

Mayor Vera Katz Proposes "Fair Contracting And Employment Initiative"

Portland Mayor Vera Katz proposed a package of reforms entitled the "Fair Contracting and Employment Initiative" to improve the city's record in contracting with minority business enterprises (MBE's) and women business enterprises (WBE's) and to expand minority employment opportunities with the city's contractors for minorities and women.

The reform package, presented as a report to City Council today, proposes that Council:

- Establish specific city-wide contracting targets coupled with quarterly reports monitoring progress in achieving them. The targets would provide benchmarks for measuring the success or failure of the new city programs as well as the performance of individual city bureaus. The quarterly reports will provide the Council a diagnostic tool for determining what further efforts are needed to improve performance.

- Increase MBE/WBE contracting opportunities by implementing a tough new "good faith efforts" program modeled on Metro's recently enacted code, requiring proof of outreach and good faith negotiations with minority and women-owned businesses. New city code provision have already been in place which mandate that in the case of professional, technical and expert (PTE) contracts, at least one bid solicitation by an MBE/WBE be included for consideration by city bureau managers prior to award of any contract. The code will also be amended to require large potential prime contractors to take more comprehensive steps and provide more systematic documentation of their outreach to MBE/WBE contractors.

- Provide business and financial assistance to existing and emerging MBE/WBE contractors in partnership with other local governments and the private sector. Establish an Opportunity Loan Fund to leverage up to \$5 million in loans from local banks.



Mayor Vera Katz

- Expand minority/women employment opportunities with city contractors through more effective monitoring of compliance by city contractors and vendors with Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.

- Investigate and document cases of discrimination through start-up funding for a regional Croson disparity study.

- Increase the number of eligible certified MBE/WBE contractors.

The Fair Contracting and Employment Initiative would be funded by monies already contained in the FY 92-93/FY 93-94 Council-approved budgets and has been estimated to leverage million in funding on the issue from the private sector and other public agencies.

"The Council has recognized a critical need to set in motion a determined effort to help the city's economically distressed groups reclaim ground they lost during more than a decade of neglect of America's inner cities," said Katz in introducing the package.

"There is strong evidence that in recent years minorities and women, as groups, have lost much of what they gained in an earlier period of affirmative action efforts and have suffered disproportionately to their numbers from the policies of neglect," said Katz.

"A recent City Attorney's Office

study found, for example, that of the 1,535 people employed by the 50 companies receiving city of Portland public works contracts in 1992 of \$50,000 or more in value, only 4.8% were minorities and less than 1% were African-Americans," Katz said.

"This package of initiatives constitutes a set of administrative actions and proposed new ordinances aimed at leveling the playing field in the competition for city contract dollars for those who have been economically impacted by the effects of discrimination and economic neglect. It is also intended to promote equal employment opportunities for those who seek work with the city's contractors," Katz said.

"I believe we must develop the legal tools to support the many positive actions included in this proposed package of reforms. I therefore propose that the city initiate the start-up funding for a regional Croson Disparity study, which will provide the statistical underpinning required to establish enforceable goals," Katz said.

Croson refers to the 1989 U.S. Court decision in Richmond v. Croson holding that affirmative action plans must meet a "strict scrutiny" test in the courts, must serve compelling government interests and must be narrowly tailored to serve those interests. A Croson study would provide direction in meeting those guidelines.

Katz asked the Council to endorse a regional approach to completing a Croson study, to provide "seed money" to complete such a study, and to authorize her to seek funding partners from among other public agencies in the region.

"As the City Attorney's Office has put it, what we can require without a Croson study are actions; what we can require with a Croson study are results," Katz said.

For more information, contact Sam Adams at 823-4120.

Copies of the "Fair Contracting and Employment Initiative" and background materials are available from the Mayor's Office.

Literacy Event Honors Outstanding New Readers, Creates Wordless USA, Population 27 Million

Imagine having to ask a friend or relative to help you fill out a job application. Warning instructions on household cleaners look like gibberish to you. What if you couldn't read the prescription label to understand how much medicine your sick child needs? Twenty-seven million American adults don't have to imagine.

To impart the emotional impact of a life without words, Coors "Literacy. Pass It On." and its four national non-profit literacy partners presented Wordless USA, a town where a comprehensible written language does not exist. The event recognized 11 outstanding new readers from across the country for their commitment to learning to read and their incredible achievements as new readers.

Actor Danny Glover and singer Jeffery Osborne, celebrity spokespersons for the program, joined Peter Coors, CEO, Coors Brewing Company, to honor the Coors Literacy Ambassadors, whose role will be to serve as national spokespeople for the cause of literacy during 1993-94.

Ben Sherrod, age 54, of San Francisco was unable to fulfill his daughter's request to read her favorite book. The next day he enrolled in a literacy program. Today, Ben meets



with his tutor several times a week. This is quite a change for the former cabbie who had to purchase his driver's license illegally because he couldn't read well enough to pass a written exam. The best thing about being able to read for Ben is "you feel like you're somebody."

Coors "Literacy. Pass It On." is a

five-year commitment in partnership with four national literacy organizations to reach 500,000 adults with literacy services by the end of 1994. To date, 350,000 have been reached. The company also funds the Coors Literacy Hotline (800-626-4601) for those who want to be volunteer tutors or who want to learn to read.

Nine Multnomah County Homeless Families With Children To receive Housing

Persistence has finally paid off. Despite a disappointing decision by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to deny funding for the Willow Tree Inn Transitional Housing program in Gresham, a network of community organizations, churches, and public agencies have persisted in finding a solution to permanently open the first East County transitional housing facility for homeless families and their children.

Rey Ramsey, Director of the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services; Multnomah County Commissioner Sharron Kelly and Count Chair Hank Miggins; Mayor Gussie McRoberts and representatives from the Housing Authority of Portland, Human Solutions and East County Shelter Projects Inc. held a press conference to formally dedicate the transitional housing facility on Wednesday, June 30.

There are currently an estimated

2,100 homeless families in Multnomah County and their number has increased 15% a year since 1989. This is the only housing project to serve homeless families with children in East Multnomah County.

The Willow Tree Inn, a former convalescent center, was purchased by East County Shelter Projects, Inc. and opened as a homeless shelter from January to May of 1992. During the last year, several state and local public agencies have pooled resources to renovate the facility to accommodate nine families with children in individual efficiency apartment units. In addition, major repairs were made to the roof and the plumbing and heating systems.

Both single and two-parent families with children will be provided housing for up to five months at the Willow Tree. Human Solutions, a non-profit agency in East Multnomah County with extensive experience in providing community-based bilingual

services, will be the social service provider for the transitional housing program. The agency will assist families in securing permanent housing and supportive services to become economically self-sufficient. These services may include counseling, child care, transportation, job training, Head Start, and transportation assistance. Funds to operate the Willow Tree Inn have been provided by Multnomah County, the City of Gresham, and the City of Portland. Volunteers from the community and local churches will also continue to help support the homeless program.

Homeless families will begin to move in and social services provided by Human Solutions on July 6, 1993. Families who need information about the Willow Tree Inn transitional housing program should contact staff at Human Solutions, Inc. at 2900 SE 122nd. Ave. between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday or call Human Solutions at 248-5201.

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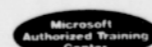


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