

Third FAQs – Maryland DBE/ACDBE Certification Reevaluation

Updated: May 19, 2026

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Interim Final Rule - *Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise in Airport Concessions Program Implementation Modifications* (effective October 3, 2025)

BACKGROUND

The Maryland Department of Social and Economic Mobility (DoSEM), established under House Bill 1253 (Chapter 605, Laws of Maryland 2025), is the first cabinet-level agency in the United States dedicated to removing structural barriers to social and economic mobility. Within DoSEM, the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) serves as Maryland’s certification entity for the following programs:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program
- Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) Program
- Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program

On October 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR), entitled “Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise in Airport Concessions Program Implementation Modifications,” effective immediately. The IFR is available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-19460>.

The IFR made three fundamental changes to the federal DBE and ACDBE programs:

- **Elimination of Presumptions:** OMBE and all Unified Certification Programs (UCPs) are now prohibited from using race- and sex-based presumptions of social and economic disadvantage. Every owner seeking DBE/ACDBE certification must now demonstrate individualized social and economic disadvantage.
- **Mandatory Reevaluation:** All currently certified DBE and ACDBE firms must undergo a one-time mandatory reevaluation under the new IFR standards, requiring submission of a Personal Narrative (PN) and a current Personal Net Worth (PNW) Statement.
- **Suspension of DBE Goals:** Until a UCP completes its reevaluation process, USDOT funding recipients may not set DBE/ACDBE contracting goals, and participation may not be counted toward overall goals.

IMPORTANT: The IFR does NOT affect Maryland’s MBE program. The MBE program is a state program that applies to state-funded contracts. Accordingly, the IFR does not affect a firm’s MBE certification. If your firm holds only an MBE certification, no action is required in response to the IFR.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This is OMBE’s third FAQ publication on the IFR reevaluation process, following the Initial FAQ (January 23, 2026) and the Secondary FAQ (February 13, 2026). This edition incorporates and updates guidance from prior publications, addresses new questions received from DBE/ACDBE firms since the Secondary FAQ, and reflects the current status of the reevaluation process. Firms are encouraged to read this document in full.

For additional questions, email OMBE at mbe.dosem@maryland.gov using the subject line “IFR Certification Reevaluation Question.” The B2G Vendor Management System is accessible at <https://marylandmdbe.mdbecert.com/>.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

A. Applicability – Which Firms and Which Programs Does the IFR Affect?

A.1 Does the IFR affect my MBE or SBE certification?

No. Your MBE and/or SBE certification remains valid and unaffected by the IFR. If your firm holds only MBE and/or SBE certification—and does not hold DBE or ACDBE certification—no action is required.

The IFR applies only to the federal DBE and ACDBE programs, governed by 49 CFR Parts 26 and 23, respectively. Neither Maryland’s MBE program nor its SBE program is subject to the IFR’s reevaluation requirements, though for different reasons.

The MBE program is a Maryland state program, separate from the federal DBE program. It is unaffected by the IFR because the IFR governs only federal USDOT programs.

The SBE program is a federal program, however SBE certification does not rely on race- or sex-based presumptions of disadvantage and therefore is not subject to the IFR’s reevaluation mandate.

A.2 Does my firm need to complete the DBE/ACDBE reevaluation? I received a notice but I am not sure it applies to me.

Your firm must submit a reevaluation application if all three of the following are true:

- Your firm holds DBE and/or ACDBE certification;
- Maryland (OMBE) was your firm’s original certifying jurisdiction (*i.e.*, your firm was originally certified by Maryland, not by another state’s UCP through interstate certification); and
- You wish to continue participating in the federal DBE/ACDBE programs.

If you are uncertain whether your firm holds DBE or ACDBE certification, or whether Maryland is your original certifying jurisdiction, log in to the B2G system or contact OMBE at mbe.dosem@maryland.gov.

If your firm's DBE/ACDBE certification originated in another state and you held Maryland interstate certification, you are not required to submit to OMBE. You must first complete the reevaluation process with your home state's UCP. See Section E for details.

A.3 Can my firm keep its MBE or SBE certification if it does not complete the DBE/ACDBE reevaluation, or if it is decertified?

Yes. MBE and SBE certifications are entirely independent. A decision not to pursue DBE/ACDBE recertification, or a determination by OMBE that your Personal Narrative does not meet the new eligibility standards, has no effect on your MBE or SBE certification.

A.4 Does the IFR apply to the ACDBE (Airport Concession DBE) program as well?

Yes. The IFR made substantially similar changes to the ACDBE regulations at 49 CFR Part 23 as it did to the DBE regulations at 49 CFR Part 26. All guidance in this FAQ applies equally to both DBE and ACDBE certification and reevaluation.

B. Submission Dates, Timelines, and What to Expect

B.1 What was the April 3, 2026 submission date? Was it a hard deadline? Can I still submit?

April 3, 2026 was OMBE's certification reevaluation submission date. Firms that submitted complete documentation by April 3, 2026 are among the first to have their applications reviewed.

However, OMBE continues to accept and process reevaluation applications received after the submission date. Firms that have not yet submitted should do so as soon as possible. Firms remain ineligible to participate in Maryland's DBE/ACDBE programs until they complete the reevaluation and are recertified.

IMPORTANT: Submitting as soon as possible remains critical. Every day without a completed submission is a day your firm remains ineligible. OMBE reviews applications in the order they are received.

B.2 What is OMBE's timeline for completing the reevaluation process? When will DBE/ACDBE program participation resume?

Federal regulations require OMBE to complete its reevaluation "as quickly as practicable."

Once Maryland notifies USDOT that its reevaluation process is complete, Maryland’s DBE and ACDBE programs will resume normal operation—including the setting of new DBE goals and the counting of DBE/ACDBE participation toward those goals. Until that time, the suspension of DBE goal-setting and participation counting remains in effect statewide on all USDOT-funded contracts.

B.3 How quickly will OMBE process my application once I submit? How will I know when a decision has been made?

OMBE evaluates applications on a first-come, first-served basis, using the date on which a firm’s complete submission is received. Incomplete applications—*e.g.*, applications missing a Personal Narrative, a current Personal Net Worth Statement with required supporting financial documentation, or signatures—will not enter the review queue until all required materials are provided. Firms are strongly encouraged to submit complete, thorough applications from the outset to avoid delays.

Upon completion of OMBE’s review, firms will receive written notification—a Recertification Letter or a Notice of Decertification—through the B2G system and by email. See Section D for information about these outcomes.

C. The Reevaluation Process – How to Submit

C.1 What are the steps to submit my reevaluation application?

All reevaluation documentation must be submitted through Maryland’s B2G Vendor Management System. B2G is the only accepted method of submission. OMBE does not accept documentation by email, mail, or in-person.

1. Log in to B2G at <https://marylandmdbe.mdbecert.com/>.
2. Under “Key Actions,” select “Renew/Apply for Certification.”
3. Select “You are an Existing DBE and you would like to submit for reevaluation.”
4. Select “Submit a 2026 Reevaluation Application.”
5. Complete and upload your Personal Narrative. See Section C.2 and the OMBE Personal Narrative Guidance document for detailed instructions.
6. Complete and upload your current Personal New Worth Statement with all required supporting financial documentation. See Section C.3 for details.
7. Submit your application and retain your submission confirmation.

IMPORTANT: Ensure you select “Submit a 2026 Reevaluation Application” at Step 4. Selecting a different application type—such as standard renewal or new application—will delay processing of your reevaluation.

C.2 What must my Personal Narrative include?

Pursuant to new federal guidelines, OMBE will holistically consider specific experiences you have encountered that may demonstrate social and economic disadvantage, including:

- Education – factors such as denial of equal access, compared to similarly situated persons, to institutions of higher education and vocational training, exclusion from social and professional association with students or teachers, denial of educational honors rightfully earned, and social patterns or pressures that discouraged the individual from pursuing a professional or business education.
- Employment – factors such as unequal treatment compared to similarly situated persons in hiring, promotions and other aspects of professional advancement, pay and fringe benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment; retaliatory behavior by an employer or labor union; and social patterns or pressures that have channeled the individual into non-professional or non-business fields.
- Business history – factors such as unequal access, compared to similarly situated persons, to credit or capital, acquisition of credit or capital under commercially unfavorable circumstances, unequal treatment in opportunities for government contracts or other work, unequal treatment by potential customers and business associates, and exclusion from business or professional organizations.

Personal narratives must state how and to what extent these and other impediments caused the owner to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Please refer to the OMBE Personal Narrative Guidance document for more detailed instructions on how to draft your Personal Narrative: <https://economicmobility.maryland.gov/Documents/OMBE-Personal-Narrative-Guidance-USDOT-IFR.pdf>

PLEASE NOTE: Consistent with USDOT guidance, OMBE does not and will not use race- or gender-based presumptions of social and economic disadvantage. That is, identifying your race, sex, or association with a certain demographic group alone is not enough to show social and economic disadvantage. Specific, individual experiences of discrimination—including instances of discrimination based on race, sex, or association with a historically disadvantaged group—may support a claim of social and economic disadvantage, but it is important that the narrative relate those specific, individual experiences, and not rely simply on group association.

C.3 What must my Personal Net Worth Statement include?

Your *current* Personal Net Worth Statement must document your individual personal assets and liabilities as of the time of application. OMBE will evaluate Personal Net Worth Statements against the eligibility threshold established at 49 CFR § 26.68, which is currently \$2,047,000. The Personal Net Worth Statement form is available for download and submission in B2G.

Required supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to: bank statements (checking, savings, money market); brokerage and investment account statements; retirement account statements (IRA, 401(k), pension); mortgage statements; vehicle loan statements; and homeowners' insurance documentation. All supporting documents must be uploaded in B2G alongside the completed Personal Net Worth Statement form.

Incomplete Personal Net Worth Statement submissions are a common cause of application delays. Firms are strongly encouraged to gather all supporting documentation before submitting.

C.4 What supporting documentation should I include with my Personal Narrative?

Unlike the Personal Net Worth Statement, supporting documentation is not required for your Personal Narrative. However, including supporting documents may strengthen your Personal Narrative. Examples include: loan denial letters or lender correspondence; employment records such as pay stubs, performance reviews, or termination notices; witness statements or affidavits; financial statements or tax records demonstrating economic harm; emails or written communications documenting discriminatory treatment; and bid rejection correspondence from contractors or procurement officials.

This list is non-exhaustive. Include any documents you believe are relevant. Evidence that is specific, contemporaneous, and corroborated is most persuasive.

C.5 My firm has multiple owners. Who must submit a Personal Narrative and Personal Net Worth Statement?

All qualifying owners whose ownership and control are relied upon to constitute the 51% majority ownership of the firm must each submit an individual Personal Narrative and a current Personal Net Worth Statement.

For example, if your firm is a corporation owned by 5 people who each own 20%, then at least 3 of those owners must submit a Personal Narrative and current Personal Net Worth Statement, including the required supporting documentation, showing that each of the 3 are socially and economically disadvantaged. By contrast, if your firm is a corporation owned by 2 people, one of whom owns 49% and one of whom owns 51%, only the 51% owner is required to submit the Personal Narrative and current Personal Net Worth Statement.

Each owner's Personal Narrative must reflect that individual's personal experiences. Personal Narratives may not be shared, combined, or submitted jointly.

C.6 What does my application status mean? What is "Submitted Pending Receipt"?

"Submitted Pending Receipt" indicates that your application has been received in B2G and is awaiting review by OMBE staff to confirm that all required materials have been provided. This is the standard initial status after submission and does not indicate a problem.

OMBE reviews submissions in the order received. If your submission is incomplete or OMBE requires additional information, you will be contacted through B2G and/or by email. For questions about a specific application, email OMBE at mbe.dosem@maryland.gov (subject: “IFR Certification Reevaluation Question”) with your firm name and B2G account number.

C.7 Who can help me complete my application? Where can I get assistance?

- **OMBE’s Personal Narrative Guidance:** a detailed framework with suggested questions and examples, available through B2G and at <https://economicmobility.maryland.gov/Documents/OMBE-Personal-Narrative-Guidance-USDOT-IFR.pdf>.
- **OMBE Staff:** Available to answer general questions about the reevaluation process at mbe.dosem@maryland.gov. Please note that OMBE staff cannot review draft Personal Narratives or provide legal advice.
- **Private Professionals:** Attorneys, consultants, and advisors experienced in DBE certification may assist with preparing your Personal Narrative and Personal Net Worth Statement. Firms that want individualized review of their submission may wish to engage a qualified professional.
- **OMBE Website:** OMBE will continue publishing updated guidance, FAQs, and other resources as the reevaluation process progresses. <https://economicmobility.maryland.gov/>

D. Reevaluation Outcomes – Recertification, Decertification, and Appeals

D.1 What happens if my firm is recertified?

If OMBE determines that your firm meets the new eligibility standards, you will receive a written Recertification Letter through B2G and by email. Upon completion of OMBE’s certification reevaluation process, your firm will be reinstated in Maryland’s DBE/ACDBE directory and will again be eligible to participate in the DBE and ACDBE programs.

The Recertification Letter may also be used to support interstate certification applications in other states where you previously held or wish to obtain DBE/ACDBE certification.

D.2 What happens if my firm is decertified? Can I appeal?

If OMBE determines that your firm does not meet the new eligibility standards set forth in the IFR, you will receive a written Notice of Decertification through B2G and by email. The notice will include the reasons for the decision and information about your right to appeal.

A firm that is decertified may not appeal directly to OMBE. However, under 49 CFR § 26.89, you have the right to appeal the decertification to USDOT within 45 days of the date of the decertification notice. The decertification remains in effect while an appeal is pending.

A decertified firm may also reapply for DBE/ACDBE certification 12 months after the decertification decision.

E. Interstate DBE/ACDBE Certification

E.1 My firm was originally certified in another state. What must I do to be recertified in Maryland?

If your firm's DBE/ACDBE certification originated in another state (your "jurisdiction of original certification," or JOC), your Maryland interstate certification has been delisted. You are not required to submit a reevaluation application to OMBE.

You must first complete the IFR reevaluation with your home state's UCP. Once your home state has recertified your firm and issued a Recertification Letter, you may submit that letter to OMBE through B2G to seek reinstatement of your Maryland interstate certification.

E.2 Maryland is my home state, but I also hold interstate DBE certification in other states. Do I need to complete reevaluation in every state?

No. USDOT has confirmed that each firm needs to complete the IFR reevaluation only with the UCP in its jurisdiction of original certification (JOC). Since Maryland is your JOC, you only need to complete the reevaluation with OMBE.

Once OMBE issues your Recertification Letter, you may use that letter to apply for interstate certification in each state where you previously held or wish to obtain certification. You will need to contact those states' UCPs individually to initiate that process.

F. Annual Recertification and the IFR Reevaluation – Key Differences

F.1 What is the difference between my annual recertification (Declaration of Eligibility) and the IFR reevaluation? Do I need to do both?

These are two distinct and independent obligations. The table below summarizes the key differences:

	<u>Annual Recertification (DOE)</u>	<u>IFR Reevaluation</u>
What it is	An annual declaration confirming that there have been no material changes to your firm’s eligibility since your last certification.	A one-time, comprehensive review of your firm’s eligibility under the new IFR standards.
What it requires	Submission of a Declaration of Eligibility (DOE) form and annual gross receipts on your certification anniversary date.	Submission of a Personal Narrative and a current Personal Net Worth Statement, with supporting documentation, through B2G.
How often	Annually, on your certification anniversary date.	Once, as a result of the IFR. Firms that are recertified will return to the regular annual recertification cycle.
Does one satisfy the other?	No. Completing your annual DOE does not satisfy the IFR reevaluation requirement.	No. Completing the IFR reevaluation does not satisfy or replace your annual recertification obligation.

Both obligations must be fulfilled independently. OMBE has not suspended the annual recertification (DOE) requirement during the reevaluation period.

F.2 I recently submitted my annual Declaration of Eligibility. Do I still need to complete the IFR reevaluation?

Yes. Your annual Declaration of Eligibility is a separate requirement and does not satisfy the IFR reevaluation. Even if you submitted a recent annual recertification, you must still complete the IFR reevaluation by submitting a Personal Narrative and Personal Net Worth Statement through B2G.

F.3 Has my certification anniversary date changed because of the IFR reevaluation?

No. Per USDOT guidance, your annual certification anniversary date remains tied to your original certification date. The IFR does not reset your certification anniversary date. You should continue to submit your annual Declaration of Eligibility on your regular certification anniversary.

F.4 I have not received my annual recertification notice. Where is it?

Annual recertification notices are generated based on each firm’s certification anniversary date. If you believe a notice is overdue, please check your B2G account for any pending items and verify that OMBE has your current email address on file. You may also contact OMBE at mbe.dosem@maryland.gov.

Note that the annual recertification and the IFR reevaluation are tracked and processed separately. If you have received IFR reevaluation correspondence, this does not mean your annual recertification is being handled simultaneously.

G. Accuracy, Confidentiality, and Legal Obligations

G.1 Will my Personal Narrative be kept confidential?

OMBE treats Personal Narrative submissions as confidential pursuant to applicable state and federal laws, including 49 CFR 26.109, 49 CFR 23.11, and Maryland’s Public Information Act (PIA). Personal Narratives are submitted solely for the purpose of evaluating DBE/ACDBE eligibility and are not published publicly.

As government records, Personal Narrative submissions may be subject to PIA requests. OMBE will apply all applicable exemptions under the PIA and relevant federal law. Firms with concerns about the sensitivity of specific information should focus their narratives on information that is sufficient to support their eligibility without disclosing private details unnecessarily.

G.2 What are the consequences of providing false or inaccurate information in my submission?

All information submitted as part of the reevaluation process is provided under penalty of perjury. Knowingly providing false or misleading information to OMBE—including in a Personal Narrative or Personal Net Worth Statement—may constitute a criminal offense under Maryland and federal law, including 18 U.S.C. § 1001 (false statements to federal agencies). Such conduct may also result in denial or revocation of DBE/ACDBE certification and potential debarment from participation in federally funded programs.

OMBE strongly encourages all applicants to ensure that their submissions are truthful, accurate, and reflective of their genuine personal experiences.

H. Resources and Contact Information

H.1 Where can I find OMBE’s guidance documents and prior FAQ publications?

All OMBE guidance and FAQ documents related to the IFR reevaluation are available through two channels:

- **OMBE’s Website:** <https://economicmobility.maryland.gov/>
- **Maryland’s B2G Vendor Management System:** <https://marylandmdbe.mdbecert.com/>

Documents published to date include: Initial Notice (January 23, 2026); Initial FAQ (January 23, 2026); Personal Narrative Guidance (February 13, 2026); Secondary Notice (February 13, 2026); Secondary FAQ (February 13, 2026); Initial Out-of-State Notice (February 13, 2026); and this Third FAQ (May 19, 2026).

OMBE will continue to publish updated guidance as the reevaluation process progresses.

H.2 How do I contact OMBE with questions about the reevaluation?

Email – mbe.dosem@maryland.gov – use the subject line “IFR Certification Reevaluation Question.” Please include your firm name and B2G account number for inquiries about a specific application.

B2G System – <https://marylandmdbe.mdbecert.com/> – for submitting applications and monitoring application status.

OMBE Website – <https://economicmobility.maryland.gov/> – for FAQs, guidance documents, and program updates.

Phone – (410) 865-1269

OMBE is actively mobilizing additional staffing resources to support the reevaluation process and is committed to assisting all currently certified Maryland DBE and ACDBE firms through this transition.