

# HELPFUL HINTS

## HOW TO BECOME CERTIFIED AS A DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE)

### SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SANDAG) DBE PROGRAM

SANDAG receives federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Rail Administration (FRA). As a condition of receiving this assistance, SANDAG complies with 49 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 26. It is the policy of SANDAG to ensure that certified DBE firms have an equal opportunity to receive and participate in United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) assisted contracts.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR DBE CERTIFICATION



In order to apply for certification as a DBE, your firm must meet the following eligibility criteria stated in 49 CFR Part 26.

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE** A disadvantaged owner must be a US Citizen (or resident alien) and meet the federal definition of socially and economically disadvantaged as defined in 49 CFR Part 26.67. Presumptive groups include Black Americans, Hispanic American, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian-Americans, women, or any individual found to be socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis.

**PERSONAL NET WORTH** Only disadvantaged persons having their personal network (PNW) of less than \$2,047,000 can be considered as a potential qualified DBE.

**BUSINESS SIZE STANDARD** A firm (including affiliates) must be a small business as defined by the US Small Business Administration. Average annual gross receipts over previous three fiscal years may not exceed \$31,840,000. Lower size standards may apply depending on business activity determination.

**OWNERSHIP** Must be a for-profit small business concern, where socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) own at least 51 percent interest in the firm.

**INDEPENDENCE** The business must not be affiliated with another firm in such a way as to compromise its independence and control.

**MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL** The DBE owner(s) must possess the power to direct or cause the direction of the management and policies of the firm and to make day-to-day decisions, as well as long-term decisions on matters of management, policy, and operations.

**ON-SITE VISIT** The federal regulations require an on-site review be conducted for all DBE applicants.

### APPLYING FOR DBE CERTIFICATION

If your firm is eligible and would like to become DBE certified, please follow the steps below to apply for DBE certification.

1. Visit the Caltrans website at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/dbe> and click on **How do I... Become DBE Certified**.
2. Review the **DBE Certification Information** before you start the DBE application process.
3. Complete the Uniform Certification Application which you can find at this link: <https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/disadvantaged-business-enterprise/uniform-certification-application-english>
4. Once you have completed and notarized your Uniform Certification Application, submit your application to the nearest agency in your firm's geographic location. View the Caltrans brochure for a list of certifying California Unified Certification Program (CUCP) DBE agencies here: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/civil-rights/documents/dbe/dbe-brochure-2021-a11y.pdf>

### DBE CERTIFICATION RESOURCES

If you need assistance with completing your Unified Certification Application, you may contact the following local small business support services offices:

#### San Diego, Orange, Imperial

##### APEX Accelerators

880 National City Blvd., Suite 7100, National City, CA 91950

[swcptac@swccd.edu](mailto:swcptac@swccd.edu) | (619) 216-6671

[socialptac.org](http://socialptac.org)

#### San Diego & Imperial Valley

##### Small Business Development Network

3333 Manchester Ave., Cardiff, CA 92007

[centerinfo@miracosta.edu](mailto:centerinfo@miracosta.edu) | (760) 795-8740

<http://sdivsbdc.org/>

### BENEFITS OF A DBE CERTIFICATION

- Certification is recognized by SANDAG and numerous other local public agencies in California.
- Expands opportunities to participate in federally funded projects.
- Become accessible to Prime Contractors needing to fulfill DBE participation goal requirements.
- Listing in official directories such as the California Unified Certification Program (CUCP) DBE database used by Prime Contractors.
- Increase opportunities to network at events for DBE and Small Business firms.
- No fees to apply, except the cost of having your application notarized.

### DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

- ✓ Black Americans
- ✓ Hispanic Americans
- ✓ Native Americans
- ✓ Asian-Pacific Americans
- ✓ Subcontinent Asian-Pacific Americans
- ✓ Women