



Could Certification Help You Win More Business?

Getting Certified in Southern Nevada

Getting your small business certified is not a requirement and cannot guarantee that you will land a new contract. On the other hand, certification can increase your visibility and give you a competitive edge in public and private purchasing processes.

What Is a Certified Small Business?

A certified small business is one that has been vetted by a local, state, or federal certification program or a nationally-recognized independent certifying body and verified to be owned, controlled, and operated by members of a historically underutilized population.

Some certification processes are more rigorous than others and require applicants to submit more documentation. For some designations, business owners can choose to "self-certify" simply by submitting basic company information and supporting documents to a certifying organization. However, buyers often prefer to work with organizations verified by a third party.

Why Purchasers May Seek Certified Firms

Most government entities and major corporations have regulations or in-house initiatives in place designed to increase the inclusion of small businesses in contract opportunities. The initiatives are designed to level the playing field for small companies struggling to compete in an arena that is widely dominated by much larger competitors. To help ensure they can achieve their small business utilization goals, purchasing agencies maintain a list of certified small suppliers they can contact when they need specific goods and services. Certified firms are often among the first to be notified when new business opportunities arise.

Types of Certification

You may be eligible for certification if it is small, economically disadvantaged, woman-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, LGBT-owned, or owned by people with disabilities. Here is a list of certifications most commonly seen in Nevada.

DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise)

A company must be at least 51% owned by a socially and economically disadvantaged person.

DVET (Disabled Veteran-Owned)

A Nevada business at least 51 percent owned/controlled by a disabled veteran.

ESB (Emerging Small Business)

ESB is a new certification available to all business types and industries. Certified by the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development effective January 2014. Approved into Nevada law during the 77th Legislative session as a result of AB294.

LGBT (LGBT-Owned Business Enterprise)

Majority (at least 51%) owned, operated, managed, and controlled by an LGBT person or persons who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, and exercises independence from any non-LGBT business enterprise.

MBE (Minority Business Enterprise)

An independent & continuing business for profit, performs a commercially useful function and is at least 51% owned & controlled by one or more minority persons of Black American, Hispanic American, Asian-Pacific American, or Native American ethnicity.

PBE (Physically-challenged Business Enterprise)

An independent and continuing business for profit that performs a commercially useful function and is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more disabled individuals pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

SBE (Small Business Enterprise)

An independent and continuing business for profit that performs a commercially useful function, is not owned and controlled by individuals designated as minority, women, or physically challenged. Gross annual sales do not exceed \$2,000,000.00.

VET (Veteran-Owned Business)

Veteran An independent and continuing Nevada business for profit that performs a commercially useful function and is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more U.S. Veterans.

WBE (Women Business Enterprise)

An independent and continuing business for profit that performs a commercially useful function and is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more women.

Where to Get Certified for Government Contracting

Depending upon the type of designation you are seeking, you can apply for certification through a local, state, or federal agency for government contracting. Here are some places to start.

DBE, SBE - The [Nevada Department of Transportation](#) and [McCarran International Airport](#) are part of the Nevada Unified Certification Program, and both accept applications for vendor certification of DBEs and SBEs. McCarran also accepts applications for certification of ACDBEs (Airport Concessionnaire Disadvantaged Business Enterprises).

ESB - Organizations seeking certification as an emerging small business can apply online through the [Governor's Office of Economic Development](#) website.

LGBT - The [National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce \(NGLCC\)](#) is the third-party certification body that vets, verifies, and grants LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE) designation to eligible businesses.

MBE - The [Western Regional Minority Supplier Development Council \(WRMSDC\)](#), an affiliate of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, provides the only nationally-recognized Ethnic Minority Business Certification in Northern California, Nevada, and Hawaii.

PBE - Disability-owned business enterprises, Service-Disabled Veterans, and Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities may get certified through a third-party organization such as [Disability:IN](#), which also links them to organizations seeking to diversify their supply chains.

VET, DVET - Veteran-owned businesses and service-disabled small businesses that have been verified through the [VA Center for Verification and Evaluation](#) under the Vets First Verification Program can qualify to compete for contracts set aside specifically for companies owned by veterans.

WBE - Women-owned businesses can apply for certification through the [Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#), or [WBEC West](#), a WBENC regional partner.

Work With Large Corporations

For opportunities to do business with large public corporations apply for certification through the [National Minority \(NMSDC\) Supplier Development Council](#).

SBA Certification Programs

You can learn about additional certification programs including the Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program, HUBZone Program, or 8(a) Business Development Program on the website of the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#).