

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and the Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) programs?

Both programs assist economically disadvantaged businesses. MBE certification is limited to members of four statutorily designated racial groups (African American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American). MBE procurement involves sheltered market or set-aside contracts in goods and services let by virtually all state agencies.

EDGE certification is open to any Ohio-based small business that has been certified as socially and economically disadvantaged. EDGE procurement does not involve sheltered markets or set aside contracts; however, EDGE applies to procurements of goods and services, professional services, information technology services, construction, architecture and engineering.

What are the basic requirements for MBE certification?

The company must be owned and controlled at least 51 percent by an U.S. citizen(s) and resident(s) of Ohio, belonging to one of the following ethnic groups: African American, Asian, Hispanic or Native American. The firm must have been operational at least one year prior to applying for certification.

What are the basic requirements for EDGE certification?

The company must be owned and controlled at least 51 percent by an U.S. citizen(s) and resident(s) of Ohio who demonstrates social and economical disadvantaged business status. The firm must have been operational at least one year prior to applying for certification. Socially disadvantaged individuals have been subject to societal prejudice or cultural bias because of their identities as members of groups, without regard to their individual qualities. Economically disadvantaged individuals are those whose personal net worth does not exceed program thresholds. Maximum personal net worth at program entry is \$250,000, ranging up to \$750,000 following program admission.

How long does it take to receive certification once a firm sends in the application packet?

If an applicant meets the requirements and provides the necessary documentation, processing takes approximately 14 days. Incomplete packets will be considered inquiries until all required documentation has been received by the Equal Opportunity Division.

What does the certification process entail?

- a. Complete an application (online applications are available at www.mbe.ohio.gov and www.edge.ohio.gov).
- b. Provide supporting documentation based upon your business structure, including, but not limited to, tax records, proof of race for all minorities, proof of social disadvantage status, articles of incorporation, corporate by-laws, stock certificates, partnership agreements, resumes, etc.
- c. Only complete applications will be reviewed; inquiries will be returned.
- d. New applications and applications for recertification are subject to on-site review by state compliance officers.
- e. Upon application approval, the company receives an MBE and/or EDGE certification via email.

For additional information, contact the Equal Opportunity Division at 614.466.8380.