



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a SBE program?

SBE stands for Small Business Enterprise. A SBE is a Business Enterprise that meets specific economic criteria and is owned, operated, and controlled by one or more persons. The specific criteria for the District SBE program can be seen by visiting www.neorsd.org/sbe.

What are the benefits of a SBE program?

A SBE program provides benefits for both the District and the business community of our region. The District is implementing a SBE program to focus on procurement opportunities in the areas of goods, professional services, construction and engineering. for small businesses located in the geographical area that the District serves. The goal of the SBE program is to increase contracting opportunities for District customers, resulting in greater job availability and business growth for the local business community. In addition to contributing to the economic well-being of the region, bringing new SBEs into the pool of companies doing business with the District enhances the District's competitive bidding processes and ensures that District customers are afforded the greatest value for their monetary contributions.



Why would a business want to become a certified SBE?

Small businesses that complete the SBE application and are certified by the District as a SBE will have enhanced contracting opportunities. For purchases of goods and services under \$25,000, the District will consult the SBE registry and reach out to those SBEs who are certified to provide needed services. Prime contractors and consultants will use the SBE registry to identify subcontractors for District projects as they are required to meet project-specific goals for the use of certified SBEs as subcontractors or subconsultants. Only those businesses that are certified under the District's SBE program will be counted towards fulfilling the District's SBE goals.

What is the difference between a MBE, a WBE, and a SBE?

MBE stands for Minority Business Enterprise. A MBE is owned, operated, and controlled by one or more members of a minority race. Similarly, WBE stands for Women Business Enterprise, and is sometimes referred to as FBE or Female Business Enterprise. A WBE or FBE is owned, operated, and controlled by one or more members of the female gender. A SBE is defined based upon economic criteria established by the District. It is a race and gender neutral designation.

How do I become a SBE?

You may download the SBE application from the District's website at www.neorsd.org/sbe. You may also contact the NEORSD at www.neorsd.org/sbe to request an application by mail or fax.

How long does my SBE certification last?

All SBE certifications remain active for one (1) year. A re-certification application must be completed by all certified SBEs before the anniversary date of the prior certification.



If I complete the SBE application, does this mean I will be certified with other agencies such as CMHA, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and RTA?

No. The SBE application for the District is for the District's program only. This application is not a part of any joint certification. However, if you are certified with other agencies, the SBE certification process at the District can be made easier. Please see the SBE application to find out how.

Why did the District eliminate the MBE/WBE program?

The District must conduct a Disparity Study to legally justify MBE/WBE goals. A Disparity Study is currently underway. When the findings of the study are complete, the District may modify its SBE program to incorporate MBE/WBE goals in addition to SBE goals.

What is a Disparity Study?

A Disparity Study determines whether and to what extent that MBEs and WBEs are actively and passively being subjected to discrimination in the District's contracting marketplace. The study involves a statistical analysis to determine if a legal basis exists to support the District's use of race and gender based goals in its contracting processes.

How long will it take to complete the study?

The average Disparity Study typically takes one year to complete.

Does having a P.O. Box in the local area allow me to participate in the District's SBE program?

No. Your firm must be physically located in the District's local area. The District's local area consists of Cuyahoga, Lorain, Lake and Summit Counties.



What types of bidding opportunities are available at the District?

Under the SBE program, the District will provide opportunities to bid in all areas of procurement: goods, professional services, construction, and engineering.

How will I find out about upcoming bids?

You may visit the District's website at http://www.neorsd.org/neorsd_bids.php to learn more about bidding opportunities with a value of \$25,000 or more. When you see a bidding opportunity that you are interested in, please attend the pre-bid conference or stop by the District's Purchasing Department to view project plans.

What is a pre-bid conference?

A pre-bid conference is held by the District for items and projects that are being advertised for bid. It provides the opportunity for prime contractors to ask questions about the bid specifications and to raise any concerns about the bid documents or project schedule. Most pre-bid conferences include representatives from the District and interested prime contractors. Subcontractors may attend these meetings, which provide subcontractors the opportunity to meet prime contractors who will need to meet SBE subcontracting goals.

What if I can not attend the pre-bid conference?

If you can not attend the pre-bid conference, visit our website at http://www.neorsd.org/neorsd_bids.php, select the contact for bid that you are interested in, and click on the Bidders List. The Bidders List has contact information for individual firms that have already purchased plans. Also, you may also call the Office of Contract Compliance at (216) 881-6600 and request a list of firms that attended the pre-bid conference as well.



What if my MBE/WBE firm is currently working on a District project?

Certified MBEs /WBEs currently working on District contracts will remain under the MBE/ WBE guidelines. However, you are encouraged to complete a new SBE application to be considered for the District's SBE program.

