

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Fact Sheet

What is a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) and why should I consider certification?

A disadvantaged business enterprise is a business that is **owned** (51% or more), **operated**, and **controlled** by a woman, a member of certain ethnic minorities, a disabled person, or a disabled veteran. Federal agencies and state agencies that receive Federal funds (for example, NV Dept. of Transportation) are generally required to establish goals for doing business with DBEs. Many private sector corporations, especially large government contractors, also have objectives for the amount of business they do with DBEs. Obtaining certification opens the door to additional opportunities to do business with these agencies.

What is certification?

Certification is a process by which some organization (the certifying organization) verifies that the eligible party owns, operates, and controls at least 51% of the business. To accomplish this, they will require an application and certain documentation from you. The certification process may require a visit to your business site. Occasionally, an agency may accept self-certification.

Is there more than one certification?

There are a number of certifying organizations, and each issues its own certification. Some agencies only certify women; others certify only minorities. Unfortunately, there is no “universal” certification that is valid for everyone interested in doing business with DBEs. Probably the most widely accepted DBE certifications are those granted by the U.S. Small Business Administration: [8\(a\)](#) and [SDB \(Small Disadvantaged Business\)](#). Unfortunately, they are also the most difficult to obtain in that they require a great deal of documentation, but they will be recognized by Federal agencies and prime government contractors nationwide.

For those desiring to do business in more than one state, there are a number of national certifications, usually issued by commercial certifying agencies, such as [National Women Business Owners Corporation \(NWBOC\)](#) or [Women’s Business Enterprise National Counsel \(WBENC\)](#) which only certify women-owned business, or the [Nevada Minority Business Council \(NMBC\)](#) which only certifies business owned by certain minorities. These agencies may charge a fee for their certification.

If you intend to do business with state and local governments in a Nevada, the [Nevada Department of Transportation \(DOT\)](#) awards certifications based on Federal certification

standards that are widely accepted within the state. Beyond the volume of paperwork needed to apply, there is normally no charge for this certification.

Will being certified automatically guarantee me contracts?

Certification is just the first step. **Just being on a DBE list does not assure you of more business.** You must still aggressively market your product or service and offer the buyers some competitive advantages or compelling reason to buy from you.

What certification(s) should I get?

Some may recommend that you apply for every certification you can. However, all certifications cost something – time or money or both. The NSBDC recommends that you first identify the certification(s) recognized by the companies or government agencies you wish to do business with. Call them and ask. If a certain certification covers most of your potential market, apply for that one first. As time permits or your marketing area expands, you may choose to apply for others.

How do I become certified?

Each certifying agency has its own specific application, and although much of the information requested is the same from application to application, submission of the proper form is essential. To streamline the process, use the checklist usually provided with the application and make sure you submit everything they request.

MGM MIRAGE Supplier Diversity Accreditation

Accreditation is a program developed by MGM MIRAGE to identify DBEs for the company's supplier diversity purchasing initiative. The MGM MIRAGE accreditation is not to be confused with the more formal DBE certification programs mentioned above.

Under the MGM MIRAGE accreditation program, qualifying suppliers may sell up to \$100,000 per calendar year in products or non-construction services.

It should be noted that you must already exist as a business to participate. To become eligible for participation, inquirers should email supplierdiversity@mgmmirage.com, or phone a supplier diversity representative in the [MGM MIRAGE Corporate Purchasing Department](#) at the numbers listed below:

If your business name starts with the letters A-M, phone 702-792-4939.

If your business name starts with the letters N-Z, phone 702-792-4921.