



For information on OMBE's free monthly Application
mbe.dosem@maryland.gov

One Certification Agency:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the official certification agency for the State

Two Areas of Contracting Opportunities:

1. Contracts awarded by any Maryland agency and most counties, cities, and municipalities
2. Federal projects with whole or partial funding by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)

Three Types of Federal Certification:

1. **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)**
2. **Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)**
3. **Small Business Enterprise (SBE) - (Race and Gender Neutral)**

Four Steps to Certification:

1. **Application** – The applicant submits a completed application and all required supporting documentation to the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE).
2. **Investigation** – OMBE staff reviews the submitted documents and conducts an on-site or job-site visit, which includes an interview with the applicant.
3. **Evaluation** – OMBE evaluates the application and supporting documentation to determine whether the firm meets DBE, ACDBE, or SBE program requirements. The Certification Committee reviews the file and makes a recommendation based on federal certification standards.
4. **Determination** – OMBE issues a written decision.
 - Approved:** A letter is issued listing the approved NAICS codes.
 - Denied:** A letter is issued outlining the reasons for denial, including the evidence supporting each finding. The firm may appeal the decision or reapply after 12 months.

DBE/ACDBE/SBE Certification Overview

Five Eligibility Standards:

1. Ownership

The applicant firm must be at least 51% owned by a qualifying individual(s).

- **DBE/ACDBE:** At least 51% ownership must be held by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged owner(s).

2. Socially & Economically Disadvantaged Owner Status (SEDO)

All DBE/ACDBE applicants must submit a **Personal Narrative** describing their experiences of social disadvantage and how those experiences affected their business opportunities. Effective October 3, 2025, under the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Interim Final Rule (IFR), applicants may no longer rely solely on presumed disadvantage based on group membership.

Not applicable to SBE.

3. Control

The qualifying owner(s) must demonstrate:

An overall understanding of the business, and Managerial and technical competence directly related to the firm's line of work.

Not applicable to SBE.

4. **Personal Net Worth** – Each individual owner must certify economic disadvantage by completing a Personal Net Worth (PNW) Statement with supporting documentation.

DBE/ACDBE/SBE PNW Cap: \$2,047,000

5. **Size** – Applicant firms must meet the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards.

DBE & SBE: Three-year average gross receipts cannot exceed \$32.82 million. NAICS size standards are based on a five-year average of gross receipts or number of employees.

ACDBE: Three-year average gross receipts cannot exceed \$56.42 million. Additional ACDBE size standards may apply