

The Value of Diverse Business Certifications

A GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING
DIVERSE BUSINESS
CERTIFICATION
IN INDIANA



PRESENTED BY THE
MID-STATES MINORITY
SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

With contributions from the Great Lakes Women's Business Council, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indianapolis Airport Authority, Indy Rainbow Chamber, Office of Minority and Women Business Development for the City of Indianapolis, State of Indiana Department of Administration and Vick Strategic Consulting

For businesses owned by people in these groups:
ethnic minorities, women,
veterans, disabled or LGBTQ

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The material included in this handbook is for informational purposes only and is no guarantee of either certification or work. The contents of this handbook should not be construed as legal advice or legal representation. Please contact certifying bodies for details on certification. Policies and procedures are subject to change.

WELCOME

Collaborate + Accelerate

I hope this handbook will help you develop your business strategy and prepare you for the certification process. If you decide to pursue Minority Business Enterprise certification through our organization, we're here to help! Check out our website and send us an email if you have any questions.



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A note from Carolyn Mosby



Can you tell me about certification?

Which type of certification do I need?

At our office, we receive calls every day from business owners looking for the answers to these questions.

Those answers can be as complex as the types of business owners in our community. Businesses may be certified as minority-owned, women-owned, disadvantaged, veteran or LGBTQ. Certifying bodies may be national, regional, state-wide, city-wide or specific to one area, like transportation. They may target the public sector or, like our organization, the private sector. It's a lot to take in, and it can be difficult to quickly share answers over the phone.

We created this handbook to get you the answers you need so you can understand certification and decide if it's right for you and your business. This collection of wisdom and nuts-and-bolts information from advisors at certifying organizations in both the public and private sector is targeted to you. We hope you find it helpful.

Please note that the details in this handbook focus primarily on the state of Indiana, and most sources are based in Indianapolis. That said, many concepts presented here could apply to other regions, and some certifying organizations, including ours, have a national focus.

Certification can be a valuable tool for your business — but only if it matches up with your business goals and vision. To make it work for you, you need to not only understand it but “own it.” May this handbook help you do just that.

All the best to you and your business!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Mosby".

Carolyn Mosby
President and CEO
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WELCOME

Meet our advisors



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It's about getting your piece of the pie.

Cities, states, the federal government and private corporations have established targets designed to open up opportunities beyond what some folks call “the good old boy network.”

For example, the standard goal for city-financed projects in Indianapolis is to have 27% of contracts go to minority- and women-owned businesses following this formula: 15% to certain disadvantaged racial minorities, 8% to women-owned firms, 3% to veteran-owned firms and 1% to disability-owned firms.

Reaching those targets is where certification comes in. Frequently a company must be certified as a minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, LGBTQ-owned or disability-owned business in order to partake in such opportunities.

Why? “Because certification proves the business in question is legitimate,” said Talmadge Vick, who owns a consulting firm that, among other things, manages contract compliance for Minority Business Enterprises for the City of Evansville, Indiana. “Certification also brings value to the subcontractor or minority or woman-owned business because it shows the owner is willing to do what it takes to meet certification requirements, which gives others a sense of comfort and confidence in their business. In the business community, this process helps build and expand opportunity for all of us.”

That's the big picture. And it's just the beginning of what certification can do for a growing business. Vick called certification a “handshake.” JaRon Haggerty, former director of Minority Business Enterprise services at the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council, called it a “tool to get you past the gatekeeper.”

It's clear that certification can be beneficial. But is it for everyone? Not necessarily.

“Certification isn't always about access to opportunities,” said Holli Harrington, who is senior director of supplier diversity and diversity officer for the Indianapolis Airport Authority. “Certification makes you eligible to take advantage of diverse programs, but it's not a set-aside. You're not the only one certified. There's competition.”

In the pages that follow, we'll share tips and tools to help you learn more about certification and decide which, if any, certifications are right for you.

**“Certification isn't always about access to opportunities.
It makes you eligible to take advantage of diverse
programs, but it's not a set-aside. You're not the only
one certified. There's competition.”**

—Holli Harrington, Senior Director of Supplier Diversity and Diversity Officer,
Indianapolis Airport Authority



In the 1960s a new movement began, ushering in support for minority businesses.

Following years of civil unrest as Black people fought for the right to be equal, including the right to spend money at White-owned businesses, President Richard Nixon recognized that the opportunity for full economic participation by minorities would be essential to reach social and economic justice.

In 1969, Nixon established the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE), which later became the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). In 1971, Nixon signed Executive Order 11625, which increased the scope of this agency, defined a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), authorized grants to organizations to provide technical and management assistances to MBEs, and directed federal agencies to develop plans and goals for a national MBE contracting program. All of these steps helped to create capital within the Black community.

In the 1970s, Jimmy Carter, in conjunction with Congressman Parren Mitchell from Maryland, continued this effort with the creation of the program for set-asides, which are municipal contracts available only for bids from minority-owned businesses.

Throughout the 1980s, a requirement that 5% of products sold to the federal government must be from disadvantaged businesses encouraged the private sector to seek more minority-owned suppliers. The resulting demand for products and services from minority-owned businesses created room in the market for even more to follow. But just as the system was gaining traction, a 1989 Supreme Court decision determined that set-aside contracts were unconstitutional except under certain circumstances where discriminatory practices could be proven. As a result, most city and state programs became voluntary, support for federal diversity programs subsided, and the private sector took over these efforts.

The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), which was chartered in 1972, provided a national certification process for Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) for businesses of all sizes in the private sector. This certification verified that businesses were legitimately owned and operated by minority owners.

Because of its uniform structure and consistency, the NMSDC inspired confidence in business leaders that certified suppliers were legitimate and would meet expectations.

With more minorities in leadership positions at many private companies, the NMSDC's MBE certification gained prominence coast to coast. Because of its uniform structure and consistency, the NMSDC inspired confidence in business leaders that certified suppliers were legitimate and would meet expectations. With a national office in New York and 23 regional councils, including the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council based in Indianapolis, the NMSDC serves as a direct link between corporate America and minority-owned businesses.

Here are three essential things to know.

The experts we interviewed for this guide helped boil down the certification process to these key steps.

1

Understanding certification

First, do your research so that you really understand what certification means for your business.

- Develop and hone your business strategy.
- Define your market, potential clients and customers.
- Research certification options.
 - Determine if you are eligible.
 - Determine if certification could help you – or not.

2

Becoming a certified business

Once you've decided that certification is right for you and your business goals, follow the application process.

- Choose the certification you seek.
- Verify that you can meet the certification requirements.
- Complete checklists, attend webinars and ask for help.
- Complete and submit your certification application.

3

Putting your certification to work

Make the most of the opportunities offered to you through top-notch business strategy, marketing and professionalism.

- Create a capabilities statement.
- Add your certification seal to your marketing materials.
- Attend networking events hosted by certifying organizations.
- Reach out to your fellow certified businesses and build connections.
- Sign up for opportunities on company and/or public websites.
- Research bid lists in the categories you're targeting.
- Professionally respond to requests for proposal.
- Deliver the goods to other contractors, clients, customers and partners.
- Create a calendar reminder for certification renewal.



Are you ready to certify?

We'll elaborate on each step throughout these pages. Before you go too far, consider these three questions:

1 Should I get certified? Really, it can be a big investment of time. Will your business benefit?

2 Am I eligible? Check each certifying body's definition of "minority" and "owner."

3 Is my business ready to be certified? You might have some work to do first.

If you can answer a resounding **YES** to these questions, you're ready to move forward.

That's a good question.

At a recent webinar on supplier diversity, it's the question business owners asked most often. On one hand, it's a difficult question to answer, since there are so many opportunities – especially for businesses that provide services or serve as primary contractors or subcontractors.

You'll often see these types of businesses benefiting from certification:

- Construction (horizontal and vertical)
- Health care
- Professional services
- Technology
- Manufacturing

On the other hand, many businesses are less likely to benefit. "It all depends on your strategy," said Carolyn Mosby, president of the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council. "For example, some people say caterers benefit from certification, but in my experience that's typically only true if there are opportunities with large corporations or a major event seeking to meet a diverse spend goal."

It's also true that independent entities like restaurants, clothing stores and hair salons likely wouldn't benefit.

"That's why we recommend that you do your homework," Carolyn said. "Applying for certification takes time and focus, and so does the networking and promotion of your business that follow. Before you go down the road to certification, make sure it's the right road for you and your business."

For examples of situations that can benefit from certification, check out the *To certify or not to certify?* chart on page 14.

Do your homework before you take the plunge.

Requirements vary for each certifying body. Do some homework and understand the foundational requirements for ownership, operation and control. As a rule of thumb, **businesses must be 51% owned, operated and controlled by qualifying minorities, veterans, women or LGBTQ.**

“If you’re a new business owner and you’d like to take advantage of certification programs, it’s important to make sure you create your business in a way that will qualify for these programs,” said Camille Blunt, formerly of the Office of Minority and Women Business Development at the City of Indianapolis. “For example, if your 49% owner is an initial investor for your entire business, they’d count as owner because of that initial investment.” That could be a problem if the owner in question doesn’t meet certification criteria.

Your citizenship, residence, ethnicity and other factors such as personal worth and company size may also come into play, depending on where you seek certification. Allow time for research before you make your decision.



51%

Percentage of a business that must be owned, operated and controlled by qualifying minorities, veterans, women or LGBTQ to qualify for most certifications



60–90 days

Time frame to process most certification applications



1–3 years

Time frame for renewals of most certifications

“Understand your customer and if certification is going to be beneficial to you.”

—Carolyn Mosby, President, Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council

Benefits of certification

- ✓ Credibility
- ✓ Access to public and private organizations and opportunities to bid for work
- ✓ Growth and networking opportunities
- ✓ Education and tools to help you succeed
- ✓ Validation of your status with a seal you can use on your website and marketing materials
- ✓ An opportunity to support other businesses like yours

Reasons not to get certified

- ✗ You don't meet eligibility requirements
- ✗ You're not in an industry that typically contracts with entities that recognize certification or procure your goods or services
- ✗ You don't have capacity for the work or paperwork
- ✗ You're not willing to commit time to networking events and programs
- ✗ You're not willing to be flexible and modify what you do to meet the needs of those offering contracts
- ✗ Certification doesn't align with your business strategy
- ✗ You've been certified in the past and haven't taken advantage of your certified status to bid on contracts (in other words, you didn't use it)

Consider what you do and who you serve.

The experts we spoke to recommend several to-dos before you apply for certification. Most important: Reflect on your business and your goals and how they align with the opportunities you're going for. Don't just apply for certification because someone else suggested it. Put yourself and your business goals first. "Understand your customer and if certification is going to be beneficial to you," said Carolyn Mosby of the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council. These expert tips may help you set your priorities:

Be strategic. Before you apply, consider how you plan to use the certifications you're seeking. When you become certified, you begin the process of setting yourself up to meet the needs of another company or organization. "It's more about what you do than who you are," said JaRon Haggerty, formerly of the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council. "First and foremost, you have to meet the needs of the company you want to work with, and you need to be able to do it well."

Identify who buys what you sell. Don't spend time selling your products or services to an organization that doesn't use them. Gain an understanding of their needs. Invest time and effort in figuring out who is your ideal target based on your capabilities and your business. Then determine if certification will help you reach that target.

Know your strengths. "Understand where your strengths are and look for niches so you're in a position to empower your organization to take advantage of opportunities," said minority supplier consultant Talmadge Vick. "It's vital that you have the ability to do the work you're seeking – and that you project your abilities in a way that helps the end user understand your value."

Follow the dollars. Certification benefits you because it qualifies you to secure contracts that help other organizations reach their goals or qualify for grant funding. For example, the Indiana Department of Transportation recently completed 303 contracts for \$670 million and exceeded its 10% goal, awarding more than \$160 million to businesses owned by minorities, women and vets. If you're wondering where to apply for certification, Sean Howard of INDOT suggests you "follow the dollars" and goals. "If it's a city project, it will be city goals. If it's a state project, it will be state goals. If the project has U.S. Department of Transportation dollars, it will be a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal," he said.

Be realistic about what you can do. Businesses seeking certification must show that they're functional and have a reasonable chance of success in the public or private sector. Financial stability and proof of performance through detailed documentation are requirements. "You're as strong as your performance," Vick said. "At the end of the day, it's not what you say, but what you deliver." So make sure that, before you go through the certification process, you're ready to deliver the goods.

Be prepared. Once you've assessed your business and your goals and you know which customers or organizations you plan to target, certification can help you qualify for – and prepare for – the bidding process and the work that could follow. "Certification shows that a business owner has put in the work of putting together their business model, which strengthens their ability to do the work," Vick said.

Use free tools. Not sure where or how to start assessing your business? Look for tools on the websites of certification organizations. For example, Meechelle Parker of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council recommends this [FAQ](#) or a [questionnaire on the WBENC site](#) that can help business owners determine if certification is right for them.



Learn the lay of the land.

When you start researching certification and organizations that offer it, the options can seem overwhelming.

In fact, there's very little about certification that's cut and dry. There are reasons to apply for certification and reasons not to apply. Municipal certifications sometimes help businesses win private contracts, and in some cases corporate certifications help businesses win government contracts. That said, there are a few general categories certifications fall into: those that relate to municipal contracts and those that relate to private ones.

Private sector certifications

If you're interested in working with corporations or private companies, certification with the right organizations can help you get a foot in the door. These groups are nonprofits that charge fees for certifications based on the size of your company. Most organizations that issue private certifications are national in scope, which can give your business broader reach, depending on your goals.

KEY PRIVATE SECTOR CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

[Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council](#)

[Great Lakes Women's Business Council/ Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#)

[National LGBT Chamber of Commerce \(NGLCC\)/Indy Rainbow Chamber](#)

For details about these certifying organizations and their programs, click each link or turn to the [**Resources**](#) section of this guide.

Public certifications

The federal government, State of Indiana and City of Indianapolis offer a range of certifying bodies and programs that help connect contractors with certified subcontractors. Because municipal organizations are funded by taxpayer dollars, municipal certifications are offered free of charge.

Most certifying organizations offer networking events, training and opportunities to respond to RFPs for the businesses they certify.

Although most municipal organizations collaborate with each other, so that, for example, the city may accept a state certification, each group retains the right to certify or not certify. "It's not a reciprocity," said Camille Blunt, formerly of the Office of Minority and Women Business Development at the City of Indianapolis. "We share some information, except for applications and tax returns. But we all have our own, independent certification process." Bottom line: When it comes to certification, even with government groups, there really is no "one size fits all" option.

KEY INDIANAPOLIS AREA PUBLIC SECTOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

[Indiana Department of Administration \(IDOA\) Division of Supplier Diversity \(DSD\) Program](#)

[Office of Minority and Women Business Development \(OMWBD\) for the City of Indianapolis](#)

[Indiana Department of Transportation \(INDOT\)](#)

For details about these key municipal organizations and their public certifications, click each link or turn to the [**Resources**](#) section of this guide.

**Swimming in
alphabet city?**

Keep afloat with our
[Glossary of Acronyms.](#)

Know your options before you apply.

This guide offers information about some of the most important certifying bodies in Indiana, especially the region surrounding Indianapolis. Our list isn't exhaustive, but it includes the major players. We hope it will help you get started!

Certifying bodies in Indiana: Private sector

[Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council](#)

[Great Lakes Women's Business Council](#)

[National LGBT Chamber of Commerce/Indy Rainbow Chamber](#)

[List of private sector certifications](#)

[Points of comparison: Private certifications by body](#)

Certifying bodies in Indiana: Public sector

[State of Indiana](#)

[City of Indianapolis](#)

[Indiana Department of Transportation](#)

[List of public sector certifications](#)

[Points of comparison: Public certifications by body](#)

For details about these certifying organizations and their programs, click each link or turn to the [Resources](#) section of this guide.



Explore possibilities that fit your profile.

Review this list of certifications by eligibility to find and choose options to explore.

For ethnic minorities

Business owners who qualify as racial or ethnic minorities must prove they are African-American/Black, Asian-Indian American, Asian-Pacific American/Asian-Islander American, Hispanic (non-European) or Native American Indian. Certification options may seem similar but offer different benefits.

Certification:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
Issued by:	<u>Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council (Mid-States MSDC)</u>
Certification:	8(a) Business/Small Disadvantaged Business
Issued by:	<u>Small Business Administration (SBA)</u>
Certification:	Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)
Issued by:	<u>Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)</u>
Certification:	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
Issued by:	<u>Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)</u>
Certification:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
Issued by:	<u>City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)</u>
Certification:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
Issued by:	<u>Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)</u>

“In the business community certification helps build and expand depth, vision and opportunity for all of us.”

—Talmadge Vick, Vick Strategic Consulting

LIST OF CERTIFICATIONS

Which certification is right for me?

For women

Women business owners may qualify for several types of certifications. Certification options may seem similar but offer different benefits.

- Certification: Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) (for ethnic women)
Issued by: **Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council (Mid-States MSDC)**
- Certification: Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
Issued by: **Great Lakes Women's Business Council/Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)**
- Certification: 8(a) Business/ Small Disadvantaged Business
Issued by: **Small Business Administration (SBA)**
- Certification: Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)
Issued by: **Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)**
- Certification: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
Issued by: **Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)**
- Certification: Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB)
Issued by: **Small Business Administration (SBA)**
- Certification: Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB)
Issued by: **Small Business Administration (SBA)**
- Certification: Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
Issued by: **City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)**
- Certification: Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
Issued by: **Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)**

For veterans

U.S. military veteran business owners may qualify for several types of certifications. Certification options may seem similar but offer different benefits.

- Certification: Indiana Veteran-Owned Small Business (IVOSB)
Issued by: **Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)**
- Certification: Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
Issued by: **US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Vets First Verification Program**
- Certification: Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)
Issued by: **City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)**
- Certification: Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)
Issued by: **US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Vets First Verification Program**

LIST OF CERTIFICATIONS

Which certification is right for me?

Certification:
Issued by:

For business owners with disabilities

Business owners who have an ADA-defined disability or veterans who have been disabled in active military service may qualify for these options.

ADA Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)
City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)

Certification:
Issued by:

Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Vets First Verification Program

Certification:
Issued by:

For LGBTQ

Business owners who identify as members of the LGBTQ community may consider this private option.

LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)
National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)

Certification:
Issued by:

For specified economically depressed communities

This certification is for small businesses located in designated HUBZone areas and employ at least 35% of its employees from a certified HUBZone. Unlike other certification options, businesses may be owned by a Community Development Corporation, an agricultural cooperative, a Native Hawaiian organization, a Native American tribe or any U.S. citizen.

Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone)
Small Business Administration (SBA)

These story problems could help you decide.

Not sure how certification could benefit you and your business? Consider these examples, which help illustrate different types of certification.

Business owner example

Should they certify?



Victor is a Hispanic man whose specialized data network installation business has been growing. He would like more opportunities to bid on contracts with larger firms.

YES. Large corporations often have programs that would benefit certified businesses. Being certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) through the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council could set Victor’s business apart from other bidders and help him become a supplier to private companies.



Sandra is a female veteran who was disabled in the line of duty. Her Indianapolis-area communications company, which provides writing and editing services, is small, but her staff is capable and eager to take on more business.

YES. Sandra could consider multiple certifications. Here are two of her options: As a service-disabled veteran, she could apply for the Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSA) certification through the Veterans Administration, which would allow her business to gain access to federal contracts. As a female business owner, she could apply for any of the three Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE) certification options through the City of Indianapolis, the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) or the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) through the Great Lakes WBC.



Minh is an Asian man whose company specializes in poured concrete for foundations and structures. He would like to branch into road construction.

YES. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification issued by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) would identify his business as socially or economically disadvantaged during his bid.



Sam is a Black man who owns a screen printing studio in Bloomington, creating custom printed items. He would like to work with Indiana University.

YES. A Minority Business Enterprise certification offered through the IDOA could allow Sam’s studio to be noticed. Large universities often have diversity programs to promote fairness to socially or economically disadvantaged business suppliers.



Calvin is a White man who identifies as gay. The HR consultant agency he owns would like to network with national companies in an effort to expand its client list.

YES. The LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE) certification features networking events where certified businesses can connect. For Calvin, many national corporations have supplier diversity initiatives. Calvin would also benefit just from being a member of the Indy Rainbow Chamber.



Lynne is a Black woman who has a small business selling handmade greeting cards. She would like an opportunity to sell her cards to incarcerated people who can use them to keep in touch with loved ones.

YES. Either the MBE or the WBE certification from the IDOA would benefit her in her goal to be a supplier to the Indiana Department of Corrections.

UNDERSTANDING CERTIFICATION

To certify or not to certify?



Business owner example

Angel is a Black woman operating a home-based makeup business selling directly to consumers. She would like to build her client base so she can increase her monthly income.

Should they certify?

MAYBE. Direct-to-consumer businesses, like Mary Kay, Avon or Tupperware, typically wouldn't benefit from certifications. But Angel might consider certification with Mid-States MSDC or Great Lakes WBC if she wants to supply her product to retailers like Target or Walmart.



Maurice is a Black owner of a fine dining restaurant in downtown Indianapolis. He would like to encourage more diners to visit his restaurant during dinner hours.

NO. A restaurant like Maurice's would not benefit from certification. However, if Maurice offered a service such as catering, it could.



Max is a Black man with a line of Indiana-themed mixing syrups for alcoholic drinks. He would like to encourage more local gift shops to carry his product line.

MAYBE. Although small local gift shops are unlikely to have supplier diversity programs, national stores like Walmart and Target often do. The Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certification offered through the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council could help Max's products get into these stores.



Abigail is a White woman owner of a business creating grab-and-go sandwiches. She has two locations and has identified the Indianapolis Airport as a potential third location.

YES. The Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) certification issued by INDOT would identify her business as socially or economically disadvantaged, which would be helpful.

Example from the Field The Indianapolis Airport Authority



As a municipal corporation, the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA) functions differently than private corporations, said the IAA's Senior Director of Supplier Diversity and Diversity Officer Holli Harrington, who has worked with both. "Typically, private corporations call you – or have preferred suppliers. The IAA process is transparent and accessible to all."

Harrington, the airport's first diversity officer, promotes equity and inclusion in daily operations and business processes. She also supports the IAA's commitment to fostering equitable inclusion – a commitment that extends to the diverse business community.

The IAA does not certify businesses but encourages small and diverse certified businesses to participate in their local and federal small and diverse business programs to gain access to meaningful procurement and contractual opportunities. The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) requires every airport that receives federal grants to maintain a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (ACDBE/DBE). Additionally, IAA prides itself on being a responsible corporate citizen by utilizing the MBE/WBE/VBE businesses that reflect the diversity of our community.

Harrington advises certified businesses to take time to thoroughly understand and strategically evaluate potential opportunities and to clearly articulate their true capabilities. "Network and determine what opportunities are a good fit," she said. "Find where there's a need, and position your capabilities to be the solution." Harrington added that being certified doesn't promise you an opportunity. "It creates access to participate, but you have to do the work and be competitive."

BECOMING A CERTIFIED BUSINESS



Twice as nice

If you fall into more than one certification category — for example, if you're a Black woman business owner — you may be certified as both a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE). However, when you bid for projects, you'll need to pick one category. "Choose your lane," said Camille Blunt, director of the Office of Minority and Women Business Development for the City of Indianapolis. "You can't be double-counted." Falling into two categories can also open doors. For example, the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce offers unique opportunities through its Communities of Color Initiative.

Application tips

If you've decided certification is right for you, here are the next steps to prepare your business for new opportunities.

Once you make the decision to certify, understanding the certification process — well in advance of your application — is the next step on your to-do list. In addition to the overviews in this handbook, you'll find helpful resources, orientations, webinars and business consultations, as well as downloadable checklists, on organizations' websites.

Ask for help. "Don't be intimidated by the process. Before you apply, come in and get a business consultation. Find out what you have and don't have," said Camille Blunt, former director of the Office of Minority and Women Business Development for the City of Indianapolis.

Watch webinars. "Start with our certification webinars," advised Maia Sipsravili, deputy commissioner of supplier diversity for the State of Indiana Department of Administration. "You can also call or email. We can't give legal advice, but we can guide you. If you don't have something, don't get discouraged. Just ask." Mid-States MSDC also offers webinars each month, and the Great Lakes Women's Business Council offers orientations, which can help you learn up front what to expect.

Complete checklists. Most certifying bodies offer checklists on their websites. Use them before you start filling out an application so you know what you're getting into. It's complicated stuff: The Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) checklist alone is six pages long.

Put your best foot forward. Think of the certification application and review process the same way you'd think of applying for a job. Your certification application should show how qualified, capable and determined you are. The more polished and complete your application looks, the more polished and ready for business you'll look to the certifying body to which you're applying.

Get organized. If you're applying for certification at more than one organization, you'll likely be able to use a lot of the same materials, but keep in mind that each certifying organization and process is different. Some organizations charge fees (Mid-States MSDC and Great Lakes, which are nonprofits). Some don't (city and state certifying bodies, which are funded by taxes). Because each certification is so complex, you may want to take your time and apply for one certification at a time.

"Use checklists, don't leave anything blank, and ask questions before you apply — not after."

—Crystal Bell, MWBE Certification Specialist,
State of Indiana Department of Administration,
Division of Supplier Diversity

PUTTING YOUR CERTIFICATION TO WORK

Leveraging the status and seal

The most important thing about certification is what you do after you achieve it.

As minority supplier expert Talmadge Vick noted, certification is a handshake, a beginning. It gives you access to opportunity, but it won't do you much good unless you take action. Here's some expert advice on how to put your certification to work.

Create a capability statement. "It's the first thing prospects will ask for," said JaRon Haggerty, formerly of the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council. Creating one requires that you clearly articulate your strengths and value proposition. Once you've honed that message, you'll be ready to put your best foot forward when opportunities come your way.

Sign up on company websites. In addition to tapping into the benefits of certifying organizations, do your own research. Visit the websites of companies for which you'd like to work. Corporations publicize diversity initiatives hoping to build goodwill in the community. Visit the "supplier diversity" section of their websites and sign up as a vendor.

Be responsive. Many businesses do a great job when it's time to do use their craft and get work done, but they may not have the personnel of larger firms to respond to customers in a timely way. For a certified business, that's not OK. Responsiveness is a need-to-have, according to Vick. "You need to dot your I's and cross your T's at every turn to show your business is buttoned up, dedicated and ready to deliver," he advised.

Act like a president. When you're working with major corporations — whether you're a plumber or you own a construction business — you need to present yourself with a title that fits your audience. Promote yourself from "owner" to "president."

Become an extrovert. Make time to attend events hosted by certifying organizations, even if they're virtual. Wear your branded gear and have your marketing materials on hand. Be sure to include seals from certifying organizations on your brochures, or indicate that you're an MBE or WBE on your business card. Start building relationships.

Connect with your peers. Certification can help you build connections with your fellow MBEs, WBEs and DBEs, many of which are large and growing companies. Get acquainted with your peers and build connections. Your certification gives you ideal opportunities to network with business owners like you. Your connections could help you hire subcontractors or open up subcontracting opportunities for your business.

Deliver the goods. The quality of your performance, especially in the contracting world, can make or break you. Word of mouth in the contractor community can determine the path your company takes — upward or downward. "Whether your performance is good or bad, others will hear about it," Vick said. "Your reputation and performance mean everything at the end of the day."

Schedule time to renew. All certifications require updates and renewals. Mark your calendar well ahead of your renewal date to ensure you have time to renew your certification before it expires.



“Certification is not a one and done. It’s nothing without the steps that come after. Online training and tools can help you grow and market your certification, so you’re prepared to go for your next big contract.”

—Meechelle Parker, Great Lakes Women's Business Council



Certification with the right organizations can help you get a foot in the door.

Interested in working with corporations or private companies? These groups are nonprofits that charge fees for certifications based on the size of your company. Most organizations and certifications are national in scope, which can give your business broader reach, depending on your goals.



Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council

<https://midstatesmsdc.org/new-certification-and-recertification/>

CERTIFICATION:

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)

VALID FOR:

1 year

Cost for certification: Fee of \$450-\$1,050 for new certifications based on company revenue

Processing time frame: 60 days; may be expedited for a fee

The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) was chartered in 1972 to provide a national certification process for Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), available to businesses of all sizes in the private sector. With a national office in New York and 23 regional councils, including the Mid-States Minority Development Council (Mid-States MSDC) based in Indianapolis, the NMSDC serves as a direct link between corporate America and minority-owned businesses.

In addition to being focused on private business, certification through the council is national in scope. "Our 'Mid-States' name reflects our territory, and your principal business, but certification makes you eligible for opportunities nationwide," said the council's former director of MBE services, JaRon Haggerty.

A key function of the council is to connect large corporations, which are members, with MBEs. **Corporate members**, including Anthem, Cummins and Eli Lilly and Company, pay annual fees for membership and access to MBEs that can help them reach their goals. Hundreds more corporate members are affiliated at the national level.

The certification process is strict, Haggerty said, and company information is kept private. Application is online only, and the council's website offers plentiful resources as well as frequent webinars to help applicants understand the process.

For certifications, the council focuses on ethnicity – not gender, disability or veteran status – and expects applicants to demonstrate their ethnic minority status through official documentation such as birth certificates. Its definition of minority includes African-American / Black, Asian-Indian American, Asian-Pacific American/Asian-Islander American, Hispanic (non-European) and Native American Indian.

"If you want to work for Fortune 500 companies as well as their supply chain, our certification will work for you," Haggerty said. "Our corporate partners attend our networking events and procurement conferences. We can help you strategize and build connections."

Another advantage of Mid-States MSDC is its reputation. They are seen as the gold standard, according to Haggerty. They've been around the longest and have the widest range of acceptance. Corporations know who they are and what they offer.

Certifying bodies in Indiana: Private sector



Great Lakes Women's Business Council

<https://www.greatlakeswbc.org/>



CERTIFICATION:

VALID FOR:

Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)

1 year

Cost for certification: Fee of \$350-\$1,250 for new certifications based on company revenue

Processing time frame: 90 days

The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) is the largest certifier of women-owned businesses in the United States and a leading advocate for women business owners and entrepreneurs. It was created to meet the national standard for businesses owned, managed and controlled by women who want to market their products and services in America's major markets.

The Great Lakes Women's Business Council is one of WBENC's 14 regional partner organizations, serving women business owners in Indiana and Michigan. In addition to certification, the council offers procurement assistance and training, corporate matchmaker events, women's forums and other services.

The certification process is online only, and the website offers plenty of tips and tools to get you started, including an online certification orientation.

To qualify, your business must be at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by one or more women who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, and your business formation and principal place of business must be in the United States or its territories. Your management and daily operation must also be controlled by one or more women owners who must demonstrate that they manage and control the company. Ethnic background is not a factor.

Certification gains WBEs recognition by and access to more than 1,000 major U.S. companies and supplier diversity and procurement executives nationwide, as well as use of the WBENC logo and ongoing training and events.

Qualified certified WBEs are also eligible for Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) certification, recognized by the federal government.

Meechelle Parker, the council's Indiana WBE and corporate member services manager, encourages women applying for certification to get involved with the council – even before they apply for certification. "It's a lot of information, and it takes time to gather everything, especially if you've been doing business for a while," she said. "Take time to build rapport with the agency. Certification is only Step One. Be prepared to launch in and take advantage of all the resources being offered."



National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)/

Indy Rainbow Chamber

<https://www.nglcc.org/>

<https://www.indyrainbowchamber.org/>

CERTIFICATION:

VALID FOR:

LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)

2 years

Cost for certification: Free for members of the Indy Rainbow Chamber; \$400 for new certifications and \$200 for recertification for applicants who aren't members of their local chamber

Processing time frame: 90 days

The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) is the largest advocacy organization dedicated to expanding economic opportunities and advancements for LGBT people and the exclusive certifying body for LGBT-owned businesses.

Businesses eligible for certification must be majority-owned by LGBT individuals, who apply for certification on this national organization's website. To qualify a business must be at least 51% owned, operated, managed and controlled by an LGBT person or people who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. It must also be independent of non-LGBT businesses and have its principal place of business in the United States. A site visit to the NGLCC's local affiliate, the Indy Rainbow Chamber, is part of the certification process.

"The site visit is basically a one-on-one interview," said Joey Amato, executive director of the Indy Rainbow Chamber, which is the only LGBT chamber of commerce in the state of Indiana. "I complete a questionnaire, and businesses are asked to provide a check or invoice."

Certified LGBTBE companies gain access to NGLCC corporate partners through a database, plus access to more than 300 contacts with corporate representatives and supplier diversity professionals. The organization also offers matchmaking and networking events, scholarship programs, mentorship, leadership training and other business development tools.

In Indianapolis, the certification program is relatively new with just a dozen certified members, but according to Amato, a lot of businesses are just learning about this program. "I've worked with the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce in many capacities throughout the years," Amato said. "I've learned that getting certified is one of the easiest, most cost-effective things you can do to help grow your business."

Amato recommends that businesses interested in certification start by becoming members of the Indy Rainbow Chamber, which includes LGBT businesses, corporate members and allies. The organization includes a member directory and frequently holds events and networking opportunities.

These certifications are issued by organizations that connect certified businesses with private enterprises such as corporations. Most certifications in this category are national in scope.

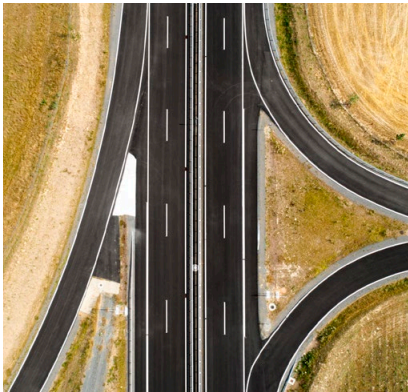
Certification:	LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE)
Issued by:	<u>National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)</u>
Certification:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
Issued by:	<u>Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council (Mid-States MSDC)</u>
Certification:	Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
Issued by:	<u>Great Lakes Women's Business Council/Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)</u>

“When you go to networking events, lead with what you do more than who you are (aka your background). What you do is most important. Don't get lost in the sauce.”

—JaRon Haggerty, Former Director, MBE Services,
Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council

Chart your course

There are so many certifications available, and there’s so much to learn about them, it’s difficult to know where to start. Experts at key Indy-area organizations shared this information, which could help you focus on which certifications are right for you and your business. Pore over them when you’re ready!



If you want to work for the city, state or Uncle Sam, certification gets you on the right list.

The federal government, State of Indiana and City of Indianapolis offer a range of certifying bodies and programs that help connect contractors with certified subcontractors. Because municipal organizations are funded by taxpayer dollars, municipal certifications are offered free of charge. We listened to experts at a few key public sector organizations. Here’s what we learned about their programs.



**State of Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA)
Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD) Program**
<https://www.in.gov/idoa/mwbe/>

CERTIFICATIONS:

VALID FOR:

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)	3 years
Women Business Enterprise (WBE)	3 years
Indiana Veteran-Owned Small Business (IVOSB)	2 years

Cost for certification: Free

Processing time frame: 90 days

State laws define this state division, established in 1983. It offers certifications for businesses owned by minorities, veterans and women, with an aim to provide equal opportunity to these groups in the state’s procurement and contracting process. In addition to certification, the program offers business outreach and manages contract compliance.

Certification with the state opens doors once closed to businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans. Certified businesses qualify for subcontracting opportunities on state contracts as well as purchasing by casinos, state universities and other public and private organizations.

To be certified, business owners must prove they have ownership and control of their businesses and also be U.S. citizens. Veterans must be able to prove their status or be on active duty. The business itself must be functional and have a reasonable chance of success in the public sector. The business owner proves this through the certification process.

Some companies are not large enough to compete on state multimillion-dollar contracts, but they do get hired as subcontractors, according to Maia Siprashvili, deputy commissioner of the IDOA Division of Supplier Diversity. Securing businesses owned by minorities, women and veterans can help larger companies reach the requirements of a request for proposal (RFP).

Siprashvili acknowledges that the application process can be difficult. She recommends that people who are interested in applying start with certification webinars, held every other month. Tip: Use the IDOA checklist well before you start filling out an application. If you’re not sure what it’s asking for, call the office or send an email.

Do your market research and see what your business can offer to secure government contracts, Siprashvili added. “Be realistic but also keep in mind that the State of Indiana buys all kinds of things, which means there are opportunities for various businesses.”



City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)

<https://www.indy.gov/agency/office-of-minority-and-women-business-development>

It’s all about goals

When they hire certified businesses, organizations meet goals that help them create a more diverse workplace. These are the Indiana Department of Administration’s participation goals for certified businesses.

MINORITY

Construction	7%
Supplies	4%
Professional Services	8%
Weighted Average Goal	6%

WOMEN

Construction	5%
Supplies	9%
Professional Services	8%
Weighted Average Goal	7%

VETERAN

Construction	3%
Supplies	3%
Professional Services	3%
Weighted Average Goal	3%

City of Indianapolis contract goals for certified businesses

MINORITY	15%
WOMEN	8%
VETERAN	3%
DISABILITY	1%

CERTIFICATIONS:

VALID FOR:

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)	3 years
Woman Business Enterprise (WBE)	3 years
Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)	3 years
Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE)	3 years

Cost for certification: Free
Processing time frame: 90 days

Much like the Indiana Department of Administration, the City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development offers certifications that give businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans and people with disabilities equal access to compete for city projects and other contract opportunities.

To qualify, businesses must be headquartered and domiciled in the state of Indiana and at least 51% owned by minorities, women, veterans or people with ADA disabilities. Owners must also be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States, and the businesses must be for-profit, registered with the city’s purchasing division and able to meet certain size standards.

If you’re not sure if this certification is right for you, Camille Blunt, former director of the Office of Minority and Women Business Development for the City of Indianapolis, recommends you start by checking out the city’s diverse **supplier list**, which is updated each month. It will give you a sense of the types of businesses already certified.

The basic requirement is a desire to do business for the City of Indianapolis. Projects go beyond parks and road surfacing to include all kinds of things, according to Blunt. And, because the supplier list is public information, it can be pulled by entities both public and private, which can gain your business exposure and a level of credibility.

To help you with your application, the city’s website links to forms to complete. The office also offers free consultations. Like the state’s application, the city’s paperwork must be printed, signed and notarized.



Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

<https://www.in.gov/indot/2384.htm>

CERTIFICATIONS:

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)*

Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)

VALID FOR:

Valid until the certification is formally removed by the review panel. Certified companies are reviewed every three years and must submit an annual affidavit.

Cost for certification: Free

Processing time frame: 90 days

Like the city and state, the Indiana Department of Transportation offers opportunities for which your business must be certified. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program was launched in 1980 by the U.S. Department of Transportation. It serves as a civil rights program designed to remedy discrimination and the effects of past discrimination in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and highway safety contracting markets nationwide.

In Indiana, INDOT is the sole certifying agency for the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE/ACDBE) programs. This means that to participate as a DBE on contracts with funding through FHWA, FAA or the FTA, a business must first obtain DBE/ACDBE certification.

To qualify for certification, a business must be least 51% owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, have expertise in the field, control their companies' daily business operations and have a personal net worth less than \$1,320,000 (excluding certain assets). Businesses must also meet Small Business Administration (SBA) size standards and income requirements. Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Subcontinent Asian Americans and women qualify as disadvantaged groups. Veterans and people with disabilities can apply independently.

INDOT applications for certification are 100% electronic. "The paperwork is similar to IDOA," said Sean Howard, supportive services coordinator lead at INDOT's Economic Opportunity division.

INDOT's participation goal for DBEs is 10.1%, a milestone INDOT has exceeded in recent years. "We need DBEs," Howard said. "The state is covered in INDOT projects. If you have a business that you think could work with INDOT, there are likely projects in your county. INDOT has a fully funded road program and about \$2 billion worth of work in our capital program. If you're looking for work, let us know."

*Indiana DBE has reciprocity with Kentucky.

The Indiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) is not a certifying entity, but it can help you navigate the certification process and more. Sign up at in.gov/Indiana-ptac.

The long list

These certifications are issued by governing bodies including the federal government, the State of Indiana and the City of Indianapolis. They primarily pertain to government (aka public) contracts. However, private organizations may also recognize these certifications.

Certification: Issued by:	8(a) Business/ Small Disadvantaged Business <u>Small Business Administration (SBA)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	ADA Disability-Owned Business Enterprise (DOBE) <u>City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) <u>Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) <u>Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) <u>Small Business Administration (SBA)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) <u>Small Business Administration (SBA)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Indiana Veteran-Owned Small Business (IVOSB) <u>Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) <u>City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) <u>Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) <u>US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Vets First Verification Program</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) <u>City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) <u>US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization Vets First Verification Program</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) <u>Small Business Administration (SBA)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) <u>City of Indianapolis Office of Minority and Women Business Development (OMWBD)</u>
Certification: Issued by:	Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) <u>Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Division of Supplier Diversity (DSD)</u>

This chart compares private sector certifications from three local organizations.

	Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council	Great Lakes Women's Business Council/ Women's Business Enterprise National Council	Indy Rainbow Chamber/National LGBT Chamber of Commerce
Acronym	Mid-States MSDC	WBENC	NGLCC
Certification type	Minority Business Enterprise	Women's Business Enterprise	LGBT Business Enterprise
Certification acronym	MBE	WBE	LGBTBE
Main benefit	National certification offers formal and informal activities to foster the development of long-term, mutually beneficial business relationships that bring corporate purchasing professionals together with minority businesses	National recognition by more than 1,000 major U.S. corporations representing thousands of well-known brands and government agencies	National scope; the opportunity to bid for contracts with the NGLCC's corporate supplier diversity partners, which have targeted amounts for spending with diverse business enterprises
Other benefits	Networking, subscription services, business opportunity sourcing, coaching, training and development, including workshops, special events and education	Inclusion in national database; invitations to regional and national events, webinars and training; and eligibility to exhibit at national and regional business expos	Eligibility to exhibit at both national and regional events, inclusion in a national database and eligibility to participate in mentorship programs, leadership trainings and scholarship opportunities
Business size	No requirement	No requirement	No requirement
Citizenship	U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents	U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents	U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents; must be formed and headquartered in the United States
Ownership	At least 51% owned, operated and controlled by a person or people who are racial or ethnic minorities	At least 51% owned and controlled by women	At least 51% owned, operated managed and controlled by an LGBT person or people
Economic requirement	No requirement	No requirement	No requirement
Years in business	At least 2 years with exceptions	No requirement	No requirement
Certification renewal	Annual	Annual; site visit every 3 years	Every 2 years
Contact info	317-923-2110 midstatesmsdc.org https://midstatesmsdc.org	317-920-1400 greatlakeswbc.org https://www.greatlakeswbc.org	202-234-9181 nglcc.org https://nglcc.org/

This chart compares certifications from three local public sector organizations.

	City of Indianapolis Office of Minority & Women Business Development	Indiana Department of Administration	Indiana Department of Transportation
Acronym	OMWBD	IDOA	INDOT
Certification type	Minority, Women and Veteran ADA Disability Owned Business Enterprise	Minority Business Enterprise, Women’s Business Enterprise and Indiana Veteran Owned Small Business	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
Certification acronym	MBE, WBE, VBE, DOBE	MBE, WBE, IVOSB	DBE
Main benefit	Prime contractors are encouraged to use city-certified subcontractors on city/county/ municipal agency projects	Prime contractors are encouraged and expected to use certified subcontractors on Indiana state contracts	Prime contractors are encouraged to use certified subcontractors on federally funded contracts
Other benefits	Networking workshops, procurement opportunities, consulting and compliance	Networking workshops and procurement opportunities	Training workshops and contract opportunities
Business size	No requirement	No requirement	Small by SBA standards
Citizenship	U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents	U.S. citizens	U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents
Ownership	At least 51% owned and controlled by a person or people with minority, woman, veteran, ADA-disabled status	At least 51% owned and controlled by a person or people with minority, woman or veteran status	At least 51% owned and controlled by a person or people with socially or economically disadvantaged status
Economic requirement	Viable business headquartered in Indiana	Viable business	Personal net worth less than \$1,320,000 and personal income less than \$350,000 (3-year avg.)
Years in business	At least 2 years with exceptions	At least 2 years with exceptions	No requirement
Certification renewal	Every 3 years + annual updates	Every 3 years + annual updates	Annual affidavit of no change; once certified you remain so until you no longer qualify for the program
Contact info	317-327-5262 OMWBD@indy.gov	317-232-3061 Mwbe@idoa.in.gov or, for IVOSB, IndianaVeterans Preference@idoa.IN.gov	INDOT website [https://www.in.gov/indot/ 2748.htm] DBECertification@indot.in.gov

Source: Indiana Department of Transportation

You can't wade far into a conversation about certifications without becoming soaked in an alphabet soup of acronyms. Use this glossary to help you sort out the DBEs, IVOSBs and SDVOSBs.

Acronym	What it stands for	What it means
8(a)	8(a) Business Development Program	National program for businesses owned and controlled by economically or socially disadvantaged people
ACDBE	Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	Federal program administered by the state for small businesses owned and controlled by an economically disadvantaged person or people, who have interest in airport concessions
DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	Federal program administered by the state for small businesses owned and controlled by an economically disadvantaged person or people
DOBE	Disability-Owned Business Enterprise	City-level certification for businesses owned and controlled by people with ADA disabilities
DSD	Division of Supplier Diversity	Division of Indiana Department of Administration that deals with certification of MBE, WBE and IVOSBs, contract compliance and business outreach for diverse suppliers
EDWOSB	Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business	National certification for small businesses owned and controlled by an economically disadvantaged woman or women
Great Lakes WBC	Great Lakes Women's Business Council	Regional office of national private certification body specializing in women's causes
HUBZone	Historically Underutilized Business Zones	National certification for small businesses located in specific zones identified as underutilized
IDOA	Indiana Department of Administration	Indiana state agency with many responsibilities, including issuing certifications (see DSD)
INDOT	Indiana Department of Transportation	Indiana state agency regulating transportation and transportation-related concerns
IVOSB	Indiana Veteran-Owned Small Business	State-level certification for businesses based in Indiana and owned by veterans that seek to do business in the state of Indiana

Acronym	What it stands for	What it means
LGBTBE	LGBT Business Enterprise certification	National certification for businesses owned and controlled by an LGBT person or people
MBE	Minority Business Enterprise	Certification for businesses owned and controlled by a person or people of a qualifying minority
Mid-States MSDC	Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council	Regional office of national private certification body specializing in minority causes
NGLCC	National LGBT Chamber of Commerce	National private certification body specializing in LGBT causes
NMSDC	National Minority Supplier Development Council	National office of national private certification body specializing in minority causes
OMWBD	Office of Minority and Women Business Development	The office of the City of Indianapolis that handles certifications
OSDBU	Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization	The office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that handles certifications
SBA	Small Business Administration	Federal agency supporting small businesses
SDVOSB	Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	National certification for small businesses owned and operated by veterans who have been disabled in service
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	Federal agency supporting veterans
VBE	Veteran Business Enterprise	Certification for businesses owned and controlled by veterans
VOSB	Veteran-Owned Small Business	National certification for small businesses owned and operated by veterans
WBE	Women Business Enterprise	Certification for businesses owned and controlled by a woman or women
WBENC	Women's Business Enterprise National Council	National private certification body specializing in women's causes
WOSB	Women-Owned Small Business	National certification for small businesses owned and controlled by a woman or women