



Small Business Certifications

Small Business Certifications for Government and Private Sector Contracts

❖ Why Certify?

- **Access to Contracts:** The federal government sets aside contracts to be awarded to business with certain verified certifications.
- **Ability to Form Joint Ventures:** Once certified, you can often join other business within your certification to compete for certain contracts.
- **Additional Management and Technical Assistance:** Many certification programs offer management and technical assistance to help businesses grow and succeed.

❖ Type of Certifications

➤ **8(a) Small Business Certification**

- Program Benefits
 - Efficiently compete and receive certain set aside government contracts
 - Receive one-on-one business development assistance for length of the certification
 - Pursue opportunity for mentorship from experienced firms
 - Connect with procurement and compliance experts
 - Pursue joint ventures with established businesses to increase capacity
 - Qualify to receive federal surplus property
 - Receive free training from SBA's 7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program
- Program Qualifications
 - 51% controlled by US citizens who are socially or economically disadvantaged
 - Owners must
 - ◆ Manage day to day operations
 - ◆ Make long term decisions
 - ◆ Have personal net worth less than \$850,000
 - ◆ Have adjusted gross income of \$400,000 or less
 - ◆ Assets totaling \$6.5 million or less
 - ◆ Demonstrate good character
 - ◆ Demonstrate the potential for success (such as being in business for two years)
- Certification Application
 - Use the [SBA's eligibility tool](#) to get a preliminary assessment of program fit.
 - Complete the application on the Small Business Administration [website](#)
 - If approved, certification lasts for maximum of nine years
 - Subject to annual reviews to maintain standing in the program



Small Business Certifications

- **HUBZone Business Certification (Historically Underutilized Business Zone)**
 - Program Benefits
 - Efficiently compete for the program's set-aside contracts
 - Get a ten percent price evaluation preference in full and open contract competitions
 - Ability to still compete for contracts under other qualifying programs
 - Program Qualifications
 - Be a small business according to SBA size standards
 - 51% owned and controlled by:
 - ◆ US citizens
 - ◆ A Community Development Corporation
 - ◆ An agriculture cooperative
 - ◆ An Alaska Native corporation
 - ◆ A Native Hawaiian organization, or
 - ◆ A Native American tribe
 - Principal office must be located in a HUBZone*
 - Have at least 35% of its employees living in a HUBZone*
 - Certification Application
 - Make sure you have a [SAM.gov account](https://sam.gov) (System for Award Management)
 - Register for an SBA Connect account and request access to the HUBZone portal ([Instructional video](#))
 - Login to [SBA Connect](#) and select HUBZone before completing the prompts
 - Check email (including SPAM folder) for instructions to complete within **2 business days**
 - Submit all requested documents **within 3 business days**
 - Submit any requested follow up documentation **within 5 business days**
 - Verify that status was updated in DSBS (Dynamic Small Business Search Database) and SAM
 - Maintaining Certification
 - Must recertify once per year
 - No limit to length of time for participation
 - Program examination required every three years
 - Notification to SBA required if
 - ◆ Business is involved in an acquisition or merger
 - ◆ Employee residency in HUBZone drops below 20% while performing on a HUBZone contract
 - SBA may visit unannounced and conduct examinations for accuracy verification

***Note: The HUBZone map is changing on July 1, 2023.**



Small Business Certifications

- **Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB)**
 - Program Benefits
 - Efficiently compete for the program's set-aside contracts
 - Contracts are for goods and services in specific industries ([list of eligible industries](#))
 - Some contracts are restricted to EDWOSBs
 - Ability to compete for contracts in other qualifying categories (including 8(a) and HUBZone)
 - Program Qualifications
 - Be a small business according to the SBA size standards
 - 51% owned and controlled by women who are US citizens
 - Have women manage day-to-day operations and also make long-term decisions
 - Further qualifications for EDWOSB include being owned and controlled by one or more women who
 - ◆ Each have a personal net worth less than \$850K
 - ◆ Each have \$450K or less in adjusted gross income averaged over the last three years
 - ◆ Each have \$6.5 million or less in personal assets
 - Certification Application
 - Use the [eligibility tool](#) to get a preliminary assessment of qualification
 - Complete the application process on the SBA's WOSB [website](#)
 - Maintaining Certification
 - Annual attestation to meeting program requirements must be submitted within 30 days of anniversary date of certification (currently in abeyance)
 - Program examination is required every three years
 - Must update SAM.gov profile annually (or prior to end of fifth year for contracts longer than 5 years)
 - Third Party Certifications (TPC) recognized by the SBA*
 - [El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [National Women Business Owners Corporation](#)
 - [U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce](#)
 - [Women's Business Enterprise National Council](#)

*NOTE: Once approved through one of these TPCs, you will still need to upload proof of citizenship and TPC-certified documentation to the SBA's WOSB site before bidding on contracts.



Small Business Certifications

➤ **Minority Business Enterprise Certification (MBE)**

- Program Benefits
 - Exposure to business opportunities through local, regional and national referrals
 - Listings in the National Minority Supplier Development Council (MSDC) supplier database
 - Invitations to private networking and corporate match making events
 - Opportunities to compete for prestigious local, regional and national supplier awards
 - Access to educational training
 - Opportunity to build relationships and find opportunities with other MBEs
- Program Qualifications
 - Be a functioning for profit enterprise physically located in the U.S. or its territories
 - 51% independently owned, managed, and controlled by one or more minority group members
 - ◆ Asian-Indian: US citizen with origins in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh
 - ◆ Asian-Pacific: US citizen with origins in Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand, Samoa, Guam, the US Trust Territories of the Pacific, or Northern Marianas
 - ◆ Black: US Citizen who is of African descent (excluding Northern Africa)
 - ◆ Hispanic: US citizen of true-born Hispanic heritage from the regions of Mexico, Central America, South America, The Caribbean Basin, Brazil (Afro-Brazilian, indigenous/Indian only)
 - ◆ Native American: Documented members of a North American tribe, band or otherwise organized group of American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut or Native Hawaiian people
 - Demonstrate the capability to perform a line of business
 - Provide a commercially useful business function
- Certification Application
 - Go to the Carolinas-Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council (CVMSDC) [website](#)
 - Review certification criteria to ensure qualification
 - Gather required documentation and complete the application
 - A desk audit and site visit will be completed before approval process begins
 - Written notification is sent within one week
- Maintaining Certification
 - Certification must be renewed annually
 - Complete recertification application and required documents ([instructions](#))

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the MBE to ensure that all paperwork for recertification is completed annually.



Small Business Certifications

➤ B Corp Certification

- Program Benefits
 - Build trust with consumers, communities, and suppliers
 - Attract and retain employees
 - Draw mission-aligned investors
- Program Qualifications
 - Demonstrate high social and environmental performance by
 - ◆ Achieving a B Impact Assessment score of 80% or higher
 - ◆ Passing the B Corp Risk Review
 - Make a legal commitment by
 - ◆ Changing your legal structure to be accountable to all stakeholders, not just shareholders
 - ◆ Achieve benefit corporation status (if available for your location)
 - Exhibit transparency by
 - ◆ Allowing information about performance against standards to be publicly available on profile
- Certification Application
 - Certification is dependent on revenue and company size among other factors ([Pathway to Certification](#))
 - Register for the [B Impact Assessment](#)
 - Use the [Legal Requirement Tool](#) to determine governance structure
 - Complete the Risk Review
 - Gather appropriate documentation and take the B Impact Assessment
 - Establish a company profile and start the Disclosure Questionnaire
 - Go through the Evaluation and Verification process
- Maintaining Certification
 - Recertification occurs
 - ◆ Every three years,
 - ◆ After a change of control (of company ownership), or
 - ◆ After an Initial Public Offering
 - Update B Impact Assessment
 - Verify updated B Impact score
 - Encouraged to submit recertification documents up to 6 months prior to due date)



Small Business Certifications

➤ Veteran Owned Business Certifications

- Veteran Small Business Certification (VetCert) program for government contracts
 - Program Benefits
 - ◆ Efficiently compete for the program's set aside contracts (7% of all contracts annually)
 - ◆ Access to SBA tools to
 - Prepare for federal procurement
 - Connect with commercial supply chains
 - Meet local business community
 - Purchase surplus federal property
 - Access capital
 - Mitigate disaster damage
 - ◆ Ability to compete for contract in other qualifying programs
 - Program Qualifications
 - ◆ Be a small business according to the SBAs size standards
 - ◆ 51% owned and controlled by a US veteran
 - ◆ Register as a small business at SAM.gov (System for Award Management)
 - Certification Application
 - ◆ Visit the [Veteran Small Business Certification portal](#) to create a MySBA account
 - ◆ Gather appropriate documentation
 - ◆ Complete the application
 - ◆ Two certification options
 - Veteran Owned Small Business Certification (VOSB)
 - Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Certification (SDVOSB)
 - Requires a service-connected disability to qualify
 - Maintaining Certification
 - ◆ Certified prior to January 2023
 - CVE certification was granted through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
 - Granted automatic VOSB or SDVOSB certification under the SBA
 - Granted an automatic 1 year extension to their certification
 - ◆ Certified after January 2023
 - Certification of VOSB or SDVOSB expires after 3 years



Small Business Certifications

- National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NaVOBA) program for private sector contracts
 - Program Benefits
 - ◆ Certification can be used to gain confidence of private sector contractors to know they are working with a certified veteran owned business
 - ◆ Program Qualifications
 - 51% owned and managed by US veteran or service-disabled US veteran
 - No business size limitations
 - ◆ Certification Application
 - Visit [NaVOBA website](#) to begin the application process
 - Validate your veteran status through ID.Me
 - Pay non-refundable application fee based on company revenue
 - Complete the application
 - ◆ Maintaining Certification
 - Certification expires after two years and must be renewed
- **LGBT Business Enterprise Certification (LGBTBE)**
 - Program Benefits
 - Opportunity to compete for sourcing contracts with NGLCC partners
 - National recognition by top US corporations
 - Eligible to exhibit at the annual NGLCC International Business and Leadership Conference
 - Automatic inclusion in the NGLCC online database
 - Use of NGLCC Certified Business logo on marketing materials
 - Access to mentorships, trainings, and scholarships from NGLCC partners
 - Access to special discounts from LGBTQ+-owned and allied partners
 - Program Requirements
 - 51% owned, operated, managed, and controlled by a person who identifies as part of the LGBT community
 - Operate in the US
 - Independent from any non-LGBTQ+ business enterprise
 - Certification Application
 - Visit the [National LGBT Chamber of Commerce](#) (NGLCC) website
 - Create a business profile on my.NGLCC.org
 - Submit supporting documents with assistance from a NGLCC team member
 - Complete a site visit
 - Pay application fee (waived if applicant provides proof of local chamber of commerce membership)
 - Maintaining Certification
 - Certification expires after 3 years or if business structure changes
 - Complete a recertification application
 - Submit tax documents and fee or proof of chamber of commerce membership



Small Business Certifications

- **Small Disadvantaged Business Certification (SDB)**
 - Program Benefits
 - Opportunity to compete for federal prime contracts/subcontracts
 - Self-representation certification, no application process
 - Program Requirements
 - Be a small business according to SBA size standards
 - 51% owned and controlled by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged individuals
 - Register as a SDB on SAM.gov (System for Award Management)
 - Certification Application
 - No application is required for certification
 - Self-representation in business profile on SAM.gov
 - Maintaining Certification
 - No expiration date or renewal required unless business no longer meets requirements
- **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification (LEED)**
 - Program Benefits
 - Gain trust of consumers and other businesses
 - Program Requirements
 - Project certification rather than a business certification
 - Certification for brick-and-mortar businesses looking to go green
 - Certifications available for
 - ◆ Building Design and Construction
 - ◆ Interior Design and Construction
 - ◆ Building Operations and Maintenance
 - ◆ Neighborhood Development
 - ◆ Homes
 - ◆ Cities
 - Point system based on five performance categories
 - ◆ Energy
 - ◆ Water
 - ◆ Transportation
 - ◆ Waste
 - ◆ Human Experience
 - Certification levels based on accrued points
 - ◆ Certified (40-49 points)
 - ◆ Silver (50-59 points)
 - ◆ Gold (60-79 points)
 - ◆ Platinum (80+ points)



Small Business Certifications

- Certification Application
 - Visit [U.S. Green Business Council \(USGBC\)](#) website
 - Register your project and pay appropriate certification fees
- Maintaining Certification
 - Certification must be renewed every 3 years
 - Registration fee is waived for recertification
 - Use the recertification link in LEED Online profile