

Form Name: 2025 Annual Reports for Boards, Commissions and Similar Entities  
Submission Time: December 17, 2025 7:23 pm  
Browser: Chrome 143.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 65.202.206.129  
Unique ID: 1415717347  
Location: 37.5702, -77.4239

## 2025 Annual Report For Boards and Commissions

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**Name of Board, Commission or Similar Entity** Minority Business Enterprise and Emerging Small Business Advisory Board

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**Current members (indicate chair, vice-chair, etc.)** Chair, Ms. Adrienne Whitaker  
Vice Chair, Ms. Shirley Crawford  
Mr. Morris Cephas  
Ms. Cynthia Williams-Bey (New)  
Ms. Le'Teshia Lesane  
Ms. Grace Washington  
Ms. Shemicia Bowen (New)

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**Is there any proposed legislation on which the board or commission recommends that the City Council or the General Assembly act?** Yes - Select Yes to upload documents

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**Meeting Dates of meetings held in 2025** January 27, 2025  
February 24, 2025  
March 17, 2025 (Changed from March 24, 2025)  
April 28, 2025  
May 19, 2025 (Changed from May 26, 2025)  
June 23, 2025  
July 21, 2025 (Changed from July 28, 2025)  
August 25, 2025  
September 22, 2025  
October 27, 2025  
November 17, 2025 (Changed from November 24, 2025)  
December 15, 2025 (Changed from December 22, 2025)

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Not applicable

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**Is the 2025 meeting attendance record included?** Yes - Select Yes to upload documents

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**Is a copy of the body's current by-laws or rules of procedures attached?** Yes - Select Yes to upload documents

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**New Projects**

1.MBL Partnership/Awards Banquet Detail. Partner with the Metropolitan Business League to present during their Annual Awards and Reception Event the "City of Richmond Minority Business of the Year Award".

2.Develop a vehicle and process for providing financial and educational resources to disenfranchised minority businesses.

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Not applicable

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# Attendance Record 2025

X = Present

		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	#	%
1	Mr. Morris Cephas	X	X				X	X	X	X				6	54.5%
2	Ms. Shirley Crawford	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X		8	72.7%
3	Ms. Le'Teshia LeSane	X	X						X	X		X		5	45.5%
4	Ms. Adrienne Whitaker	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X		8	72.7%
5	Ms. Grace Washington	X						X	X	X	X	X		6	54.5%
6	Ms. Shemicia Bowen						X	X		X		X		4	36.4%
7	Ms. Cynthia Williams-Bey											X		1	9.1%
8	Mr. Lester Johnson	X												1	9.1%
9														0	0.0%
10														0	0.0%
11														0	0.0%
12														0	0.0%
13														0	0.0%
14														0	0.0%
15														0	0.0%
16														0	0.0%
17														0	0.0%
18														0	0.0%
19														0	0.0%
20														0	0.0%
21														0	0.0%
22														0	0.0%
23														0	0.0%
24														0	0.0%
25														0	0.0%
# in Attendance:		6	4	0	0	0	4	5	5	6	3	6	0		

Meeting for March, April, May, and December were cancelled.

Ms. Shemicia Bowen and Ms. Cynthia Williams-Bey are our newest members

Mr. Lester Johnson term ended

# **Minority Business Enterprise – Emerging Small Business (MBE–ESB) Advisory Board**

## **Executive Summary**

The MBE–ESB Advisory Board submits these legislative and policy recommendations to strengthen equity, accountability, and inclusion in public contracting, procurement, and economic development at both the local and state levels.

At the City level, the Advisory Board recommends establishing a legally compliant and standardized framework for minority participation in contracting, supported by clearer accountability and oversight mechanisms. The Board also recommends modernizing meeting requirements to allow limited use of virtual meetings to improve participation and operational efficiency.

At the state level, the Advisory Board urges the Virginia General Assembly to preserve and protect Small, Women-, and Minority-owned (SWaM) business programs that promote equitable access to procurement opportunities. The Board further recommends extending the authorization of the Minority Business Commission beyond its current sunset date to ensure continuity and long-term impact.

The Advisory Board also identifies key legislative concerns related to access to capital, support for emerging and mid-size businesses, and public communication and engagement by the Office of Minority Business Development. Addressing these priorities will strengthen Richmond’s economic ecosystem, promote inclusive growth, and enhance transparency and effectiveness in minority business development efforts.

## **Legislative and Policy Recommendations and Legislative Concerns**

### **I. Recommendations to the Richmond City Council**

#### **A. Minority Participation Requirements in Contracting**

The MBE–ESB Advisory Board recommends that the Richmond City Council review and re-evaluate the City’s policies and procedures governing minority participation requirements in public contracting, including enforcement mechanisms, penalties, and sanctions applicable when agreed-upon participation levels are not achieved.

The Advisory Board notes that the City’s prior Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Goal-Setting Program was invalidated pursuant to *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Company*. As a result, the City’s current approach relies primarily on aspirational guidelines rather than enforceable standards.

The Advisory Board recommends that the City establish a standardized, legally compliant framework for minority participation that promotes transparency, accountability, and consistency across departments, while ensuring adherence to applicable constitutional and statutory requirements.

**B. Accountability and Oversight in the Allocation of Public Funds**

The MBE–ESB Advisory Board recommends that the City Council implement additional structure, monitoring, and accountability measures related to minority participation in the awarding and allocation of City funds.

**C. Advisory Board Meeting Flexibility**

The MBE–ESB Advisory Board recommends that the City Council amend the applicable provisions of the City Code governing Advisory Board meetings to permit limited use of virtual meetings, specifically authorizing up to one virtual meeting per quarter.

**II. Recommendations to the Virginia General Assembly**

**A. Preservation and Protection of SWaM Programs**

The MBE–ESB Advisory Board recommends legislative action to preserve and protect Small, Women-, and Minority-owned (SWaM) business programs that promote equitable access to procurement opportunities.

**B. Extension of the Minority Business Commission**

The Advisory Board recommends eliminating or extending the statutory sunset provision applicable to the Minority Business Commission through at least July 1, 2032.

**III. Legislative Concerns**

**A. Access to Capital and Financial Resources**

The Advisory Board recommends increased communication regarding available loan and grant programs and supports the development of a Small Business Resource Guide.

**B. Support for Emerging and Mid-Size Businesses**

The Advisory Board recommends targeted investments in emerging, regional, and mid-size businesses to foster inclusive economic growth.

**C. Public Communication and Engagement by the Office of Minority Business Development**

The Advisory Board recommends strengthening public communication and engagement by the Office of Minority Business Development through improved digital resources, public forums, and strategic funding reallocation.