



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long after this workshop can I submit my application?

A: Applications must be completed within a year from the time of attending a workshop.

Q: If we filled an extension can we submit 2023 taxes?

A: Yes, an extension can be submitted along with the previous year's taxes or opening bank statement if you don't have taxes for the previous year.

Q: My wife and I own our business 50/50. Would either one qualify? We are both minorities and she is a woman. But we only own 50/50

A: You will be eligible to apply for MBE as 50/50 since you are both minorities

Q: If partners own 51% of both women and minorities, can we apply for both or are we only allowed one type of certification?

A: You are able to apply for both types you qualify for at the same time.

Q: Are contractors considered employees?

A: Yes

Q: What document should be submitted for proof of ethnicity

A: US passport or birth certificate

Q: Does an Indian American qualify as a minority?

A: Yes

Q: Can you apply for all of them at the same time?

A: If you are eligible yes, you can apply for MBE WBE and VBE at the same time. DBE is with another agency - details here <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-disadvantaged-business-enterprise-dbe-certification>

Q: What if you were a sole proprietor and then became an LLC? from one year to the next

A: If your business structure changes after being certified, you can make that change within the portal. You will not have to be certified again, you will go through an administrative review and have to possibly upload additional documents based on your change.

Q: If my document gets rejected how long do I have to re-upload?

A: You have 30 days to re-upload documents once they have been rejected.

Q: Can businesses save their application as a draft so they can gather the necessary documents for their specific business structure?

A: You can begin and save your application and finish it at a later time.

Q: Can changes be made after submitted? example. I am trying to move.

A: Yes changes can always be made.

Q: In a best case scenario with all correct documents submitted, what is the turnaround time from application submission to investigator assignment and decision?

A: 30-90 days to verify the profile.

Q: How often do you have to renew?

A: Renewal every 3 years.

Q: What Does the SDO Do?

A: The SDO aims to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in state contracting. Their key functions include:

- Certifying diverse businesses (such as minority, women, veteran, service-disabled veteran, disability, and LGBT-owned) and small Massachusetts-based businesses.
- Connecting these companies with business opportunities and resources to enhance their marketability when bidding on public contracts.
- Collaborating with Executive Agencies and public organizations to identify and remove barriers for diverse and small businesses, as well as increase diverse and small business spending.
- Buyer and Vendor Training

Q: How Can I Apply for Certification?

A: To apply for diversity certification as a Massachusetts-based business, follow these steps:

- Attend the pre-certification workshop to understand the certification criteria, process, and required documents.
- Submit the necessary documents through the SDO portal platform.
- The SDO will evaluate your application based on the relevant criteria.

Q: What Are the Benefits of Certification?

A: Certification opens doors to:

- Opportunities for certified businesses and Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) participants.
- Inclusion in bid evaluation criteria within the state goods and services bid process.
- Public access to certified business lists on the SDO web pages.
- Distribution of business opportunity events and notices to SDO participants.

Q: What criteria are considered for certification?

A: The SDO certifies businesses based on criteria related to diversity (minority, women, veteran, disability, and LGBT-owned) and small Massachusetts-based businesses. Attend the pre-certification workshop to learn about the certification process and required documents.