FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
(FAQ’S)

STATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Q. What is the State program?

The State certifies organizations as Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Minority and Woman Business Enterprise (M/WBE), and Women Business Enterprise (WBE), The Supplier Diversity Office reviews and investigates applicants who seek to participate in affirmative business opportunities to determine that they meet the requirements of state statutes and regulations.

Q. What are the steps in the certification process?

You must first attend an Instructor Led Pre-Certification Session. The application process will be discussed during this session.

Q. What is the cost for the Instructor Led Pre-certification Workshop?

There is no fee for the workshop.

Q. How long is the Instructor Led Workshop?

The workshop is 2 hours long.

Q. Who do I contact with questions about filling out the application?

You may contact the Intake Specialist-Jose Silva at jose.silva@state.ma.us

Q. While filling out the application, if something doesn’t apply do I leave it blank?

You must indicate N/A – not applicable.

Q. Is there a cost to become certified?

There is no fee for certification.
Q. **What is the definition of “Minority-owned Business”?**
A minority business enterprise is defined as a business in which more than 51% of the interest, stock and otherwise, is owned by minority group members.

- African American
- Asian-Indian American
- Asian-Pacific American
- Hispanic American
- Native American

**Q. What is the definition of a Women-Owned Business?**
"Women-owned small business concern means a small business concern—(a) which is at least 51 percent owned by one or more women; or, in the case of any publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of the stock of which is owned by one or more women; and (b) whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more women."

**Q. What is a DUNS number and how do I get one?**
A DUNS number is a unique, non-indicative 9-digit identifier issued and maintained by D&B that verifies the existence of a business entity globally. We recommend that you go directly to [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform) because submitting online allows you to easily view and answer the personally derived questions and multiple choice answers the authentication exam. Alternately you can also call them directly at 1-800-705-5711

**Q. How long does the certification process take before receiving the SDO certification?**
SDO will endeavor to make certification decisions within 90 days of a completed application

**Will State certification really help my company to obtain new business?**
Yes, however it is how your company utilizes its certification that will be of direct value to your firm’s revenue growth. These programs provide purchasing opportunities to companies that would not be available to your business.

**Q. How do I get my company on a government contracts once I become certified?**
You must be proactive in marketing your company. We recommend that you attend the Connecting your Business to the Commonwealth workshop: This a free workshop designed for businesses who are interested in learning how to do business with the state. This workshop includes: An Overview of OSD programs and services including, State and Federal Certification, Supplier Diversity Program (SDP), Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP), and a live demonstration of where to find bidding opportunities in Comm-PASS. (Commonwealth’s e-Procurement System) Attendees will also learn about Statewide and Departmental Contracting procurement process and marketing to public entities.
Q. **Is there a contact person to assist me with the process of attaining contracts with the commonwealth?**

We also offer various trainings that you are welcome to take advantage of, here is the link to read the descriptions and register: [http://www.somwba.state.ma.us/WorkShop/xwrk_main.aspx](http://www.somwba.state.ma.us/WorkShop/xwrk_main.aspx).

Q. **What is the Comm-PASS program?**

The Commonwealth Procurement and Solicitation System (Comm-PASS) is the only official procurement record system for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Departments. It offers free internet-based access to all public procurement information in order to promote transparency, increase competition, and achieve best value for Massachusetts taxpayers.

Q. **What are the benefits of signing up for the training workshops?**

You will learn how to navigate the Commonwealth Procurement Solicitation System (Comm-PASS) and will gain a better understanding of how to do business with the commonwealth.

Q. **I am a sole proprietor; can I submit only the schedule c?**

You must submit the complete signed personal tax return, including all schedules and attachments.

Q. **Is there a Fast Track Process?**

No, there is no fast track process.

Q. **Can I make changes to my profile?**

No, please go to maintaining your certification for instructions.

Q. **Is my Financial Information Secure?**

Yes, all information is kept in a separate room under lock and key, your information is not given out to the general public.

Q. **Once I attend a workshop, How long do I have to submit an application?**

You have 1 year from the date you attended a workshop.

Q. **Can I submit the application online?**

No, the application must be downloaded, printed and submitted in hard copy form with all of the required documents to the SDO office.