

DBE Application FAQs

1) What is the DBE certification process?

Step 1: The application is received by VTrans Civil Rights [Program Manager](#).

Step 2: The application is checked for completeness. If additional materials are needed, the applicant is contacted by VTrans.

Step 3: Once the application is complete VTrans (or their consultant) will schedule an on-site visit at the applicant's place of business. During the on-site review, interviews are conducted with the owners of the firm. All disadvantaged business owners must be present and participate in the on-site review.

Step 4: All materials submitted by the applicant and the on-site report are reviewed by VTrans, who determines if the applicant meets the eligibility standards.

Step 5: If the application is approved, the applicant is notified, in writing, of the certification approval. The certification approval letter clearly indicates approval of the firm as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) to perform work in specific types of work and the expiration date of the certification. If an applicant is denied certification, VTrans sends a letter to the applicant citing the denial and provides information related to the appeal process.

2) How long is the certification process from start to finish?

VTrans strives to make the application process as efficient as possible. Once your application is complete, expect a site visit within the next month and a certification decision no later than two months from application completion.

3) Is there a cost to the applicant for the certification process?

No. The only cost associated with certification is for notarizing the application and the cost of postage. At this time, applications are not accepted electronically.

3A) Can I file my application online?

This option is not available, although VTrans offers a [fillable PDF file](#). Please send your application and all supporting documentation, via regular mail, to:

Sonya Boisvert, Civil Rights Program Manager
2178 Airport Road, Unit B
Berlin VT 05641

4) What is the threshold for personal net worth?

The threshold for each owner(s) is \$1,320,000. Items **excluded** from a person's net worth calculation include an individual's ownership interest in the applicant firm and his or her equity in their primary residence. [Click here for more information on PNW](#).

5) Which business owner should complete the Personal Net Worth Statement?

The majority disadvantaged owner(s) whose ownership and control is/are being relied upon for DBE certification should each complete a Statement.

6) I run a consulting business. How do I determine my “initial investment” in the business?

Initial investment includes the cash and equipment that you contributed to start the business. For instance, include the dollar value of computer equipment, office equipment, and the initial cash contributed to your business checking account.

7) What schedules do you need with my personal and business income tax returns?

Please include your federal tax returns, personal and business, with all schedules.

8) Are my tax returns and other personal information secure?

At VTrans, we must comply with confidentiality requirements and take this responsibility seriously. All files are kept behind locked doors where only VTrans Certification staff has access.

9) I am a sole proprietor. How do I include a “Salary Schedule”?

Assuming that you take an owner’s draw instead of a salary, provide a year’s worth of owner’s draw amounts and the dates they were taken.

10) What is a Balance Sheet?

A Balance Sheet gives a picture of the businesses financial situation at a given point in time, including assets and liabilities.

11) What is a bank authorization/signatory card?

This is a form that the bank collects when you open your bank account. The form contains signatures of the person or people who are authorized to sign for the bank account. A copy of this form can be obtained from your bank.

12) Why does VTrans visit my business as part of the application process?

The site visit is a federal regulatory requirement.

13) Once my business is certified, when does the certification expire?

Once your business is certified, you are required to complete an Annual Update Affidavit annually with VTrans. The affidavit affirms that there have been no changes in the firm’s circumstances affecting its ability to meet size, disadvantaged status, and ownership or control requirements. This update requires you to submit the most recent business tax returns. You will be notified via email when the Annual Update Affidavit is due.

14) I have questions regarding the DBE application; who can I contact for assistance?

Sonya Boisvert, Civil Rights Program Manager at sonya.boisvert@vermont.gov, 802.279-1330

US Department of Transportation (USDOT): [Official Questions and Answers \(Q&A's\) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Regulation \(49 CFR 26\)](#)