

# Frequently Asked Questions



Division of Minority and Women-Owned Business Development

## Certification eligibility criteria:

Under Article 15-A of the Executive Law, any for-profit firm that is at least fifty-one percent owned, operated and controlled by citizens or permanent resident aliens who are either a woman and/or minority is eligible for certification

## List of minority groups who are eligible for certification:

- Black persons having origins from any of the Black African racial groups
- Hispanic persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Central or South American descent of either Indian or Hispanic origin, regardless of race
- Asian-Pacific persons having origins from the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Pacific Islands.
- Asian-Indian subcontinent persons having origins from the Indian subcontinent
- Native American persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America

## An MWBE applicant must successfully demonstrate the following:

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- **Ownership, Operation and Control:** Firm must be independently owned, operated and controlled by minority and/or women members. The ownership must be real, substantial and continuing, and owner(s) must exercise the authority to independently control the day-to-day business decisions
- **Personal Net Worth (PNW) Restriction:** Each minority or woman owner upon whom certification is based cannot have a personal net worth exceeding \$3.5 million after allowable deductions
- **Small Business Restriction:** Firm cannot exceed more than 300 full time equivalent employees

\* NOTE: Participating certification program may have geographic restrictions.

- **Independent, Active and In Business One Year:** Firm must operate independently of other firms, must demonstrate business activity and, generally, the business is required to be in operation for at least one year
- **Out of State Applicants:** Firm to be certified as a MWBE in their home state, if a similar process exists, and be registered and authorized to conduct business in the state of New York and have a presence in New York

## How to apply for certification?

New York State has a fully integrated online certification process New York State Contract System (NYSCS) [ny.newnycontracts.com](http://ny.newnycontracts.com). Firms can use NYSCS to submit:

- New Certification Applications with the NYS MWBE Program
  - (Optional) “One-Stop” certification – once certified, the firm’s application is forwarded for review for MWBE certification with the New York City Small Business Services\*, Joint Certification Committee of Erie County and City of Buffalo\* and/or Port Authority of New York/New Jersey
  - If certified by a recognized program, eligible firms may submit a Fast-Track application\*
- Re-Certification Application
- Certification and Vendor Profile Updates

## What are the benefits of certification?

- Be listed on the MWBE Directory of certified firms
- Be considered for MWBE utilization goals by NYS Agencies and Authorities
- Receive customized alerts for upcoming procurement opportunities
- Receive invitations for business development: workshops, webinars, classes and customized technical assistance targeted to MWBEs
- Have access to lending and bonding programs exclusively for certified MWBEs

## HAVE QUESTIONS?

MWBE Hotline: (212) 803-2414 | Email: [MWBECertification@esd.ny.gov](mailto:MWBECertification@esd.ny.gov)  
Apply for certification at: [ny.newnycontracts.com](http://ny.newnycontracts.com)

A Division of Empire State Development