



**NATIONAL COALITION OF 100 BLACK WOMEN, INC.**

Bergen/Passaic Chapter | Central New Jersey Chapter | Southern New Jersey Chapter

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# **Support for New Jersey State Agencies to Include Minority and Women-Owned Businesses for State Contracts**

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*Legislative Day at the New Jersey State Capitol*

**May 18, 2026**

**Bills Addressed:**

A3496 • S3925 • A4586

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Jersey's state contracting landscape reflects longstanding and well-documented disparities in access for minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBEs). Despite representing a significant share of available firms, MWBEs—and Black-owned businesses in particular—have received a disproportionately small fraction of public contract dollars. The National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW), through its Bergen/Passaic, Central New Jersey, and Southern New Jersey Chapters, presents this white paper in support of a legislative package designed to directly address these inequities.

This paper examines three pieces of legislation currently before the New Jersey Legislature:

- **A3496:** Assembly Bill A3496 — Requires State agencies to make a good-faith effort to increase unadvertised contracts awarded to certified MWBEs by 30 percent over five years, with mandatory reporting and oversight.
- **S3925:** Senate Bill S3925 — Establishes a price preference program so that MWBE bids remain competitive even when slightly higher than the lowest bid, directly addressing scale and pricing disadvantages faced by smaller firms.
- **A4586:** Assembly Bill A4586 — A companion legislative package that strengthens equity, accountability, and inclusive procurement practices across state agencies.

Together, these bills represent structural interventions — not quotas — aimed at expanding access, increasing competition, and building a more equitable New Jersey economy. Inclusive procurement benefits not only individual business owners but also local communities, taxpayers, and the state's competitive vendor pool. NCBW urges New Jersey legislators to advance this legislative package as a meaningful investment in economic justice and community prosperity.

### Key Findings

**< 1%**

of awarded State contracts received by Black-owned businesses (2015–2020) Source: African-American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey

**~4%**

of State contract dollars awarded to minority-owned businesses, despite representing 23%+ of available firms Source: NJ Department of the Treasury, 2024 Disparity Study

**~9%**

of New Jersey businesses are Black-owned — far exceeding their share of public contracts

These figures are not incidental. They reflect structural barriers including limited access to procurement networks, reduced visibility into bidding opportunities, administrative burdens, and historic exclusion from public-sector contracting. The 2024 New Jersey Department of the Treasury disparity study confirms that MWBEs remain significantly underrepresented — and that intentional policy action is required to close the gap.

## Assembly Bill A3496

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Good-Faith Effort to Increase MWBE Participation in State Contracts

### Overview

A3496 requires New Jersey State agencies to make a documented good-faith effort to increase the share of unadvertised contracts awarded to certified minority- and women-owned businesses by 30 percent over five years. The bill mandates regular agency reporting every 30 days and bi-annual implementation reports to the Governor and Legislature.

#### What This Bill Does NOT Do

A3496 does not establish quotas or guarantee contract awards based on race or gender. It strengthens outreach, monitoring, and good-faith procurement practices to ensure broader access while maintaining competitive standards and full compliance with State and federal law.

### Why It Matters

MWBEs face compounding disadvantages in the State procurement process: limited visibility into contract opportunities, under-resourced administrative capacity, and a history of exclusion from established procurement networks. A3496 addresses these barriers by placing affirmative responsibility on State agencies to expand their outreach and track their progress.

The broader economic impact is significant. MWBEs are more likely to hire locally, reinvest within their communities, and contribute to generational economic stability. Expanding the vendor pool also fosters innovation and improves competition — outcomes that benefit the State directly.

## NCBW Position

The National Coalition of 100 Black Women strongly supports A3496 and urges New Jersey legislators to advance it as a critical investment in supplier diversity, economic empowerment, and sustainable community growth.

## Senate Bill S3925

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Establishing a Price Preference Program for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses

### Overview

S3925 establishes a price preference program for certified MWBEs competing for State contracts. The bill allows MWBE bids to remain under consideration even when slightly higher than the lowest submitted bid, directly addressing the pricing and scale disadvantages that cause many qualified MWBE firms to lose contracts not on quality, but on cost competitiveness alone.

Originally introduced and sponsored by Assemblywoman Angela V. McKnight, S3925 is a holdover bill from the 2024–2025 legislative session, currently in Senate committee. It requires additional sponsorship to advance.

### Status & Action Needed

S3925 is currently in Senate committee and needs expanded bipartisan sponsorship to advance. NCBW 100 urges legislators to co-sponsor this bill and support its passage in the current session.

### The Problem It Solves

Black women business owners in New Jersey are routinely outbid for State contracts — not because of inferior work, but because larger, established firms benefit from economies of scale that smaller MWBE firms cannot match. Without a price preference mechanism, qualified MWBEs are effectively excluded from meaningful participation in public contracting regardless of merit.

If S3925 is not enacted, Black women business owners will continue to face structural exclusion from State-funded contracts and the wealth-building opportunities they represent. State contracting will remain concentrated among large firms, perpetuating existing inequities.

### NCBW 100 Position

NCBW 100 believes that expanding bipartisan sponsorship of S3925 would significantly increase its chances of passage — and that passage would open meaningful economic mobility and generational wealth-building opportunities for thousands of minority-owned women businesses across New Jersey.

## Assembly Bill A4586

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### Strengthening Equity, Accountability, and Inclusive Procurement Across State Agencies

#### Overview

This companion legislative package reflects New Jersey's growing statewide commitment to equity, public safety, and economic justice — priorities that directly align with the mission and core pillars of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women.

For Black women — who continue to face persistent disparities in homeownership, wage equity, and access to capital — these bills represent more than incremental policy changes. They are structural interventions designed to dismantle long-standing barriers and ensure that Black women are not only protected by law, but positioned to participate fully in New Jersey's economic future.

#### Community Impact

From a policy and community impact perspective, A4586 takes definitive and measurable steps to center Black women in New Jersey's equity agenda. Key impact areas include:

- Housing stability and homeownership access
- Consumer fairness and protection from systemic bias
- Expanded participation in state and local economic opportunity
- Accountability mechanisms that translate legislative intent into measurable outcomes

#### NCBW 100's Position

NCBW 100 is uniquely positioned to serve as both a thought partner and accountability stakeholder — ensuring these laws translate into tangible community-level benefits. This includes advancing education and outreach so Black women understand their rights, advocating for equitable enforcement, and partnering with municipalities and agencies to close gaps in access and outcomes.

The state benefits when bids are open to a wider and more diverse field, increasing competition and expanding access to innovative solutions. Aligning these policies with culturally competent, community-driven strategies is not only the right approach — it is the most effective one.

## Recommendations

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The National Coalition of 100 Black Women calls on New Jersey legislators to take the following actions:

- **1. Pass A3496** — advance this bill as a data-driven, accountability-centered step toward equitable state procurement.

- **2.** Expand sponsorship of S3925 — recruit additional bipartisan co-sponsors to move this bill out of committee and to a floor vote.
- **3.** Advance A1720, S3639, and A4586 — pass this companion package to strengthen the structural framework for equity and inclusion across state agencies.
- **4.** Invest in MWBE outreach and capacity-building — ensure that procurement opportunities are communicated to businesses that have historically lacked access to State contracting networks.
- **5.** Establish clear reporting and accountability standards — require agencies to publicly report MWBE participation data and hold leadership accountable for progress toward stated goals.

These are not radical proposals. They are targeted, legally sound, and economically sound investments in a more competitive, inclusive, and equitable New Jersey. The data is clear. The need is documented. The moment calls for action.

## About the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.

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The National Coalition of 100 Black Women (NCBW 100) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of Black women and girls to promote leadership development and gender equity in the areas of health, education and economic empowerment.

Through its Bergen/Passaic, Central New Jersey, and Southern New Jersey Chapters, NCBW 100 is uniquely positioned to serve as both a thought partner and accountability stakeholder — ensuring these laws translate into tangible community-level benefits. This includes advancing education and outreach so Black women understand their rights, advocating for equitable enforcement, and partnering with municipalities and agencies to close gaps in access and outcomes.

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