

Doing Business with the Commonwealth

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On September 23, 2015, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf took a significant step toward leveling the playing field for Small Diverse Businesses and Small Businesses with the signing of Executive Order 2015-11 - "Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities in State Contracting and Pennsylvania's Economy."

His action, for the first time in state government, directed a consistent and coordinated effort to ensure diversity and inclusion in all contracting programs for [small diverse](#) and [small businesses](#) throughout agencies under the governor's jurisdiction and promoted the continued development of programs to better prepare those businesses to compete and succeed in Pennsylvania's economy.

Small Diverse Businesses or SDBs, are small businesses owned, operated and controlled by minorities, women, veterans & disabled veterans, disabled persons, and members of the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender community; Small Businesses, or SBs, are independently-owned businesses that employ less than 100 full-time equivalent employees and meet gross sales requirements.

In Fiscal Year 2014-2015, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania spends approximately \$3.5 billion per year on commodity contracts such as: natural gas, electricity, medical supplies, asphalt, and office supplies; and services contracts for both professional and operational services, such as medical staffing, training, auditing and financial services, maintenance contracts for office equipment, elevator maintenance, and waste removal services. The DGS Public Works deputate manages nearly \$1.5 billion in construction projects that take place throughout the commonwealth.

When you look at the total spend of nearly \$5 billion in commonwealth contracting it isn't hard to realize the opportunities that are available to SDBs and SBs. The question is "How do you find these opportunities?"

There are various ways SDBs and SBs can do business with the commonwealth, but the first step is registering to do business with the commonwealth and obtaining your six-digit vendor number, which is the key to opening the door to state contracting opportunities. The process below outlines the steps you would take to become a registered vendor with the commonwealth and self-certify and verify as a SDB or SB.

STEP 1: Register as a Vendor

1. Go to the PA Supplier Portal at www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us.
2. Click on **Supplier Registration** and follow the instructions. TIP: View the [Registration Guide](#) for tips and step-by-step instructions.

STEP 2: Self-Certify as a Small Business

CRITERIA

To self-certify and participate in the Small Business Procurement Initiative, a business must meet each of the following requirements:

- The business must be a for-profit, United States business.
- The business must be independently owned.
- The business may not be dominant in its field of operation.

- The business may not employ more than 100 full-time equivalent employees.
- The business, by type, may not exceed the following three-year average gross sales:

\$7 Million	\$20 Million	\$25 Million
• Building Design Services	• Procurement Goods & Services • Construction Contractors & Suppliers	• Information Technology

INSTRUCTIONS TO SELF-CERTIFY

1. Have prepared your three most recent annual federal tax returns filed for the company. You will need page 1 of Federal form 1120, 1120S, or 1065, OR the Schedule C filed with your Form 1040. This will be uploaded to Step 4 of the online application.
2. Go to the PA Supplier Portal at www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us.
3. Click the Log on button in the upper right and login. TIP: Contact the Supplier Service Center at (877) 435-7363, option 1, if you do not have your log on information.
4. Click “Bidder” > “Enterprise Applications” > “Small & Small Diverse Business Program Application.” Contact the Supplier Service Center at (877) 435-7363, option 1, if the Enterprise Applications portal page appears blank or view our [application guide](#) for basic troubleshooting for most common obstacles.
5. Sign into the application at the bottom of the page.
6. Complete Steps 1 – 4.
7. Review the information in Step 5. Scroll to the bottom of the page, check the boxes and complete the signature, and submit.

STEP 3: Obtain a 3rd Party Certification

ACCEPTED 3RD PARTY CERTIFICATIONS

- [National Minority Supplier Diversity Council](#) (MBE)
- [Women’s Business Enterprise National Council](#) (WBE)
- [Unified Certification Program](#) (MBE/WBE)
(this is PA’s UCP certification program; every state has its own)
- [U.S. Small Business Administration 8\(a\) Business Development Program](#) (MBE/WBE)
- [Vets First Verification Program](#) (VBE/SDVBE)
- [National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#) (LGBTBE)
- [U.S. Business Leadership Network](#) (DOBE/SDVBE)

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBMIT FOR VERIFICATION

1. A congratulations page will appear after you’ve submitted the small business self-certification. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to continue directly on to the SDB verification. TIP: If the congratulations page does not appear, click the Step 5 tab again, and scroll down to the bottom of the screen to click on the “Verify as an SDB” button.

OR

2. Return to the application at a later time > Skip to Step 5 > Click on the “Verify as an SDB” button at the bottom of the page.

3. Upload your third party proof of certification in Step 6, click **“Save”**, and then click **“Save and Continue”**. Repeat for all third party certifications if you are submitting more than one.
4. Review and submit in Step 7.

Small Business self-certification is immediate. You will receive an approval email with a copy and link to your small business certificate shortly after submittal. Third party certifications submitted for SDB verification goes through a review process which can take up to 14 business days. Once the verification has been approved, you will receive a second email with a copy of your SB certificate, which will have been updated with your SDB information.

Once you've completed your vendor registration, self-certification and verification process, it's time to do business! The best way to find out what opportunities are available is [PA eMarketplace](#). PA eMarketplace is your one-stop source for state contracting information. On the website you can search for [overall contracting opportunities](#), see what opportunities are reserved solely for [SDBs and SBs to do business as a prime contractor](#), awarded contracts, upcoming procurements and more!

One way to stay informed is to sign up for eAlerts based on your selected commodity codes. This will ensure that you are getting information related to opportunities and announcements of interest to you.

The staff of the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities is always ready to assist you! Feel free to contact BDISBO at 717-783-3119 or GS-BDISBO@pa.gov with any questions you may have on our programs.