Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Federal certification

DoSEM is Maryland's certifying agency. Certified by the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE)

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CERTIFICATION

DBE

FEDERAL CERTIFICATION

Work, Wages and Wealth!

The **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program** lets certified firms count toward DBE participation goals on contracts funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), including contracts from the MDOT State Highway Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, and Maryland Aviation Administration, as well as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

Why get certified?

Federal contract goals

Certified DBEs count toward DBE participation goals on transportation contracts funded by USDOT.

Certified firm directory

Your firm is listed in Maryland's directory of certified firms, which Contract Entities and prime contractors search to find partners.

Pair it with MBE

Firms can hold both DBE and Maryland MBE certification. MBE counts toward State and local contracting goals.

No cost

There is no cost to apply. Certification does not guarantee contracts; you still market, bid, and deliver.

Important Regulatory Notice: Changes to DBE Certification

A USDOT final rule published September 25, 2026 changed how DBE eligibility is decided. Race and sex no longer create a presumption of disadvantage; each disadvantaged owner shows it in a personal narrative. **DoSEM is accepting new DBE applications under the new rules.** Maryland must finish reevaluating the DBEs it certified before October 3, 2025 by December 24, 2026. Until then, federal rules do not allow new DBE contract goals to be set or DBE participation to be counted.

51%
minimum ownership and control by disadvantaged owners

$2.047M
personal net worth limit for each disadvantaged owner

$0
cost to apply for DBE certification

Program details and application help

Eligibility, reevaluation dates, and how to apply are on the other side.

EconomicMobility.Maryland.gov

410-697-9600 | economic.mobility@maryland.gov | 100 Community Place, 4th Floor, Crownsville, MD 21032

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WHO QUALIFIES AND HOW TO APPLY

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DBE

Am I eligible?

- **Ownership and control.** Disadvantaged owners must own at least 51% of the business and control its management and daily operations.
- **Personal narrative.** Each disadvantaged owner names at least one objective distinguishing feature, such as a disability, national origin, language, or discrimination they faced, and shows the economic harm it caused compared with non-disadvantaged people of comparable or lesser qualifications. Group membership alone is not enough.
- **Personal net worth.** Each disadvantaged owner's personal net worth must be $2,047,000 or less, not counting the business, home equity, or qualified retirement assets (still reported). Being under the limit does not by itself prove economic disadvantage.
- **Small, for-profit business.** Meet the SBA size standard for your type of work. Average annual gross receipts over the previous three fiscal years, including affiliates, cannot exceed $32.82 million, a limit USDOT adjusts each year.

DBE certified before October 3, 2025? Key dates

Now
Submit your narrative, a current Personal Net Worth Statement, and documents in B2G. No need to reapply.

December 24, 2026
Maryland must finish reevaluating. Firms that have not submitted get a notice of nonresponse.

March 24, 2027
Last day for those firms to submit before they are disqualified.

Reevaluation looks only at disadvantage. Each firm gets a written decision it can appeal to USDOT. Keep filing your annual Declaration of Eligibility. To skip reevaluation, the majority owner can withdraw by email; MBE and SBE certification are not affected. **Questions?** Email mbe.dosem@maryland.gov with the subject line **"Final Rule Certification Reevaluation Question."**

How to apply

1 — Check your registration
Your business must be in good standing with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT).

2 — Apply
Complete the Uniform Certification Application. Choose DBE and write N/A where a question does not apply.

3 — Prepare your narrative
Each disadvantaged owner writes a personal narrative using OMBE's guidance and completes a current Personal Net Worth Statement.

4 — Submit online
Submit at marylandmdbe.gob2g.com and track status there. You will receive a written determination.

Ready to get started?

Program details and application help

Ready to apply? Go to the certification portal

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410-697-9600
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