



U.S. Department of Transportation

**Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
&
Airport Concession DBE (ACDBE) Programs**

Road to Certification Success

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Overview

- For nearly 40 years, Congress has recognized the need to remedy ongoing discrimination, and the continuing effects of past discrimination, against small businesses owned by minorities and women in federally assisted surface and aviation contracting opportunities.
- Three DOT Operating Administrations – **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**, **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**, and **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** – help finance thousands of contracting projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



Facts & Figures

- More than **43,000 DBEs** in all 50 states and the District of Columbia
- DBE firms participate in construction, design, architecture, engineering, maintenance, repair, supply, trade projects, and more
- In FY 2020, FAA, FHWA, and FTA funding recipients committed **nearly \$6.3 billion** to DBEs



Eligibility Requirements

- ✓ For-profit business concern
- ✓ At least 51% **owned** by an individual(s) who is both socially and economically disadvantaged (SED)
 - Designated groups
 - Personal net worth \leq \$1.32 million
- ✓ SED owner's **control** of management and daily operations
- ✓ Small business: average annual **gross receipts** \leq \$28.48 million

** * * The applicant firm bears the burden of proving eligibility * * **



DBE/ACDBE Certification Benefits

- Certification is **not a guarantee** for receiving a contract – **but does increase the likelihood** of working on DOT-assisted projects
- Certified firms are listed on **individual state-wide directories** that helps prime contractors find and hire them
- Apply through **state transportation agencies** listed on websites of state departments of transportation



Tips for Success

- Become as familiar as possible with all eligibility requirements before applying
- Gather **necessary documents**. For example:
 - Resumes of SED owner(s) and key employees
 - Signed tax returns
 - Documentation of gross receipts
 - Operating agreement
 - Etc.



Tips for Success

- Carefully review the application to **ensure accurate information**. Firms are permitted to correct any errors in the application up until the recipient issues an eligibility decision.
- Thoroughly prepare for the **on-site interview**:
 - Discuss all aspects of the business
 - Explain experience from résumé(s) and clearly explain the roles of each director or employee.
 - **Don't be shy!**



Tips for Success

- DBE certification never expires, but a firm has obligations to maintain it:
 - Submit a **no-change affidavit** every year on the anniversary of the certification affirming that there have been no changes in the firm's circumstances affecting its ability to meet size, disadvantaged status, ownership, or control requirements
 - If changes occurred, notify the certifier, in writing, within 30 days



Resources

DBE Program Details (USDOT website)

<https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/disadvantaged-business-enterprise>

DBE Program Regulation (49 CFR Part 26)

<https://tinyurl.com/DBE-Regulation>

ACDBE Program Regulation (49 CFR Part 23)

<https://tinyurl.com/ACDBE-Regulation>

