



30 December 2020

The Hon. Candi CdeBaca
Denver City Councilwoman for District 9
City and County Building
1437 Bannock St., Rm. 451
Denver, CO 80202

Re: Neglect of Latino firms by DEN procurement contracting

Dear Ms. CdeBaca:

The Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy, & Research Organization, a 57-year-old nonprofit (formerly known as LARASA) is deeply concerned about the disproportionate health and economic burden COVID-19 is having on Denver's Latino residents. Denver's Latino-owned businesses and their employees are bearing more than their fair share of that burden. That excessive economic burden on Denver Latinos is expected to continue for at least the next two years.

This is the wrong time to cut back on the City's commitment to contracting with minority and women owned small business enterprises in Denver. Earlier this year, City Council did the right thing by reauthorizing the Denver Small Business Opportunity Ordinance (DSBO) to assure equity for small minority- and women-owned firms on public contracts. But today in actual practice, major procurement projects at Denver International Airport appear to ignore that commitment.

A flagrant example is the large DEN janitorial contract proposed for Flagship Facilities Services of Irving, Texas, to be considered by City Council on January 4th. The proposed contract makes no progress at increasing participation by Latino firms at DEN. We see no evidence of unbundling large contracts at DEN to increase participation by local MWBE certified city government contractors, contrary to commitments made during DSBO reauthorization by City Council last April.

We fear that when it comes to major procurement contracts at DEN, Denver's DBSO will prove to be nothing but empty promises. Given the economic damage that today's pandemic will continue inflicting upon Latinos in Denver for years to come, we urge you and your City Council colleagues to require DEN to do better.

Sincerely,

Michael Eduardo Cortes, MSW, MPP, PhD
Executive Director

By email: district9@denvergov.org

Cc The Hon. Michael Hancock
Ms. Kim Day