



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

April 12, 2005

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COUNCIL APPROVES PROGRAM TO BOOST COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS ACCESS TO COUNTY GOVT. CONTRACTS

The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved legislation that will require County departments for the first time to reserve 10 percent of their procurement opportunities for Montgomery County small businesses. It will also require that individual County departments post informal procurement opportunities on the internet.

"Small businesses are the backbone of this County," said Council President Tom Perez. "They deserve a fair chance to do business with County government."

By awarding 10 percent of all procurement opportunities to the best bids submitted by Montgomery County small businesses, the legislation seeks to enhance competition by broadening the pool of vendors doing business with the County and will ensure that more Montgomery County residents benefit from these opportunities. The Maryland General Assembly last year passed similar legislation creating a state small business "reserve."

"It is only fair and reasonable that small business owners get a fair shake," said Councilmember George Leventhal. "The little guy should be able to play."

"It will help to level the playing field for small businesses," said Councilmember Steve Silverman. "They deserve an equal opportunity to compete."

County Department heads directly make more than 4,500 purchases for goods and services under \$25,000. These informal procurement opportunities totaled \$14 million in fiscal year 2003. In addition to the 10 percent reserve, this legislation will require posting of opportunities in the \$5,000 to \$25,000 range on the County website, giving small businesses that may have been previously unknown to the Department the opportunity to provide their best bid.

"County small businesses are the base of our growing local economy," said Councilmember Floreen. "They and their thousands of employees should get fair consideration in the County's contracting process."

The start date for the program is January 1, 2006, or earlier if practicable. # # #

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