

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What exactly does it mean to be "certified as an M/WBE"?**

Being certified as an M/WBE means that a business concern has gone through a stringent certification process to confirm the business is owned, managed, and controlled by a designated minority group and/ or a woman to be eligible to do business with local municipalities. The minority group(s) includes Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific, and Asian-Indian OR a woman or women. The certification requirements can be found [here](#).

### **How can my company become certified as an M/WBE?**

Businesses interested in applying for M/WBE Certification or requiring assistance completing the application must first be a registered vendor with the City of New York. To register, you must create a Payee Information Portal (PIP) account by visiting the [PIP webpage](#). Businesses are eligible to apply for certification with the **NYC Department of Small Business Services** or one of its certification partners. To submit an application, you must be an authorized representative of the business such as a business owner or a person authorized to act on their behalf. The authorized representative will be the point of contact for all communications from the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS).

### **Does DSS still require M/WBE certification if my company is currently certified as either an MBE or a WBE?**

Yes. In order to be eligible for a DSS contract opportunity with either of these referenced certifications, your firm must obtain M/WBE certification by NYC Department of Small Business Services. If you already have either of these certifications from one of NYC SBS Fast Track Partners, your company is eligible to submit a shorter application to SBS for M/WBE certification. **The SBS Fast Track application** will require fewer supporting documents and the determination of your certification status may be given in a shorter time period.

**Will DSS consider my company's current membership in a diverse trade association for a particular industry as a viable alternative to M/WBE certification?**

No. While both private organizations and public agencies can legitimately certify businesses as M/WBEs, there is no recognition of diverse members of trade associations as certified M/WBEs. However, if you already have certifications from one of **NYC SBS Fast Track Partners**, your company is eligible to apply application to SBS for M/WBE certification.

**What is the advantage to a prime contractor of utilizing a certified M/WBE?**

LL1 applicable contracts obtain M/WBE participation goals that a prime contractor is required to comply with. If the prime contractor is an M/WBE, the participation goal is fulfilled. If the prime contractor is not an M/WBE, the prime contractor must subcontract out the participation goal percentage to M/WBEs. The prime contractor is providing work opportunities to M/WBEs and assisting the economy.

**How do I prepare my company to do business with DSS after obtaining M/WBE Certification?**

Firms should review our website for M/WBE events, workshops and notices of programs. Additionally, as an M/WBE, your firm should create an account and enroll in PASSPort if you are currently doing (or planning to do) business with any other City agency.

**How do I list my firm's core capabilities so that it can be found by using either a keyword search or product code listing?**

The system most commonly used by local governments for commodities and services is NIGP(National Institute of Governmental Purchasing) codes. DSS encourages M/WBEs seeking contract opportunities to use NGIP codes.

**Does DSS provide technical assistance to M/WBEs?**

Yes. In keeping with the spirit of our City and Mayor de Blasio's vision, DSS hosts various workshops designed to build the capacity of M/WBEs in its targeted procurement areas. The events information can be found here. \*Link to initiatives and programs page.

**Does DSS have an M/WBE vendor list?**

Yes. DSS maintains a contact list of all M/WBEs that DSS has interacted with at events, over the phone, or by email.

**Does my company need to be pre-qualified to participate in DSS procurement opportunities?**

No. DSS does not pre-qualify vendors for participation in its procurement solicitations. The requirements that a vendor must meet to be eligible for award of a contract are identified in each specific solicitation.