



Washington State

**OFFICE OF  
EQUITY**

## Improving State Contracting for Small Businesses

Communities across Washington continue to highlight the need to remove barriers to accessing state contracting opportunities. To address this need, Washington State agencies are working together to remove administrative burdens for small businesses in contracting.

The state agencies currently involved in this work are:

- Department of Commerce
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Department of Labor & Industries
- Department of Licensing
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Social and Human Services
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Employment Security Department
- Office of Equity
- Office of Financial Management
- Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises
- Office of Regulatory Innovation & Assistance
- Your Washington

We are currently collaborating on:

### **1. Direct Buy Policy**

Direct buy contracts remain one of the most accessible entry points for micro and small vendors. The state's direct buy policy was updated by DES in September 2025 to increase purchase limits and provide guidance to ensure fair and transparent contracting. We are tracking data to evaluate outcomes.

### **2. Improving Access to State Contracts**

A collaborative, enterprise-wide effort is underway to bring greater consistency and fairness to the state's contracting process. This initiative includes updating the state procurement manual to simplify requirements, align practices across agencies, and reduce administrative burdens—particularly for small and diverse businesses. Key progress is expected by Spring of 2026.

### **3. System Modernization & Transparency**

We are modernizing contracting technology systems to improve transparency, access, and user experience. Short-term improvements address immediate barriers to accessing opportunities while long-term solutions will explore new public portals, system enhancements, and a one-stop shop approach for external (e.g., [business.wa.gov](https://business.wa.gov)) and internal (e.g., [des.wa.gov](https://des.wa.gov)) contracting needs, following a no-wrong-door approach. This work involves collaboration with technical teams and partners across state government to ensure accessible, user-friendly solutions.

### **4. Prompt Payment Focus**

We are collaborating on a statewide strategy to ensure vendors — especially small businesses — are paid on time, strengthening their financial stability.

### **5. Supplier Diversity Dashboard**

We are developing a statewide supplier diversity dashboard to provide data transparency, strengthen accountability, and track progress toward increasing state spending with diverse vendors. The first version is expected by January 2026, with updates planned on an ongoing basis.

For more information about this collaboration or ideas to further access in contracting, please reach out to Katrina Tuggle at: [Katrina.tuggle@equity.wa.gov](mailto:Katrina.tuggle@equity.wa.gov).

“Washington for All”