



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

April 7, 2026

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This Informal Report provides an update on activities, initiatives, and partnerships as part of the City's Small Business Development Program (SBDP). Staff also provided an IR on March 3 detailing programming and resources for veteran-owned small businesses (IR 26-0037). A separate IR will be prepared to provide an update on the utilization of small businesses in City procurements.

Background

On August 5, 2025, City Council adopted an ordinance establishing a small business program for procurement of goods, services, and construction. A Small Business division was created in the Economic Development Department, which administers several small business initiatives, programs, and partnerships. Over the past six months, the Economic Development Department has worked with other City departments and external partners to create the framework of the Small Business Development Program (SBDP) to focus on expanding opportunities for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. The program focuses on addressing the unique challenges faced by small businesses and providing resources to support their success.

Partnerships with Chambers of Commerce

To enhance small business capacity building efforts, the City entered into 13-month contracts (September 2025 through September 2026) with the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. Through their respective contracts, each chamber is a partner with the City in developing small business programming, increasing access to businesses resources, creating platforms for networking, mentoring, and collaboration, and assisting small businesses in navigating City of Fort Worth's procurement system. While each chamber has a distinctive set of responsibilities and objectives outlined below, all chambers have worked together and with the City in building out the SBDP.

Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce (FWMBCC)

The City's contract with FWMBCC is for an amount not to exceed \$270,000. Through this contract, FWMBCC provides business development resources, construction support, outreach, education, and procurement connections with four identified goals: 1) educate and support bonding and insurance provider relationships; 2) educate and support access to capital for business needs; 3) develop a workforce development plan with local partners; and 4) encourage Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Texas Historically Underutilized Business (HUB), and other certifications for special program access and resources.

Over the past six months, FWMBCC has undertaken a number of initiatives to support the SBDP including development of a series of workshops with Frost Bank to educate and increase readiness for bonding and insurance services to all of its members. Additionally, FWMBCC will be hosting a bonding and insurance roundtable meeting over the summer and co-hosting (alongside the other



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chambers) an annual forum focused on City of Fort Worth contracting opportunities, including formal and informal solicitations. The forum will educate and help SBEs strategically position themselves for contracting opportunities, including providing information on resource allocation, bonding and insurance, prime and subcontracting roles, proposal and bid strategies, and cash flow planning. FWMBCC is also actively engaged with relevant advisory boards, including chairing the City's Small Business Advisory Board, and providing valuable feedback received from members and businesses.

This past quarter, FWMBCC hosted a small business mixer to generate interest in their Spring Prosperity Bank/FWMBCC Business Masterclass Cohort, which helps educate attendees about available financial services. Two cohorts of the program were successfully completed in March. FWMBCC also conducted "Lunch and Learn" workshops alongside Frost Bank to showcase the various financing tools and services available to participants, obtaining feedback from participants on potential business needs to help identify future workshop topics. FWMBCC also includes direct links to the City of Fort Worth's Economic Development Small Business webpages, including all events promoted by the Devoyd Jennings Business Assistance Center, and to the City's procurement website for quick access to Bonfire and the City's procurement opportunities, in their monthly newsletter. FWMBCC is also creating a bonding and insurance resource webpage (estimated to be completed by June 2026).

FWMBCC has teamed up with Tarrant County College and Workforce Solutions to create a workforce development committee to implement the Workforce Grants/Skills Program, which connects small businesses and employees to job skills training. FWMBCC continues to encourage small business certifications by partnering with the City to host a series of workshops with the North Central Texas Regional Certification Agency (NCTRCA), designed to educate and bring awareness of the benefits of obtaining a Small Business Enterprise certification as a vendor within the City of Fort Worth for the five-county marketplace (See NCTRCA section later in this IR for more information).

Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (FWHCC)

The City's contract with FWHCC is for an amount not to exceed \$270,000. Through this contract, FWHCC provides capacity-building services, including business development, construction assistance, outreach, supply-chain education, and procurement connections. The contract identified two goals: 1) deliver supply-chain network education and experience support; and 2) match local small businesses to City contract and procurement opportunities and connect small businesses to HUB and cooperative purchasing opportunities.

Through its efforts to date, FWHCC has exceeded its supply-chain education goal by assisting more than 60 businesses, doubling their established goal. FWHCC has also supported more than 30 businesses with logistics and inventory management, meeting the targets established in their agreement. FWHCC has successfully connected small businesses to City of Fort Worth bidding



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opportunities, with one contract awarded and 37 in the pipeline. To better improve their contract connections, FHWCC has also identified a workflow to review bidding opportunities and match the opportunities to members and program participants. FWHCC has also developed a campaign to launch its [Preferred Supplier Assessment Form](#) to help identify local supply-chain vendors, and has introduced a Procurement Readiness Index to clearly understand what resources contractors need to build capacity and be prepared to bid on City projects. Through their efforts, they have identified more than 29 individuals who would benefit from training for procurement opportunities under \$100,000 by applicable North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes and have initiated plans to schedule additional trainings in the coming months. To better serve the contractor community, FWHCC will hold their annual Build Fort Worth event on August 6, 2026, at Will Rogers Memorial Center.

Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce (FWC)

The City's contract with FWC is for an amount not to exceed \$185,000. Through this contract, FWC supports outreach, engagement, and business assistance to increase small business participation in City contracts and engages in work to strengthen the supplier ecosystem. The contract identified three goals: 1) cultivate relationships between prime, sub, and other vendors; 2) leverage and amplify outreach and communications for local small business contracting and procurement opportunities; and 3) retain established small businesses in the Fort Worth market.

Through its efforts to date, FWC is creating a list of members identified by their NAICS codes so they can begin targeted communications related to specific bid opportunities. To amplify the City's contracting opportunities, the FWC utilizes digital platforms and targeted email communications to distribute bid opportunities, including second quarter forecasts of City bidding opportunities that were provided by City staff. Additionally, FWC is creating a webpage where vendors can subscribe to procurement opportunities by NAICS codes and linking to related workshops where potential vendors can register to attend.

FWC has reported more than a dozen prime-to-sub introductions and created a taskforce that can assist vendors with these potential networking opportunities. Additionally, the FWC supports the promotion of FWMBCC and FWHCC workshops, with FWMBCC reporting increased attendance as a result of these efforts. Access is also provided to the FWC's event page for both FWHCC and FWMBCC, allowing them to post and promote their own events directly.

FWC plans to work in partnership with the other two chambers to identify five members from each of their respective chambers that can benefit from a future succession planning training cohort that will take place at Tarrant County College.



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SBDP Outreach and Engagement

Staff are working to increase the City's communication, outreach, and engagement efforts to promote small business programming, provide information about SBE certification and small business utilization goals, and gather feedback from key stakeholders. Over the past six months, the City team has initiated direct contacts with vendors registered in Bonfire, the City's vendor management system, to inform them of the City's small business utilization goals for contracts and provide information on how to apply for the SBE certification. This communication effort encourages vendors to connect with program partners and provides additional information about resources available to small businesses.

Additionally, the City has built out a new [SBDP webpage](#) and produced one-pagers promoting the various program elements. The one-pagers, available in both English and Spanish, have been helpful in providing information to small businesses at various events hosted by one of the chambers or by the City. The one-pagers feature information on the SBDP and goals, the SBE certification process, SBE certification workshops, small business support resources and programs available through the Devoyd Jennings Business Assistance Center (BAC), veteran resources, and VetHUB certifications. The City team has also increased promotion of small business programs through its social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and has included SBDP programming and opportunities in its monthly BAC Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship e-newsletter.

The City also launched the Small Business Advisory Board (SBAB), which includes representatives from local chambers of commerce, construction associations, certifying entities, and City departments. The SBAB held meetings on November 3, 2025, January 12, 2026, and March 2, 2026. As part of these meetings, the City invited the various entities to provide feedback on elements of the SBDP and procurement processes. The meetings have been helpful in providing a direct connection between City departments and entities representing potential bidders and providing opportunities for input and feedback on the City's procurement processes.

Beyond the SBAB, City staff have continued to engage small businesses through one-on-one vendor meetings, attending relevant events to provide information, and providing information and resources through construction associations.

Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Certification

To expedite certifications of SBEs, the City entered into a six-month agreement with the North Central Texas Regional Certification Agency (NCTRCA) for an amount not to exceed \$96,250. Through this pilot program, NCTRCA provided one dedicated certification officer, plus system and overhead support, to support an accelerated review of SBE certification applications. In addition, the City covered the expedite fee for up to 95 businesses.



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This program has made significant progress in meeting its goals, with NCTRCA reporting that 85 expedited SBE certifications have been approved, with some turnaround times as fast as 24 hours, allowing those firms faster access to City procurement opportunities. NCTRCA has reported continued demand for the fast-track certification pathway. Through this program, the City has seen an increased pool of certified SBEs in key industries such as construction, roofing, fencing, trucking, and water/sewer. NCTRCA also launched quarterly SBE certification workshops (offered in both English and Spanish) at the BAC, reaching up to 30 businesses each session and increasing awareness of certification benefits. More information about this workshop series can be found on the City's [Events at the BAC](#) webpage.

As of March 4, 2026, NCTRCA reports that there are 655 SBE-certified entities across the eligible five-county region with 476 in Tarrant, 128 in Denton, 34 in Johnson, 8 in Parker, and 9 in Wise counties.

Small Contractor Development Programs

A separate IR in this Council packet provides details on the City's Small Contractor Development Program, which is an important component of the SBDP. In addition, the City has supported the Beck School of Construction for many years to help develop small contractor capacity.

The Beck School of Construction

The City recently partnered with the Beck School of Construction to host a Fort Worth cohort of their program, helping local construction and construction-related businesses grow their capacity to compete for City projects. Through a nine-month program, the 23 participating small businesses will gain practical skills in business development, marketing, bidding, preconstruction planning, and project management. This program strengthens participant's understanding of industry standards and municipal contracting, making them better prepared to pursue and manage government projects. Upon graduation, businesses will leave with clearer strategies, improved operations, and enhanced readiness to work with local government. The cohort will also be recognized by the Mayor and City Council for their commitment and progress in the fall of 2026.

For questions regarding this information, please contact Ori Fernandez, Assistant Economic Development Director, at (817) 392-2606 or at Ori.Fernandez@fortworthtexas.gov.

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