety and cost.

The Excellence in Construction awards program is the industry's leading competition, developed to honor innovative and high-quality construction projects. The award honors all construction team members, including the contractor, owner, architect and engineer. Ω

The Travis County Commissioners Court project was selected from entries submitted

Purchasing Appreciation Month

Every March, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) sponsors National Purchasing



Month. At this time, professional purchasers are honored for the work they do within their respective governing bodies. As a result, the Commissioners Court designated March as "Purchasing Month" in Travis County.

The local NIGP chapter, The Texas Association of Public Purchasers obtained similar proclamations from the State of Texas Governor as well as the City of Austin government. The proclamations will designate March 2013, as Purchasing Month in the State of Texas and the City of Austin, respectively.

Proclamations are important because Travis County officials, and the public can recognize the valuable, hard work of the Purchasing Office.

On February 25, 2013, the Commissioners Court recognized Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M, CPPO, and her staff with this yearly proclamation. The Purchasing Office is committed to performing at the highest level of professionalism to efficiently utilize precious tax dollars for the benefit of Travis County taxpayers. Additionally, staff members encourage and sponsor activities to promote education and certification in purchasing. Ω

Economic Opportunity Forums

05/22/13 - San Marcos, TX
Construction and AE Services HUB Forum at the Embassy Suites (1001 E. McCarty Lane, San Marcos, TX 78666), Texas State University HUB Outreach Program and Facilities Planning & Design offer a HUB-focused educational seminar to explain the HUB contracting process. To find more information and register for the free event please contact Yolanda Strey, HUB Specialist at ys12@txstate.edu or 512-245-2523

06/27/13 - Austin, TX
Procurement Connection Seminar & EXPO at the Austin Convention Center, 201 E 2nd St., Austin, TX 78701. This forum is FREE. Supplier diversity can be beneficial to both the seller and buyer. Come learn about the state government procurement processes to maximize this partnership potential. The 2013 PCSE will include workshops providing vendors guidance and training on the state government purchasing process. We have dedicated time in the agenda for vendors to network with state purchasers to explore tools and approaches that can help them secure state and other governmental business.

Contact: Keisha Gash at 512-463-5894 or keisha.gash@cpa.state.tx.us

Civil and Family Courthouse Project: Program Manager

Staff Contribution

On February 13, 2013, the Travis County Purchasing Office released the Request for Services (RFS) for Program Manager/Owner's Representative for Development of a New Travis County Civil & Family Courthouse. The RFS closed on March 27, 2013 and will be evaluated by an internal County team.

The selected consultant will advise the Commissioners Court and represent the County's interests in the development of a New Civil and Family Courthouse. The team will assist in preparation of solicitation documents for the selected financing and oversight of the procurement.



PICA 19498 Austin History Center, Austin Public Library
View of City of Austin, circa 1890. The Travis County Jail, Jailor's Residence, and Travis County Courthouse are located in foreground

They will help in the selection of a designer and construction project manager that supports the long-term objectives of the Court.

The Court also decided that Travis County residents should vote on bonds to finance the new Civil and

Family Courthouse. Estimates at this time range from \$268 - \$404 million.

The proposed downtown courthouse would replace the aging Heman Marion Sweatt Historic Travis County Courthouse, which is growing smaller and smaller as the county court system gets bigger.

The Court also will be watching how it spends taxpayer funds on the project, having already invested more than \$24 million for the land purchase, consultants and studies. Ω

Austin Independent School District (AISD), Capital Metro and Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA). The bulk of the cost of the study would be saved by utilizing some of the data the City would share. The Court also received comments from local minority trade associations' leadership and other minority vendors encouraging the Court to pursue participation in the disparity study.

At the next Commissioners Court session on December 4, 2012, the Purchasing Office summarized the previous session and presented draft language for the County's requirements for its part of the disparity study.

On December 17, 2012, the

"Disparity Study" continued from page 1

City of Austin released its RFQ, Minority and Women-Owned and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Disparity Study, with an amended closing date of February 22, 2013. It is anticipated that an award will be made in April or May 2013.

Currently, County HUB staff are working on draft contract language for the winning consultant, gathering prime contractor and subcontractor payment data to provide to the consultant for disparity analysis. After completion of the draft language, members of the business community, non-minority and minority-owned will be invited to review the contract language for their input. Ω

Save the Date!

...for the

**Purchasing Liaison Workshop
and Mini Vendor Fair**

When: August 8, 2013

Where: 700 Lavaca Bldg,
1st Floor in the
"Hall of Government"

What: Learn what is going on
with Purchasing, BEFIT
and HUB Disparity Study.

Light refreshments and prizes!!

RSVP to Betty Chapa

betty.chapa@co.travis.tx.us

(512) 854-9914

Purchasing Liaisons

Special Information

Supplement to the Winter 2013 Issue



Purchasing Quarterly

Celebrating Black History Behind “Forty Acres and a Mule”

The policy of “40 acres and a mule” was Union General William T. Sherman’s Special Field Order No. 15, issued on Jan. 16, 1865.¹ The policy was to be in effect for one year. Before the order was issued, General Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton met with leaders of the black community in Savannah, Georgia. One of the leaders was a Baptist minister named Garrison Frazier. Rev. Frazier said, “The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor ...”²



The order was issued by General Sherman to alleviate the great number of refugees that were following his army on his “March to the Sea” campaign. Sherman designated approximately 400,000 acres with the provision that the freed slaves would be self-sustaining.³

After President Lincoln’s assassination, President Andrew Johnson revoked the order, thus returning the land to the southern land owners. Over the years, Sherman’s act to solve a temporary problem became a permanent symbol of a failed attempt at reparation. Ω

Women’s History Month

On March 3, 1913, 5,000 women marched up Pennsylvania Avenue demanding the right to vote - one day before the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. The event brought women from around the country to Washington in a show of strength and determination to obtain the ballot. The extravagant parade and the near riot that almost destroyed it, kept women’s suffrage in the newspapers for weeks.

Organized by Alice Paul for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the parade, calling for a constitutional amendment, featured marchers, nine bands, four mounted brigades, 20 floats, and an allegorical performance near the Treasury Building. Though the parade began late, it appeared to be off to a good start until the



route along Pennsylvania Avenue became choked with tens of thousands of spectators, mostly men in town for the inauguration. Marchers were jostled and ridiculed by many in the crowd. Some were tripped, others assaulted. Policemen appeared to be either indifferent to the struggling paraders, or sympathetic to the mob. Before the day was out, one hundred marchers had been hospitalized.⁴

The mistreatment of the marchers amplified the event into a major news story and led to congressional hearings, where the D.C. superintendent of police lost his job. What began in 1913 took another seven years to make it through Congress. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment secured the vote for women. Ω

¹ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/40acres/ps_so15.html

² <http://www.theroot.com/views/truth-behind-40-acres-and-mule>

³ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/40acres/ps_so15.html

⁴ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/aw01e/aw01e.html#ack>



REMINDER

What you must know about Purchasing in Travis County

The Purchasing Agent is the chief procurement officer for Travis County. By statute, the Purchasing Agent is responsible for directing and overseeing the county procurement process for all Elected and Appointed Officials and Commissioners Court departments. The Purchasing Office is the "single point of contact" for doing business with Travis County.

Travis County Commissioners Court supports the implementation of its Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program by requiring all vendors to make a "good faith effort" to use HUBs whenever possible.

All employees must follow ethical principles in the procurement process.

Travis County employees cannot:

- Place orders outside of the Purchasing Office
- Approve invoices for items that have not been delivered
- Modify orders unless the Purchasing Office has issued an amendment
- Receive demos or products/services for "free trial" use until approved by the Purchasing Office
- Misappropriate assets that have been acquired through the procurement process
- Divulge, share or profit from any proprietary information gained through the procurement process

Every employee must:

- Comply with all procurement policies and procedures (See County website)
- Disclose any conflicts of interest to the Purchasing Agent
- Ensure public spending is not to be used to enrich elected officials or County employees, or to confer favors
- Conduct themselves in such a manner that fosters public confidence in the integrity of the procurement process
- Ensure responsible bidders, including Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) are given a fair opportunity to compete for the County's business
- Avoid any violation of public purchasing laws that could result in severe disciplinary action including censure, termination, or jail time

The Purchasing Office is committed to promoting effective, professional, and consistent procurement in Travis County, as well as championing the public perception that tax dollars are wisely spent.

Cyd V. Grimes, C.P.M., CPPO

Travis County Purchasing Agent

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www.co.travis.tx.us/purchasing/default.asp

