

Boston Councilor Campbell Starts Push For New Minority Contract Goals

By Paul Singer
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Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell on Friday called on Mayor Marty Walsh and the city to establish aggressive targets for awarding city contracts for minority-owned businesses.

Campbell joins the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts in calling for more aggressive action by lawmakers [in the wake of a report](#) from WGBH News' New England Center for Investigative Reporting showing that the value of contracts won by minority businesses in Massachusetts has dropped over the past two decades.

"This has been an issue for so long and I think we don't have time to waste," Campbell told WGBH News. "We need more than what we currently have in the city, which is a committee. We need action. We need specific commitments and targets. And we have advocates that have been working on this issue for a long time that have brought us specific things that we can do."

Read more: [The Color Of Public Money](#)

In October, Walsh issued his second executive order in three years to press city agencies to do more to create business opportunities for minority contractors, but the order did not update numeric goals for minority participation in city contracts that were set out in his 2016 order.

John Barros, Walsh's chief of economic development, told WGBH News earlier this week that the city is working with its new Supplier Diversity Advisory Council to look for ways to boost minority contracts.

Campbell joined BECMA in calling for the city to set targets of 7 percent, 14 percent and 20 percent minority contracts over the next three years. City officials reported last year that less than 5 percent of city contracts went to minority-owned businesses.

Statewide, NECIR analyzed 13,000 publicly announced construction and services contracts from state and local agencies between 2008 and 2018 and found only about 250 had gone to minority contractors.

Campbell is also calling on the city to "host a symposium with leaders from other cities designed to solicit feedback on Boston's procurement process and develop a list of concrete recommendations for how to make it more equitable."

Campbell, who is on maternity leave but still participating in Council business, said she has not yet met with other Council members to talk about next steps, but she said other members — including Council President Kim Janey — have previously shown leadership on the issue.

"I think others will look at this," Campbell said. "I think they'll look at your work and say: We've been talking about this for far too long. What concrete action can we take as a collective? And how do we force the mayor and the administration to adopt specific targets and commitments and not continue to just keep pushing the issue down the pike?"