

the state was planning to undertake another disparity study to update the state's data.⁷⁵ Should disparities be found, the state's Business Enterprise Program is authorized to establish other sheltered programs to provide targeted remedies for specific minority groups in given industries.⁷⁶

Like Tennessee, other states have also commissioned disparity studies, with Indiana, Virginia, and North Carolina all having produced disparity studies within the past several years. As in Tennessee's own 2009 study, these other states do show disparities in most categories, including for African American-owned businesses both on the whole and in particular industries. Virginia, for instance, showed a disparity ratio of 0.49 among African American-owned businesses, which counts as a significant level of disparity.⁷⁷ North Carolina's study reported an even more sizable disparity ratio of 0.04 for African American-owned businesses in the non-professional services category, with still lower figures in other industries.⁷⁸

Recent disparity studies from other states often make similar recommendations to address the disparities they find. Studies from Colorado, Virginia, and Washington, for example, all recommend making improvements to their outreach and technical assistance programs. Virginia's study suggests that the state should consider various technical assistance, business development, mentor-protégé, and joint venture programs to help businesses build the capacity required to compete for relatively large Commonwealth and HEI contracts and procurements.⁷⁹ Studies from Indiana, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington all include recommendations for improved data collection. Washington's study goes as far as saying improved data collection and monitoring is "[p]erhaps the most critical recommendation" and that "[t]he ability to track M/WBE participation at the highly detailed level of 6-digit NAICS codes for prime vendors and all subcontractors (not just certified firms) is the foundation for any efforts to increase opportunities."⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Illinois Department of Central Management Services 2020.

⁷⁶ Illinois Department of Central Management Services 2021.

⁷⁷ BBC Research and Consulting 2020b.

⁷⁸ Griffin and Strong 2020.

⁷⁹ Keen Independent Research 2020 (Colorado); BBC Research and Consulting 2020a (Indiana); Griffin and Strong 2020 (North Carolina); BBC Research and Consulting 2020b (Virginia); Colette Holt and Associates 2019 (Washington).

