

PRESS RELEASE

July 19, 2017

ESSEX FREEHOLDERS REDEFINE ECONOMIC INCLUSION FOR WOMEN, MINORITIES, AND VETERANS

(Newark, NJ) – In a chamber packed with wall-to-wall diverse support, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously passed an ordinance that will redefine economic inclusion in Essex County. The law, [Ordinance O-2017-00005](#), is sponsored by Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake, At-Large Freeholders Lebbly C. Jones, and Rufus I. Johnson and establishes a set-aside and joint venture program to increase economic opportunity for women-owned, minority-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.



Britnee N. Timberlake
Freeholder President

The set-asides are in the areas of goods and services, nonprofessional services, and professional services, while establishing a “Joint Venture” program for construction contracts. The Joint Venture method has been successful in other places in the United States like the City of Atlanta. The result is removing historical blockades preventing MBEs, WBEs, and VOBs from being competitive in the bid process. For example, it is challenging for many companies to obtain “bonding” as it involves having large amounts of cash on hand not committed to use. This law states that the bond must be assigned to the joint venture formed and thus opens access to major construction contract participation for MBEs, WBEs, and VOBs.

President Timberlake shared remarks during the meeting, stating, “On average, women in the U.S.A. make twenty cents less on the dollar than men; contracting more women-owned businesses can help close that gap. There are plenty of qualified, ready, and able minority-owned companies who can do the work but face passive discriminatory policies limiting access to capital. This legislation can improve such conditions and offer economic opportunity. Furthermore, our veterans had our back, and now this law mandates we have theirs by making an effort to support their businesses.”

Freeholder Lebbly Jones said, “This law was a long time coming, and it undergirds entrepreneurs who need the support by offering an opportunity for their businesses to grow and create more jobs.”



Lebbly C. Jones
Freeholder At-Large

Current 3-Year 2014-2016 Average Contract Spend	Projected Average Contract Spend by the year 2020
SBE=33%	SBE=33%
MBE=6%	MBE=27%
WBE=9%	WBE=25%
VOB=.16%	VOB=15%

A review of the County’s 2014, 2015, and 2016 reports from the Office of Small Business Development and Affirmative Action revealed the County’s total average “spend” on contracts was 33% for Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), but only 6% for Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), 9% for Women Business Enterprises (WBEs), and .16% for Veteran Owned Businesses (VOBs). The Board’s goal, embodied in this law, is to increase the average “spend” to 33% for SBEs, 27% for MBEs, 25% for WBEs, and 15% for VOBs by the year 2020.

Freeholder Johnson added, “This is about spurring economic development opportunities for companies that have been historically overlooked, disregarded, and systematically abused nationwide.”

Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin was present and expressed his support for the Board and his commitment to duplicating this law at the State level, something Assembly Speaker Emeritus Sheila Y. Oliver and Senator Ronald L. Rice are also in support. LeRoy J. Jones, Jr., Chairman of the Essex County Democratic Committee, congratulated President Timberlake on her “steady hand of leadership” and commended the Board as a whole and the Administration for this “hand up, not a hand out.”



Rufus I. Johnson
Freeholder At-Large

Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo, Jr., reflected on the law, stating, “The Set-Aside and Joint Venture Ordinance adopted by the Freeholders displays our continued commitment to promoting opportunities for small, minority, woman and veteran owned companies to obtain contracts to do business with Essex County. Essex was the first – and is still the only county in New Jersey – to conduct a Disparity Study, and

this new ordinance will provide us with additional tools to offer opportunities to a more diverse group of vendors who reflect our county's population.”

The law is endorsed by the NJ State NAACP; the Newark, Montclair, and South Orange/Maplewood NAACP chapters; National Organization for Women Essex-NJ; NJ Citizen Action; NJ African American Chamber of Commerce; Essex County Latino Chamber of Commerce; LUPE Fund, Inc.; People's Organization for Progress; BlueWaveNJ; South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race; Diaspora Pan-African Action Committee; Guyana American Heritage Foundation; Sandji CDC; clergy throughout the County including Pastor Ronald L. Slaughter; community leaders such as Former Ambassador to the United Nations Robert Van Lierop, James Harris and Rebecca Doggett; veteran organizations; and many more.

Endorsements from past and present electeds include Congressman Donald Payne, Jr., State Senator Ronald L. Rice, Assembly Speaker Emeritus Sheila Y. Oliver, Assemblyman Thomas P. Giblin, Assemblywoman Cleopatra G. Tucker, former Assemblyman/Freeholder and current Essex County Democratic Chairman LeRoy J. Jones, Jr., former Assemblyman William Payne, East Orange Council President (Mayor-elect) Ted R. Green, South Orange Village Trustee (Councilwoman) Deborah Davis Ford, and former Essex County Freeholder Carol Y. Clark.

Clarence Jackson, Commander of the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 3 in Newark, applauded this initiative encouraging Veteran entrepreneurship and said, “I look forward to getting the word out about this new ordinance.”

Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, Executive Director of New Jersey Citizen Action, added, “NJCA, commends Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake and the Freeholders for implementing this law, which ensures that historically overlooked women, minority, and veteran-owned small businesses are fairly represented among county contractors. The Freeholders are leading the way with initiatives that focus on fixing specific and documented economic disparities in Essex County.”

Nancy Gagnier, Executive Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race stated, “The set-asides proposed by the Essex County Freeholders to historically disadvantaged groups like women, minorities, and veterans in the small business community is a responsible way to support economic growth in Essex County.”

Marcia Marley, President of BlueWaveNJ, also offered support, stating, “BWNJ endorses the spirit of this ordinance and believes it is a step in the right direction needed to correct the discrimination against minority and women-owned businesses.”

President Timberlake concluded by thanking the endorsing community groups; electeds and leaders; Freeholder Counsels Michael J. Parlavecchio, Esq., and Evans Anyanwu, Esq.; Freeholder Jones; Freeholder Johnson; the entire Freeholder Board and staff including Debra Marvel and Chris Taylor; and the County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., and his Administration, including Robert Jackson, Chief of Staffs, Counsels, and Julius Coltre. She stated, “Everything is a team effort.”

Businesses interested in Essex County bid opportunities referred to in this new ordinance should register as an NJ State Certified MBE, WBE, or VOB. Registration applications and guidelines can be accessed through the State of New Jersey Business Portal website www.nj.gov/njbusiness/contracting. Businesses must also register with Essex County to automatically be informed of and apply for opportunities with the County. As stated on www.purchasing.essexcountynj.org, "once registered, vendors can download current opportunity documentation, stay up to date with the purchasing process, and track past awards."

For more help or information, please contact the following:

- New Jersey State Business Action Center, (866)-534-7789, www.nj.gov/njbusiness/contracting/;
- Essex County Department of Administration and Finance Office of Purchasing, (973)-621-5100, www.purchasing.essexcountynj.org, procure@admin.essexcountynj.org;
- Essex County Small Business Development and Affirmative Action Department, (973)-621-7958, www.ecbizcenter.com, resource@rsbd.essexcountynj.org.

A free non-mandatory State Contracts and Competitive Purchasing Workshop will also be held on August 17, 2017, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at McLoone's Boathouse located at 9 Cherry Lane in West Orange. To register, use the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/essex-county-state-contracts-competitive-purchasing-workshop-tickets-36112188528>.

For Additional Information:

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