

Office of Equity and Inclusion Small Business Enterprise Certification Procedures

OVERVIEW

The Department of Administration - Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) owns the responsibility of administering the City of Milwaukee's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program. In accordance with Chapter 370 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances, the SBE Program shall apply to all city contracts and the OEI shall take steps to increase the participation of small business enterprises by assisting in small business enterprise development programs and the identification and elimination of barriers that deny small business enterprises equal opportunity. Firms interested in fulfilling small business requirements on city contracts shall be certified as a Small Business Enterprise by the OEI.

The City offers three (3) certification applications: new, renewal and addendum. A new application should be submitted by a small business seeking initial certification. A renewal application should be submitted by an SBE firm seeking to extend certification for an additional (3) years. An addendum application should be submitted by an SBE firm seeking to identify new services or changes within the operations, structure or ownership of the firm. Any of the aforementioned applications may be modified, at any time, by the OEI to reflect legislative and programmatic changes to Chapter 370 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances and the office's operating procedures. The document will solicit sufficient information to determine whether the applicant is eligible for certification. As part of its review, the OEI may require business owners to provide additional information separate from the items identified on the document checklist and other areas of the application. The applicant shall have the burden of providing evidence to substantiate whether the business is eligible for certification as a Small Business Enterprise.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The OEI conducts application reviews by date of receipt on a first-in, first-out basis. If an application is properly completed and submitted with all supporting documents, the OEI may complete the review process within ninety (90) days from the date of receipt. Applications that are not notarized and do not bear the signature of the owner(s) will not be accepted. In addition, the OEI may return incomplete application within ten (10) calendar days of its request for additional information or missing documentation.

Processing Guidelines

1. The review process will commence when the applicant submits a complete application along with required supporting documentation via the [Compliance Reporting and Certification System](#) (CRCS).
2. The office may suspend the application review process if it is determined that the application is incomplete. Processing will not resume, and the application may be returned, if the applicant fails to provide the requested information within the allotted timeframe. In the event the OEI returns an application, the applicant may request that the process resume and the Chief Equity Officer has the sole discretion of granting such requests.
3. The applicant will have two opportunities to respond to the request for missing information. The applicant has ten (10) calendar days to respond to the initial request. In the event the OEI makes a second request, the applicant will have ten (10) days from the date of the second request to respond. If the applicant does not provide the information within the allotted timeframe, the OEI will return the application. The applicant will be afforded one additional opportunity to submit a complete application and any future incomplete submissions thereafter are subject to automatic denial. An applicant may request additional time to respond to the request for missing information; however, the Chief Equity Officer has the sole discretion of granting such requests.
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5. The applicant shall have the burden of providing evidence to substantiate whether the business is eligible for certification as a Small Business Enterprise.
6. The OEI will notify the applicant, in writing, of its decision to grant or deny certification.

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DENIAL

The OEI may deny certification based on any of the following circumstances including but not limited to:

1. Failure to qualify as an SBE under the certification requirements and eligibility standards identified in Chapter 370 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.
2. Failure to provide sufficient information and pertinent records to the OEI staff in a timely manner.
3. Refusal to permit on-site site visits by SBE staff.

The OEI will notify the applicant in writing, via certified mail or e-mail, of its decision. If the OEI denies a firm's request for certification, the applicant cannot reapply for a period of three (3) calendar years after the date of denial.

DECERTIFICATION

A firm may be decertified based on the following circumstances including but not limited to:

1. Firm no longer qualifies as an SBE in accordance with the certification requirements and eligibility standards identified in Chapter 370 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.
2. Failure to provide sufficient information and pertinent records to the OEI staff in a timely manner.
3. Failure to satisfy loan payments awarded via the OEI's Revolving Loan Program.
4. Firm notifies the OEI of administrative dissolution, transfer of ownership or substantial ownership interest or wishes to relinquish certification. If a firm experiences a substantial change in ownership, control, or organization of the business and the new owner desires to maintain the firm's SBE certification, he/she must submit a new application.
5. Debarment of a firm from contracting with one or more local government jurisdictions or, decertification from another certifying entity may be grounds for decertification with the City.

If a firm is decertified, the OEI will notify the applicant in writing, via certified mail, of its certification status. As a result, the firm cannot reapply for certification for a period of three (3) calendar years after the date of denial.

APPEAL

In the event a certification is denied or decertified, the applicant has the option to file an appeal with the Administrative Review Appeals Board, Office of the City Clerk, within thirty (30) days of the date of the denial correspondence. A \$25 filing fee is required. Please call (414) 286-2221 for further instructions.

APPLICATION RESUBMISSION

An applicant who has withdrawn his/her application may file a new application if there has been a substantial change in ownership, control, or organization of the business only once within the same calendar year of the initial withdrawal.

Questions? Contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at 414-286-5553 or oei@milwaukee.gov