



Asian Contractor Association (ACA)
4201 Ed Bluestein Blvd.
#2100
Austin, TX 787
Tel: 512-926-5400
www.acta-austin.com

▶ TRAVIS COUNTY AND AISD
JOIN CITY OF AUSTIN IN DIS-
PARITY STUDY TO VET CON-
TRACTING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR MINORITY AND WOMEN
BUSINESSES 1

▶ ASIAN CONTRACTORS/
ENGINEERS CORNER 2

▶ ASIAN AMERICAN RE-
SOURCE CENTER OPENS
AMONG BLESSINGS FROM
LOCAL RELIGIOUS AND POLITI-
CAL LEADERS..... 3

○ Volume 5

○ Issue 03

○ September 2013

ACA Newsletter

Travis County and AISD Join City of Austin in Disparity Study to Vet Government Contracting Opportunities for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses

Austin -- Following several months of discussions and research, Austin Independence School District Board unanimously approved Monday on September 30th to join Travis County as co-sponsors of a disparity study issued by the City of Austin to examine fairness in government contracting for minority and women businesses.

In April, Travis County Commissioners approved study guidelines to append to the city's disparity study for cost savings as the case with AISD.

The contract to conduct the study was awarded to National Economic Research Associates, Inc. (NERA) by Austin City Council in June, which also included veterans as a minority group for the very first time.

This year's study is the latest of a five-year interim data analysis by the city since the first official disparity study was conducted in 1992. NERA was selected in 2006 to perform one of the statistical analyses.

The 1992 study was prompted after a landmark Supreme Court decision in 1989 in *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.* that set forth strict legal framework for government affirmative action programs.

In the lawsuit, the US Supreme Court deemed the City of Richmond's "set-aside" program unconstitutional because it did not satisfy the "strict scrutiny" standard applicable to "race-based" government program. In such a program, a government entity is required to have a "compelling governmental interest" to redress past discrimination through a program that must be "narrowly tailored," which is a legal principle in policy making to address a specific objective without affecting other rights or the smooth running of business.

J.A. Croson challenged City of Richmond's MBE program after it lost a bid for failing to meet 30% minority participation goal set by the city.

Since the ruling, in order to monitor the validity of their affirmative action programs, government entities were motivated to conduct scientific study and analysis using an array of data collection methods.

In a more recent case, *H.B. Rowe v. Tippet*, filed in April of 2003, both the federal district court and the U.S.

Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld North Carolina's MBE/WBE program based on evidence of discrimination presented to the courts.

The City of Austin adopted an ordinance to establish its MBE/WBE procurement program in 1987 after holding a number of stakeholders meetings and public hearings.

The city's initial disparity study in response to the Croson case provided further evidence of existing disparities in government contracting so to solidify and legitimize the continuation of the city's MBE/WBE program. As a result, participation goals were established by ethnic groups and by trades including construction, professional services, non-professional services, and commodities.

Travis County and AISD currently do not have any established participation goals for minority and women contractors for lack of documented evidence to necessitate an affirmative action.

Once data have been collected by NERA and analyzed, the two aforementioned government entities will have legality to set up a program similar to the city's if study results support such an action.

The study will include all minority, women, and veteran businesses in five counties, namely, Travis, Bastrop, Hays, Caldwell, and Williamson counties. The study is expected to last one year and a half to two years.

All members of the three minority trade associations will be invited to participate through surveys, community engagement meetings, and focus group settings. All feedback will be recorded, transcribed, and tabulated for analysis in strict confidence.

Participants need not be apprehensive about repercussion or any negative reflection on their part if they speak openly and candidly about their experience with the city's program. The city sincerely seeks information that truly reflects reality and makes improvements to the program. The NERA team members will be contacting members of the minority business community in the very near future to invite them to be part of the study.

Asian Contractors/Engineers Corner



Chairman and CEO of Chivas Engineering & consulting, Dr. Vasant C. Ramkumar is a highly degreed technical professional/executive with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and skills to draw on. With over 30 years of leadership, IT, engineering, research & development, and training/coaching experience in corporations and government organizations both domestic and international, Dr.

Ramkumar held senior leadership positions (DIR/SVP/EVP/CTO/CIO/CEO) at AT&T, Bell Labs, Lucent Technologies, US-West, MediaOne, Netraverse, CloverworXs, Maximum Multimedia Services Network and with their affiliates worldwide. Dr. Ramkumar is very experienced working with different cultures and knows how to motivate and empower teams to achieve project goals and objectives.

He has worked on many projects in the USA as well as projects undertaken by US companies in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. These included the UK, Italy, Spain, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Singapore, Nigeria and the West Indies.

His experience encompasses organization planning, project implementation, product management, strategic planning/engineering, design, software development, IT design/planning, negotiation, mergers/acquisitions, leadership, sales & marketing, research/consulting, analysis/evaluation, training & directing, customer/vendor relations, communication, analytical/problem solving, carrier interconnection and network security.

He has demonstrated expertise in setting up and managing start-ups, joint ventures, vendor & customer relationships, channel partners, strategic alliances and partnerships. He is a proven leader with excellent communication skills and possesses proven ability to creatively execute projects for the success of the entire organization.

Dr. Ramkumar is also engaged in teaching at Universities in an effort to transfer knowledge from industry to the classroom. He teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate level in the areas of computer science, engineering, networking technologies, network security, and telecommunications management.

His research interests are in network security, telecommunications networks, network services/planning/development/implementation, and network management.

As a member of the Austin Speakers Association, a sub-chapter of NSA, Dr. Ramkumar speaks on technology at product launches and at technical conferences. He is also engaged in speaking on the transformation of organizations, corporate culture, communication, leadership and employee empowerment.

Dr. Ramkumar holds patents in the US, Canada and Europe. He earned a Ph.D., MS (Computer Science), from the CUNY, NY, an MS (Electrical Engineering) from the NTU, Fort Collins, Colorado, and a BS (Engineering) from the Philadelphia University, Philadelphia, PA.

CORPORATE PROFILE

Chivas Engineering & Consulting, Inc. (CE&C) was incorporated in Texas, USA in 2006. CE&C is the result of a merger of Chivas Electric (formed in 1990), and Chivas Consulting (formed in 1993). CE&C operates world wide with its Head Office in Austin, Texas. CE&C is an Engineering and Consulting firm specializing in Electrical Contracting, IT/Telecommunications Network Engineering, and Training Services.

CE&C provide services in:

Construction: Consulting and Supervision, Electrical installation (residential, commercial and industrial), Intelligent Buildings, Telephony, Data, Video-TV, Fire Alarm, Security, etc.

Energy Generation: Alternative energy generation (Solar & Wind), Residential energy distribution.

Corporate Planning: strategic plans, organization, budget, alliances, joint ventures, start-ups, business plans, etc.

Infrastructure Development Planning: Telecommunication (cable, wireless, telecom, internet, LAN, WAN)

IT Product Planning: software engineering, lifecycle, costing, support, feature set, sales, channel partners, marketing, sales, etc.

Training: information technology, telecommunication, Organizational soft skills, Executive transformation training (Leadership, Communication, Empowerment)

Personnel Development: personal coaching, leadership coaching, succession planning, etc.

Project Management: timeline, milestones, resources

Vendor Negotiations: RFP, conflict resolution, cost, delivery

CE&C provides consultancy services for companies and government organizations worldwide. We know how to get things done in a multi-cultural environments.

Our mission is to provide clients across the globe through consultancy with the skills, knowledge and experience of CE&C to make their business and organization successful.

Our goal is to become a premier, worldwide provider of knowledge based solutions through Consulting, Management and Training

Vision: To use our tools and skills that will help Corporations and Government increase their organizational efficiency and revenue generation mechanism through the use of technology and cost effective processes.



Asian American Resource Center Opens Among Blessings from Local Religious and Political Leaders



Austin— Local spiritual leaders of all faiths including Buddhism, Muslim, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, stood on one accord at the grand opening ceremony of Asian American Resource Center (AARC) on September 28th to bless the landmark facility.

Thunder storm was in the forecast and cancellation of the outdoor ceremony was in the plan. The day turned out to be another typical sunny day in central Texas with a few passing clouds bringing along much welcome shades and breezes.

The Asian community in Austin is as diverse as all the religions there are in the world representing approximately 50 nations and growing. The Asian population has doubled in the last decade in Austin standing now at around 7 percent.

In great foresight of the Asian population boom, a group of Asian community leaders had a vision to build an Asian community center. In the 1990s, individuals from different Asian nations coalesced and formed the largest Asian organization in Austin, Network of Asian American Organizations, better known as NAAO. Because of their concerted efforts, AARC is a reality today. In 2006 voters approved a bond to appropriate 5 million dollars for the center, and in 2007 the council authorized to purchase 15 acres of land where the center is sitting on today.

All seven city council members, Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Mike Martinez, Kathie Tovo, Sheryl Cole, Chris Riley, Laura Morrison, and Bill Spelman were present at the ceremony and gave their congratulatory remarks along with City Manager Marc Ott and city officials including SMBR (Small and Minority Business Resources) Department Director Veronica Lara and Watershed Protection Department Director Victoria Li.

Hundreds attending the ceremony waited anxiously for the big moment to come when the ribbon was cut, and the center's door was officially open to the public. They jammed the entrance eager to catch a glimpse of the inside and to find the best seats for the ensuing fashion shows and multi-cultural live performances in the grand ballroom.



In addition to the ballroom with 300 people capacity, the center has a resource library, a computer lab, several community meeting rooms, classrooms, and activity rooms with free Wi-Fi throughout the building.

Although the center was built to serve the Asian community, the facility is a city-owned property and is open to everyone. Taja Beeley, AARC Culture and Arts Education Manager, told The Daily Texan, "Asians and Asian Americans are our target demographic, but the center also offers an opportunity for the greater Austin community to come, learn and experience the various cultures and heritages of the different nationalities from Asia."

AARC, located at 8401 Cameron Road, is open 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Tuesday and Friday, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Wednesday and Thursday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Saturday and Sunday. The contact phone number is 512-974-1700