

Frequent Asked Questions for Newly Certified DBE Firms

How do I go about getting certified as a DBE in other states?

The Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program (PA UCP) does not currently have reciprocity with any other State UCP. Accordingly, if you are seeking Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification in other states then you should contact the UCP in that respective state for their specific process. Generally speaking, interstate certification should follow the requirements outlined in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 26.85. **Please note that you must be certified in your home state prior to seeking certification in other states.**

How do we find work now that we are certified as a DBE?

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has partnered with ProRank Business Solutions, LLC to provide supportive services to DBE firms certified by the PA UCP. The Supportive Services Center (Center) can assist you in understanding the various types of contracting opportunities that exist within PennDOT. In addition to assisting your firm in understanding the applicable bidding processes, the Center can also assist you in marketing your firm to potential prime contractors and consultants seeking to utilize DBE firms on federally funded procurements. Finally, the Center provides a wide array of other services for DBE firms to enable them to acquire the proficiency, expertise and experience necessary to compete on an equal basis, with non-DBE firms for federally-assisted PennDOT contracts and subcontracts. All services offered by the Center are free-of-charge. The Center can be reached via the following contact information:

Telephone: 833.PENN.DBE or 833.736.6323

Email: penndbe@prorankllc.com

Web: www.penndbe.com

Do we receive a certificate?

Upon initial certification you will receive an approval letter which indicates that your firm is certified as a DBE and includes the applicable North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for which your firm is certified. However, physical certificates or letters are not required and should not be requested by entities or firms seeking to utilize your firm as a DBE. Instead they should be directed to the PA UCP website which includes a real time directory of currently certified DBE firms. Parties seeking to provide documentation that a firm is/was certified can simply print a dated screenshot showing the applicable firm in the PA UCP directory. All firms listed in the directory are currently certified to participate as DBEs in Pennsylvania. A letter from the Chair of the PA UCP Oversight Committee was previously drafted and sent out to impacted stakeholders advising them that the PA UCP directory is the only source to be used in order to determine the eligibility of DBE firms. That letter can be provided to you upon request.

Please explain my new DBE status and how it relates to the PAUCP?

The PA UCP is the entity responsible for making all DBE certification decisions on behalf of all agencies and organizations within Pennsylvania. The PA UCP provides “one-stop shopping” for firms seeking certification as DBE. This means that certification as a DBE by one of the five PA UCP certifying participants is recognized by all recipients of federal transportation funds within Pennsylvania. The PA UCP confirms to the certification requirements established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and outlined in 49 CFR Part 26.

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Recipients of federal transportation dollars establish DBE goals on federally funded projects that lend themselves to subcontracting opportunities. Prime contractors or consultants seeking to meet these DBE goals (or making a Good Faith Effort to do so) can only utilize firms certified as DBEs by the PA UCP. In addition, certification as a DBE gives you access to the DBE Supportive Services Center at ProRank Business Solutions, LLC. The Center offers a multitude of services (all free-of-charge) which include the following:

- Bid Assistance
- Bonding Assistance
- Business Plan Development
- Computer Training
- Construction Management Training
- Construction Technology Training
- Assistance with Financial Resources
- Marketing & Communications
- On-site Assistance at your location
- Prime/DBE Matchmaking
- Overhead Rate Calculation Assistance

May I say that I am certified on my letterhead?

Yes, you are encouraged to promote your firm's certification as a DBE.

How can I get additional Code(s)?

The PA UCP has developed a 'Request for NAICS Code Modification form for firms seeking additional NAICS codes. This form should be completed and submitted to your respective PA UCP certifying agency. To assist in expediting the request you are encouraged to include documentation which shows your firm has and/or is providing the products or services for which you are seeking additional codes. Please note that an onsite review may be conducted depending on the code(s) requested and whether or not they are vastly different from the current work and codes for which you are already certified.

During my yearly renewal, do I have to go through the entire process again?

No. However, you are required to complete and submit an Annual Affidavit, along with copies of the most recent federal business tax returns in order to affirm your continued eligibility. Additional documentation may be required if significant changes have been indicated on the affidavit.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions about my certification?

You should contact the Bureau of Equal Opportunity's (BEO) Certification Staff for all questions related to your DBE certification. BEO can be reached via the following contact information:

Telephone: 800.468.4201 or 717.787.5891

Fax: 717.772.4026

Email: penndotucpinfo@pa.gov

May I sub out some of my work?

You may subcontract out a portion of your work to both DBE and non-DBE firms provided your firm still performs a commercially useful function (CUF) as outlined under 49 CFR Part 26.55 (c). You must clarify the portion of work you intend to subcontract out when agreeing to participate on the project. This is critical to ensuring an accurate CUF evaluation. Please note that the portions of work you subcontract out to non-DBE firms cannot be counted towards the project's DBE goal.

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For more information please contact PennDOT's DBE Program Administrator via the contact information for BEO noted above.

What happens if my business changes its name?

Within 30 days of the change, you must notify your respective PA UCP certifying agency. You must complete a Notice of Change Affidavit (or comparable notice on company letterhead) and provide the appropriate supporting documentation. That documentation may include, but is not limited to, copies of the name registration filing with the Department of State, operating agreements, etc.

What happens if my business has new owner(s)?

Per 49 CFR Part 26.83 (i), within 30 days of the change, you must notify your respective PA UCP certifying agency. You must complete a Notice of Change Affidavit and provide the appropriate supporting documentation. In addition, a Personal Net Worth statement, 3 consecutive years of federal personal taxes, and an Affidavit of Certification must be completed for the new owner(s) claiming disadvantaged status. That documentation may include, but is not limited to, updated meeting minutes, current and cancelled stocks, ledgers, purchase agreements etc. as proof of change. Please note that your firm may be temporarily suspended (up to 30 days) while your certifying agency determines your firm continues to meet eligibility requirements.

How do I change the location of my principal place of business?

Within 30 days of the change, you must notify your respective PA UCP certifying agency. You must complete a Notice of Change Affidavit (or comparable notice on company letterhead) and provide the appropriate supporting documentation. That documentation may include, but is not limited to, mortgage agreements, property taxes, lease agreements, deeds, etc.

Is there any way I can be linked to our company under the PA UCP website?

Currently, login to the website (www.paucp.com) is for PA UCP certification staff only.

Are we considered a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise or a Women's/Minority Business Enterprise?

All firms certified by the PA UCP are considered DBE's. While your company may be woman owned, for the purposes of the PA UCP the designation for your firm is DBE.

Is this organization the only organization to obtain certification through?

The PA UCP is the only certifying entity for DBEs in the Commonwealth of PA. Other local and regional agencies may require additional certifications but you would need to speak to those entities directly regarding their requirements. Generally speaking DBE certification is more stringent and thus is accepted by most entities.