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Brooklyn Communities Collaborative Releases Research on MWBE's in Brooklyn

Participatory action research conducted by Brooklyn Communities Collaborative and Hunter College (CUNY) highlights Experiences of Black-Owned Business and Opportunities in Healthcare Procurement

BCC launches Brooklyn Health Enterprise Advisory Council and engages two Brooklyn Health Systems in response to reports' insights

BROOKLYN, NY – This week [Brooklyn Communities Collaborative](#) (BCC), a non-profit partnership focused on strengthening health, wealth and leadership in local communities, released its newest participatory action research (PAR) report on the current state of Black-owned businesses across the borough, in collaboration with Hunter College (CUNY). In the report, researchers pinpoint positive and negative variables affecting Black business owners in Brooklyn and discuss strategies for how major institutions can shift from a compliance mentality to proactive engagement with supply chain diversification.

The report delivers an eye-opening overview of Black business owners' successes, their challenges, and was drawn from data and testimonials collected from 32 business owners located in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Canarsie, Brownsville, and East New York. The researchers also conducted multiple focus group interviews with students at Brooklyn College using the knowledge acquired from field interviews with business owners.

"Small businesses are the lifeblood of our local economies, but far too many Black business owners face hurdles in their already difficult journey to success. At the Brooklyn Communities Collaborative, we're acutely aware of the need to support these entrepreneurs, because their success is crucial to our collective prosperity," said **Gretchen Susi, PhD, Deputy Director of Brooklyn Communities Collaborative**. "This report identifies some of the business climate contributors affecting these entrepreneurs, and proposes key interventions to foster economic development through hospital procurement and community engagement."

Some notable findings of the report include:

- **Gentrification's Dual Impact.** Gentrification has boosted foot traffic and purchasing power for minority-owned businesses but increased the risk of displacement due to rising rents and the racial real estate wealth gap.
- **Certifications and Securing Government Contracting Opportunities.** Minority and Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) certification offers priority consideration for government contracts, but challenges persist in bidding despite certification, highlighting a disconnect between conferring M/WBE status and supporting these firms as viable government suppliers.
- **Racial and Gender Biases.** Such prejudices create obstacles for minority entrepreneurs, leading to skepticism, dismissiveness, and even doubts about their qualifications to own a business.
- **Access to Capital.** Access to capital for funding and expansion is hindered by skepticism, mistrust, and avoidance from conventional banks, affecting initial funding, working capital management, and plans for expansion.



Anchor institutions such as hospitals and colleges spend billions annually on goods and services, but much of that money doesn't stay in the local communities. Procuring from local vendors has been shown to double revenue recirculation and job creation compared to non-local procurement. In Brooklyn hospitals alone, this presents an opportunity of up to \$2 billion or more annually. BCC is already working with two partners, Maimonides Medical Center and One Brooklyn Health, to harness their purchasing and contracting practices as a community development strategy, employing strategies to help local M/WBE's overcome common barriers to major procurement contracts.

Based on early findings from the report, BCC founded the Brooklyn Health Enterprise Advisory Council – a group that harnesses the acumen and experience of local experts to support and implement inclusive sourcing practices – earlier this year. The Brooklyn Health Enterprise Advisory Council brings together leaders already working to support and nurture Black-owned businesses in Brooklyn, and implement strategies to strengthen local businesses proposed by the report, including:

- Involving core staff not only in setting goals but in designing ways of tracking progress;
- Sponsoring forums, including forums about upcoming projects, that enable M/WBEs, local companies, and worker-owned firms, to meet buyers and others in purchasing decision-making roles;
- Directly helping small businesses by providing ways to get bonding and insurance;
- Breaking up or “unbundling” contracts and service purchase orders;
- Embedding supplier diversity and local purchasing goals within Requests for Proposals, and eventually within contracts;
- Engaging vendors to create jobs and open facilities locally – and tying performance on this metric to extended long-term contracts;
- Fulfilling the potential of the anchor mission approach;
- And supporting partnerships and mentor-protégé relationships between veteran vendors and companies with less experience.

“As a member of the Brooklyn Health Enterprise Advisory Council, I believe that empowering minority-owned businesses not just as a responsibility, but as an economic imperative,” said **Tiera Mack, Executive Director of Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District**. “Offering local business owners guidance, support and opportunities is crucial to their success and to the success of the communities around them.”

To read the full report, click [here](#).

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About Brooklyn Communities Collaborative

Brooklyn Communities Collaborative (BCC) is a not-for-profit based in New York that works with local institutions and stakeholders to address longstanding health inequities in the borough. BCC was founded in 2019 with the goal of leveraging the financial power of anchor institutions and community resources to address the economic factors that improve the social determinants of health – whether it's supporting housing stability, advancing economic empowerment, expanding care management services, or strengthening CBOs in the area. BCC builds upon years of collaborative efforts with anchor institutions and community partners in Brooklyn. Visit [www. https://brooklyncommunities.org/](https://brooklyncommunities.org/) for more information.

