

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Small Businesses (SB)

Q What is a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)?

A A DBE is a for-profit small business concern that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more individual(s) who are both socially and economically disadvantaged. Also, the management and daily business operations of a DBE business must be controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.

Q Who is a Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual?

A A socially and economically disadvantaged individual means any individual who is a citizen (or lawfully admitted permanent resident) of the United States and who a certifier finds to be socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis. A determination that an individual is socially and economically disadvantaged must not be based in whole or in part on race or sex. For that reason, all applicants shall qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged if they can meet the relevant criteria described in § 26.67. Being born in a particular country does not stand alone, meaning that a person is necessarily socially and economically disadvantaged.

Q What are the DBE Program Objectives?

A Key DBE Program objectives are:

- > To ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of federally-funded contracts on Caltrans highway, transit, and airport financial assistance programs
- > To create a level-playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly for federally-funded contracts
- > To ensure that only firms that fully meet this part's eligibility standards are permitted to participate as DBEs
- > To help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in federally-funded contracts; to assist the development of firms that can compete successfully in the marketplace outside the DBE Program
- > To promote the use of DBEs in all types of federally-assisted contracts and procurement activities conducted by recipients

Q What steps are required to become a certified DBE?

A

1. For online certification, create an account to apply for certification at: <https://caltrans.dbesystem.com/>.
2. Complete the notarized application form and supporting documents to a CUCP certifying agency in your region. Refer to the application to locate the nearest CUCP certifying agency. Some certifying agencies may prefer physical documents be sent via mail.
3. The CUCP certifying agency will determine whether a firm qualifies for DBE certification after a thorough review of the firm's application, personal narrative, supporting documentation and information obtained from an on-site visit.

Q How do I locate certified DBE's and SB's

A Certified DBEs can be found on the CUCP's website at <https://californiaucp.dbesystem.com/>.

Certified SBs can be found on the California E-Procure website at <https://caleprocure.ca.gov/pages/index.aspx>.

Q What is the DBE Supportive Services Program?

A Caltrans DBE Supportive Services Program offers free assistance to DBEs or Potential DBEs including training, technical assistance and an extensive 6-month Business Development Program. More information can be found at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/supportive-services>.

Q What are the benefits of being a certified DBE?

A Some advantages to being a DBE firm include:

- > DBEs may be used to satisfy a DBE goal on any project with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation (i.e. cities, counties, airports, transit agencies). DBEs receive statewide exposure for contracting opportunities through the DBE Directory, which provides one list of all DBE firms certified in the State of California. Prime contractors and consultants are strongly encouraged to use the DBE Directory to identify subcontractors/sub-consultants for their projects
- > DBEs may participate in a variety of supportive services such as training and technical assistance if they are construction and consulting firms

involved in road, highway or bridge construction or maintenance related business.

Many of these services are at no cost or reduced cost to certified DBEs. Access Services offers several different business opportunities, open to all businesses and vendors. Access encourages collaboration with DBE's/SBs. Such partnerships increase the overall economic viability of small and disadvantaged businesses, allowing them an opportunity to perform on Federally assisted contracts and projects.

Q How do I locate Access Services DBE Program and Goals?

A www.accessla.org/doing_business_with_us/dbe_program.html

Q How do I access current and upcoming business opportunities?

A To access current business opportunities with Access Services, register at www.accessla.org/cms/user/register.

Q How can DBE's and SBs participate in Access' Projects?

A There are many areas where DBEs and SBs can participate. These may include:

- > Car washing services
- > Uniforms
- > Fueling services
- > Various project consulting
- > DOJ/Livescans background checks services
- > Janitorial services
- > Training services
- > IT services
- > Administration