

**Pre-Certification Self-Assessment for Minority, Woman, Disabled Veteran-Owned Business**  
**Enterprise Certifications (MBE/WBE/DVB)**

Applying for Minority, Woman, Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise certification is a time-intensive process that involves making available to the department many personal and financial documents. Prior to submitting an application, a review of the rule criteria is recommended.

All information submitted to the department becomes the property of the Department. The Department allows between **four to six weeks** for processing an application. The review process may take longer in situations where an applicant did not submit all the required information or did not respond to the department's request for additional information.

Prior to completing a WBE/MBE/DVB certification application, an applicant should also ask themselves the following questions:

1. ***Do I meet the eligibility requirements in all three criteria?*** The three criteria are: ownership, management, and control. The department will determine whether or not the documentation you submit meets the administrative rule requirements in determining ownership, management, and control.
2. ***Am I able to document my financial investment to acquire or start the business?*** The department requires proof of your ownership and therefore requires disclosure regarding the means of the investment (i.e., a financial paper trail) made by you to acquire or start the company.
3. ***Am I able to document and demonstrate that I possess the experience, expertise, and knowledge to operate the particular type of business in which I seek certification?*** Generally, expertise limited to office management, administration, or bookkeeping functions unrelated to the principal business activities of the company is insufficient to demonstrate the corporate governance, financial restrictions or a substantial reliance upon a male business owner in exercising independence in decision-making.
4. ***Are the services and products of my business needed by government agencies and/or large corporations?*** Not knowing whether a corporation or government agency is in need of your product or service could mean you obtain a certification that will hold no value in expanding the marketability of your business. Typically, it is larger corporations and government agencies that have diversity goals in place and will request verification of your status as a minority, woman, or disabled veteran-owned business. *Keep in mind that currently the State of Wisconsin does not have statutory language to direct state government to have goals for WBE purchasing. There is also no state government preference awarded to WBE certified businesses. In the State of Wisconsin, women are not considered minority. There is a 5% goal and 5% preference with the State for MBE and DVB certified businesses.*
5. ***What are the types of certifications that a corporation I wish to provide services/supplies will accept?*** It's important to do your homework in advance to determine the needs of larger corporations that you feel may purchase your services/supplies. Many large corporations will not accept a government certification as valid recognition of your ownership and will prefer certification from a nationally recognized certifier such as: for WBE - the National Women's Business Enterprise Council ([www.wbenc.org](http://www.wbenc.org)) or the National Women Business Owners Corporation ([www.nwboc.org](http://www.nwboc.org)) and for MBE – the National Minority Supplier Development Council ([www.nmsdc.org](http://www.nmsdc.org)). Also, make sure to check whether or not the corporation that you

wish to provide services/supplies to will recognize the State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration's certification. A review of the supplier diversification program of a target market corporation is one place to start in doing your research in advance of applying to become certified with the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

6. ***Is my business able to meet the demands of a corporation or state agency if I am awarded a contract for my services or products?*** If a business is too small to be able to fulfill the needs of a contract, a certified business may not be able to utilize their certification. Typically, large corporations and government agencies have large contract needs which a small business may not be able to fulfill. A business should closely examine their capabilities to meet the contract criteria and quality standards.
7. ***Is being a WBE/MBE/DVB certificate holder a part of my marketing plan?*** Simply having a certificate stating that you are a minority, woman, or disabled veteran-owned business enterprise will not enhance your business unless you properly market yourself as a certified WBE/MBE/DVB. A certificate holder should have a strategic marketing plan in place that includes the target markets that recognize the value of doing work with a certified business.