HREEO BUDGET PRESENTATION

HRA Transfer to Support Small Business Contracting

How HREEO puts this funding to work for Saint Paul's small businesses

Presented by: Andrea Ledger, Director
Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity (HREEO)

HRA Board Meeting • September 23, 2026

FUNDING OVERVIEW

What This Fund Supports

AU 10015700
in place since 2009

What It Supports

This budget unit connects small and emerging businesses with contracting opportunities generated by the City of Saint Paul, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), and PED's housing and economic development activities.

Backed by the HRA's $539,966 annual transfer to HREEO's General Fund budget (AU 10015700).

WHERE IT GOES

Citywide Work This Funding Helps Sustain

Disparity Study	Establishes the data foundation for citywide inclusion goals across procurement and construction contracting.
Vendor Outreach Program (VOP) Compliance	Sets a 25% CERT-business goal on subcontracted dollars for eligible contracts, with good-faith-effort monitoring across procurement and development projects citywide.
CERT Certification	Certifies small businesses to compete for city work. Departments must pull at least two CERT-vendor quotes on eligible purchases, backed by regular staff training on working with CERT vendors.
Targeted Small Business Outreach	Supplier Fair, NMSDC engagement, and CERT workshops that connect certified businesses directly with city departments and contracting opportunities.
Small Business Retention	Uses CERT certification to keep small businesses engaged and growing with the City over time, not just certified once.

RESULTS

Small Businesses Are Winning This Work

61%

of City contract dollars over the past 7 years went to small businesses

$1.42B

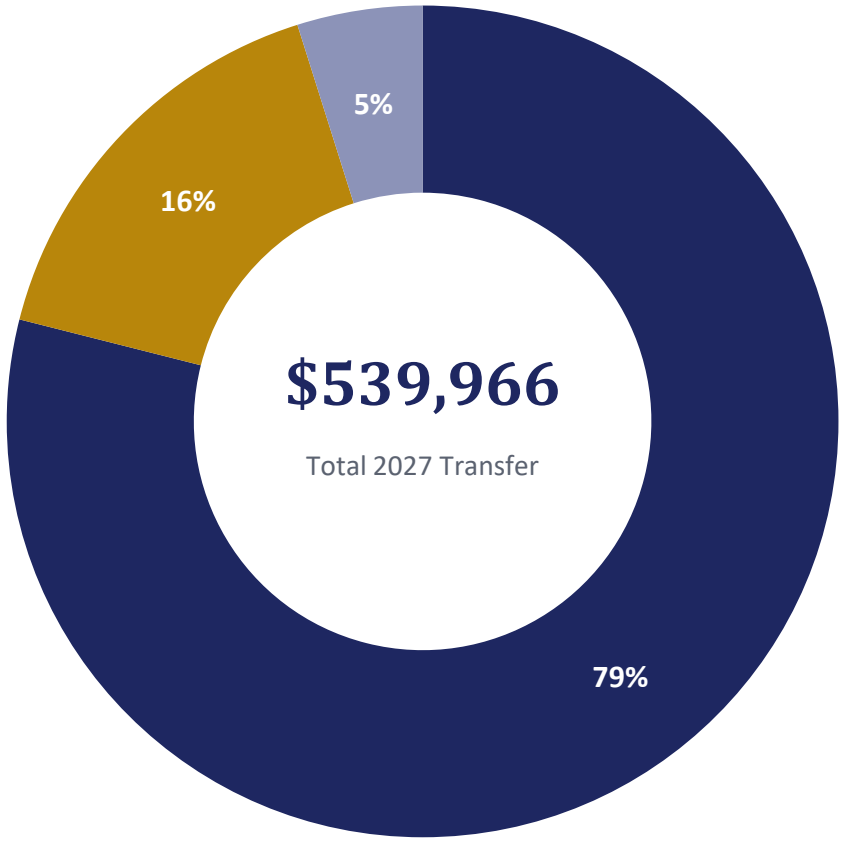
awarded to small businesses in City contracts since 2016

Small businesses are the backbone of the City's contracting base — and the pipeline keeps growing. CERT certified firms grew nearly 40% in 2025 alone, reaching 1,417 certified businesses, with a support-ticket backlog dating to 2021 now fully cleared.

Source: 2025 Keen Independent Joint Disparity Study (small-business share of contract dollars, July 2016–June 2023); Strong & Starlike CERT Dashboard, 2025 Annual.

2027 BUDGET

Exactly Where the $539,966 Goes



Personnel — Staff (3.25 FTE)

$426,271

CERT Dues & Lead Agency Expenses

$87,411

B2GNow (VOP Database)

$26,284

3.25 FTE spans small-business contract coordination, CERT/compliance, procurement data, and departmental leadership.

Source: 2027 HREEO Budget Presentation to Mayor Her, June 2026.

REALLOCATION IN ACTION

A New Role, Built From This Fund

This fund's flexibility let HREEO reallocate an existing position into a new Small Business Contract Coordinator role — dedicated to CERT certification coordination and small-business contracting support.

What This Role Is Positioned to Lead Next

Scaling best-value procurement in construction, launching the already-authorized set-aside and sheltered market programs, and building CERT pre-qualification rosters for common contract types — the priorities identified in the City's own Disparity Study and 2022 program assessment.

IN SUMMARY

How the $539,966 Is Used

$539,966

transferred annually from the HRA — unchanged since 2019

61%

of contract dollars go to small businesses

1,417

CERT-certified firms — up ~40% in 2025

One transfer, put to consistent use: funding the staff and programs that keep Saint Paul's small businesses competitive for city work.

VOP goals apply directly to HRA and PED development projects — and the HRA's own Small-Scale Development program shares this fund's exact goal: creating opportunities for small and emerging businesses on HRA-owned land.

Andrea Ledger, Director — Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity

Contact-HREEO@stpaul.gov | 651-266-8966