FACT SHEET

Economic Opportunity

Minority, Women and Local Community Commitment
Construction Contracting and Workforce

Historically, Columbia University has maintained a high standard of including minority, women and local (MWL) construction contracting and workforce as part of its work ethic. During the Community Benefits Agreement negotiation, the University increased its MWL commitment from 25 percent construction contracting to 35 percent of all construction contracting spend. And, the workforce commitment increased from 35 percent to 40 percent. The commitment spans the life of the several-decades-long project and became one of the highest standards in New York State.

The commitment limits the goal to non-specialized work due to the lack of MWL firms that specialized in the areas needed for the 21st-century campus. Even with the focus on non-specialized work, the University required the construction management firm and subcontractors to work toward the highest possible goal and reviewed every contract in light of the commitment.

With the strong collaborative efforts of all involved, Columbia is tracking toward meeting or surpassing the multidecade commitment. Cumulatively from August 1, 2008, through June 30, 2016, Columbia paid more than $132 million to MWL firms for non-specialty construction work, representing 34 percent of non-specialty construction spend.* Cumulatively from August 1, 2008, through June 30, 2016, the MWL construction workforce delivered 1,191,851 hours worked for non-specialty construction work, representing 50 percent of the non-specialty workforce hours for the construction of the new Manhattanville campus.

A report outlining construction spend and workforce is submitted quarterly to Empire State Development (ESD) and is available to view online at manhattanville.columbia.edu.

“Columbia University has been a good partner and I look forward to building an even stronger relationship with them. The Manhattanville campus is a long-term construction project, so we have the opportunity to truly build a great campus and strengthen the community at the same time.”

—Lavon Chambers, Assistant Director, Greater New York LECET, Locals 78 and 79
Specialty Construction

Below-grade construction in an urban environment can be particularly difficult. Utilizing a “top-down construction” approach along with the unique topography within the Manhattanville footprint, including a high groundwater table, the need for deep and narrow excavation and other conditions, required very specialized approaches and construction techniques, including the building of a slurry wall. The complex construction allowed for concurrent excavation and steel erection for the Jerome L. Greene Science Center and Lenfest Center for the Arts.

Slurry walls are uncommon in New York City for building construction, and after extensive research, only one other area in New York City was found that has used slurry walls with “top-down” construction: The New York Law School in Lower Manhattan.

As of June 2016, in the specialty area, which is not part of the commitment, over $91 million was spent with MWL construction contracting firms, representing 26 percent, and nearly half a million hours of construction work were performed by MWL workers, for a total 38 percent.

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<tr>
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<th>MWL Non-Specialty Contracting Spend</th>
<th>MWL Specialty Contracting Spend</th>
<th>TOTAL MWL Contracting Spend</th>
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<td>$132,659,624*</td>
<td>$91,609,887*</td>
<td>$224,269,511*</td>
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*Figures presented exclude the amount paid to the construction management firm.

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<th>MWL Non-Specialty Workforce Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,191,851</td>
<td>482,832</td>
<td>1,674,683</td>
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Manhattanville Campus

The largest and most ambitious capital project undertaken by Columbia University since its landmark Morningside Heights campus (McKim, Mead and White, dedicated 1896), the Manhattanville campus was proposed by University President Lee C. Bollinger in 2003. It is designed to provide the innovative academic space that will keep Columbia at the forefront of the world’s research universities and fulfill its mission to address society’s challenges through the creation of new knowledge. Defining Columbia’s building footprint for decades to come, the 17-acre campus is intended to create a different kind of space than in the past, with facilities that encourage the University-wide, cross-disciplinary interaction that is crucial to advances in all fields, and reflective of New York’s dynamism. At the same time, the open, sustainable campus is designed to deepen the connections between Columbia and its local community, so that the City and the University can enliven and strengthen each other. The Manhattanville campus plan will enable Columbia to extend beyond its beloved but enclosed Morningside Heights setting with an open, welcoming campus, embedded in New York’s existing street grid without traditional gates or barriers. The long-term plan will eventually create 6.8 million square feet of new academic space, as well as more than an acre of publicly accessible green space, landscaped paths and street-level commercial and civic facilities open to the public.

Learn more at manhattanville.columbia.edu