
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Senator Susan Rubio

Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 1358	Hearing Date:	4/14/2026
Author:	Rubio		
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Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
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SUBJECT: News outlets: state expenditures on ethnic and community media outlets

DIGEST: This bill expands the responsibilities of the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (Office) by requiring it to establish and maintain a database of ethnic and community media outlets. The bill also requires the Office to annually submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing how state agencies spend funds on marketing and outreach advertising. Additionally, the bill authorizes a state agency to award a contract for the acquisition of advertising or marketing services that has an estimated value of less than \$350,000 to an ethnic or community media outlet, as long as the agency obtains price quotations from two or more community media outlets. Finally, the bill requires state agencies to direct at least 40% of their annual advertising spending to ethnic and community media outlets.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Office and requires the office to assist in marketing, advertising, and outreach to priority populations, as defined.
- 2) Defines “priority populations” to mean members of underserved, disadvantage, and hard-to-reach communities, including, but not limited to, people who are any of the following:
 - a) Asian American.
 - b) Black or African American.
 - c) Immigrants or refugees.
 - d) Native American or members of Tribal communities.
 - e) Latinx.

- f) LGBTQ+
 - g) Limited English proficiency.
 - h) Middle Eastern or North African.
 - i) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
 - j) People with disabilities.
 - k) Religious minorities.
 - l) Low-income communities.
- 3) Requires state agencies that expend funds on marketing, advertising, or outreach to develop a plan for increasing expenditures directed to ethnic media outlets and community media outlets, as those terms are defined. State agencies are required, until January 1, 2029, to annually report their progress in implementing these plans.
- 4) Defines “ethnic media outlet” to mean an entity that provides a substantial amount of ethnic media content through broadcast, print, or digital means, including television, radio, or online outlets on a daily, weekly, or other regular interval, and that has continuously produced content for at least one year.
- 5) Defines “ethnic media” to mean any organization that produces news or culturally relevant media that serves ethnic, racial, or cultural communities residing in California, including priority populations, racial and linguistic minorities, immigrant communities, indigenous groups, and other historically underserved and underrepresented groups.
- 6) Defines “community media outlet” to mean a nonprofit organization, small business, or microbusiness, in which at least one-half of the content is originally produced community news and cultural content of specific interest to a community, city, neighborhood, or region in the state through broadcast, print, or digital means, including television, radio, or online outlets on a daily, weekly, or other regular interval, and that has continuously produced that content for at least one year.
- 7) Authorizes, under the Small Business Procurement and Contract Act, a state agency to award contract for the acquisition of goods, services, and information technology (IT) that has an estimated value of greater than \$5,000, but less than \$250,000, to a certified small business (SB), including a microbusiness, or a disabled veteran business enterprise (DVBE), as long as the agency obtains price quotations from two or more SBs or DVBEs, without complying with specified competitive bidding requirements.

- 8) Defines a “small business” to mean an independently owned and operated business that is not dominant in its field of operation, the principal office of which is located in California, the officers of which are domiciled in California, and which, together with affiliates, has 100 or fewer employees, and average annual gross receipts of \$10 million or less over the previous three years, or is a manufacturer, as defined, and has 100 or fewer employees.
- 9) Requires a state agency that significantly regulates small business or that significantly impacts small business to designate at least one person to serve as a small business liaison.
- 10) Requires the small business liaison to be responsible for specified duties relating to interactions between the state agency and small businesses, including assisting the head of the agency in ensuring that the procurement and contracting processes of the state agency are administered in order to meet or exceed the 25% small business participation goal, and developing and sharing innovative procurement and contracting practices from the public and private sectors to increase small businesses.

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes state agencies to award a contract for the acquisition of advertising or marketing services that has an estimated value of greater than \$5,000, but less than \$350,000 to an ethnic or community media outlet, as long as the agency obtains price quotations from two or more ethnic or community media outlets.
- 2) Requires the Office to establish and maintain a database of ethnic and community media outlets and requires the Office to publish guidelines setting forth a process for outlets to apply to be listed and certified within this database.
- 3) Authorizes the Office to engage nonprofit news outlets and organizations to assist in strengthening the sector and ensuring diverse and wide representation across the state.
- 4) Authorizes the Office to hold one or more annual trainings for public information and communication officers and other state employees responsible for purchasing advertising to ensure a common understanding of the diverse media ecosystem and best practices for equitable outreach.
- 5) Requires a state agency issuing a request for proposal for marketing or advertising services that requires outreach to priority populations, to provide an

awarded vendor with a copy of the Ethnic and Community Media Database and require the vendor to prioritize outlets included in the database in their media buying plan.

- 6) Requires state agencies to direct at least 40 percent of their annual advertising spending to ethnic and community media outlets.
- 7) Requires the small business liaison, for each state agency that is required to have a small business liaison, to assist the agency in complying with the provisions of this bill and shall work with local community groups and organizations to identify additional ethnic and community media outlets for including in the database.
- 8) Requires the Office, on or before July 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, to submit to the Governor and the Legislature and publish on its internet website, a report that identifies all of the following:
 - a) Each state agency that paid for placement of marketing or outreach advertising material pursuant to a contract.
 - b) The amounts paid by each state agency to each media platform pursuant to a contract, including pursuant to a subcontract if the information is available, to place marketing or outreach material.
 - c) The recipients of the amounts paid by each state agency to media platforms, including any subcontractors if the information is available, with which the agency contracted or subcontracted to place marketing or outreach advertising materials.
 - d) The information required above shall be further disaggregated to report information on contracts if the information is available, for both of the following:
 - i) The placement of marketing or outreach advertising material targeting specific ethnic communities, including, but not limited to priority populations.
 - ii) The placement of marketing or outreach advertising material by ethnic and community media outlets.
 - e) Recommendations for best practices based on successful state agencies.

Background

Author Statement. According to the author's office, "equity and access to opportunity are crucial to having a strong democratic system and maintaining public trust, and this is true for our state advertising processes. California is home to diverse communities with their own unique needs, histories, cultures, and

methods of communication. Ethnic and community media outlets are organizations and groups that are well-equipped to address the information needs of these communities, especially those that are underserved. Called ‘trusted messengers,’ these outlets can provide relevant information to their intended audiences and can act as leaders and advocates on behalf of their communities. Yet, these same outlets struggle with financial instability and need increased access to revenue to continue their critical work.”

Additionally, “SB 1358 will strengthen California’s outreach to underserved communities by enhancing the allocation of advertising funds to ethnic and community media outlets. The bill will create a database of ethnic and community media outlets, will direct that agencies spend at least 40 percent of their annual advertising spending to ethnic and community media, and will ensure ethnic and community media outlets are represented in state contracting processes. In California, we believe in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensuring that everyone, from our immigrants to minority populations, have access to information as to what is going on in their state. If we care about our immigrant and underserved communities and their well-being, then we, as legislators, have an obligation to protect the work of ethnic and community media, and uphold access to opportunity for these outlets and their communities.”

Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications. The Office was formally proposed by Governor Newsom in January 2022 and officially established in July 2022 within the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to coordinate California’s major public awareness and community engagement efforts. It was established as part of Governor Newsom’s “California Blueprint,” with dedicated state funding to formalize and expand outreach strategies that had been developed during the 2020 Census and COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

The Office’s core role is to serve as the state’s central hub for communicating with Californians – particularly hard-to-reach or underserved populations – about high-priority issues such as public health. The Office accomplishes this by coordinating statewide campaigns, bunding and partnering with community-based organizations, and building a network of trusted organizations who can deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate information directly to communities.

This bill expands the responsibilities of the Office by requiring it to establish and maintain a database of ethnic and community media outlets. Additionally, the bill requires the Office, until January 1, 2031, to annually submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing how state agencies spend funds on marketing and outreach advertising. The report must identify which state agencies entered into advertising contracts, how much each agency paid to media platforms

and the ultimate recipients of those funds. It must also break down this information to show spending on campaigns targeting specific ethnic communities and on placements with ethnic and community media outlets. In addition, the office must include recommendations for best practices based on successful agency efforts.

Streamlined Contracting for Ethnic and Community Media. The bill would authorize state agencies to award contracts for advertising or marketing services, with an estimated value greater than \$5,000 but less than \$350,000, to ethnic or community media outlets, provided the agency obtains price quotations from at least two such outlets. This provision mirrors existing law that permits state agencies to award contracts for goods, services, and information technology valued between \$5,000 and \$250,000 to certified small businesses or disabled veteran business enterprises, upon obtaining price quotations from at least two qualified entities, without complying with specified competitive bidding requirements.

This provision is intended to encourage and facilitate the ability of state agencies to contract with ethnic and community media outlets without the need to navigate formal competitive bidding processes. It should be noted, however, that while current law sets a cap of \$250,000, SB 1044 (Reyes, 2026) proposes to increase this threshold to \$350,000 to account for inflation.

New York City Example. The New York City Ethnic Media Program officially began under the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2019. It was established as part of his efforts to recognize and bolster the city's ethnic and community media outlets. The initiative was formalized with the creation of the Mayor's Office of Ethnic and Community Media in 2020. This office was tasked with coordinating the city's outreach and support to these media outlets, ensuring they have the resources and access needed to serve their diverse audiences effectively.

The office's establishment was a response to long-standing advocacy for greater support and recognition of ethnic media's role in New York City. The program aims to bridge communication gaps and ensure that all city residents, regardless of language or cultural background, have access to vital information and city services. Under the program, at least 50 percent of the city's annual advertising budget must be directed to ethnic and community outlets. This mandate was formalized by Executive Order 47, signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in March of 2021. The directive is designed to ensure that these media outlets, which serve diverse and often underrepresented communities, receive a significant share of city advertising spending, thereby supporting their financial sustainability and helping to disseminate information more broadly across all demographics. This allocation was designed not only to boost the revenue for ethnic media but also to ensure city

communications reach a wider audience, including those who might not engage with mainstream English-language media.

This bill seeks to implement one of the core goals of the New York City Example by requiring that state agencies direct at least 40 percent of their annual advertising spending to ethnic and community media outlets.

Prior/Related Legislation

SB 1044 (Reyes, 2026) increases, from \$250,000 to \$350,000, the maximum estimated value of a contract awarded pursuant to the Small Business Procurement and Contract Act which allows state agencies to award a contract to a SB, or to a DVBE without complying with competitive bidding requirements. The bill also requires the Department of General Services (DGS) to biennially review the maximum contract value and authorize the director to adjust the value to reflect changes in the California Consumer Price Index. (Pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee)

SB 70 (Seyarto, 2025) would have similarly increased, from \$250,000 to \$350,000, the maximum estimated value of a contract awarded pursuant to the Act which allows state agencies to award a contract to SB or DVBE without complying with competitive bidding requirements. The bill would have also required DGS to biennially review the maximum contract value and authorized the director to adjust the value to reflect changes in the CPI. (Held in the Assembly Appropriations Suspense File)

SB 1511 (Santiago, Chapter 352, Statutes of 2024) requires state agencies that expend funds on marketing advertising or outreach to develop a plan for increasing expenditures directed to ethnic media outlets and community media outlets, as specified.

AB 2030 (Davies, 2024) would have expanded the current authorization that allows state agencies to grant contracts valued between \$5,000 and \$250,000 for goods, services, or IT to certified SBs, Micro SBs, and DVBEs to now include women business enterprise, LGBT business enterprise and minority business enterprises. (Held in the Assembly Appropriations Suspense File)

SB 2019 (Petrie-Norris, Chapter 730, Statutes of 2022) codified, among other things, a 25% small business goal for state procurement and proposes a number of actions to enhance the ability and commitment of state agencies to include small business, including microbusinesses in state contracting, as specified.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT:

Latino Media Collaborative (Source)

OPPOSITION:

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the Latino Media Collaborative, “California’s ethnic media sector includes roughly 300 outlets that publish and broadcast throughout California, serving at least 38 different ethnic, racial, and cultural communities. The second has a long history of providing trusted, community-specific information and stories. Government agencies have underutilized the state’s ethnic and community media, which has hurt the state’s ability to reach all of California’s diverse communities. SB 1358 will maximize the State’s outreach capacity in several ways. The bill establishes an Ethnic and Community Media Database, providing state agencies with the resources needed to efficiently partner with these outlets. The bill also promotes accountability and transparency through a mandatory annual report that will include total state agency marketing and advertising expenditures.”