



CITY OF HOUSTON

OFFICE
of
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Minority Women Small/Persons with Disabilities and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises Certification Program

Pre-Certification Workshop

The Office of Business Opportunity would like to invite you to attend one of our weekly pre-certification workshops for more information on applying for MWSBE/PDBE and DBE certification. *The workshop is conducted every Thursday, except holidays, at 611 Walker St. 7th floor Houston, TX 77002 at 2:00 p.m.* This workshop is free of charge. For more information or to apply online please visit our website <http://www.houstontx.gov/obo/index.html>.



Advantages of Certification

Businesses certified with the City of Houston are provided with programs to educate business owners, connect business owners with the network of certified business owners, and tools to help business owners grow their business. The following is a list of advantages:

- Listing in the City's Online Directory of Certified Vendors, which is accessible on the City's website at **WWW.HOUSTONTX.GOV** (click Business, then MWSBE/PDBE and DBE Directory)
- Access to workshops, seminars, and newsletter.
- Bidding opportunities on City contracts.
- Certification is free and valid for a period of three years. Annual updates are required for ACDBE/DBE certification. Three-year cycle certification update required for MWSBE/PDBE certifications
- Our Certification is also accepted by:
 - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - Port of Houston Authority
 - METRO
 - Houston Independent School District
 - Houston Community College System
 - Houston Housing Authority
 - Kellogg Brown and Root
 - Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

Certification Requirements

The following is a list of requirements for certification:

- Must be at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by a minority, female, or person with disability.
- Firm must be for profit, independent, and currently functioning.
- Firm must be registered as a Vendor/Supplier with the City of Houston Strategic Purchasing Division.
- Maintain a significant presence in Harris, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty, Montgomery, Waller, Austin, or San Jacinto County.
- Meet the Small Business Administration Size Standard(s) for its industry classification(s).
- Owners must have the training/expertise to perform the work, and where required, has a license or certificate issued in his or her name.
- Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprise (PDBE) certification require applicants to submit a Disability Affidavit and an accompanying letter from a State of Texas certified medical doctor. Disabled veterans must provide a disability rating letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs or a disability determination from the Department of Defense demonstrating a service-connected disability.
- For Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification, applicant must have a Personal Net Worth of less than \$1,320,000 – excluding value of home and ownership interest in the business. There is no local presence requirement.

Certification Process

Program participation requires certification. The process takes approximately 90 days from when we receive a complete application packet, and includes the following steps:

- Pre-Certification Workshop
- Preliminary screening of Application
- Desk Audit
- Financial Audit
- Field Audit ♦
- Committee Review

♦ Not required for Small Business Enterprise Certification, only when applicable.



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Ins and Outs of City Contracting

Soliciting business from the City or prime contractors can be a rewarding experience: understanding the procurement process, marketing your business, and conducting research are key components to success. The following are some suggestions that can help you secure City contracts.

I. GET A VENDOR NUMBER

All suppliers and contractors interested in bidding on products and services procured by the City of Houston, Strategic Purchasing Division, must complete and submit a **Supplier Registration Form** to receive a vendor number.

- The Supplier Registration Form can be submitted online through the City's Strategic Purchasing Division website at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>, under the Supplier Registration Information section.
- Vendor numbers can be obtained in person from the Strategic Purchasing Division, 901 Bagby, Room B-120, in the basement of City Hall.

II. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES

The Strategic Purchasing Notice to Bidders is available from the following resources:

- Each Friday, bid advertisements appear in the "Notice to Bidder" section of the **Houston Business Journal**. Some bid advertisements may be found in the Sunday edition of the **Houston Chronicle**.
- Bids are publicly posted according to State Statute and Charter provision. Bids for supplies and nonprofessional services are posted in the basement reception area of City Hall, 901 Bagby, Room B120.
- Bid advertisements appear weekly on the Municipal Access Channel. (TCI and Warner Cable TV).
- **Bids and Requests for Proposals** are available online at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>, under the Formal Bids & RPF's section.

For more information about Bids or RFP's attend pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences to meet potential prime contractors:

- Schedule of pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences can be found on the City's Strategic Purchasing Division's web site at <https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/>.
- Contact successful low bidders to show how you can help them meet the MWSBE/PDBE and DBE goals.

For Professional Service Providers:

- Find the City departments that utilize your service. Call the Mayor's Office of Business Opportunity Division at (832) 393-0600 for further assistance.
- Architects and Engineers (A&E) should go to 611 Walker, 5th Floor, to pick up form PWE-100 for inclusion in the City's A&E database. This document can also be found online at http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/documents/a-e_qual/pwe100in.pdf.
- Contact the City department to let them know what you do and request to be included on the Request for Proposal (RFP) list.

Please visit the Office of Business Opportunity (OBO) website <http://www.houstontx.gov/obo/>, for more information about MWSBE/PDBE and DBE participation in the City's procurement process. A comprehensive list of Current Contracting Opportunities can also be found on the OBO website.

III. SUBMIT A BID OR PROPOSAL

Before submitting a bid or proposal, make sure all specifications are met.

- Read everything and make certain that your goods or services meet City specifications.
- Sign your bid and turn your bid/offer in on time. (No exceptions for late responses).
- If you are unsuccessful, keep trying. Go to the City Secretary's Office (City Hall Annex, Public Level, 900 Bagby) to review the successful bidder's submission to be better prepared next time.

IV. Hire Houston First

Businesses interested in becoming eligible to participate in the Hire Houston First program must complete the application.

- Application may be received by mail to Houston Business Solution Center, 611 Walker, Lobby Level, Houston, TX 77002.
- Applications may be submitted via e-mail to HoustonBSC@houstontx.gov or faxed to [832.393.0650](tel:832.393.0650).