



Minority Business Certification Programs

There is more than one program or source for being certified as a Minority-Owned Business (sometimes referred to as a “disadvantaged business”). Deciding which programs to select should relate to current customer markets, as well as future desired markets. It may be advantageous to be certified with several or all of the programs described.

Benefits to operating as a certified business:

- Expanded contracting opportunities;
- Added advantages when competing for contracts with public and private sector entities;
- Entities who choose to do business with you are confident that their reporting of dollars spent with businesses will be verifiable and credible.

The following are the applicable programs to Oklahoma:

The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)

NMSDC and its affiliates solicit major corporations and large companies to do more purchasing from minority-owned businesses and provide a “Minority Business Enterprise” (MBE) certification to assist in identifying eligible minority-owned businesses.

To qualify for certification, the minority business owner must:

- Be from one of the following racial minority/ethnic groups: African American/Black, Native American, Hispanic/Latino American, Asian-Pacific American and Asian-Indian American;
- Hold 51% or more of the ownership of the business,
- Have full control of its operations and management.

The cost of the certification varies based on the size of the business. Effective 1-1-14, the affiliated councils that formerly operated in Oklahoma and New Mexico merged into the area covered by the Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council (SMSDC), headquartered in Austin, TX. Minority business owners in Oklahoma seeking the MBE certification should go to smsdc.org or call 512-659-2160.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT)

ODOT is the state agency in Oklahoma responsible for planning and constructing the state’s transportation arteries or systems. As a recipient of federal funding, ODOT provides a “Disadvantaged Business Enterprise” (DBE) certification for minority- and women-owned businesses in Oklahoma.

To qualify for DBE certification, the minority or female business owner must:

- Hold 51% or more of the ownership and have full operating control of the business;
- Provide a service, product or material needed for transportation projects.

ODOT and its prime contractors may utilize the DBEs for numerous projects in Oklahoma. DBEs can also be used by other transportation agencies and contracting sources (such as for airport and mass transit systems).

For information or to apply for DBE certification, visit the ODOT DBE page at tinyurl.com/ODOT-DBEcert or contact DBE Supportive Services at 405-521-6411, or 800-788-4539.

Federal Contracting and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides certifications to eligible small businesses that want to do business with the departments and agencies of the federal government. The certifications may be of particular assistance to minority-owned small businesses and are described as following:

Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) Certification

SDB is a self-certification program for a small business that meets the required criteria of being both socially and economically disadvantaged. The certification can aid the business in seeking both contracting and sub-contracting opportunities from large, federal prime contractors. SDB requires entering the business in the general, federal contracting database called the “System for Award Management” (SAM). Visit the page at sam.gov.

8(a) Business Development Certification

This certification program denotes a small business with disadvantaged conditions that are severe enough to qualify for sole source, negotiated contracts with federal agencies (often referred to as set-aside contracts or actions). A business eligible for 8(a) certification would also have been previously eligible for self-certification as a SDB.

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Historical Underutilized Business Zones (HUBzone)

This certification denotes a business that is eligible to receive more favorable consideration for federal contracts by being located in an economically, geographically challenged area.

A business owner seeking either 8(a) or SDB certification must qualify as being socially and economically disadvantaged. Racial minorities are generally presumed to be socially disadvantaged, but to qualify for 8(a) or SDB certification, the owner's net worth (excluding the assets of the business and the main home residence) cannot exceed \$250,000 or \$750,000 (respectively).

More information is available at: sba.gov. Oklahoma business owners can contact the contracting staff of the Oklahoma SBA District Office at (405) 609-8000 or visit sba.gov/ok.

Oklahoma Department of Commerce (Commerce)

Commerce provides a Women-Owned Business certification that may be beneficial to minority, female business owners. To qualify, the female owner(s) must hold 51% or more of the ownership of the business and have full operating control.

More information and the application form can be found at OKcommerce.gov/certifications. For additional information, contact the program coordinator at (405) 815-5143.

City of Tulsa's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program

The purpose of Tulsa's SBE program is to provide small businesses the opportunity to be on a preferred list to provide services and products to departments of the city. Additional benefits include educational, partnering and networking opportunities to develop managerial and communications skills to assist business growth. One key requirement is that participating businesses must be located in the Tulsa Metropolitan Statistical Area (Tulsa, Osage, Rogers, Pawnee, Wagoner, Creek and Okmulgee counties).

See the full eligibility requirements and application forms at tinyurl.com/TulsaSBE. To apply, request an application packet from the Mayor's Office for Human Rights via phone at 918-596-7818, in person at the City Clerk's office, City Hall, 175 E. 2nd Street, 2nd Floor, Tulsa 74103.

Procurement and Contracting Programs by Oklahoma's Tribal Indian Nations

Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) Programs

TERO certification programs support the use of Indian-owned businesses in providing products and services purchased by the tribal nations. Preference is given to businesses owned by members of specific tribal nation with the program; then to businesses owned by persons who are members of other tribal nations.

Current TERO programs in Oklahoma are the following.

- Cherokee Nation TERO: cherokeetero.com
(918) 453-5335 or (918) 453-5334
- Muskogee (Creek) Nation TERO: mcn-nsn.gov/services/tero
(918) 549-2964 or (918) 549-2966.

Preferred Tribal Vendor or Supplier Programs

As of October 2016, two Indian tribal nations in Oklahoma have certification programs that give an order of preferences to minority owned businesses. Preference is given to businesses owned by members of the specific tribal nation with the program; then to businesses owned by persons who are members of other tribal nations; lastly to businesses owned by all other minorities.

Current preferred tribal vendor or supplier programs in Oklahoma are the following:

- Chickasaw Nation Preferred Vendor Program: chickasaw.net/Services/Preferred-Vendor-Program.aspx,
(580) 559-0728
- Choctaw Nation Preferred Supplier Program: preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com,
(580) 924-8280, ext. 2889 or 2899.

For more information, contact:

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