



## **DBE PROGRAM FACT SHEET**

### **TENNESSEE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) PROGRAM SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

#### **What is the program?**

This program was developed by the Federal Highway Administration and is administered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation to encourage minority, female, and other disadvantaged firms to work in the highway/bridge industry. Both state and federal construction projects and monies are included in it.

#### **Who can qualify as a DBE?**

There are several eligibility criteria for certification. As these conditions are met certification can be granted:

1. Your firm must be an existing “for-profit” business that is currently operational.
2. Your firm must be an independent business. If it is a subsidiary of a corporation, your firm must still operate in a self-sufficient manner.
3. Your firm must meet the federal definition of a small business concern.
4. Owners must meet the federal definition of “socially and economically disadvantaged.” Women and certain minorities are presumed to fit the definition.
5. Owners must possess the expertise to control the daily operations and management of the firm.
6. Owners must be able to show ownership of at least 51% of the firm through real and substantial investments of capital.
7. Owners’ net worth must not be over \$1.32 million (excluding personal residence and stock/ownership in the potential DBE firm).

Call the Small Business Development Office in Nashville at (615) 741-3681 or 1-888-370-3647 for further information or check our web-site [www.tdot.state.tn.us](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us)

#### **What happens once I am a DBE?**

Once certified, your firm is placed on a statewide list of firms showing contractors that you are certified and listing your work areas. **You must be certified at the time that the prime contractor submits a bid to TDOT.**

DBE certification does not guarantee that you will get TDOT work. But if you perform good work at competitive prices, you have an advantage on projects with DBE goals.

As a TDOT DBE you are eligible to receive group and individualized training and technical assistance to increase your efficiency and profits. The Small Business Development Office headquartered in Nashville provides this without cost to you.