SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
The Small Business Administration (SBA) is an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of SBs through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more about the SBA and its programs, visit: www.sba.gov/about-sba-services/199

The SBA provides assistance with financing, contracting, advocacy and entrepreneurial development, which includes education, information, technical assistance and training at no cost. Local SBA District Offices are located in Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco and Santa Ana. To find the nearest SBA District Office or view a complete listing, visit: www.sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/districtoffices

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS
Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) are partnerships between the private sector, the educational community and federal, state and local governments, administered by the SBA, to provide assistance to anyone interested in beginning a small business for the first time or improving or expanding an existing small business that cannot afford the services of a private consultant.

SBDCs provide SBs with technical assistance at no cost. Services include assistance with certifications, financial, marketing, production, organization, engineering and technical problems and feasibility studies. Regional Lead Centers are located in Fullerton, Arcata, Chico, Fresno, Long Beach and National City. To find the nearest SBDC or view a complete listing, visit the Association of Small Business Development Centers at: www.asbdc-us.org/

MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is an entrepreneurially focused organization committed to promoting the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises.

MBDA Business Centers offer assistance related to business development, capital management, general financial counseling, contracts and procurement, obtaining certification and business planning at no cost. MBDA Business Centers are located in San Francisco, El Monte, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Jose. To find the nearest MBDA Business Centers or view a complete listing, visit: www.mbda.gov/main/offices

For more information contact:
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 1160
Sacramento, California 95814
www.hsr.ca.gov
sbprogram@hsr.ca.gov
Main: (916) 324-1541
Direct: (916) 431-2930
Small Business Certification Guide

CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Small Businesses must meet the eligibility criteria of and be certified by either the California Department of General Services (DGS) or the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). DGS sets forth the eligibility criteria below:

- Be independently owned and operated;
- Not dominant in field of operation;
- Principal office located in California;
- Owners (officers, if a corporation) domiciled in California, and;
- Including affiliates, be either:
  - A business with 100 or fewer employees; and average annual gross receipts of $14 million or less, over the last three tax years;
  - A manufacturer with 100 or fewer employees; or,
  - A microbusiness. (A small business will automatically be designated as a microbusiness, if gross annual receipts are less than $3,500,000, or the small business is a manufacturer with 25 or fewer employees.)

Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises must meet the eligibility criteria listed below and be certified by DGS:

- Be at least 51% owned by one or more disabled veterans of the U.S. military, naval, or air service with a service-connected disability of at least 10% or more as declared by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.
- Daily business operations must be managed and controlled by one or more disabled veterans.
- Home office must be located in the U.S. (the home office cannot be a branch or subsidiary of a foreign corporation or foreign firm, or other foreign-based business).

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises must meet the eligibility criteria listed below and be certified by the California Unified Certification Program (CUCP):

- Must be a for-profit small business where socially and economically disadvantaged DBE owner(s) own at least a 51% interest, and have managerial and operational control of the business operations; the firm must not be tied to another firm in such a way as to compromise its independence and control.
- The disadvantaged individual must be a U.S. citizen (or resident alien), member of a socially or economically disadvantaged group and have a personal net worth of less than $1,320,000. Items excluded from a person’s net worth calculation include an individual’s ownership interest in the applicant firm, and equity in their primary residence.
- Depending upon the nature of work performed, a firm (including its affiliates) must not have average annual gross receipts over the firm’s previous three fiscal years in excess of $22,410,000 for construction related work. Depending on the type of work the business performs, other lower size standards may apply.

HOW TO GET CERTIFIED

SBs and DVBEs interested in applying for certification through DGS must first register with eProcurement, DGS’s online procurement service. Registration is required to begin the SB and DVBE certification process. Follow the instructions completely to ensure a free subscription:

- Go to www.eprocure.dgs.ca.gov
- Open Access eProcurement (eP)
- Click on Registration Instructions

For technical assistance with registration, contact BidSync at 800-990-9339. For more information regarding SB and DVBE certification through DGS, call 916-375-4940 or visit: www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/getcertified

DBEs interested in applying for certification through CUCP are instructed to complete the DBE Application and mail the application package and any other required documentation to the certifying agency designated for your geographical location. To access and download the DBE Application and Roster of Certifying Agencies, visit: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/downloads/pdf/DBE_Application.pdf

For more information regarding DBE certification through CUCP, call 866-810-6346 or visit: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/business_forms.htm

SBs interested in applying for certification through the SBA must first verify that the eligibility criteria for certification are met. For most industries, SBA defines an SB by the average number of employees over the past 12 months or average annual receipts over the past three years that meets the following eligibility criteria:

- Organized for profit;
- Has a place of business in the U.S.;
- Operates primarily within the U.S. or makes a significant contribution to the U.S. economy through payment of taxes or use of American products, materials or labor;
- Independently owned and operated; and
- Not dominant in its field on a national basis.

To begin the certification process, SBs must register with the System for Award Management (SAM), obtain a Dun & Bradstreet D-U-N-S® identifying number for financial reporting, determine business size and identify all applicable industry code(s).

For more information regarding SB certification through SBA, visit: www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/contracting/getting-started

CERTIFICATION BENEFITS

Only certified SBs, as recognized by the Authority, are eligible to be credited towards the Authority’s overall 30% SB goal.

There are several additional benefits to becoming a certified SB, DBE or DVBE through the state of California:

- California encourages state agencies to award at least 25% of their annual contracting dollars to SBs and at least 3% to DVBEs certified by DGS.
- Certified SBs are eligible to receive a 5% bid preference and DVBEs are eligible for up to a 5% incentive in the formal bid process.
- Certified SBs are eligible for interest penalties for late, undisputed payments under the Prompt Payment Act.
- SBs and DBEs certified by DGS and DBE certified by CUCP are reflected in online directories, which state agencies utilize to find SBs.
- California state agencies may utilize the SB/DVBE Option, a streamlined procurement process that allows for contracting directly with SBs and DBEs certified by DGS for goods, services, information technology are valued from $5,000 to $249,999,999 (up to $2,000,000 for public works contracts) after obtaining price quotes from at least two SBs or two DBEs.
- Focused outreach to SBs for participation on federally assisted contracts.

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