

Edgemoor Invites Women, Minority Contractors To Weigh In On Plans For New KCI

By [ANDREA TUDHOPE](#) • JAN 16, 2018

[kcur.org](#)

Over 100 people gathered Tuesday afternoon for a community forum on labor for the construction of Kansas City's new single terminal airport.

The event drew a diverse crowd, roughly half of which indicated by a show of hands that they were M/WBEs, or minority or woman owned business enterprises.

That's what Edgemoor — the Maryland-based developer the city selected to lead the \$1 billion project — was hoping for when it called the meeting.

In a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the city, Edgemoor promised 35 percent participation on site for minority and women-owned construction firms. Although that [MOU was rejected by City Council in December](#), the pledge remains, but it would be nearly impossible to meet, says Edgemoor, if it can only hire union workers.

This issue was at the forefront of Tuesday's discussion. Almost every audience member who came forward with a question for the panel — which consisted of union leaders and representatives from the companies set to build the terminal — asked how they planned to make sure the airport's construction workforce would be diverse and inclusive.

Panelist Alise Martiny — who represents Kansas City's construction trade and organized labor unions — believes the union could help achieve these goals, despite the construction union's history of exclusion.

"I've been in trades for 37 years. As a woman, it was hard for me to get in, but a lot has changed," says Martiny, business manager for the Greater Kansas City Building and Construction Trades Council.

"It's all about barriers that were created a long time ago," she says. "We need to break those barriers and provide opportunity."

Marcus Williams of Triple 777 Construction came before the panel to say that he tried unionized work, but was treated unfairly.

"For the MBE contractor who never had a shot, roll your sleeves up," he told the panel. "Carve something out for the little guy."

Negotiations on the makeup of the workforce for the project will continue as Edgemoor and the city work toward a final memorandum of understanding. The developer hopes to factor in community feedback from Tuesday's meeting, as well as a second meeting Thursday at 3 pm, again at the Minority Contractors Association.