

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER

CHRIS HOLLINS, CITY CONTROLLER



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City Controller Chris Hollins Mobilizes Houston's Response to State HUB Program Suspension

*Hollins takes swift action to convene business leaders and protect opportunity
for minority- and women-owned entrepreneurs across Houston*

HOUSTON — In response to the Texas Comptroller's suspension of new and renewed certifications under the state's Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program, [Houston City Controller Chris Hollins](#) took swift action to unite local business leaders and community partners in defense of economic opportunity for minority- and women-owned businesses.

After initiating outreach to key business and community organizations—including the Greater Houston Black Chamber, the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Houston LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce, and others—the Controller's Office will convene stakeholders to develop a unified strategy for protecting small business growth and access to opportunity. The goal: to chart a clear path forward for entrepreneurs navigating the uncertainty created by the state's decision.

"The strength of Houston lies in the dreams of all its people, including the entrepreneurs of every background who built this city from the ground up," said Controller Hollins. "While the state creates obstacles for small business owners, Houston must continue to deliver solutions. That's why we're coming together immediately, not to dwell on setbacks, but to design the next phase of opportunity for our city. Our action is guided by the simple principle that fairness and access are non-negotiable foundations of our economy."

Effective October 28, the Texas Comptroller's Office halted new applications and renewals for HUB certification as it reviews program rules in response to ongoing court challenges and federal policy changes. The move has created uncertainty for thousands of small businesses across Texas—including many in Houston—that rely on HUB certification for visibility and access to contracting opportunities.

Dr. Asheli Atkins, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Black Chamber, said the decision underscores the importance of collaboration across Houston's business community. "Black-owned businesses are essential economic engines for Houston," she said. "We're committed to working with the Controller and business leaders across the city to advocate for fair access and ongoing opportunity."

"The Greater Houston LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce stands united with our partners across the city to protect equitable opportunity for every entrepreneur," said Tammi Wallace, President and CEO of the Greater Houston LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce. "Our diverse business community is Houston's strength, and it's essential that LGBTQ+-owned and other minority-owned businesses continue to have a fair shot to grow, compete, and contribute to our city's success."

Houston has long been recognized as one of the most entrepreneurial and diverse cities in America, consistently ranked among the top for business creation. With hundreds of thousands small businesses and startups driving the local economy, entrepreneurship fuels innovation, job creation, and community growth across every neighborhood. That legacy of innovation is what's now at risk—and what Houston's leaders are determined to protect.

"Entrepreneurship and diversity are at the heart of who we are as a city," said Hollins. "We must continue to ensure fairness and foster innovation to keep Houston a place where everyone can build and belong."

Under Hollins's leadership, the Controller's Office and its partners are taking immediate steps to protect opportunity and strengthen inclusion. These efforts aim to keep Houston's business community strong and inclusive while preparing for the future:

- Host a joint roundtable with entrepreneurs and civic leaders to identify urgent challenges and share ideas for short- and long-term solutions.
- Coordinate guidance and resources to help small businesses navigate changes and maintain access to city and private contracting opportunities.
- Advocate for local and state policies that preserve equitable access and strengthen pathways for minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses.
- Encourage public and private partners to ensure inclusion and fairness throughout procurement processes.

"No single policy change should erase generations of progress," Hollins said. "By standing together—business, government, and community—we will protect what makes Houston strong: our diversity, our innovation, and our commitment to opportunity for all."

Businesses and organizations interested in participating or sharing feedback can contact the Controller's Office at 832-940-7263.

ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER'S OFFICE: Established in 1903, the City of Houston Controller's Office is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America's fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston's fiscal integrity and protect residents' tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City's financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller's Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS: Chris Hollins, serving as Houston's City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city's fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins's commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties.

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