



Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

PROCUREMENT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS – Fact/Information Sheet

September 2009

FEDERAL CERTIFICATIONS

8(a) Business Development

The 8(a) BD Program -- named for Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act – is a business development program created to help small disadvantaged what's "disadvantaged"? Businesses compete in the American economy. It is also designed to assist such companies in gaining access to federal and private procurement markets.

The focus of the program is to provide business development support such as mentoring, procurement assistance, business counseling, training, financial assistance, surety bonding, and other management and technical assistance. The goal, however, is to prepare small disadvantaged firms for procurement and other business opportunities. The 8(a) BD portion of the SBA Website contains an assessment tool that will help a business determine if 8(a) is right for them. Additional information including eligibility requirements and the online application are available at the 8(a) home page.

<https://sba8a.symlicity.com/applicants/guide>

Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)

On October 3, 2008 an interim final rule was published in the Federal Register stating that small businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals may self-certify its status as a Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB). There is a presumption that individuals belonging to the following groups are socially disadvantaged: Black Americans; Hispanic Americans; Native Americans; Asian Pacific Americans; and Subcontinent Asian Americans. Others that feel they have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups, and without regard to their individual qualities, may also qualify.

The self-certification is done by completing an Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA) **orca website**, or by completing a questionnaire sent by a prime contractor. The business's CCR and Dynamic Small Business Search Data Base registration should also reflect the small disadvantaged business status.

HUBZone Small Business

The HUBZone Program helps businesses in historically underutilized areas (based on census tracts and unemployment rates) gain access to federal procurement opportunities. To be eligible, a business must:

- Have its principal office in a HUBZone
- Be 51% owned by U.S. Citizen(s)
- Qualify as a small business for its principal NAICS code
- Have at least 35% of its employees residing in a HUBZone

The HUBZone Program is set up as a paperless program. All the information, including mapping software to find out if a given location is in a HUBZone and the electronic application, can be found at the HUBZone Homepage.

<https://eweb1sp.sba.gov/hubzone/internet/index.cfm>

Women Owned Small Business

At the present time, a woman-owned small business may self-certify its status as such there is currently no certification program for women at the federal level. The self-certification is done by completing an Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), or by completing a questionnaire sent by a prime contractor. The business's CCR and Dynamic Small Business Search Data Base registration should also reflect the women owned small business status.

Veteran-Owned and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses

The Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 allows Federal contracting officers to restrict competition to Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB), and award a sole source or set-aside contract where certain criteria are met. Public Law (P.L.) 109-461 gives the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) authority to give additional preferences in contracting with Veteran and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.

For non-VA contracts, SDVOSBs may self-certify their status by completing an Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), or by completing a questionnaire sent by a prime contractor. The business's CCR and Dynamic Small Business Search Data Base registration should also reflect the Veteran and Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business status.

Veteran-Owned and SDVOSBs wishing to benefit from the VA's unique contracting authority must register with the VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise and agree to have their Veteran or Service Disabled Veteran status verified by the VA.

<http://www.vetbiz.gov>

STATE CERTIFICATIONS

Targeted Group/ Economically Disadvantaged (TG/ ED) Small Business Program

The State of Minnesota Department of Administration's Material Management Division (MMD) operates a program for Targeted Group (TG) and Economically Disadvantaged (ED) small businesses. The Commissioner of Administration periodically designates businesses that are majority-owned and operated by women, persons with a substantial physical disability, or specific ethnic minorities as targeted group businesses within purchasing categories as determined by the Commissioner.

TG and ED small businesses must be certified as such by MMD in order to participate in the program. Once certified, TG and ED small businesses may be eligible for price preferences in selling their products or services, or bidding on construction projects to the state. An application form and additional information about the program can be accessed from the Targeted Group/Economically Disadvantaged (TG/ED) Small Business Program web site.

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn02001.htm>

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/webven>

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) - Uniform Certification Program (UCP)

The DBE program applies to federally funded transportation projects and is set forth in 49 CFR Part 26. Certifying Agencies under 49 CFR Part 26 includes the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. A small business may submit its DBE application to any of the certifying agencies listed above and, if approved, the certification will be recognized by all.

To be eligible, a DBE applicant must have 51% ownership by a woman, minority or socially and economically disadvantaged business. In addition, the owner must control the business, be independent, and enjoy the risks and rewards of the business. The business must be considered small as defined by the SBA size standards, and the 51% woman or minority owner cannot have a personal net worth of more than \$750,000. The business must be ready, willing and able to do business in areas of work they are requesting for certification.

Additional information including the application is available on line from the Mn/DOT Office of Civil Rights and from the Metropolitan Council.

http://www.metrocouncil.org/doing_business/dbe/mnucpdbeapplicants22404.pdf

LOCAL CERTIFICATIONS

CERT Program

The Central Certification (CERT) Program is a small business certification program sponsored collaboratively by four local government jurisdictions: Hennepin County; City of Minneapolis; Ramsey County; and City of St. Paul. Small, minority- and woman-owned businesses are encouraged to apply for certification through the CERT program. Rather than operating separate certification efforts as they have in the past, the collaborative members have come together to create a “one-stop shop” for certification. Eligible business owners, desiring to be certified by any or all of the participating jurisdictions, now submit a single, standard application to a central processing location. Each application received is then evaluated using a uniform set of certification criteria. Certified businesses receive increased market exposure through inclusion in directories of certified vendors that are regularly distributed to purchasing officials in various jurisdictions. In addition, some prime contracts contain goals for certified businesses. Additional information is available by contacting the City of St. Paul at 651-266-8900.

<http://www.govcontracts.org/intcert4.pdf>

CORPORATE CERTIFICATIONS

Midwest Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) (MBE)

The Midwest Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) provides business development and advocacy services to certified ethnic minority-owned businesses and corporations throughout Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and abroad. The MMSDC is one of the 39 regional councils of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) in New York, NY and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works closely together with Corporate America to help these organizations increase minority business participation.

Businesses owned and controlled by ethnic minorities can apply for certification as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) with the MMSDC. Large Corporations often require certification from a council of the NMSDC before counting dollars spent with an MBE toward its supplier diversity goals. MBE certification also provides access to networking opportunities, corporate buyers, and various business development tools and resources to help ethnic minority-owned businesses expand. The MMSDC offers business mentoring through the MBE Input Committee, which brings together certified MBEs based on industry groups.

<http://www.mmsdc.org/uploads/2007%20certifications%20appliationfinal.pdf>

Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) (WBE)

The Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) in Chicago, IL, a co-founder of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), provides national certification and procurement services for women-owned businesses throughout the Midwest. The Women's Business Development Center – Minnesota (WBDC-MN), WBDC's satellite office in Minneapolis, MN, provides the Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) Certification to majority-owned women's businesses in Minnesota, Western Wisconsin, South Dakota, and North Dakota. The WBDC's Women Business Enterprise (WBE) certification process verifies that a business is at least 51% independently owned, operated and controlled by women. The WBE Certification is national in scope and issued by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). It is accepted by more than a thousand major corporations and public agencies in the country. In addition, the WBDC-MN offers training, mentoring, networking, and business development opportunities to WBEs. Please determine your eligibility prior to application. If you meet the criteria you can apply online. For more information please contact WBDC-MN at 612-259-6584.

<http://www.wbdc.org>

<http://www.wbdc.org/mn>

THE PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (PTAC) CAN ASSIST YOU WITH CERTIFICATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT AN AREA MANAGER:

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