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ACA Newsletter

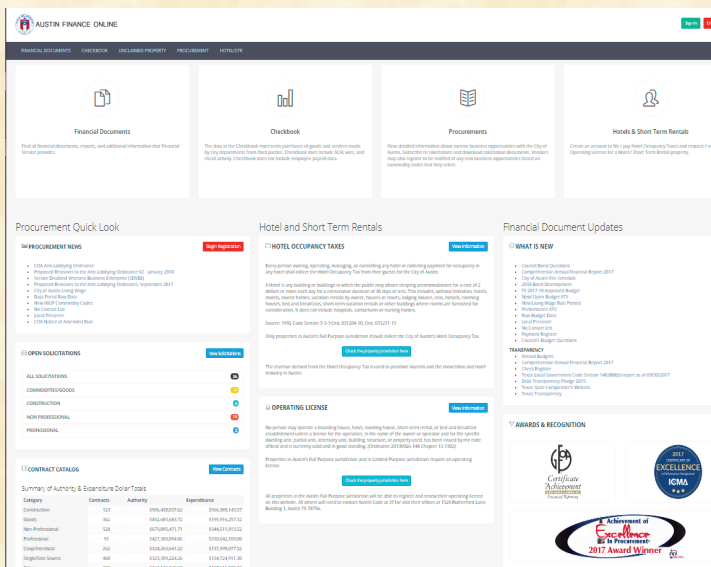
Asian Contractor Association
4201 Ed Bluestein Blvd. #2100
Austin, TX 78721
Tel: 512-926-5400

Austin Finance Online Goes Mobile

Austin—The City of Austin has given Vendor Connection a facelift to make data more accessible and easy to download.

Vendor Connection is now replaced by Austin Finance Online, which has been the city's official financial website that also serviced city vendors through Vendor Connection in the past. City vendors can still access the same type of information only now without having to sign in to their city online accounts.

New Austin Finance Online Main Page



What's new?

- ◆ AFO is now "mobile-friendly"
- ◆ We added new information gathering to support Veteran Owned businesses, especially Service Connected Disabled Veterans

However, making AFO "mobile-friendly" caused us to redesign the entire site.

What did we change?

- ◆ We added new capabilities to make registration and account maintenance easier and more accurate
- ◆ We increased access to solicitation documents by

removing the requirement to sign in to download

What else should I be aware of?

With the addition of new features, some of the links that you may have "bookmarked" may have changed. We kept the changes to the existing features at a minimum, but new features means new pages.

Here's the new Vendor Connection's "landing page" https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/vendor_connection/index.cfm

What did not change?

- ◆ Our commitment to serving citizens, vendors and staff with the highest quality, timely information about the City's financial, procurement and code enforcement operations.
- ◆ We want to continually increase access and transparency.
- ◆ We are still American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliant.

How do I contact the City regarding AFO changes?

All the contact numbers and emails you are using now have not changed. Please contact us if you need assistance with any AFO features, old or new. Here's our contact information again for easy access:

Help Lines	Phone	Email
Vendors	(512) 974-2018	Vendor@austintexas.gov
SMBR	(512) 974-7645	smbr@austintexas.gov
Purchasing (reception)	(512) 974-2500	Purchinfo@austintexas.gov
Controller's Office (reception)	(512) 974-2600	

Please contact Mr. Mike Benson, Chief Administrative Officer, Purchasing Office, (512) 974-2500 for further assistance.



EQUITY ASSESSMENT PILOT REPORT RELEASED

The city's chief equity officer, Brion Oaks, released a report on equity in City programs and services on June 12th completing his first major task on the job since September of 2016 in the newly created position.

The report was prepared in conjunction with the Center for Place-Based Initiatives (CPBI) at the Dell Medical School. It details areas of Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat.

The following is a memo the chief officer sent to the mayor and city council regarding his findings.

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the Equity Assessment Pilot Report that was prepared in partnership between the Equity Office and the Center for Place-Based Initiatives at the University of Texas Dell Medical School. The full report is attached for your review.

BACKGROUND

In an effort to address racial inequity in Austin, City Council passed Resolution No. 20150507-027 in May 2015, which directed the City Manager to evaluate the impact of existing city policies and practices on racial equity and develop an Equity Assessment Tool that can be used across City departments. The City's goal is to utilize the Equity Assessment Tool and implement new policies, practices, and programs to help identify and address the inequities that impact the quality of life for low-income communities in Austin, which are disproportionately communities of color.

OVERVIEW

The Equity Office is excited to distribute the report on the first cohort of City Departments to undergo the Equity Assessment Tool. In June 2017, eight pilot departments - Austin Public Health, Austin Water Utility, Economic Development, Human Resources, Austin Public Library, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Austin Transportation - completed the Tool.

The results were taken to the Center for Place-Based Initiatives (CPBI) at The University of Texas Dell Medical School for an independent third-party evaluation. CPBI performed an analysis on each department, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis), as it relates to equity.

A SWOT Analysis is used as a means of analysis on two spectrums, positive vs. negative and internal vs. external. Strengths and Weaknesses are characteristics within departments themselves, here interpreted to be policies, procedures, and practices which either promote equity, Strengths, or impede equity, Weaknesses. Opportunities and Threats are outside the organization and are typically measured by their impact on the department, be it positively, Opportunities, or negatively, Threats.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

In the SWOT method, Strengths are most often defined as an advantage or asset an organization has, and evaluators highlighted many impactful activities taking place across departments to advance racial equity. One area in particular that was high-

lighted as a strength were strategies to promote diversity and inclusion in hiring. Departments had strengths in recruiting when they utilized community organizations, boards and commissions, and multi-ethnic chambers of commerce to help identify candidates who may not otherwise apply.

Some departments also relied on social media to reach a wider audience. One department edited their job descriptions so that they were more inclusive and requirements would not inherently disqualify potential candidates. A more common practice was using a diverse hiring panel to minimize bias in selecting candidates. Once hired, some departments offered trainings that directly addressed equity and racism, and measured the effectiveness of their trainings.

Evaluators also identified significant areas of improvement for departments as it relates to advancing equity. In a SWOT analysis, a Weakness is commonly used to describe blind spots and areas where failures can occur if not addressed. One blind spot across multiple departments was in the area of data collection and management. Weaknesses in data collection pointed to the lack of a process to collect, aggregate, or analyze client data, including demographic information and client surveys, for input in, or to measure the effectiveness of, its programs and services.

Only a few departments had data regarding the race and ethnicity of their contractors and consultants. Departments infrequently did not collect data on individuals in the community for outreach and engagement efforts, such as the number reached and the demographic makeup of those groups. Most departments did not capture resident satisfaction data on their programs and services. Standards or measures to gauge the effectiveness of trainings and community engagement activities were often missing. Having disaggregated data by race and ethnicity is one of the essential first steps in advancing equity. Without segmented data to inform decision-making, it is difficult for the City to assess the impact or lack of impact it is having on communities of color and other marginalized populations.

NEXT STEPS

The primary goal of the tool's first pilot was to develop a baseline for measurement within departments about their understanding of equity; how policies, procedures, and practices can support equity or create inequities; and how community engagement can inform their work towards equity. By establishing this baseline, departments can monitor progress over time. The Equity Office will now use this report to begin working with departments on an Equity Action Plan to assist departments in crafting and supporting equitable policies, practices and procedures, and eventually equitable outcomes. The Equity Assessment tool, paired with an Equity Action Plan, will establish a cycle of continuous improvement to better advance equity.

The full report and Memo from Chief Equity Officer Brion Oaks can be found at this link: [click here](#).

If you have any questions, please email him at Brion.Oaks@austintexas.gov or call (512) 974-7979.

Minority Business Development Agency Seeks Nominations for 2018 National Minority Business Awards



Minority Business Owners and Champions Encouraged to Apply for National Recognition

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), within the U.S. Department of Commerce, is seeking nominations for the 2018 National Minority Business Awards. The MBDA National Minority Business Award is the highest level of national recognition that a U.S. minority-owned firm can receive from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

These prestigious awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of minority entrepreneurs, as well as the individuals and organizations that have demonstrated their commitment to advancing minority business enterprises. There are three main award categories:

- Minority-Owned Firms
- Champions of Minority Business Development
- Individual Recognition

A complete list of categories is available online at <https://medweek.mbda.gov>. All nominations must be submitted online at <https://medweek.mbda.gov> no later than July 31, 2018. The award winners are scheduled to be announced in September. The awards will be presented during National Minority Enterprise Development Week (MED Week), taking place October 14-20, 2018 in Austin, TX.

Last October, President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross welcomed the award winners to the White House. The invitation marked the first time that MED Week recipients were hosted at the Oval Office since the creation of the event by President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

For questions, please contact the MBDA National MED Week Program Coordinator Antavia Grimsley at 202-482-7458 or agrimley1@mbda.gov.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale, and capacity through access to capital, contracts, and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda).

About National Minority Enterprise Development Week

Since 1983, every president has issued a Presidential Proclamation designating a National Minority Enterprise Development Week to recognize the contributions of the minority business community to the U.S. economy. For 35 years, MBDA has led the National MED Week program to convene business leaders, honor outstanding MBEs and advocates, promote business opportunities, and report industry trends.

5 Seminars to Help Grow Your Business



When it comes to winning contracts, strategizing market communications, prioritizing financing solutions and engaging new markets, the Minority Business Development Agency is here to help. Join us for these five seminars to access the information and networks to grow your business.

Sustainability in Seattle • June 12, 2018

The Northwest Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council's Annual Conference on June 12 in Seattle features speakers representing Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks, T-Mobile and more for talks on sustainability across sectors. Register [here](#).

Get Your Feet Wet • June 27, 2018

Aloha means hello ... to a great networking opportunity. Grow Your Business! Capital and Contracts: Business Match-Making and Networking will connect minority business owners with contractors, government agencies, and banks. The June 27 event in Honolulu offers networking opportunities and business financing tips. Register [here](#).

Mastering Manufacturing • August 5-7, 2018

Expand your business, experience innovative technology and expose your company to a national audience at the National MBE Manufacturers Summit 2018. From August 5-7, Georgia Tech will host a summit that features plenty of networking and education opportunities for minority manufacturers. Register [here](#).

Trading Day • October 12, 2018

Get a taste of the global trade business when the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce joins San Francisco State University on October 12 to host How to Do Business in the Pacific Rim, an evaluation of the impact technology may have on international business and emerging trends in trade. Register [here](#).

Homecourt Advantage • Anytime, Anywhere, MBDA Webinars

Whether you're setting your sights on government contracts or need advice on expanding your workforce, visit our [webinars page](#) from the comfort of your home to hear from experts on business trends, resources, and opportunities.

