



Government of the District of Columbia
D.C. Department of Small and Local Business Development

Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) Program FACT SHEET

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) supports the development, economic growth, and retention of district based businesses, while promoting economic development. It has seven organizational divisions, one of which evaluates businesses to determine if they are eligible to become a Certified Business Enterprise (CBE). The Certified Business Enterprise Program is outlined as follows:

1. What is a Certified Business Enterprise (CBE)?

- a. A CBE is a business certified by the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) that receives preferred procurement and contracting opportunities with the District government.
- b. Under this program, the DC government directs spending to CBEs, which in turn support and contribute to job creation and the city tax base, strengthening the local economy.

2. Why Should My Business Apply To Be A CBE?

- a. CBEs are granted contracting preferences, which increase their competitiveness for District government contracting and procurement opportunities.
- b. Specifically, they receive up to a 12% effective price reduction or 12 preference points, and District agencies must spend 50% of their expendable budgets with certified small business enterprises (CSBEs).

3. Does My Business Qualify?

- a. The principal office of the business must be located in the District of Columbia (The chief executive officer and highest level managerial employees of the business must maintain their offices and perform their managerial functions in the District).
- b. The business must be properly licensed under DC law and subject to taxes under DC law.
- c. One of the following must apply: More than 50% of your assets are in the District; More than 50% of the employees are DC residents; More than 50% of the owners are DC residents; More than 50% of the total sales and revenues are DC transactions.



Government of the
District of Columbia
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor

441 4th Street NW, Suite 970N Washington, DC 20001
(202) 727-3900
www.dslbd.dc.gov



Office on Asian and
Pacific Islander Affairs
Soohyun "Julie" Koo,
Executive Director

- d. The owner of the business DOES NOT have to live in DC; however, if the owner is a high level managerial employee, he/she must maintain his/her office and perform managerial functions in the District.

4. What Are The Categories Of Certification?

- a. The business must meet the Local Business Enterprise (LBE) certification category requirements as a prerequisite for certification with DSLBD and in any additional category. In addition to being certified as an LBE, the business can also request a Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Resident-owned Business Enterprise (ROB), Development Zone Enterprise (DZE), Resident Business Enterprise (LRB), Veteran-owned Business Enterprise (VOB) or a Local Manufacturing Business (LME) designation for consideration.

5. What Are The Steps For The Certification Process?

- a. Attend a mandatory CBE pre-certification orientation (valid for 12 months).
- b. Complete an online CBE application.
- c. Schedule and attend a consultation after completing the CBE application.

6. How Long Is The Certification Process?

- a. Decisions will be made within 45 business days after receipt of a complete application.

7. How Long Is The Certification Valid?

- a. CBE Certification is valid for two years.

8. Can Non-Profits Be Certified?

- a. No, non-profit institutions are not eligible for certification.

9. Who Can I Contact If I have Any Additional Questions?

- a. You can contact DSLBD by phone at 202-727-3900 or by email at dslbd@dc.gov.

Applications are generally processed on a “first come, first served basis”.

In accordance with the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, D.C. Official Code, Section 2-1401.01 et seq., (Act) the District of Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, or place of residence or business.

