

## Our Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program

Here are answers to some of the questions we often hear from individuals who seek Disadvantaged Business Certification with Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council/Valley Metro.

### **1. What is a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise?**

The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council/Valley Metro has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), 49 CFR Part 26. The DBE program ensures equal opportunity in transportation contracting markets, addresses the effects of discrimination in transportation contracting and promotes increased participation in federally funded contracts by small, socially and economically disadvantaged businesses, including minority and women owned enterprises. The statute provides that at least 10% of the amounts made available for any Federal-aid highways, mass transit, and transportation research and technology program be expanded with certificated DBEs.

### **2. If my business is HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) Certified, am I considered a DBE?**

No, this certification is not automatic. The DBE program is different from the HUB program. The DBE program is a federally regulated program, requiring a separate certification process than that required by the state's HUB program. The net worth of the company is one of the critical factors in determining who is eligible to be a DBE. The net worth of the company cannot exceed \$1.32 Million.

### **3. How long is a DBE Certification valid?**

DBE certification is generally valid for up to three years. However, as a DBE, every year on the anniversary of the date of certification, an affidavit must be submitted to the agency that certified you as a DBE, affirming that there are no changes in circumstances affecting size, disadvantaged status, ownership or control requirements of 49 CFR or any material change in the information provided in the application.

### **4. What is the Texas Unified Certification Program (TUCP)?**

The TUCP is a "one stop" certification process for the Federal DBE Program in Texas. The TUCP consolidates all DBE firms certified by six different agencies into one centralized DBE Directory for USDOT funded contracts for Airport, Highways and Public Transit.

### **5. How do I become certified?**

Simply fill out the DBE Application and return it to the certification agency in your area.

#### **The certifying agencies are:**

- City of Austin, Dept. of Small & Minority Business Resources: [mail@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:mail@ci.austin.tx.us)
- City of Houston, Affirmative Action: [mail@cityofhouston.net](mailto:mail@cityofhouston.net)
- Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority: [mail@ccrta.org](mailto:mail@ccrta.org)
- North Central Texas Regional Certification Agency: [mail@nctrca.org](mailto:mail@nctrca.org)
- South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency: [info@sctrca.org](mailto:info@sctrca.org)
- Texas Dept. of Transportation: [tucpdata@dot.state.tx.us](mailto:tucpdata@dot.state.tx.us).

Visit the Texas Unified Certification Program DBE Information Directory:

<http://www.dot.state.tx.us/business/tucpinfo.htm>

Texas Unified Certification Program  
South Central Texas Regional Certification Agency