



New York City Comptroller  
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Sharon Lee, (212) 669-3747

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**LIU: NEW ONLINE REPORT CARD  
TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL  
NEW YORKERS DOING BUSINESS WITH THE CITY**

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NEW YORK, NY – New York City Comptroller John C. Liu launched an unprecedented, online report card that for the first time sheds light on the city’s failure to spend with minority- and women-owned businesses.

**A WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION FOR INTERESTED MEDIA WILL TAKE PLACE AT 11:30 AM TODAY AT THE OFFICE OF THE CITY COMPTROLLER – 1 CENTRE STREET – ROOM 1200**

“There is no shortage of talent in New York City,” Comptroller Liu said. “The challenge is to make sure everyone has an equal chance to get a foot in the door. Right now the door is being slammed in the face of New York’s diverse and ambitious population. When government draws from a bigger talent pool it means increased competition for city dollars and greater savings for city taxpayers.”

“*M/WBE Report Card NYC*” gives the public user-friendly, interactive data that graphically presents just how much -- or how little -- each city agency spends from its eligible budget with minority- and women-owned business enterprises.

To date, the City has spent more than \$17 billion in 2010 that was eligible to go toward M/WBEs. Sadly, 2.3 percent was actually expended to date with registered minority- and women-owned businesses.

More troubling than the disparities highlighted by the “Report Card” is the sad reality that the M/WBE gap may even worse than the available data shows. While much has been touted in recent years regarding the City’s strides in M/WBE contracting, the City has no accurate system in place to track the billions of dollars spent on subcontractors.

“Despite the administration’s public posturing, little has been to level the playing field when it comes time for the city to assign necessary contracts,” Comptroller Liu stated. “The purpose of the M/WBE Report Card is not to point fingers. It’s our hope that everyone -- my office included -- finds in this report card motivation to do more to increase opportunities for all New Yorkers.”

As a legislator, Comptroller Liu was a staunch advocate for Local Law 129 which was enacted December 29, 2005 to “enhance the ability of minority and women owned business enterprises to compete for city contracts.” Five years later, it is clear the City has not kept its promise.

The Comptroller’s Audit Bureau has uncovered agencies failing to comply with Local Law 129’s M/WBE hiring mandates, including a report in October that found the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development made no effort to verify or account for M/WBE spending. In fact, it seemed that there was no proof that prime contractors were in fact using M/WBEs as subcontractors on City projects. Other audits into M/WBE spending will be released in the coming weeks, and highlights the need for more oversight into how the program is measured.

The Comptroller’s Office has undertaken proactive initiatives to expand opportunities. When hiring senior managers for a large bond sale this summer, Comptroller Liu held a “bake-off” for competitive bids instead of turning to the usual rotation of firms to lead the deal. As a result of leveling the playing field, Loop Capital, a minority-owned firm, won the bid and performed so well the bond sale was increased to \$1 billion. The resulting bond refinancing had a direct result on taxpayers, saving New Yorkers \$82 million.

“Greater transparency is not an end in itself. It has to serve the public as tool to bring about smarter use of taxpayers’ money,” Comptroller Liu said.

The M/WBE Report Card will be updated daily using data from the City’s Financial Management System to identify and record all City expenditures on prime contracts. The data is based on actual spending to date, not expected expenditures over the lifespan of long-term contracts. In addition to providing a trove of data, the Report Card includes a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section and resources for companies and others interested in learning how to register as an M/WBE and find available City contracts.

Comptroller Liu credited Simcha Felder, Deputy Comptroller for Accountancy & Budget, and Chief Information Officer Mike Bott and their respective teams for coming up with this unparalleled tool for public accountability.

The M/WBE Report Card – available at [www.mymoneynyc.com](http://www.mymoneynyc.com) -- is part of Comptroller Liu’s broader “My Money NYC” transparency initiative that gives New Yorkers unparalleled access to information about the City’s finances, encourages community-government collaboration on fiscal matters and provides user friendly performance measures.

Other applications include:

- Checkbook NYC – A comprehensive online database of City expenditures, launched July 1, that makes billions in spending accessible at the public’s fingertips.
- Open Audit NYC– An interactive website where New Yorkers can submit ideas for audits to save the City money, increase revenue and improve agency efficiency.
- ClearView NYC– A searchable database of City contracts registered with the Comptroller’s Office.

Supporters of Comptroller Liu’s M/WBE Report Card said the following:

Congresswomen Nydia Velazquez (D-NY): “As we recover from this latest economic recession we must work to repair the economic imbalances that exist in our communities. The M/WBE Report

Card takes a much-needed step toward leveling the playing field by holding the City accountable for its poor record of hiring businesses owned by women and minorities. The vast majority of New York's work force is comprised of women and people of color. Government should reflect the diversity of the taxpayers it represents when it spends their money.”

New York State Senator Jose Peralta: “I commend City Comptroller Liu for his efforts to not only make city government more efficient, but more equitable as well. It is troubling in this day and age, when minorities and women make up almost 80 percent of the city's population, to see so few city contracts with MWBEs. As a city and state, we need to do a much better job of having our contracting practices be truly reflective of whom we are. This tool is an important step toward that end.”

New York City Councilmember Julissa Ferreras: “Empowerment for women and minorities in New York requires full participation in our city's economy. The M/WBE Report Card will provide transparency and accountability so New Yorkers can see whether public money is being spent fairly. As Chairperson of the Council's Women's Issues Committee, I am proud to stand with Comptroller Liu as we roll out this progressive and enlightening tool.”

New York City Councilmember Brad Lander: “This project is an excellent example of how the internet can be used to bring public data into light in a smart and easy-to-use format, while highlighting an area of policy where the city has badly underperformed for too long. The fact that so few of our contracting dollars are going to historically-underrepresented women and minority-owned contractors four years after the passage of Local Law 129 highlights a need to strongly rethink how this program is working.”

New York City Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito: “The M/WBE Report Card will bring much needed transparency and give us a real time accounting of the City's contracting with our Minority and Women Owned Businesses. Unfortunately, so many of our city agencies are far behind where they should be when it comes to expanding contracting opportunities for our M/WBEs, even though actively recruiting these businesses typically represents a direct investment in our communities. I thank Comptroller John Liu for taking the leadership on this initiative, which will allow for greater scrutiny of the City's performance on contracting with M/WBEs.”

New York City Councilmember Darlene Mealy: “This is a huge breakthrough that sheds light on the way the city does business. No longer can the city hide behind skewed data and political rhetoric. Transparency is a must and now we can actually see who's doing their jobs and who's non-compliant. The M/WBE program is important and must be framed as such. This website will either bring praises or shame to city agencies and their business practices.”

New York City Councilmember Diana Reyna: “Since the inception of the MWBE program, the data and funding supporting the initiative remain obscure – hidden behind the veil of bureaucracy – to the many minority and women-owned businesses, elected officials and to the general public throughout New York. My colleagues and I champion the City's diversity and are continually collaborating to increase transparency within the administration to remove any uncertainty. The M/WBE Report Card aims to increase opportunities for all New Yorkers and challenge how the government spends taxpayer dollars to better reflect our dynamic population.”

New York City Councilmember James Sanders Jr.: “As the father of Local Law 129, I am deeply disappointed at its abject failure. It is a sad thing when minority businesses have a better chance to

make it in Selma, Alabama, with its sordid racial history, than in “liberal” New York City. Comptroller John Liu's efforts to correct this is a noble effort during these tough times, and he is to be commended,”

New York City Councilmember Jumaane Williams: “It is imperative that city agencies make giving contracts to M/WBE’s a priority. Council Member Lander and I released a report on the city’s shortcomings back in September. I am glad that Comptroller Liu went even further by implementing a way to really gauge the City's progress. For years prior, the City has refused or was unable to do the same. The upcoming M/WBE Report Card will be a great tool to hold the City accountable.”

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